



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 16TH JANUARY 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

The children have been busy across the curriculum this week with Year 6 finding out about the Mayans, Year 5 engaging with their new text the Wonderling in shared reading, Year 4 continuing to practice their multiplication skills, Year 3 participating in a storytelling workshop, Year 2 exploring safe and unsafe situations in PSHE, Year 1 comparing different materials and their uses in Design and Technology, Reception adding one to a given number and Nursery exploring the story of the three little pigs. In addition to the curriculum, some children in Key Stage 1 participated in a cricket competition and some children in Year 5 and Year 6 participated in a badminton competition. All the children tried their best and represented the school well. The badminton team returned with bronze medals – well done to everyone who took part in these events!

This week we also celebrated all the children who achieved 100% attendance last term with a reward session. It was great to see so many children achieving 100% attendance in the autumn term. We are looking forward to further attendance rewards this term with ad-hoc attendance raffles, weekly class attendance winners and finding out who achieves 100% in the spring term.

As mentioned in the newsletter last week, if you are interested in volunteering, we are looking to recruit some reading volunteers. If you are interested, please speak to the school office for further information.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 92.92%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Andrade's Class with 98%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss White's Class with 98.67%

If your child is absent, contact must be made to the School Office EVERY school day that your child is absent.

Please report your child's absence by phone 01268 417893, ParentMail or by email: admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk.

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

STAR OF THE WEEK CERTIFICATE

FOCUS: RESPECT

Nursery: Linken-Kai H

Nest: Alfie N

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Louie C

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Raphael M

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Krystyna C

Year 1, Mrs King: Eliza G

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Liam M

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Avineet B

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Raigan-Rells E-G

Year 2, Miss Milne: Anthony W

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper: Erik E

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Aria G

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Jack S

Year 3, Miss Medina: Ayyan H

Year 4, Miss Lee: Bonnie-Mae D

Year 4, Miss Miller: Tiana K

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Harry M

Year 5, Miss Day: Florrie S

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Sophie G

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Jude D

Year 6, Miss White: Suzanna F

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Frankie D

BADGES



Our Merrylands badges are given to the pupils who demonstrate the school values at all times.

They are good role models to other pupils and work hard to improve every single day. They try their best and persevere in all lessons, complete homework on time, have good school attendance and show kindness to their peers.

Reception	Albert P
Year 1	Ariah C
Year 2	Lottie-Mae R
Year 3	Jaiden Y
Year 4	Freddie C
Year 5	Katy J
Year 6	Lily T

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

JANUARY

19.01.2026—Careers and Aspirations Week

21.01.2026—Young Voices (O2)



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

BOOK OF THE WEEK



Reception, Miss Sullivan's class have been enjoying their class book called 'The Magic Paintbrush' written by Julia Donaldson.

This book is about a determined young girl called Shen who is given a magic paintbrush. Whatever she paints becomes real, but she is told to only paint for people who are in need. Shen stands up to the Greedy Emperor when he orders her to paint a tree with gold coins!



SPORTING EVENTS

On Monday 12th January 2026, KS1 pupils attended the Cricket Festival at James Hornsby School. The children had a great time participating in cricket drills and cricket friendlies.

On Wednesday 14th January 2026, the Year 5/6 Badminton Team attended James Hornsby to participate in a Badminton match. The children played amazingly and received third place.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Alex Yee

Who is Alex Yee?

Alex Yee is a triathlete from Lewisham, England. He was born on the 18th February 1998 and has grown up to be the most successful Olympic triathlete ever. Alex was inspired by the 2012 Olympic Games and his father's duathlons which prompted him to start serious training at a young age.

What has Alex achieved?

Alex Yee is one of the most successful Olympic triathletes of all time. At the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Alex won an individual silver medal and a mixed relay gold. At the next Olympics, Alex won an individual gold medal and a mixed relay bronze. He also won a gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

In 2025, at the London Marathon, Alex made his marathon debut clocking an impressive time of 02:11:08 to cross the line in 14th place, and the second Brit.



Complete the Clock



What you need: twelve markers, one ball

How to play:

- Create a circle with the markers. Identify where the numbers would be if it was a clock.
- Kick your ball through each of the gaps.
- Repeat, this time once through 1 o'clock, twice through 2 o'clock, all the way to twelve times through 12 o'clock.

Make this harder by asking someone to time you. How quickly you can complete the clock?



On Monday 19th January 2026 children will return to school on Week 3.



Please ensure all school lunches are paid for in advance on ScoPay.



Please let the office staff know if there are any changes to your child's dietary needs.

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Lighter Bites



OUR LIGHTER LUNCH
OPTIONS OF JACKET
POTATO & HAM OR
CHEESE BAGUETTE ARE
AVAILABLE TO ALL
PUPILS EVERYDAY



MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY

WEEK 1

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP
QUORN FAJITA WRAP
WITH POTATO CUBES & SALAD
BAR
DESSERT - FRESH FRUIT &
YOGURT

SAUSAGE ROLL
VEGAN ROLL
WITH SMILEY FACES & SPAGHETTI LOOPS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE ICED SPRINKLE
CAKE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIE
QUORN & VEGETABLE PIE
WITH SAUTE POTATOES, CARROTS
& GRAVY
DESSERT - FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE
TOMATO SAUCE & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

FISH FINGERS
CHEDDAR WHIRL
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - STRAWBERRY SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

WEEK 2

BEEF MEATBALLS
VEGAN MEATBALLS
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE &
PEAS
DESSERT - AMERICAN PANCAKES & GOLDEN
SYRUP
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS
VEGETABLE NUGGETS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE SPONGE CAKE &
CUSTARD
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGE
VEGAN SAUSAGES
WITH MASH POTATO, YORKSHIRE PUDDING,
PEAS, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

CHICKEN CURRY
VEGETABLE CURRY
WITH STEAMED RICE & SWEETCORN
DESSERT - GOLDEN OAT FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

Battered FISH
Vegetable Fingers
WITH SMILEY FACES & PEAS
DESSERT - ICE CREAM
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

WEEK 3

BREADED CHICKEN BURGER
QUORN BURGER
WITH CHIPS & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE
SPRINKLE CAKE
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

BACON MACARONI CHEESE
MACARONI CHEESE
WITH PEAS
DESSERT - SEASONAL FRUIT &
YOGHURT

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN
QUORN FILLET
WITH ROAST POTATOES,
YORKSHIRE PUDDING, GREEN
BEANS, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY

BEEF BOLOGNESE
VEGETABLE BOLOGNESE
WITH FUSILLI PASTA & MIXED
VEGETABLES
DESSERT - HOMEMADE FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEESE OMELETTE
WITH POTATO WEDGES & SPAGHETTI
HOOPS
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

Tackling Misogyny at school and at home.

You will probably have seen and heard a lot in the media over the last 6-12 month about the rise of misogyny in children and young people across the country. Misogyny is described as the dislike, contempt of, or ingrained prejudice against women. Sadly, evidence tells us that half (49%) of secondary school teachers said they witness pupils making misogynistic comments or displaying misogynistic behaviours against other female pupils at least once a month or more - with 6% saying they witness this every day, and 21% saying at least once a week. Even in primary schools, 18% of teachers in the UK said they witnessed pupils making misogynistic comments or displaying misogynistic behaviours at least once a month or more - with 1 in 10 (10%) reporting to witness this weekly.

Tackling misogyny requires a united effort between schools and families. To do so we need to both confront sexism and misogyny when we see it and create environments which celebrate gender equality. In our school, we try and tackle the issue with inclusive language, appropriate classroom materials, encouraging mixed-gender working and always addressing sexist behaviour early.

As parents, you play a crucial role in shaping your children's values and beliefs. Home is where gender norms are first learned – and can be unlearned. Good strategies to support can be:

- Model respectful relationships – children learn from their adults and how they treat each other,
- Talk openly about gender and fairness
- Diversify media and role models – use stories that include strong female characters and emotionally intelligent male figures
- Encourage all interests – help children explore hobbies regardless of gender norms.
- Challenge stereotypes gently – talk about phrases like “girls can't do that” or “boys don't cry” to help them reconsider.

Tackling misogyny is a shared responsibility. By working together as teachers in the classroom and parents at home, we can raise young people who value equality, respect difference, and stand up against injustice.



Dear Merrylands' parents/carers,

On the week of the 9th February we will be celebrating 'Safer Internet day 2026'.

As part of the celebrations, all the children will be taking part in activities related to being safer when using the internet both inside and outside of school.

The theme this year is based around AI (artificial intelligence) and the reliability of it.

KS1 will be focusing on the use of smart speakers and how to get the best out of them, even designing their own devices as part of their activities.

KS2 will be focusing on the reliability of AI and how we can tell whether something is real or AI generated. They will be taking part in a live lesson through the BBC and be taking part in activities related to AI.

There are plenty of free resources through the BBC website that you can do with your children at home. If you have any questions about what the children will be doing or how you can get involved yourselves, please come and speak to me.

Mr. Taylor
Computing Lead



**Safer
Internet
Day 2026** | Tuesday
10 February

SAFER INTERNET DAY

Make good choices





PE & JEWELLERY SAFETY UPDATE



Why Do Children Need To Remove Earrings For PE?

For children to enjoy PE safely, this is why earrings need to be removed:

- Earrings and studs can easily get caught on equipment and clothing. Even small earrings can cause significant injuries to the wearer and other children.
- Wearing earrings in PE increases unnecessary risks.

Merrylands PE Jewellery Rules

- No Earrings or studs (metal or plastic) in PE lessons or sporting activities.
- Taping earrings is not allowed as it does not prevent injury.

What Parent/Carers Can Do To Help

- Encourage your child to leave earrings at home on PE days.
- Ensure your child can remove their earrings themselves and put back in independently after PE lessons.
- Consider getting your child's ears pierced at the start of the summer holidays as it can take up to 6 weeks for the piercing site to be fully healed and earrings to be safely removed.

Special Circumstances

- If your child has an injury to their ear, infection or a concern about the piercing hole closing up too soon we will work with you to ensure missed PE lessons remain limited.

This may include parents/guardians coming up to the school to remove and then replace the earrings for the child.

If Earrings Cannot Be Removed

- Pupils who cannot remove their earrings themselves will not be able to take part in PE lessons for their own safety.
- Non-participating cards are available to ensure every child is included in a lesson or an alternative activity will be provided.

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

1 PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.



2

PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES



You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

3 PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES



For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.

5

MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER



Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the Internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.

4



THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES

As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the Internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the Internet.



9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6

REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS



Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.

7

DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE



Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.

8 WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.



9 KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.

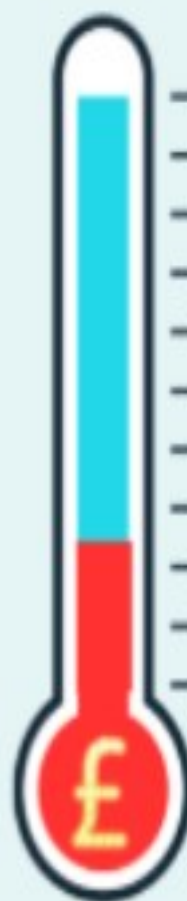


Meet our expert

Emma Davis was a secondary school Computer Science teacher for more than a decade. Since leaving education, she has been working in a cyber security firm delivering cyber awareness training to businesses and carrying out network testing. She is a mother of a five-year-old, she's had vast experience of controlling and managing how children access online services and use apps.



Friends of MERRYLANDS Fundraising



£10,000
(2026 target)

£1,020
PANTO EXTRAS
£304
XMAS ARTWORK
£29.25
RECYCLING
£153.40
LOTTERY
£284
FUND RAISIN
£1,511.32
PROSTRIKE

Fundraising total
★
£3,357.97