



# MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 20TH MARCH 2026

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been another busy week at Merrylands with Nursery exploring the environment and looking for different shapes while Reception have been planting beans and watching them grow. Year 1 have been finding out why plants grow in spring and Year 2 have been using the software 2Paint to create pictures in computing. Year 3 have been busy sewing their cushions while Year 4 found out that sound is made by vibrations. Year 5 have focused on first aid and learnt how to deal with scalds and burns while Year 6 have been writing newspaper articles.

On Tuesday the children found out about St. Patrick's Day and why it is celebrated. They also enjoyed a special themed dinner. Also this week, Year 2 enjoyed their curriculum showcase session. Thank you to all the parents and carers who were able to attend.

It was great to see all the children dressed in red today to mark Red Nose Day and raise money for Comic Relief. Thank you for all your donations to this worthy cause.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend and if you are celebrating Eid ul-Fitr I hope you have a wonderful time with your family.



**School Attendance Target: 95.00 %**



**This week's attendance: 93.97%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's Class with 97.55%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss White's Class with 99.26 %**

**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](mailto:admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk).**

**RESPECT**

**KINDNESS**

**PERSEVERANCE**

# STAR OF THE WEEK CERTIFICATE

## FOCUS : PERSEVERANCE

Nursery: Cezar S

Nest: Alfie N

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Lanayah L

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Ruby J

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Heidi B

Year 1, Mrs King: Summer W

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Quinn H

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Jaxon P

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Leah B

Year 2, Miss Milne: Anthony W

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper:

Aurora P

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Remi S

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Adas V

Year 3, Miss Medina: Harley L

Year 4, Miss Lee: Alex P

Year 4, Miss Miller: Ivy-Mae H

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Layla W

Year 5, Miss Day: Jessie P

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Mila B

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Katy J

Year 6, Miss White: Jessica C

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Teddy G

## 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.

Congratulations to this week's winners.

Reception	Sofia S
Year 1	Francesca B
Year 2	Jordan M-H
Year 3	Lydia A
Year 4	Billy M-S
Year 5	Ameerah M
Year 6	Scarlett D

## UPCOMING DIARY DATES

### MARCH

30.03.2026 Easter Holidays

### APRIL - AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

13.04.2026 Back To School



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

# BOOK OF THE WEEK



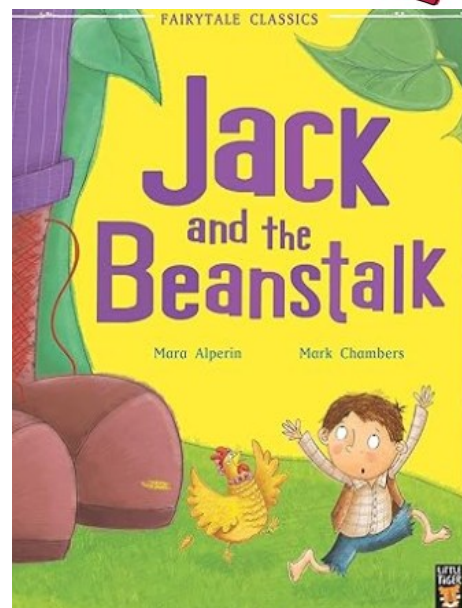
Miss Bagridge's class have been reading the classic fairy tale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

The class like this story because the giant is scary! They also love chanting "Fee Fi Fo Fum!" in their loudest giant voice.

The children have loved reading this book and taking on the role of a giant!

Ember said, "I like pretending to be a giant and going stomp stomp stomp."

Noah said, "I like when Jack has to run away from the giant and climb down the beanstalk!"

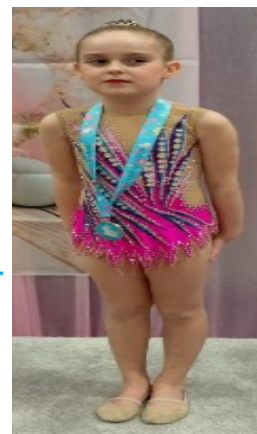


# ACHIEVE-



Elizabeth in Year 1, took part in a rhythmic gymnastics competition last Saturday and she won 3rd place.

Elizabeth worked so hard and perfected her routine winning her a spot on the winners podium and a medal.



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



## Sportsperson of the Half Term...

### Alice Tai MBE

Who is Alice Tai MBE?

Alice Tai MBE is a British Paralympic swimmer who was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1999. She competes in the S8 category of the sport. At the age of eight, Alice joined a swimming club, however, it wasn't until the winter of 2010 that her parents discovered she could be classified as a disability swimmer. Before she was 12 years old, Alice has undergone 14 operations. Her main swimming event is backstroke.

What has Alice achieved?

Alice is a very accomplished athlete who has won many medals during her career so far. She has won medals in the Paralympics, World Championships, European championships and is a Commonwealth champion. At the World Para Swimming Championships in 2019, she won seven gold medals. At Paris 2024 Alice won S8 100m backstroke gold with a new Paralympic record, finishing nearly six seconds clear of her rivals.



## Plane in Flight



**What you need:** a sheet of newspaper, an A4 sheet of paper, a pen, masking tape, scissors, an adult to help you cut.

### How to play:

- Draw circles of different sizes on the sheet of newspaper.
- Ask an adult to help you cut them out.
- Make a paper aeroplane with the A4 paper (have fun finding how to make this on the internet).
- Tape your newspaper so that it hangs in a doorway and name each of the holes after a country.
- Stand 3m away and throw your aeroplane so that it travels through every country.



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 23rd March 2026 children will return to school on Week 2.



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 - CHOCOLATE CHIP SHORTBREAD  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIE  
QUORN & VEGETABLE PIE  
WITH SAUTE POTATOES, CARROTS & GRAVY  
DESSERT - MINI SUGAR RING DONUTS  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

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

FISH FINGERS  
VEGGIE FINGERS  
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 - BELGIAN WAFFLES WITH SQUIRTY CREAM  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGE  
VEGAN SAUSAGES  
WITH CRISPY CUBE POTATOES, YORKSHIRE PUDDING, PEAS, CARROTS & GRAVY  
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY  
FRESH FRUIT

CHICKEN CURRY  
VEGETABLE CURRY  
WITH STEAMED RICE & SWEETCORN  
DESSERT - 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 - PANCAKES WITH GOLDEN SYRUP  
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 - BELGIAN WAFFLE WITH SQUIRTY CREAM  
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

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

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# YOUTUBE

Almost anyone with an internet connection knows YouTube. The Google-owned site lets anyone upload videos to be shared around the world, and as a result, it's an incredible resource with instant free access to material covering every conceivable topic. But with over 500 hours of video uploaded every minute, not all of it will be appropriate for young eyes.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

YouTube is free and can be accessed via numerous devices, even without creating a YouTube account. Some content is flagged as 'age-restricted' (requiring the user to be logged into an account with a verified age of 18), but children can still view some mildly inappropriate content. This can include profanity and violence, which some young users may find upsetting.

### CONNECT WITH STRANGERS

YouTube recommends videos related to what the user has previously watched on their account, aiming to provide content that will interest them. This is intended to be helpful but it can also lead to binge-watching and screen addiction – especially if 'auto-play' is active. Users without an account are shown popular videos from the last 24 hours, which might not always be suitable for children.

### RADICALISATION

YouTube's algorithm tends to promote content that's getting the most traffic – a lot of which can be quite extreme. This can be fine for harmless topics, but YouTube isn't regulated like television, and that means that conspiracy theories, fake news and hateful ideologies can occasionally surface to warp impressionable minds all too easily. Remember – the more they watch, the more they'll be recommended.

### CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

YouTube is a social media platform which allows people to interact with other (usually unknown) users. Account holders can leave comments on any video they have access to, as well as message other users directly. Connecting with strangers online can potentially lead to children being exposed to adult language, cyberbullying and – in the worst cases – online predators. If a child is creating content themselves, this can increase the likelihood of them becoming a target.

### TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

YouTube is teeming with trends and challenges, some of which are fun to watch and join in with. Children often find these immensely entertaining and might want to try them out. Most challenges tend to be safe, but many others may cause physical or emotional harm children who watch or copy them. The painful 'salt and ice challenge' – where people use these two ingredients to burn their skin – is just one of many examples.

### SNEAKY SCAMMERS

The comments sections of popular content creators regularly have scammers posing as that influencer, attempting to lure users into clicking on their phishing links. Scammers impersonate YouTubers by adopting their names and profile images, and often offer cash gifts or 'get rich quick' schemes. Children may not realise that these users aren't who they claim to be.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### APPLY RESTRICTED MODE

For older children, Restricted Mode is an optional setting that prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material (such as drug and alcohol abuse, graphic violence, and sexual content) to underage viewers. To prevent children from changing across age-inappropriate content on the platform, we would recommend enabling Restricted Mode on each device that they use to access YouTube. It's worth also turning the auto-play feature off, to prevent YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending something inappropriate.



### TRY GOOGLE FAMILY

Creating a Google Family account allows parents and carers to monitor what their child is watching, uploading, and sharing with other users. It will also display their recently watched videos, searches, and recommended videos. In general, a Google Family account gives a parent or carer oversight of how their child uses sites like YouTube and helps to ensure that they are only accessing appropriate content.



### MONITOR ENGAGEMENT

YouTube is the online viewing platform of choice for billions of people, many of them under 18. Younger children will watch different content to older ones, of course. You may want to keep an eye on how children interact with this material – and, if applicable, with content creators – to understand what they're interested in. Remember that creators often share content outside of YouTube, so don't ignore their web presence elsewhere!



### CONSIDER YOUTUBE KIDS

It's possible to sidestep most inappropriate content completely via Google's own YouTube Kids app for Android handsets and iPhone. This lets you filter content by "preschool" (4 and under), "younger" (ages 5 to 8) and "older" (ages 9 to 12). This isn't a perfect substitute for personal supervision, as the app's filtering system is automated, and Google can't manually review all videos.

### CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

YouTube gives users the option of uploading videos as 'private' or 'unlisted' – so they could be shared exclusively with family and friends, for example. Comments on videos can also be disabled and channels that a child is subscribed to can be hidden. If the child is only uploading videos set as 'private', they are far less likely to receive direct messages from strangers.



### LIMIT SPENDING

Although YouTube is free, it does offer some in-app purchases. For example, users can rent and buy TV shows and movies to watch. If you'd like to avoid children purchasing content online, limit their access to online payment methods. Many parents have discovered the hard way that a child happily consuming a paid-for series quickly leads to an unexpected bill!



## Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



The National College

# Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain?

**Excellent**  
100% attendance

100%

**Good**

98% attendance =  
Four whole days absent  
in the school year and  
20 hours of lost learning

98%

**Cause for concern**

95% attendance =  
9.5 whole days absent in  
the school year and 47.5  
hours of lost learning

95%

86 to  
90%

**Unsatisfactory**

90% attendance =  
19 whole days absent in  
the school year and 95  
hours of lost learning


86% attendance =  
27 whole days absent in  
the school year and 135  
hours of lost learning

Less  
than  
85%

**Critical**

Less than 85% attendance =  
28.5 whole days absent in the  
school year and 142.5 hours  
of lost learning

# Getting your child to school on time really matters...



If your child is late every day by...	They would have lost approximately....	Or they would have missed approximately...
5 minutes	3.5 days	15 lessons
10 minutes	7 days	42 lessons
15 minutes	10 days	60 lessons






**EYFS and KS1 pupils: *MUST* be in school by 8.55am**



**KS2 pupils: *MUST* be in school by 8.55am**

**Why is it important to be on time every day?**

- 
- Every moment a child is late = missed learning.
  - Children that are on time start the day settled, relaxed and ready to learn.
  - Children that arrive late are often stressed and embarrassed and take a while to settle into their day.
  - Late arrivals cause disruption within the class which has an effect on everyone.
  - By arriving at school on time, students establish a routine that nurtures discipline and responsibility.
  - This simple act cultivates organisational skills and time-management abilities that will serve them not only during their school years but throughout their lives.
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*If you are any struggling to get into school on time or to pick your child up on time, please contact the school office and we will help wherever we can.*