



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 24TH APRIL 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

I had the absolute pleasure to attend the Basildon Junior Music Festival at the Towngate Theatre on Tuesday evening where the KS2 choir put on an amazing performance. The choir performed a range of songs alongside 6 other Basildon schools. It was a fantastic evening and everyone who participated should be very proud of themselves.

On Thursday, we celebrated St. George's Day. Each class created a shield which decorated the outside of the school and the children completed a range of activities during the school day to find out about the legend of St. George. The children also completed a range of creative activities. It was fantastic to see all the children and staff dressed in red and white and we are very grateful to Kelly's Creations for the wonderful balloon arch at the school entrance.

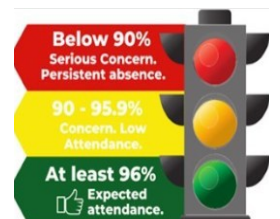
Can I remind all parents/carers who drive to the school to think carefully about where they are stopping or parking at drop off and pick up times. Once again, several dangerous situations have occurred where cars have stopped outside the school gates or on the zebra crossing, making it unsafe for the pupils of Merrylands to walk to school.

Next Friday we are looking forward to the mini marathon. Miss Day has been busy planning the route and making arrangements for the day. Remember to ask your family and friends to sponsor your child for this event.

I hope you all have a great weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 94.94%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's Class with 98.67%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Osborne's Class with 99.03%

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: PERSEVERANCE

Nursery: The Whole Class
 Nest: Kasper L
 ASC: Elijah M
 Reception, Mrs Anthony: Arthur S
 Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Laevion C-T
 Reception, Miss Bagridge: Heidi B
 Year 1, Mrs King: Mykhailo R
 Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Russell H
 Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Leo G
 Year 2, Mrs Didham: Lukas B
 Year 2, Miss Milne: Jacob L
 Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper:
 Georgina P

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Alex G
 Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Scarlett B
 Year 3, Miss Medina: Joshua S
 Year 4, Miss Lee: Marley S
 Year 4, Miss Miller: Ellis R
 Year 4, Miss Atkin: Skylar B
 Year 5, Miss Day: Carmella A
 Year 5, Mr Taylor: Mila B
 Year 5, Miss Osborne: Amelia S
 Year 6, Miss White: Taii L
 Year 6, Mrs Thour: Tay L

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	Krystyna C
Year 1	Milo N
Year 2	Logan D
Year 3	Isaac c
Year 4	John L
Year 5	Damilola A
Year 6	Elizabeth S

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

APRIL

01.05.2026 Mini Marathon School Event
 11.05.2026 Year 6 SATS Week



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

BOOK OF THE WEEK

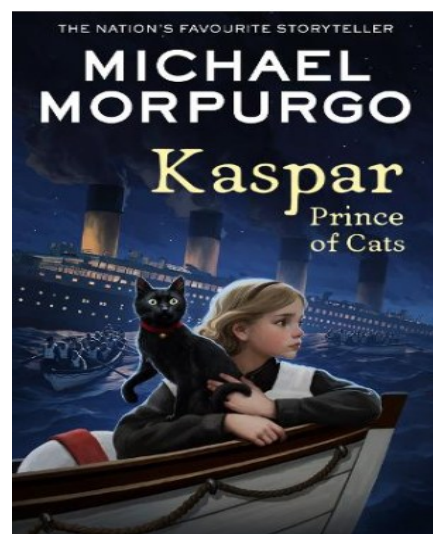


Year 5, Miss Day's Class have been reading, 'Kaspar: Prince of Cats' by Michael Morpurgo.

Arriving in London in a basket, Kaspar quickly becomes an integral part of Johnny Trott's life, a bell boy who works in the hotel. Together they tackle adventures which take them around the world.

The children are thoroughly enjoying reading this book as part of their English topic.

Sienna said, "This book keeps you interested and there is always something new happening. I am really enjoying the twists and turns."



MINI MARATHON SCHOOL EVENT

On Friday 1st May 2026, pupils at Merrylands Primary School will take part in the 2026 Mini Marathon. An event where schools all across the country can take part by running, jogging or walking around a 2 mile course in their school grounds.



We are hoping to raise funds to support the school with raising the profile of PE and physical activity in our school. In order to do this, we kindly ask for children to seek sponsorship from friends and family.

Any donation is greatly appreciated. We will not be accepting any sponsorship forms or money prior to the 1st May 2026.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Keely Hodgkinson

Who is Keely Hodgkinson?

Keely Hodgkinson is a British professional athlete who competes in athletics. She was born on the 3rd March 2002 in Wigan, England and was a keen swimmer when she was younger - nervous to compete in running events. Her father promised to buy her a new pair of running shoes if she gave running a try. She is a resilient athlete who, at 13 years old, Hodgkinson had an operation to remove a tumour on the side of her head. After the operation, she became deaf in one ear and temporarily struggled to walk or run. She now competes in the 800m event.

What has Keely achieved?

In her career so far, Keely has achieved many things. In 2021, she became the youngest British person in history to win a European indoor gold medal. In the same year, she also broke the record for the under-20 indoor 800m as well as the Women's 800m British record set by another of her idols, Dame Kelly Holmes. She has won Olympic gold and Olympic silver medals too.



Hit for Wicket



What you need: a wall or chair, a ball

How to play:

Begin 6m away from the target. Overarm bowl to hit the target. More than 2 bounces is a no-ball.

For each successful bowl collect a letter from the word 'wicket'. If you bowl a no-ball start again from the beginning.



Extra players? Who can spell the word first? Make this easier by underarm bowling (only one bounce allowed). Make this harder by standing further from the target.

www.getset4education.co.uk

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 27th April 2026 children will return to school on Week 1.

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

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS
VEGETABLE NUGGETS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT -
WAFFLES & GOLDEN SYRUP

PEPPERONI PIZZA
CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE
& SALAD BAR
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BREADED CHICKEN BURGER
QUORN BURGER
WITH CHIPS & SPAGHETTI HOOPS
DESSERT - STRAWBERRY MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

BEEF MEATBALLS
QUORN MEATBALLS
WITH FUSILLI PASTA IN A
HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE
DESSERT - HOMEMADE GOLDEN OAT
FLAPJACK

BATTERED CHICKEN PIECES
QUORN DIPPERS
IN SWEET & SOUR SAUCE WITH RICE &
SWEETCORN
DESSERT - HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE CHIP
CAKE

**SPAGHETTI CARBONARA WITH
CHEESE SAUCE & BACON PIECES**
VEGETABLE PASTA BAKE
WITH PEAS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE
FLAPJACK

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN
ROAST VEGAN FILLET
WITH ROAST POTATOES, YORKSHIRE
PUDDINGS, PEAS, CARROTS AND GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT
YOGURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGES
VEGAN SAUSAGES
WITH MASH POTATO, YORKSHIRE
PUDDING, SEASONAL VEGETABLES &
GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT YOGURT

ALL DAY COOKED BREAKFAST
ALL DAY QUORN BREAKFAST
WITH HASH BROWNS AND
BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT
YOGURT

BEEF CHILLI
VEGETABLE CHILLI
WITH RICE AND SWEETCORN
DESSERT - HOMEMADE LEMON
DRIZZLE CAKE

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP
VEGAN FAJITA WRAP
WITH CRISPY CUBE POTATOES AND
SALAD BAR
DESSERT - HOMEMADE OAT FLAPJACK

STICKY BBQ CHICKEN
STICKY BBQ VEGAN PIECES
WITH RICE & SWEETCORN
DESSERT - AMERICAN PANCAKES
WITH GOLDEN SYRUP
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEESE OMELETTE
WITH POTATO WAFFLES & PEAS
DESSERT - ICE CREAM
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
VEGETABLE FINGERS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE SPONGE CAKE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEDDAR WHIRL
WITH SMILEY FACES & PEAS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE ICED SPONGE
CAKE WITH SPRINKLES
FRUIT & YOGURT



ST GEORGE'S DAY



This week, in honour of St George's Day, children across the school have been designing shields. The children learnt about the sacrifices and challenges of St George and why he is celebrated to this day as a national hero.

St George stood up for what was right and showed that everyone should be treated equally.

The children had a fantastic day on Thursday celebrating St George's Day. All the classes worked hard to produce a variety of amazing shields to display at our school entrance, which was also kindly decorated by Kelly's Creations.

The children then had the opportunity to take part in a range of St George's day activities in their classrooms and also enjoyed a special St George's Day lunch.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ROBLOX

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Roblox is an online platform where users can play and create games known as 'experiences' made by other users. Roblox has a large UK audience. ITV News has reported that millions of people in Britain use the platform regularly, with children forming a significant proportion of its users. The sheer scale of it makes it extremely difficult to moderate effectively, creating risks for unsupervised children.

A PLATFORM RATHER THAN A GAME

Roblox differs from traditional video games in that it hosts millions of user-created experiences rather than a fixed set of developer-produced content. Each experience is self-rated by its creator rather than independently age-rated in advance, as is the case with PEGI-rated games. With millions of user-created experiences, moderation is largely automated which means that inappropriate content may reach younger players and have a harmful effect.

MATURE CONTENT

With much of Roblox's moderation automated through AI and creators self-certifying suitability, inappropriate content frequently appears on the platform. Some experiences may include content intended for older players. While Roblox has tools to restrict access based on age settings, these systems are not always perfect. Younger players are likely to encounter content you may deem unsuitable.

IN-GAME SPENDING

Roblox is free to play, but many experiences and cosmetics include optional purchases using Robux, the platform's virtual currency, to get advantages in games. This business model is common across online games, but reporting has highlighted cases where children have spent large amounts of money unintentionally or without understanding the real-world cost.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox encourages repeated and extended play. Many experiences are made of short tasks, rewards, and progression systems that can prompt users to keep playing for longer periods of time. Some games also use reminders, daily rewards, or timed events to encourage frequent logins. These designs can make it difficult to stop playing. Spending long periods online may affect sleep, schoolwork, or other activities if boundaries are not in place.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER USERS

Roblox includes text and voice features that allow players to chat in shared game spaces. While the platform uses automated filters and moderation tools, media investigations have found that inappropriate and potentially harmful messages can still get through. There are risks that children could be targeted by groomers. In response, Roblox has announced changes to how chat works. The platform plans to use facial age-estimation technology to restrict chat access between adults and children they do not know.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox's parental controls provide an important starting point. Linking a child's account to an adult account allows parents to apply spending controls, limit communication features, and review recent activity. Regular supervision, use of parental controls, and conversations with children about what they see online can help reduce the risk of exposure to inappropriate content.

CONSIDER LIMITING OR DISABLING CHAT

Although Roblox is introducing tighter age-based chat restrictions, some parents and educators may prefer to disable chat entirely for younger children. Children can still play games while communicating with friends they know through other supervised platforms.

PLAY TOGETHER WHERE POSSIBLE

Playing Roblox with a child can help adults understand the types of experiences available, how monetisation works, and how children interact online. This shared engagement can also make it easier for children to raise concerns if something feels wrong. Parents and educators should monitor all games played on Roblox due to its self-rating nature.

ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Many Roblox experiences are creative and age appropriate, and for many children, the platform is an important way to socialise with friends. Rather than banning it outright, parents and educators should talk openly with children about online safety, spending, and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is a technology journalist who has written for publications including Wired, TechRadar, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website

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