



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been another busy and successful week at Merrylands, and it has been a pleasure to see the children working hard in their lessons and continuing to demonstrate our core values every day.

There has been lots of exciting learning taking place across the school. Year 6 have been drawing maps in geography, Year 5 have been investigating water resistance in science, and Year 4 have been writing explanation texts about plant life cycles. Year 3 have been learning how fossils are formed, while Year 2 have been discovering who lived and worked in castles long ago. Year 1 have been designing maps of our school, Reception have enjoyed learning about owls and sharing the story Owl Babies, and Nursery have been developing their mathematical language by comparing large and small objects.

Please can I remind all parents and carers that children should not ride bikes, scooters or roller skates on the school grounds. We have had a few near misses recently, and we want to ensure everyone remains safe at the beginning and end of the school day. If your child brings a bike or scooter to school, please ensure they walk alongside it until they are outside the school gates. Thank you for your continued support with this.

Next week, we are looking forward to welcoming parents and carers to our parent consultation meetings for children in Reception to Year 6. If you have not already done so, please book an appointment with your child's class teacher via ParentMail. If you experience any difficulties booking an appointment, please contact the school office. The travelling book fair will also be available during these evenings. I hope you all have a wonderful weekend, and I look forward to seeing you all next week.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 94.38%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's Class with 97.22%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Miller's Class with 99.59%

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: KINDNESS

Nursery: Carter W
Reception, Mrs Anthony: Maeve S
Reception, Mrs Fairman/
Miss Stanhope: Cezar S
Reception, Mrs Bagridge: Linken-K H
Year 1, Mrs King: Heidi B
Year 1, Mrs Sullivan: Krystyna C
Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Lanayah L
Year 2, Mrs Didham: Ocean A-D
Year 2, Miss Milne: Quinn H
Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper: Kai C

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Georgina P
Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Chiril D
Year 3, Mrs Camoccio: Sienna Y
Year 4, Miss Lee: Jack B
Year 4, Miss Miller: Hanaa M
Year 4, Miss Atkin: Adas V
Year 5, Miss Day: Teia S
Year 5, Miss Medina: Ruby F
Year 5, Miss Osborne: Sebastian V
Year 6, Miss White: Evie S
Year 6, Mrs Thour: Alaine M
Year 6, Mr Taylor: Nina-F A

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	Delilah-R M
Year 1	Arthur S
Year 2	Maria C
Year 3	Logan D
Year 4	Hanaa M
Year 5	Rose P
Year 6	Nina-F A

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

October - Black History Month & Oracy Month

13.10.2026— Reception—Year 6 Parents Evening 3:40pm-19:30pm

14.10.2026— Reception— Year 6 Parents Evening 3:40pm-17:30pm

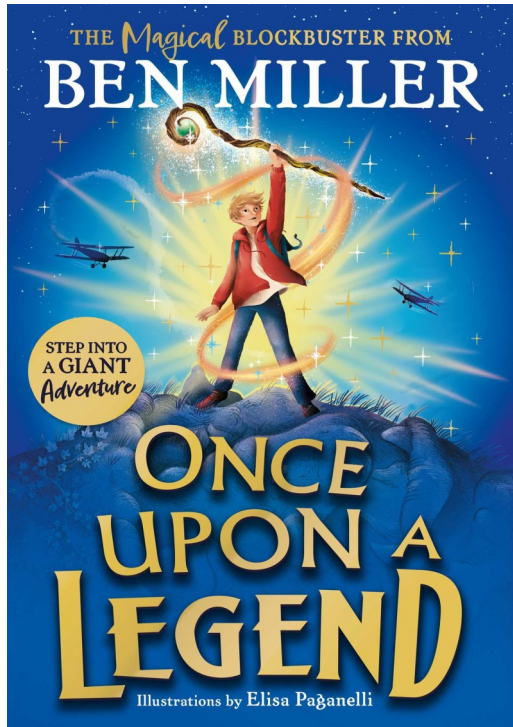


RESPECT

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BOOK OF THE WEEK



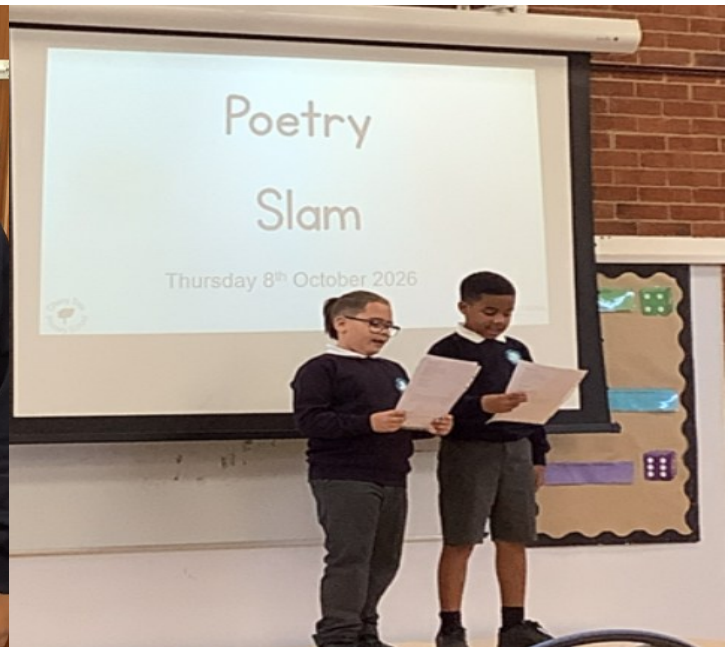
This week in Year 3, Mrs Almond's class are reading "Once Upon a Legend" an exciting and funny story by Ben Miller. This book is full of magic, adventure and interesting characters. The story follows Marcus, a rebellious young boy who is sent to a unique boarding school for rebellious children.

Once Marcus arrives at his new school, the story begins to unfold in a crazy, magical way leaving us all enchanted to read more!

Mrs Almond said "The characters were one of my favourite things about the book. They are brave, interesting and sometimes a little bit silly! I liked seeing how they worked together and helped each other when things became difficult." Sophia said "My favourite part was when the story became magical."

TRUST POETRY SLAM COMPETITION

On Thursday Esmee, Shea, Ayan, Olivia, Lexi and Jacob attended the Berlesduna Poetry Slam at Cherry Tree Primary School. The children were chosen to perform a range of poems based on the theme of 'Wonder' in front of the other children and adults from the Trust. The children were superb and were very confident when it was their turn to perform. They were a pleasure to watch and were a credit to the school.



RESPECT

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HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

On Tuesday 6th October, the School Council, Head Pupils and Deputy Head Pupils visited the Houses of Parliament. We had a fantastic day and learned so much about the history of Parliament and how bills become laws. The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained a real insight into how decisions are made in our country.

The children were a real credit to our school, demonstrating excellent behaviour and enthusiasm throughout the trip. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Mrs North for accompanying us and helping to make the visit such a success.



Here is what the children thought:

On Tuesday, we went to the Houses of Parliament and it was brilliant. My favourite part was the robing room. It was beautifully designed with portraits and sculptures. The House of Lords and the House of Commons were decorated in gold. It was such a good trip! - Alaine, Deputy Head Pupil

On the 6th of October, we went to the Houses of Parliament it was a fantastic trip. We learnt about the robing room, House of Commons and the House of Lords. We also did some activities related to what we had learnt. Our tour guide was very funny and kind. My favourite part was the workshop at the end. -Zac, Head Pupil

Earlier this week, all school councillors, head pupils and deputy pupils attended a fascinating trip to the Houses of Parliament. We found out many interesting facts such as no members of the Royal family are allowed in the House of Commons. The House of Commons has green chairs whereas the House of Lords has red chairs. Keira, Head Pupil and Sophia, Deputy Head

Here is what some of our school councillors enjoyed:

My favourite part was the room where the king was allowed to go in!
- Murtaza

My favourite part was the workshop—Esme

My favourite part was the secret doors in the robing room—Iris

My favourite part was seeing the different houses- Eva

HEAD AND DEPUTY HEAD PUPILS

We are very proud to announce our newly appointed Head Pupils and Deputy Head Pupils for this academic year. They will play an important role in school life, serving as positive role models and ambassadors for our school. As part of their responsibilities, they will help lead presentations both within school and in the wider community. They will also be key members of the School Council.



My name is Keira, I am one of the head pupils of the school. I want to be a voice for the children of our school. I can't wait for a fun year ahead and I hope to make the school even better than it is already.

My name is Zac. I am so excited to be Head Pupil of Merrylands 2026/27. I want to represent our school so it's an even more positive environment to learn in. I also want to encourage reading in younger years.



Hi my name is Sophia, my favourite thing to do is running. I am one of the deputy pupils. I would like to raise money for more PE and lunchtime play equipment. I would also like to add more choices to the dinner menu. I hope to make our school even better than it is now.

My name is Vinnie and I like playing football and at weekends I like to go fishing. I want to make this school a better place by making lunchtimes even better by adding more sports.



My name is Alaine and I am one of the deputy pupils. I like dancing. I hope to make the school a better place by listening to everyone's ideas and trying to make their ideas come true.

On Monday 12th October 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.



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

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL
BE NO HAM BAGUETTE
AVAILABLE ON MEAT FREE
MONDAYS.



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

WEEK 1

MACARONI CHEESE
VEGETABLE PASTA BAKE

DESSERT -
FRUIT & YOGURT

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP

QUORN FAJITA WRAP

WITH CRISPY CUBE POTATOES & SALAD
BAR

DESSERT - APPLE SPONGE CAKE WITH
ICING & SPRINKLES

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGES

QUORN SAUSAGES

WITH MASH POTATO, PEAS, CARROTS,
YORKSHIRE PUDDING & GRAVY

DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN CURRY

VEGETABLE CURRY

WITH BROWN RICE & MIXED VEGETABLES

DESSERT - FRUIT OR YOGURT

BIRDSEYE FISH FINGERS

CHEDDAR WHIRL

WITH SMILEY FACES & SWEETCORN

DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRUIT OR YOGURT

MEAT FREE MONDAYS

Jacket Potato or
Cheese Baguette

Jacket Potato,
Ham or Cheese
Baguette

Jacket Potato,
Ham or Cheese
Baguette

Jacket Potato,
Ham or Cheese
Baguette

Jacket Potato,
Ham or Cheese
Baguette

WEEK 2

CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA

WITH TRI COLOUR PASTA IN A
HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE & SALAD
BAR

DESSERT - FRUIT & YOGURT

BIRDSEYE FISH FINGERS

VEGETABLE FINGERS

WITH POTATO WAFFLES & PEAS

DESSERT - HOMEMADE LEMON DRIZZLE
CAKE OR FRUIT

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN

QUORN FILLET

WITH ROAST POTATOES, CARROTS, GREEN
BEANS, YORKSHIRE PUDDING & GRAVY

DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRUIT OR YOGURT

HOMEMADE BEEF BOLOGNESE

VEGETABLE BOLOGNESE

WITH SPAGHETTI & PEAS

DESSERT - FRUIT OR YOGURT

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS

VEGETABLE NUGGETS

WITH CHIPS & SPAGHETTI HOOPS

DESSERT - STRAWBERRY SWIRL
MOUSSE
FRUIT OR YOGURT

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHAT'S REAL ONLINE

Children are growing up in a digital world where seeing and hearing no longer mean they can always believe. One major emerging concern is what UNESCO describes as 'synthetic media': AI-generated audio, images or video, including deepfakes, that can convincingly imitate a person's voice or likeness. As these tools become easier to access, children may encounter manipulated content, cloned voices, and fabricated messages that appear or sound real. Parents and educators therefore need to help them question what they experience online, which can often feel harder when we're experiencing it for the first time, too.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AI-GENERATED CONTENT

Artificial Intelligence can now create realistic images, audio, video, and text in a very short time. Online, children may encounter fabricated news clips, AI 'influencers', fake screenshots, or entirely invented events without ever realising they are fake. The real challenge is that this content often looks polished and convincing. Parents and educators need to help children understand that professional-looking content is not automatically reliable and that all digital material should be questioned before it is trusted or shared.

DEEPFAKES LOOK CONVINCING

'Deepfakes' use AI to alter or create images and videos that appear to show a real person doing or saying something that never happened. They are sometimes used to spread false information, embarrass someone, or target people through bullying and image-based abuse. Even when others know the content is fake, the emotional and reputational impact can still be significant – and, in some cases, potentially life threatening. Deepfakes therefore need to be treated as both a digital literacy and safeguarding concern.

FALSE INFORMATION SPREADS

Misinformation is false or misleading information shared without necessarily intending harm, while disinformation is deliberately created to deceive others. Both types can spread quickly through social media, messaging apps, and video platforms. Their popularity, repetition, and confident presentation can make these false claims feel true. Children may also be more likely to trust content shared by friends, influencers, or familiar accounts, making source-checking and verification essential parts of developing their digital literacy.

VOICES CAN BE CLONED

AI tools can copy someone's voice using only a short audio sample. A child may receive a call or voice note that appears to come from a parent, friend, teacher, or trusted adult, but the audio is not genuine. These messages can be used to create panic, request money, obtain information, or pressure a child into secrecy. Hearing a familiar voice is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity, especially when a message is urgent or unusual.

ACCOUNTS MAY BE FAKE

Not every online profile represents the person it claims to be. Fake accounts may impersonate another pupil, a teacher, a family member, or someone connected to the school. They can be used for acts such as bullying, scams, grooming, or manipulation. A convincing photograph, username, or message history does not prove that an account is genuine. Children should be cautious when someone asks for their or someone else's personal information, images, passwords, money, or access to private conversations.

ALGORITHMS INFLUENCE REALITY

Many online platforms, such as social media, are shaped by algorithms that recommend content based on what users view, like, search for, and share. This means children do not see a neutral or balanced version of the world. They may repeatedly encounter similar opinions, misleading claims, or increasingly extreme content. Over time, this repetition can make an opinion feel more common or credible than it really is, because the child may never see this opinion opposed or countered.

Advice for Parents & Educators

PAUSE, CHECK, COMPARE

Teach children not to accept content as true simply because it looks professional, sounds confident, or has been widely shared. Encourage them to pause, identify the original source, check the date, and compare the claim with another reliable source. Ask questions such as: Who created this? What evidence is provided? Could anything have been altered? What is the real motive? Regular, age-appropriate practice helps children develop the critical thinking needed to navigate their online worlds.

VERIFY ANOTHER WAY

A familiar face, voice, or account is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity. If a message is unusual, urgent, or asks for secrecy, money, personal information, or immediate action, children should verify it through a separate route. They should be encouraged to call the person directly using a known number, speak to them face to face, or check with another trusted adult. Families can also agree a private 'code' phrase to help them authenticate genuine emergency messages from each other. This should be something random, non-personal, and known only to the family.

KEEP TALKING OPENLY

Create regular, non-judgemental conversations about what children see, hear, and experience online. Make sure you use parental controls where appropriate and understand each platform's age restrictions. Asking children about new platforms, influencers, unusual messages, or content they are unsure about can help open up valuable conversations. Avoid immediately blaming the child or removing their device, as this may discourage them from disclosing their concerns in the future.

SAVE, REPORT, SUPPORT

When fake content, impersonation, or manipulation targets a child, take it seriously, even if the material is fabricated. Save relevant messages, usernames, links, and screenshots without sharing the content any further. Report it through the platform, follow safeguarding procedures, and escalate concerns involving threats, grooming, sexual content, coercion, or extortion. Remind children that creating or sharing this content, even as a so-called 'joke', can have serious consequences for them and others, and may be difficult to remove once shared online.

Meet Our Expert

Philippa Wraithmell is an educator, author and digital transformation specialist with expertise in digital safeguarding, online safety, AI in education and whole-school digital strategy. She is the Founder and CEO of EdRupture and works with schools, organisations and policymakers to help create safer, more ethical and more effective digital learning environments for children and young people.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College