

21 May 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

'The greatest use of a life is to spend it on something that will outlast it.'

– William James

Dear Parents/Carers,

The term continues at pace and it is difficult to believe that we are approaching half-term already. As always, there is a vast array of activities and learning going on in classrooms. Please try to find some time each day to talk to your children about their learning, as this makes such a difference to them whilst at the same time helping you to keep in touch with what is going on.

Everyone in school is working hard to make the most of every minute. It is really important that we support all children to make as much progress as possible, so they are ready to move into the next year group. Thank you for all your support with attendance. Children being in school every day is absolutely critical. They also need to be on time as, even coming a few minutes late, means a disrupted start to the school day which can be upsetting for a child. Unfortunately, there are a small number of children who are regularly late. Please help us and your child by making sure you are here on time every day.

Although the number of COVID-19 cases in Birmingham and the surrounding area has significantly reduced from the peak, we must not be complacent as a school community. I have noticed an increase in the number of **parents not wearing a mask on the school site**. The government and Public Health England have raised concerns regarding the 'Indian variant' and asked for everyone to take a considered approach to the easing of lockdown measures. The number of detected cases of coronavirus linked to the 'Indian variant' is rising in Birmingham - with 29 cases now alerted, the city's public health chief said on Wednesday of this week. The highly transmissible B1617.2 strain now accounts for around one in ten cases in the city and other parts of the West Midlands.

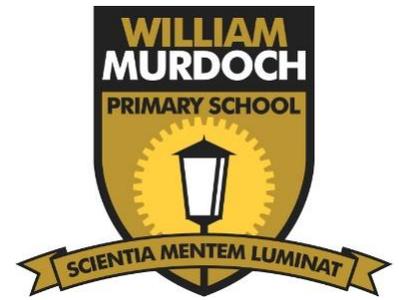
Many thanks to all those who continue to wear a mask on the school site.

Euro 2020 Football Competition

After the half-term break we will be holding our own Euro 2020 football competition for Year 1 to Year 6. Each class will be randomly drawn a country which has qualified for this summer's tournament, and they will represent them in matches against the other classes in their year group. The matches will be played during lunchtimes, and the winning class in each year group will receive a special trophy. The draw will be made during a virtual assembly on Monday 7 June 2021 and pupils will complete a study into their country in dedicated lessons. This is an excellent opportunity for pupils to not only engage in competitive sport, but also learn about an interesting country from Europe.

Parents' Evening Consultations

We will be holding parent consultation meetings for Lower School children next week over the



phone. Each appointment has a strict limit of five minutes, but if there are matters that require further discussion, please do not hesitate to ring the Main Office to arrange another follow-up appointment with your child's class teacher.

The consultations will take place between 4.00pm and 6.30pm and are scheduled on the following days:

Monday – Reception

Tuesday – Year 1

Wednesday – Year 2

Thursday – Nursery

If you have not yet returned your reply slip, please do so as a matter of urgency. All appointments are allocated on a first come first served basis.

Pupil Absence Telephone Calls

More recently we have experienced a number of children who have been absent from school with no reason provided. It is paramount that we know the reason for your child not attending school. We are also experiencing difficulty when trying to contact some parents. Where the school has left a message for you, please make sure that you reply and contact the Main Office to provide further information. If your child is absent, you **must** contact the school either by telephone on 0121 554 0999 or by email on enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk. Any absences without a suitable reason will be classed as unauthorised.

If you telephone to leave a message about your child's absence from school, you must state clearly: -

- Child's name
- Child's class
- What symptoms of illness the child has

It is not enough to leave a message saying they 'are unwell' as we need to record in more detail the reason for the absence. Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

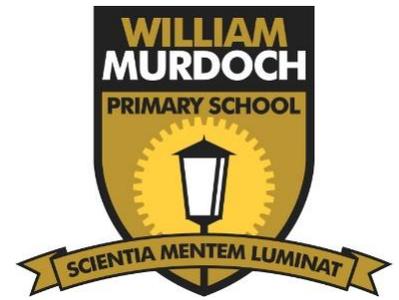
Free Books from Morrisons

Parents can join the 'Morrisons Children's Little Library', a new initiative to promote the joy of reading and help get books into homes. Children, teenagers and parents can pick up a book for free at any Morrisons store across the UK and donate one in its place. Morrisons are donating 50,000 books to get the nation reading. More information can be found using the link below:

<https://www.morrisons-corporate.com/media-centre/corporate-news/morrisons-launches-little-library-book-exchange-to-promote-literacy-amongst-disadvantaged-children/>

Transition Support for Year 6 Pupils

We are still waiting to find out if secondary schools will be inviting Year 6 pupils into school for a transition day, as they normally would have done pre-covid. For now, please see the following information:



- West Midlands Police have put together some resources to help students feel confident to travel and how to behave responsibly and safely while travelling to and from school. The resources will be shared with pupils in their class.
- For reassurance/advice on using public transport and what it looks like to travel, please find links below to three short YouTube films covering bus, tram and train journeys:

Travelling Safely on bus (social distancing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwaOX4iCDTg>

Travelling Safely on Metro (social distancing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wFwMpeHC0Q>

Getting through train stations (social distancing) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCjtsv4_07Y

Police and Crime Commissioner: Call for Evidence

Please find attached a letter from the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster, to be distributed for organisations and members of the public to let him know what their priorities are for policing and criminal justice. The call for evidence will end on Monday 10 June 2021 and a full consultation on a new Police and Crime Plan will then follow in due course. People and organisations can submit their views by clicking the link below. Any questions regarding the call for evidence can be sent to: vru@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk.

<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/your-new-police-and-crime-plan/>

Symptoms of COVID-19 and Testing

With much positive news about restrictions lifting, it remains important that households continue to isolate when symptoms of COVID-19 are known. These are:

A high temperature:

-any new high temperature where your child feels hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure the temperature).

A new continuous cough:

- coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.

A loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste:

- a noticeable loss of smell or taste or things smell and taste different to normal.

If a family member displays any of these symptoms, the household must isolate until a negative PCR test is received, or until ten days of isolation are completed following a positive PCR test.

An LFD test does not replace a PCR test when there are known symptoms of COVID-19. LFD tests are only to be used for those people who are asymptomatic. If there are known symptoms of COVID-19, as listed above, a PCR test must be booked and the Main Office must be made aware of the result.

I wanted to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has helped keep our school as safe as we can possibly make it. We must still continue to go forward with caution and **we are still urging parents/carers to continue to wear their facemasks when dropping off and collecting their**

children. We are doing everything we can to ensure that no bubble has to isolate, which is a government requirement if a positive case occurs.

E-Safety

I know I regularly use space in the weekly message to highlight the importance of e-safety and I make no apology for this. We are now in a world full of social media and we also know that our children are vulnerable in this world if we all do not educate them on the dangers. Please be aware, that social media sites including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat are not appropriate for primary aged pupils. Most have an age restriction of at least 13 due to content which can be inappropriate for younger children, and the issues that arise from using them often in turn lead to issues in school and have an impact on learning. For more information on how to manage your child's social media use and keep them safe, please visit: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> which provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online.

Grammar School Applications - Entry to Year 7 in September 2022

We have been notified that parents can now register their child for the optional entrance test by applying online before 4pm on 30 June 2021. The test will take place on 11 September 2021. To register, parents need to visit www.birminghamgrammarschools.org

Nursery/Reception Places for September 2021

There remain a limited number of Nursery and Reception places for the next academic year starting in September 2021. If you have a child (or know of a friend or family member who has a child) who is born between 1.09.2017 and 31.08.2018 (Nursery) or 1.09.2016 and 31.08.2017 (Reception), we strongly encourage you to apply as spaces are strictly limited. Please register your interest by either telephoning the Main Office on 0121 554 0999 or via email on enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk. We are more than happy to help with completing the application process.

Artist of the Week



Usra R.1

In Reception the children have been learning about the African Maasai population and their culture. The children learnt about the clothing often worn within this community, including necklaces. Reception created some beautiful necklaces using different materials. Usra produced an excellent piece of work.

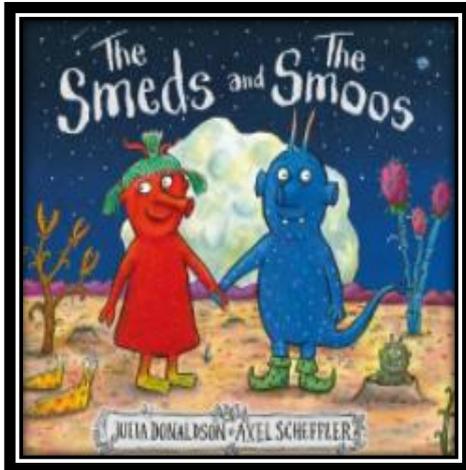
Jayla-Pearl Y6.1

Year 6 have been learning about the Renaissance in their Art lessons. The children learnt that Michelangelo was one of the architects for St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. The children created reliefs on clay tiles of St Peter's Basilica. Jayla added loads of great detail to her work and took lots of care throughout.



Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



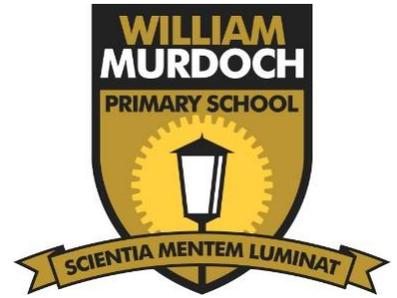
The Smeds and The Smoos – Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (Illustrator)

The newest rhyming picture book from the fantastic duo of Julia Donaldson (author) and Axel Scheffler (illustrator). In this book, I particularly love all the alien-related language (you definitely need to practise reading this first before reading out loud!)

All children love aliens, and when the two main characters go missing, their alien families (the red SMEDS and the blue SMOOS) race around the universe searching different planets, in the process, meeting very different looking aliens.

Although these families initially do not get along, whilst searching together they start to value each other's company.

As well as a wonderful story, the theme of difference is tackled superbly! I cannot recommend this book enough.

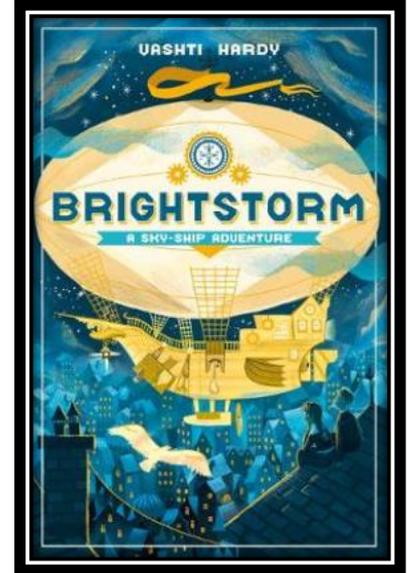


Upper School

Brightstorm: a sky-ship adventure - Vashti Hardy

This breath-taking, thrilling debut totally enchanted me with its rich storytelling, incredible world-building, and compelling cast of characters led by orphans Maudie and Arthur. Arthur has to be only one of a handful of disabled characters that I have seen featured in children's fiction, but interestingly it's his lack of self-belief that is his weakness and challenge rather than his disability.

Maudie's inquisitive mind and her wondrous inventive spirit make for a remarkable heroine. At the heart of this story is the need for courage and bravery in the darkest of times as incredible bonds of friendship are forged in the most unexpected of places. A story of truly epic proportions, it will sweep you away through the skies across



Pupil of the Week



Y2.1 – Dakayah



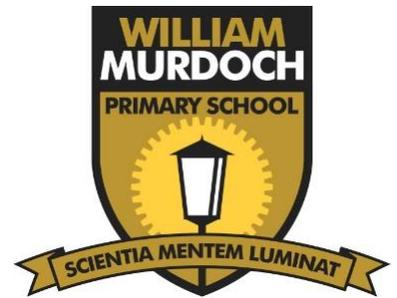
Y2.2 – Cristian



Y2.3 - Shafi

Finally, I just want to put out an impassioned plea to you to continue reading both with and to your child. It has been proven that reading and hearing print-text for twenty minutes a day greatly enhances your child's attainment and chances of future academic success. Sharing a book together is

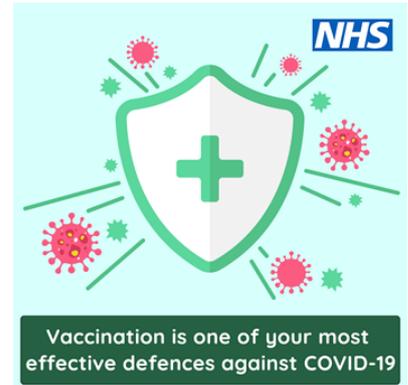
KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



a fantastic way to spend time with each other and has huge benefits for your child. We thank you for your on-going support with achieving this aim for all of our children.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Singh
Headteacher



Dates for the diary:

W/C 31 May 2021	School closed for half-term
7 June 2021	Pupils return after the half-term break
25 June 2021	Staff Training Day

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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