

6 January 2023

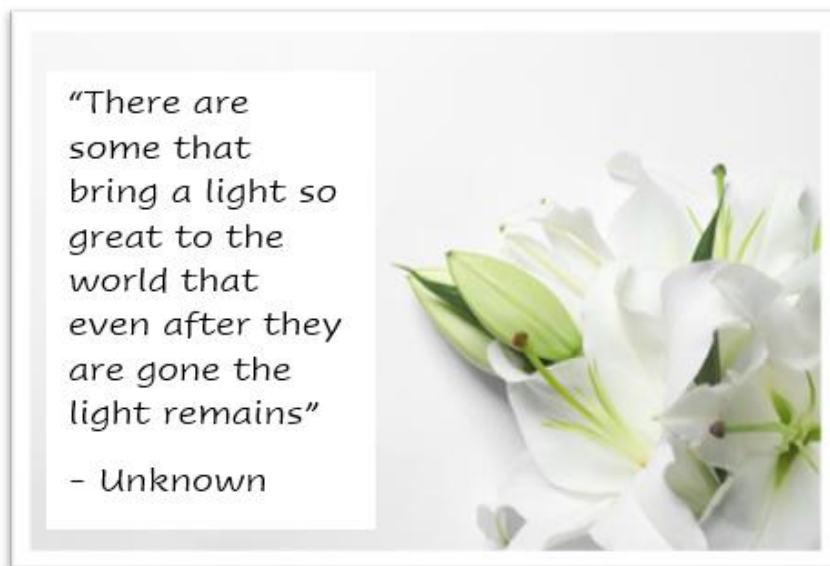
## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

*'Words are the clothes thoughts wear.'* – Samuel Beckett

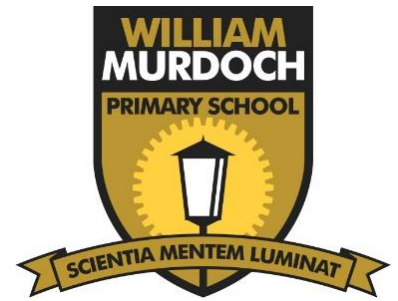
Dear Parents/Carers,

Whilst we were pleased to welcome back pupils to school on Wednesday, we received heart breaking news that one of our pupils would never return to our school community again. Today, I had the sad duty of informing the pupils in Year 4 of the death of our beloved pupil Saksham Suman, a pupil in Class Y4.2. Class teachers also informed their classes of the sad news. We sought guidance from Birmingham City Council before sharing the information with children.

Saksham died suddenly in hospital after a short illness during the holiday period. He was a well-liked and friendly member of the William Murdoch school community and will be missed by everyone who knew him.



When someone dies, children may experience many different feelings, such as sadness or anger. Some pupils may feel shocked and upset by the news, while others may be confused or numb. These reactions are all normal. We have tried to answer children's questions in school, using age-appropriate and honest language, but they may want to discuss their thoughts and feelings further at home. For more information about speaking to children and young people about death, please visit the Child Bereavement UK website <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>.



Our thoughts and prayers are with Saksham's family and friends at this time. The school has been supporting the family and we will be in touch with details of how our school will remember Saksham.

## Newsletters

Today pupils were given a hard copy of the termly newsletter which details the topics your child will be covering in each subject this term. It is good practice for children to do some background reading on topics that they will be studying. A soft copy of the newsletter is available from the school website and Class Dojo.

## Poetry by Heart

'Learning poetry by heart can, literally, transform you' - Gyles Brandreth.

As a school we are championing the benefits of learning poetry by heart. Research carried out by the Memory Laboratory at the University of Cambridge showed how learning and speaking poetry benefits both younger and older people. In young children, engaging with poetry can improve the speed at which they learn to speak, read and write. It can improve academic performance, concentration and even support better sleep. For adults, the evidence shows that learning poetry by heart improves the ability to communicate, improves memory, increases brain capacity and keeps dementia at bay.

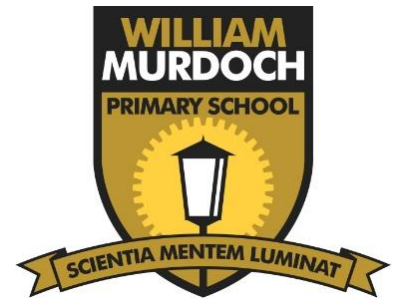
Poetry can make you laugh and cry. Poetry can make you think and feel. Poetry can teach you, and sustain you, and surprise you. Learning poetry by heart can, literally, transform you. Children throughout the school will be learning poems off by heart and performing them out loud. Attached you will find the poems children in each year group will be learning. It would be of great benefit to you and your child if you could learn them together.

## UK Health Agency (UKHSA): Back to school advice issued amid high levels of flu, COVID-19 and scarlet fever

As pupils and students return to school following the Christmas break, UKHSA is reminding people that winter illnesses continue to circulate at high levels. Following simple steps can help protect children, minimise the spread of illness in education and childcare settings and protect wider communities.

Flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) are [currently circulating at high levels](#) and are likely to continue to increase in coming weeks. High numbers of scarlet fever, which is caused by group A streptococcus, also [continue to be reported](#).

Professor Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said: "It's important to minimise the spread of infection in schools and other education and childcare settings as much as possible. If your child is unwell and has a fever, they should stay home from



school or nursery until they feel better and the fever has resolved.

Helping children to learn about the importance of good hand hygiene is also key, so practice regular handwashing at home with soap and warm water. Catching coughs and sneezes in tissues then binning them is another simple way to help stop illness from spreading. Adults should also try to stay home when unwell and if you do have to go out, wear a face covering. When unwell don't visit healthcare settings or visit vulnerable people unless urgent.

Remember that flu vaccination is still available for all eligible groups and is the best protection against the virus. We have seen good uptake in older age groups but vaccination among young children remains low. Flu can be very unpleasant, and in some cases can lead to more serious illness. Getting your child vaccinated protects them and others they come into contact with, and it's still not too late."

### Healthy Snacks

A reminder that children are not permitted to eat unhealthy snacks in school. They will instead be asked to save their snack to eat after school. This also applies to junk food in packed lunches. There is some excellent packed lunch advice and recipes within the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

### Parents of Nursery Pupils

Applications are now open for the 2023 Reception intake. The application must be made directly with the local authority and **must** be submitted by Sunday 15 January 2023. Please refer to the website

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions> where you can find further information. If you need any help or support in completing the application for your child, please speak to Mrs Kullar in the first instance or contact the Main Office.



## Mr Slinn's Artists of the Week



### **A selection of artwork Y2.1**

In Year 2 the children have been learning about visual texture and how different artists create this in their work. The children looked at examples of work where different textures were created by the way paint, for example, was applied. The children had the chance to create images of washing lines filled with clothes and add some visual texture of their own. The work produced was exceptional!

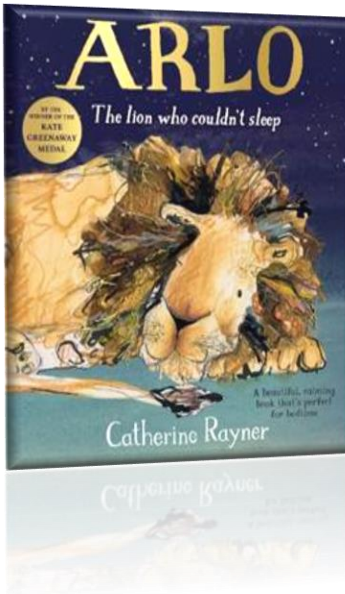
### **Hajar Y3.2**

In Year 3 the children have been learning about how careful colour choices can help to show different shapes of objects. The children learnt, for example, that using areas of light colour alongside areas of darker colour can create a three-dimensional effect. Hajar produced a brilliant picture based on fruit and took lots of care when choosing a range of pastels in different colours.



## Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

### Lower School



#### **Arlo, The Lion Who Couldn't Sleep – Catherine Rayner**

Poor Arlo the lion is very tired but just can't get to sleep: it's too cold at night, his family – though warm – are too wriggly to cuddle up to, and the ground is too scratchy. Desperate for some rest, Arlo meets Owl who sings him to sleep with a special, relaxing song. Arlo wakes feeling refreshed and ready to take on his lionish duties for the day, but wakes Owl from her sleep. Fortunately, Arlo now knows a new song that will help... A perfect bedtime book, Arlo, The Lion Who Couldn't Sleep is tenderly illustrated in watercolour as always by Rayner, giving readers gentle pages to fall into and inspire soft, reassuring dreams. Arlo himself is a cuddly, relatable lion we'd all like to snuggle next to, and Owl's song – repeated twice in the book for maximum bedtime lulling effect – guides children through a gentle relaxation process of stretching and wriggling before settling down to dream. As well as Rayner's stunning artwork, there's the reminder that, in the animal world, some creatures are awake in the day and some at night: a useful talking point for parents explaining why we need to sleep at night and help get little ones into a routine if needed.

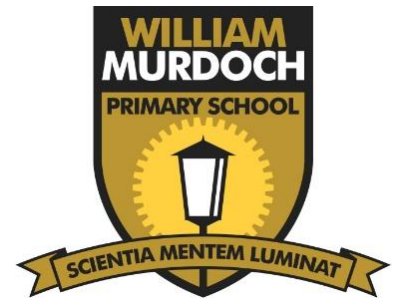
### Upper School

#### **Fledgling- Lucy Hope**

Fledgling is a real treat for those who love a gothic story full of thrills and atmospheric settings. Taking place at the turn of the century in 1900, everything about Cassie's life is remote; from the rock-edge house in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps to her aloof and emotionally distant parents and a gravely ill grandmother. When a strange cherub-like creature appears after a storm, a series of strange events are set into motion and a shocking family secret is brought to light. With owls and angels, menacing storm birds, an eerie forest setting and a family mystery to uncover, there's plenty of tension around each corner in Lucy Hope's debut narrative. Taxidermy animals and strange inventions furnish the inside of Cassie's home, while outside in the forest there are storms and strange birds and all the noises of the forest. There's a sense of darkness gathering throughout the story and a brilliantly gothic cast of characters and setting. The story feels surreal in places, while never losing the thread of hope pulled long by Cassie and the cherub and finished with a warming message about love and family.



# KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Many thanks for your continued support, cooperation and understanding.

Your sincerely,

Mr M Singh  
Headteacher

January		2023				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4 Pupils return to School	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Y5 Guru Nanak Gurdwara Visit	12	13	14	15 Deadline for Reception Intake
16	17	18 Reception & Y6 Height & Weight	19 Nursery Dinosaur Workshop	20	21	22
23	24 Y4 Fire Safety Workshop	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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HEADTEACHER: MR M. SINGH