

1 October 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

'Excellence is not a skill, it's an attitude.' – Ralph Marston

Dear Parents/Carers,

Everyone has been busy learning together as well as building new relationships. As a school we pay particular attention at the start of the year to the themes of respect, kindness and friendship. It has been wonderful to see the hundreds of little acts of kindness that children have shown to one another, as well as adults, along with fantastic manners.

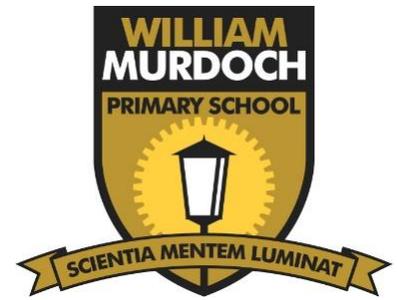
I would also like to take the opportunity to thank parents who have followed school guidance by respecting the one-way entry/exit at the Albert Road entrance; only one parent drops off/collects their child; avoid mingling and congregating on the playground and inform school promptly when their child begins to exhibit symptoms that may or may not be related to coronavirus.

Parents' Evening

Last year we were unable to accommodate face-to-face parents' evenings due to government guidance on COVID-19. Although the guidance has relaxed considerably, we have a duty of care to our pupils and staff, and we monitor COVID-19 rates in our school and the local community rigorously. With case numbers on the rise in Birmingham, we cannot just act as if everything is normal again. We do however want to be able to accommodate face-to-face parents' evening appointments. In order to do this safely we have introduced the following mitigations to our autumn parents' evening:

- All appointments will be held in the school hall and will be socially distanced
- Teachers will do a lateral flow test prior to the meeting
- Parents will be required to wear a face mask
- The hall doors and windows will be open to ensure there is adequate ventilation
- All parents attending must be present at their allocated time
- Only one year group will be allocated to each hall
- Appointments will be restricted to 5 minutes
- Books will not be available to be looked at (this will occur in the spring term) although an update on the progress being made by your child will be shared

KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Parents' Evenings will be held during the week commencing 11 October 2021 and the schedule is as follows:

	Lower School Hall	Upper School Hall
Monday 11 October 2021	Year 6	Year 2
Tuesday 12 October 2021	Year 5	Year 1
Wednesday 13 October 2021	Year 4	Reception
Thursday 14 October 2021	Year 3	Nursery

Appointment slips have been given out today. We also recognise that there may be a small number of parents who are vulnerable, are self-isolating and for reasons beyond their control are unable to attend in person. In such circumstances, telephone appointments can be arranged directly with your child's teacher via Class Dojo.

In addition to holding parents' evenings, we will be introducing termly report cards for the end of the autumn term and spring term. Further details on these will be provided closer to the time.

National Poetry Day

This year, National Poetry Day takes place on 7 October 2021, and the theme is Choice.

National Poetry Day generates an explosion of activity nationwide, with thousands of amazing events across the UK – on doorsteps and at kitchen tables, in gardens and streets, in schools, libraries and public spaces both online and offline – all celebrating poetry's power to bring people together.

Listening and reading poetry aloud is the gateway into a world of rhythm, rhyme and infectious musicality. Great poems use riddles, question and answer and raps to immediately appeal to younger readers, which is why many of our children love learning poetry in school. In order to celebrate this fantastic occasion, children across the school will spend an English lesson devoted to all things poetry. Many will learn about rhyming couplets, haikus, sonnets, limericks and much more. It sure will be an amazing day.

Reading

Last week I wrote to you about the importance of reading and it is a drum I will unashamedly beat throughout the year.

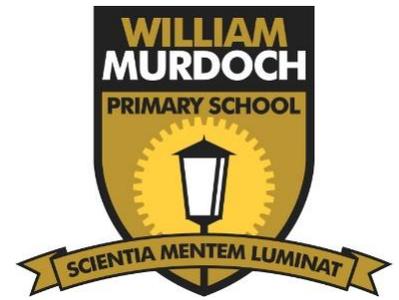
Hearing children read is a vital part of helping them to make continued progress, whatever age and ability they are currently at. All children are required to read at home, to an adult, during the week as part of their home learning activities. Reading is an essential life skill and children do not make progress unless they practice at both home and school.

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER: MR M. SINGH



It is important when hearing your child read, that as well as focusing upon the fluency (reading with good speed and accuracy), time is spent developing their ability to use inference and deduction. This is particularly important when your child can “read” fluently. This is not the time to assume that you do not need to support them. This is where the higher order reading skills need to be developed so they are able to talk about the more complex aspects of the texts they are reading. After hearing your child read, please make a note of the book they have read in their Reading Record and sign that you have heard them read. Due to coronavirus mitigation measures their class teacher will not be countersigning the Reading Record. They will however keep a school-based record to monitor the reading progress of your child. This ongoing assessment of reading will be supplemented by termly PiRA Reading tests.

The BookTrust have developed some excellent reading guides for parents and these are available using the following link: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/reading-tips/>



Speech and Language Therapy – Supporting Speech Sounds

Parent/Carer webinars take place regularly throughout the year and cover a number of different topics. Please see the local offer website for further details. Each webinar should last approximately one hour and take the format of a presentation followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

Are you concerned about your child’s speech clarity? These webinars will give you practical ideas around supporting your child’s speech sound development:

Early Years – Wednesday 6 October 2021 - 1.00pm to 2.00pm

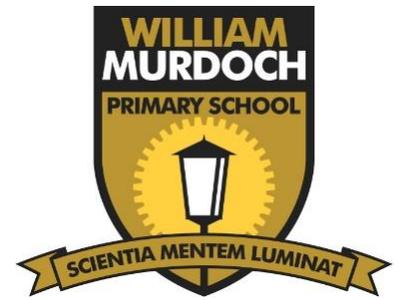
<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/product/speech-language-therapy-supporting-speech-sounds-early-years-6th-october-1pm/>

Primary Age – Thursday 7 October 2021 - 10.00am to 11.00am

<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/product/speech-language-therapy-supporting-speech-sounds-for-primary-age-7th-october-10am/>

School Meals Pre-Ordering Reminder

We still have a significant number of children having a jacket potato on a regular basis because their parents have forgotten to choose their meals. Dolce requires all parents to pre-order their child’s meal. This can be done on a weekly basis but it can also be done in advance over a number of weeks (a whole term’s worth). Please ensure you sit with your child and choose their meals over the weekend so that they are not being served the default option of a jacket potato. We do send text



reminders to parents who have forgotten but this is at a significant cost to the school when that money could be spent elsewhere.

Year 6 Parents - Secondary Transfer Meeting

The school has produced a video that explains in detail the procedures for applying for a secondary school place. Please make an effort to watch the video if you are unsure, or it is the first time you are making an application. The closing date for applications is 31 October 2021.

The video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo4Qvs1kNqI>

COVID-19 UPDATE

Children who are awaiting a PCR result, where they have had close contact with a positive case **within their household**, must remain at home until the PCR test result comes back. Once the result is received, we ask that you ring the school for further advice on how to proceed. We really appreciate your co-operation with this.

COVID-19 Champion Update

This past week saw millions of people within priority groups offered a [COVID-19 booster vaccine](#). This means that adults classed as vulnerable, including care home residents, health and social care workers and those with underlying health conditions have been prioritised to ensure they are protected from COVID-19 as we enter the Autumn/Winter season.

[People aged 12 to 15](#) in England will be offered one dose of the vaccine as part of a schools-based vaccination programme. To view the latest government vaccine information and resources, visit the [gov.uk website](#).

Walk-in Vaccinations

Walk-in appointments are taking place at mass vaccination centres across Birmingham and Solihull. These appointments are for both first doses and those eligible to receive a second dose (following Government guidance, there must be a gap of 8-12 weeks between appointments). Everybody must always wear a face covering and follow social distancing guidelines when attending the sites. If you would prefer to book ahead of time, please call 119 or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/>.

Select locations include:

New Street Station *Queens Drive, B5 4BS*

Wed 29 Sep – Fri 1 Oct 9:00am to 6:00pm

Green Lane Mosque *20 Green Lane, B9 5DB*

Tue 28 Sept – Sat 2 Oct 9:00am to 3:30pm

Nechells Pharmacy *56A Nechells Park Road, B7 5PR*

Sun 3 Oct 9:00am to 3:30pm

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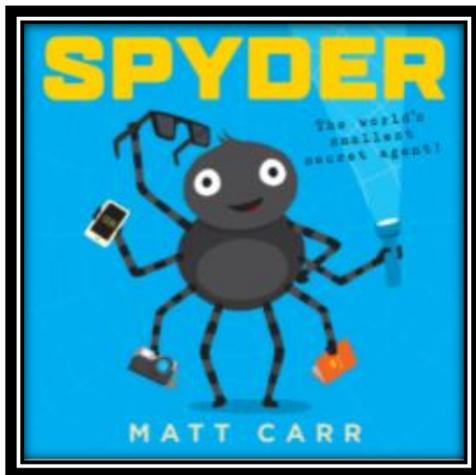
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We do ask that you [please check this webpage](#) on the day you plan to attend as dates/times are subject to change.

Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



Spyder – Matt Carr

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to read this awesome book! Meet Spyder: a secret agent known as 008 and she's on a mission to save a birthday cake from a naughty fellow, code name Bluebottle.

I love that it's a female main character in this role. This funny tale is packed with humour for little readers and the grown-ups too. Look out for the trouble 'afoot'! This is a fun way to introduce minibeasts to your children and maybe take away a bit of fear of these 8-legged friends, sharing with the reader why we really need them.

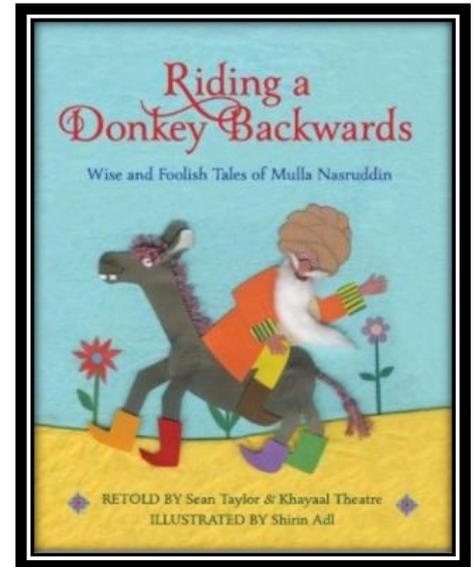
The James Bond style will appeal to children and the book just shouts out writing opportunities for children to become spies too. The factfile on the baddy, Bluebottle, could be mimicked for other bugs that cause a bit of bother. Spyder's spy kit would be a great starter for children to write their own lists. The book ends with a spider facts WEBSITE – a lovely non-fiction addition, and a spark to find out more. Matt Carr's graphic style suits the book perfectly. A brilliant book for Reception children and a fabulous bedtime read.

Upper School

Riding a Donkey Backwards: Wise and Foolish Tales of the Mulla Nasruddin – Sean Taylor, Eleanor Martin and Luqman Ali

Trickster tales abound across many cultures and one of the wildest tricksters is Mulla Nasruddin, also known as Hodja, Joha or Afandi in various countries across Central and Western Asia. On the surface, Nasruddin may appear to be foolish but his actions and wise sayings expose human foibles.

The stories about him, of which these are just a selection, are short and pithy and their essence and brevity lends them to being retold orally. The collage and mixed media illustrations by an artist who grew up in Iran complement these humorous tales well. A really enjoyable read for Year 3-4 children, if not the whole family.



Mr Slinn's Artists of the Week

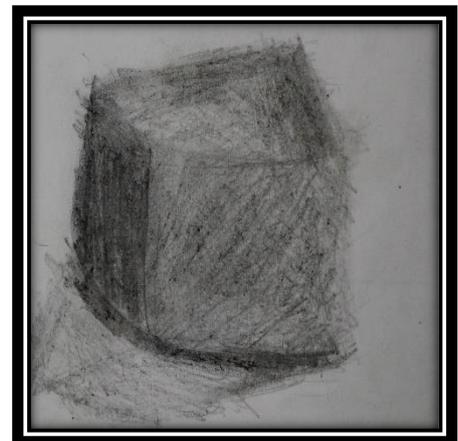


Anha R3

The children in Reception have been creating self-portraits using paint. Anha tried very hard and produced an excellent piece of art. We look forward to seeing lots more brilliant work in the future from Anha.

Ishmeet Y4.2

In art this term the children have been working through a unit of work called 'Light'. The children had to draw basic 3D shapes and add shading in an effective way. Ishmeet created a very high quality piece of work.





Pupil of the Week



Flo – Y4.1



Arika – Y4.2



Benjamin – Y4.3

Thank you for your continued support in these unprecedented times and we look forward to continue working alongside you this year.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M. Singh'.

Mr M Singh
Headteacher

