

10 January 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

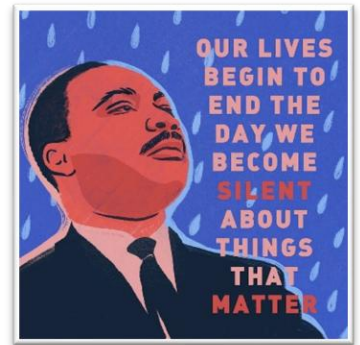
'You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.' – C.S. Lewis

Dear Parents/Carers,

Let me begin by wishing you all a Happy New Year filled with many successes and continued progress. I am honoured to be able to share the wonderful news that Mrs K Begum, Reception teacher in Class R.3, gave birth to a baby girl during the festive break. Many congratulations to Mrs Begum and her family and we wish both mum and baby well.

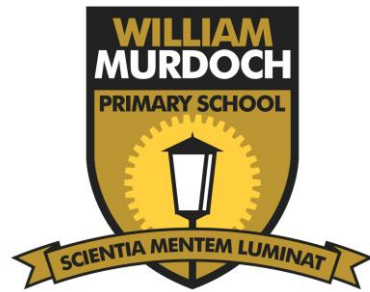
During the winter break, I hope you had the chance to catch up with friends and family and enjoy some rest and relaxation. I certainly spent some time reflecting on 2024 and thinking about the work and opportunities that lie ahead in 2025.

On Monday 20 January 2025 it is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day. It is a good opportunity to reflect on his work and enduring legacy, and I am reminded of one of his most profound quotes: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."



One of the qualities I admire most about the staff at William Murdoch Primary School is their commitment to speaking up for what truly matters. Together we continue to provide a high-quality service for our children and families. At WMPS, we deeply value the success and academic growth of our pupils as they progress through their educational journey. I am excited to embark on the second half of the school year, with the launch of our new Writing curriculum just one of the measures being taken to ensure that learning remains a top priority. With the new year comes an opportunity to check in with our pupils and families, ensuring that everyone is on track, well-prepared, and ready to thrive in the months ahead. As we reach the midpoint of the school year, I am proud to observe our pupils' academic strength and the energy and dedication of our teaching and support teams.

William Murdoch Primary School remains committed to fostering educational equity and exploring creative and innovative ways to partner with our community. Our goal is to make our school a place where all children feel inspired to learn, build meaningful relationships, and grow each day—socially, emotionally, and academically. As always, thank you for your continued support.



Extreme Weather Policy

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread and prolonged disruption. Schools are often affected and it can be difficult to maintain an education service. As a fundamental principle every effort is made to keep the school open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend. However, schools may close due to 'unavoidable' circumstances. Those circumstances being that it is no longer safe for staff or pupils to be onsite. We recognise that it is important our school remains open so parents are able to work and pupils can continue to learn. William Murdoch Primary School will make every effort to prepare for severe snow/ice this winter by gritting pathways and clearing access points.



With the possibility of adverse weather around the corner, I wanted to remind you of our Extreme Weather Policy. Communication is key in such circumstances. Should we experience any extreme winter weather, we will communicate our plans with you via Class Dojo, email, the school website homepage and our X feed. If the school cannot open, we will give you as much notice as possible. In such circumstances, please do not ring the school telephone as these lines must be kept clear for school leaders to communicate with staff and other agencies.

Should it snow or there be a heavy frost, it may be sensible and practical for us to focus our attention on clearing one safe route onto the school site and into the building. Again, if this is the case, we will communicate it with you.

If there is snow, school leaders will decide whether it is safe or not for children to play outside. Pupils will only be allowed out to play during the school day if they have a warm coat and a change of socks, shoes and trousers.

If we have to close the school, we would do so because of one of the following reasons:

- Inadequate heating
- No meals available
- No water available
- Insufficient supervision
- Whether there is likely to be a change to circumstances that will impact on the above

Due to the improvements in our remote learning, in the event of a school closure, we will set work to allow children to learn from home. If the school has to close early, under no circumstances will children be allowed to leave without an adult. Only parents or a person named as an emergency contact will be allowed to collect a child.

During cold weather children need to wear suitable warm clothing including a winter coat, hats, gloves and shoes/wellies.

Newsletters

Today pupils were given a hard copy of the termly newsletter which details the topics they 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.

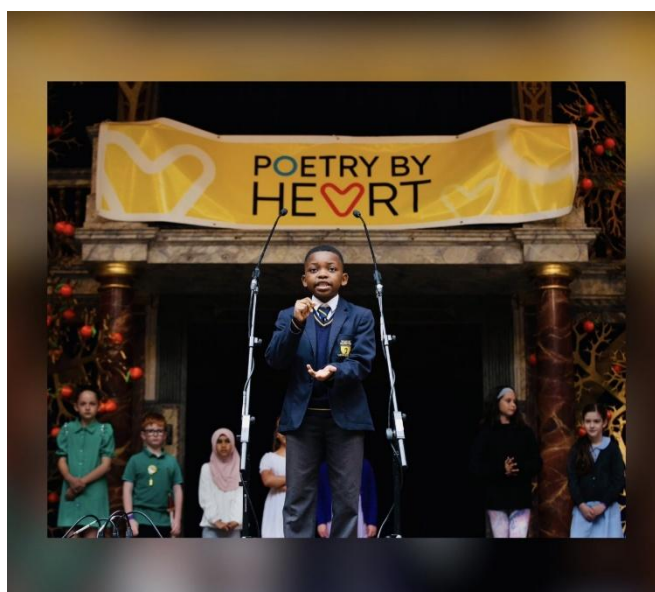
Poetry by Heart

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

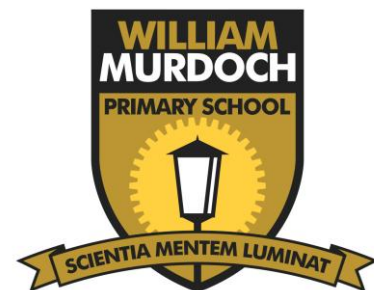
As a school we are championing the benefits of learning poetry by heart. Research carried out by the Memory Laboratory at the University of Cambridge showed how learning and speaking poetry benefits both younger and older people. In young children, engaging with poetry can improve the speed at which 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.

The school has again registered for the prestigious Poetry By Heart national competition. Last year Maya in Y5.1 gave an amazing poetry performance at the Globe Theatre in London. Please keep an eye out in the upcoming weekly newsletters for more information on the Poetry By Heart competition.



KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Aston Villa's Football School

Aston Villa Foundation are offering an opportunity for children aged 2 - 16 to attend **x1 FREE FOOTBALL SESSION**.

The sessions will take place at a range of locations:

- Aston Soccer School - **Aston Villa FC City Academy**
- Bartley Green Soccer School - **King Edwards Five Ways**
- Sutton Coldfield Soccer School - **Sutton Coldfield Town FC**
- Harborne Soccer School - **Lordswood Girls Academy**
- Solihull Soccer School - **St Peter's Catholic School**



To redeem your child's free space, please complete the below form or scan the above QR code.



**ASTON VILLA
FOUNDATION**

[1FREE FOOTBALL SESSION | Aston Villa Foundation](#)

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/>

Meat Free Mondays

The school has chosen to take part in the 'Meat Free Monday' initiative which aims to raise awareness of the detrimental environmental impact of animal agriculture and industrial fishing, and to encourage people to help slow down climate change, conserve natural resources and improve their health. One day a week can make a world of difference.



Parents of Nursery Pupils



Applications are now open for the 2025 Reception intake. The application must be made directly with the local authority and must be submitted by Sunday 15 January 2025. Please refer to the website <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions> here 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.

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER: MR M. SINGH

UNICEF Article of the Week



Holocaust Memorial Day

27 January marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. On this day we remember the six million Jewish people who were killed during the Holocaust, alongside millions of other people who were killed under Nazi persecution and in genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Holocaust Memorial Day is for everyone. Each year across the UK, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and take action to create a safer future. We know they learn more, empathise more and do more.

Holocaust Memorial Day is promoted and supported by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

This week's activities link to the following articles:

Article 2 - The Convention applies to every child without discrimination

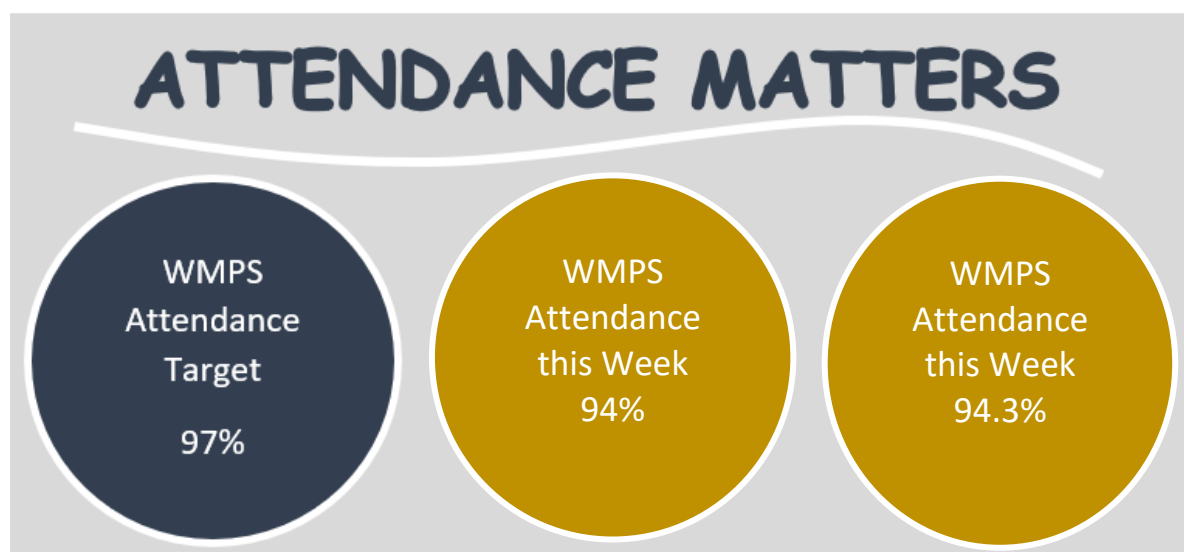
Article 19 - Protection from violence, abuse and neglect

Article 37 - No child should be tortured, sentenced to death, imprisoned unfairly or treated in a cruel or inhuman way

Article 38 - No child under 15 should join the army and children should be protected in war

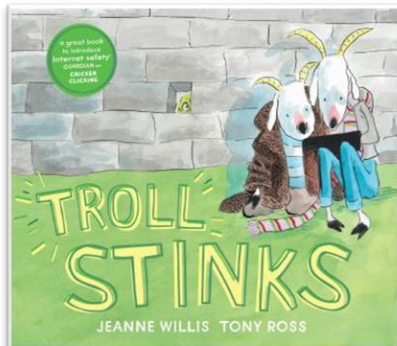
WMPS Attendance Stats

Over a school year, we are due to be open for 190 days, which equates to 380 sessions. Registration takes place at 8.50am in the morning and after lunch in the afternoon. Attendance is affected if a pupil is not present at school for any whole session including registration.



Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



Troll Stinks – Jeanne Willis & Tony Ross (Illustrator)

Troll Stinks is a timely and engaging book for today's children, offering both entertainment and meaningful lessons. Billy the Goat and his friend Cyril find a phone and decide to send mean messages to the troll under the bridge, only to discover the emotional harm their actions cause.

Part of a series that reimagines traditional tales in a modern context, the book explores the impact of technology on children's safety. With more primary-aged children using online messaging,

it provides an excellent springboard for discussions on bullying, empathy, and the power of words. Even for younger children not yet using devices, its themes of kindness and accountability are universally relevant.

This important and entertaining story is a must-read for fostering empathy and understanding in the digital age.

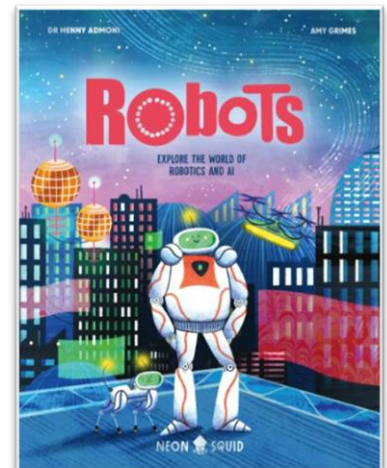
Upper School

Robots: Explore the World of Robotics and AI- Henny Admoni and Amy Grimes (Illustrator)

Colourfully illustrated, 'Robots' offers an engaging exploration of robotics, starting with a surprising timeline of their history. It explains what robots are, how they differ from AI, and how various types of robots function - from those helping the environment to ones used in farming and mobility. The book highlights the diverse roles robots play, from assisting in factories to supporting hospitals, and delves into the ethics of robotics and future possibilities.

A glossary at the back simplifies technical terms, making the content accessible for young readers.

Perfect for KS2, this book is an excellent resource as AI and robotics become increasingly relevant in everyday life.



Mr Slinn's Artist of the Week



Reception Children

In Reception the children have been learning about landscapes and how different artists can show landscapes in a range of creative ways. The work of David Hockney was explored in great depth and the children explored how he used colour and shape to create different types of landscape. After doing lots of research, Reception produced their own colourful landscape paintings and the results were incredible. Avneet, Chaniya and Sukhmani showcased their artistic skills very well through their creations.

Manat Y4.1

During Year 4's recent topic they have been learning how artists use colour and detail to show depth in a piece of work. The children learnt that artists use colour to show depth in a painting by often putting darker colours in the foreground and lighter colours in the background. Year 4 found out that artists often use the most detail in the foreground because it is closer to the viewer's eye. The children used a range of images of landscapes and created their own landscape scenes using a wide range of materials. Manat produced an excellent piece of work with great attention to detail. She used light and dark tones to help produce a three-dimensional effect.

Many thanks for your continued support, cooperation and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Singh
Headteacher

Dates

15 & 22 January 2025
16 January 2025

Year 6 Religious Education visits
Reception & KS1 Christmas Panto