

7 February 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." — Benjamin Franklin

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been heartening to see the signs of spring appearing in our forest school and local parks with shoots and bulbs starting to show as well as the benefit of slightly longer days. For all of us, it feels as though January is truly behind us. With this time of year, come lots of bugs, coughs and colds and children will inevitably catch some of them during the school term. At school we encourage the children to wash hands regularly and use tissues to try and minimise the spread of germs. Please encourage these habits at home and check your child is wearing suitable clothes for outdoors each day so they keep warm at breaktimes.

We have noticed some incidents of unsafe and illegal parking outside school (for example, cars parked on the yellow zig zag lines along Antrobus Road). Please could we remind parents and carers to park safely and considerately when dropping off and collecting children from school. We would ideally request that you park away from the school and ask your children to walk a short distance to or from school to reduce congestion. Thank you for your support.

For additional information with regard to when and where you are able to park, please use this link from the RAC on parking rules: <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/legal/parking-guide/>. The guide points out that parking and waiting on double yellow lines are not permitted at any time. It says that the yellow zig zags by school should be kept clear of stationary vehicles. It also says that you cannot park in a bus stop.

At WMPS, safeguarding is our highest priority. Our safeguarding culture aims to ensure that every pupil is protected from maltreatment and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes. Our strategy is built on early identification by staff, with clear channels for sharing information and instant intervention through regular safeguarding team meetings.

We have robust systems in place for managing processes with low safeguarding thresholds, along with ongoing checks and balances to maintain a high standard of care. Through continuous staff training and challenging normalised behaviours, we foster a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, operating on the principle that "it could happen here." Our commitment is to give every child a voice, champion their well-being, and maintain open and honest conversations with all concerned.

We will be running Safer Internet Day assemblies this half term. Safer Internet Day is held every February all around the world. Last year, over 170 different countries celebrated the day! Safer Internet Day is a chance to think about any worries we might have about using technology and the internet, but it's also about celebrating all the fantastic things technology can help us with.

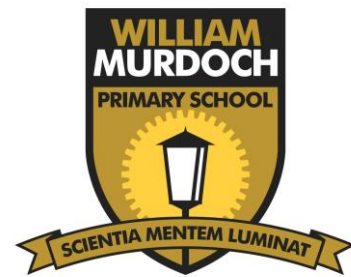
WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTROBUS ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, B21 9NT TEL: **0121 554 0999** FAX: 0121 554 6332

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KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Children's Mental Health Week 3-9 February 2025

This year Children's Mental Health Week takes place from 3 February - 9 February. Every year, for the past 11 years, the week is organised and run by the children's mental health charity Place2Be. It is all about helping young people speak up and feel empowered to talk about mental health.

Each year the week has a theme, and this year it is 'Know yourself, Grow yourself' and is all about encouraging you to build self-awareness. Mr Singh will lead a special assembly on Monday but you can take part in Children's Mental Health Week from home using the link below:

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/families/>

Celebrating Chinese New Year with a Spectacular Lion Dance

This week, our Year 3 and Year 5 pupils had the exciting opportunity to celebrate and learn more about Chinese New Year with a special visit from traditional Chinese dance performers. The highlight of the event was a mesmerising lion dance, which captivated the children with its vibrant movements and rhythmic drumming.

In addition to enjoying the performance, pupils had the chance to ask questions and even try on parts of the lion costume while learning some of the dance steps themselves. It was a fantastic cultural experience that brought the celebrations to life, leaving everyone inspired and with a deeper appreciation of this vibrant celebration.



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West Midlands Police Bravery Award

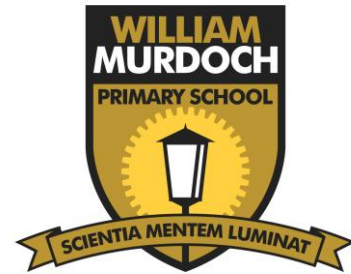
In November 2024, Ayaan was faced with having to deal with a family medical emergency after finding his mother unconscious at home. Ayaan subsequently contacted emergency services and followed the instructions given. As a result of Ayaan's actions his mother was able to receive the care needed at the critical time. Consequently, Ayaan was presented with a West Midlands Police Bravery Award. Needless to say, all of us at William Murdoch Primary School are extremely proud of Ayaan!

Teaching your child from a young age how to react and what to do in emergencies can provide you with peace of mind. It might feel uncomfortable to think about, but it can save lives. For more information please click on the link below:

<https://families.barnardos.org.uk/other-support/child-and-family-safety/teaching-children-what-to-do-emergency>



KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Reception Fire Visit

This term the children in Reception have been learning all about People Who Help Us and were very lucky to have a visit from the West Midlands Fire Service. The fire fighters let the children sit in their fire engine, listen to the siren, use the fire hose, beep the horn and they talked to the children about how they help people in the community.



Years 3 & 4 Multi-Sports Festival

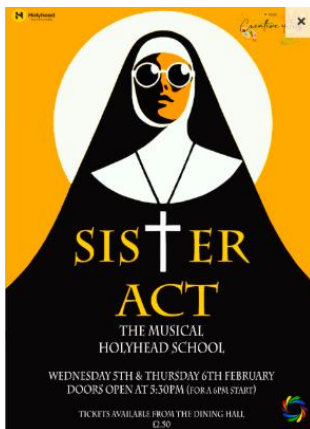
On Tuesday Mr Harris, Mr Blackmore and ten lucky children from Years 3 & 4 had the good fortune of participating in football skills related PE sessions at Aston Villa's community hub. The children had a great morning and each of them were fantastically behaved. Thank you to the Aston Villa coaches who provided such a wonderful experience for the children. The children will never forget their morning.

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Sister Act Performance



On Thursday 6 February, Year 5 were fortunate enough to watch a production of Sister Act at Holyhead School. The performance was delivered by some incredibly talented children from Holyhead under the directorship of their teachers. The whole of Year 5 was made to feel incredibly welcome on the day and the staff of Holyhead even provided juice and cookies for the children to enjoy during the show's interval. Year 5 were left feeling incredibly inspired by the talented performers on the stage and they were very grateful for the whole experience. We would all like to say thank you to the Holyhead School community for such an amazing morning!

Reception Vision Screening Checks

In line with national guidance, the NHS school nursing team have been commissioned to carry out visual screening checks on Reception aged children. Parents have been provided with a consent form which gives them the opportunity to opt out of the screening test. Reception vision screening checks will take place on Wednesday 12 February 2025.

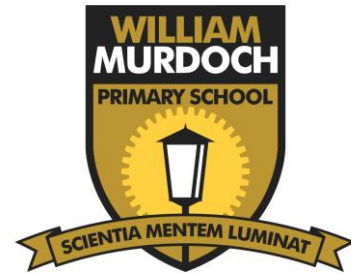
The screening checks are completed during the school day and only take a few minutes. They are carried out by trained health care professionals from the school nursing team.

- Children will not be made to take part on the day if they do not want to.
- If your child is already under hospital care for vision and/or hearing they will not need to be seen by the screening team at school
- Individual results are not shared with your child or their school. It is your choice if you share the information

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Club Drop-off and Collection

We have over recent weeks noticed a small number of children being dropped off far too early for morning clubs and/or collected late from after-school clubs. Quite often these clubs are held by school staff who are generously giving their time. Where children are being dropped off before 7.55am (morning clubs start at 8.00am) or are being collected late from clubs after school (clubs finish at 4.30pm), then a warning will be given, after which the facility will be withdrawn for the academic year.

Your cooperation in keeping children safe on site and by ensuring timely drop-off and collection is appreciated.



UNICEF Article of the Week

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day is marked on 7 February every year. We all have a right to feel safe and secure and that means safe online as well as in the real world. Safer Internet Day is an annual event that promotes the safe, responsible and positive use of the internet. The internet can be a great place but needs to be used carefully.

There are a large number of articles that link with being online. This week's activities have a particular focus on Article 19, the right to protection from harm, Article 17, the right to reliable information and Article 34, protection from exploitation.



Article 17, Access to information from the media - Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.



Article 19, Protection from violence, abuse and neglect - Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.



Article 34, Protection from exploitation - Governments must protect children from forms of abuse and exploitation.

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.

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ATTENDANCE MATTERS

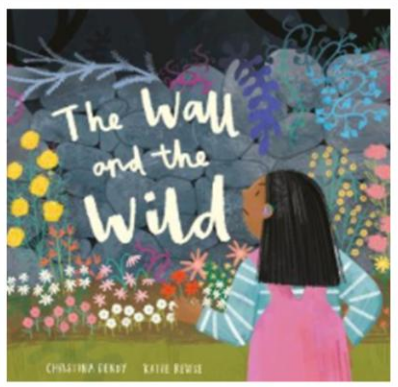
WMPS
Attendance
Target
97%

WMPS
Attendance
this Week
92.13%

WMPS
Attendance
this Year
94.21%

Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



Wall and the Wild - Christina Dendy & Katie Rewse (illustrator)

A wonderful picture book about the desire for control and tidiness, and the wonders that can occur when we accept a little mess and freedom into our lives.

Ana builds a beautiful garden on the edge of her town but is determined to keep the disorderly WILD out, so she builds a boundary wall to separate the two. She wants her garden to be perfect, full of only the sweetest-smelling flowers, leafiest trees and tastiest fruit and vegetables. Any seeds that are not absolutely perfect get thrown away into the WILD.

With its message of biodiversity and variety, the book ends with a very clearly and engagingly written scientific afterword on the importance of maintaining ecosystem health. As the book ends, we are all clear in the understanding that, for ecosystems and for human communities, "Variety makes for a bright, rich, wondrous garden".

The Wall and the Wild is luxuriously presented on thick paper with a gorgeous, rich colour palette - all the better to display the beauty of nature. The Wall and the Wild would be a stunning addition to any topic on ecosystems and sustainability - as well as the value of embracing diversity and difference.

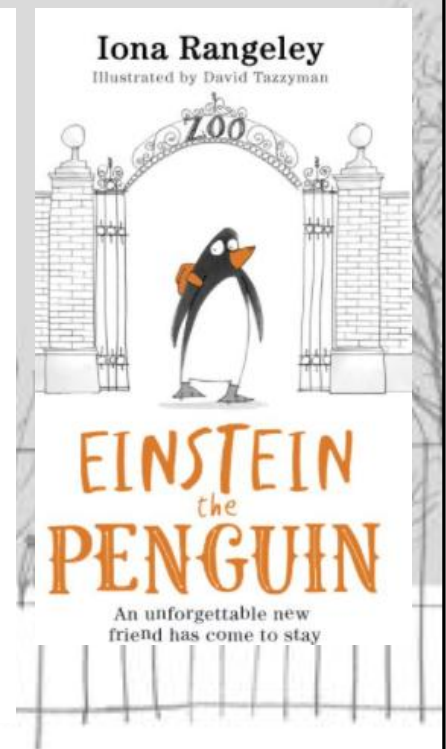
Upper School

Einstein the Penguin - Iona Rangeley & David Tazzyman (illustrator)

When Mrs Stewart invites a small penguin to visit on a spontaneous visit to London Zoo, no one could have imagined that later that day they would find him on their doorstep, rucksack on his back and an adventure about to begin...

Einstein the Penguin is the debut children's novel for Iona Rangeley, aptly brought to life with the help of the award-winning illustrator, David Tazzyman. A lovely mix of whodunnit with a slightly preposterous story of a penguin who comes to live with our two heroes, Imogen (age 9) and Arthur (age 6), causing them to put aside their sibling squabbles and come to his rescue. Rangeley manages to pull at your heartstrings as you come to understand each of the characters' insecurities, bringing together the fear of losing a friend with the loneliness associated with never having had one. The grown-ups are scatty at best and young readers will love it as our heroes come to put one over on them.

Perfect for Lower KS2 pupils, children will enjoy the parody of incompetent zookeepers and detectives while also prompting several discussion points about right and wrong.



Mr Slinn's Artist of the Week

Y1.3 – Hidayah and Younis

The children in Year 1 have been learning about famous architects and sculptures. Lots of time was spent investigating how different artists create sculptures in a range of different ways. Year 1 were taught a range of sculpting skills and had the chance to put these into use when producing their clay models. It was great to see Hidayah and Younis use vivid colours on their clay flower sculptures.



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The children of Y5.2

In Year 5 the children have been learning about African Art. Having created designs for antelope masks Year 5 had lots of fun creating cardboard masks and then painting them with metallic paints. The children layered pieces of cardboard onto the masks in an attempt to create a three-dimensional effect. The outcomes were excellent.





Pupil of the Week

Well done to our Year 5 pupils, for becoming this week's 'Pupil of the Week'.



Abdullah – Y5.1



Hamza – Y5.2



Jessica – Y5.3

Many thanks for your continued support, cooperation and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Singh
Headteacher

Dates

11 February 2025	Reception and Year 6 Height and Weight Checks
11 February 2025	Nursery Dinosaur Workshop
11 February 2025	Years 5 & 6 Aston Villa Football Tournament, Aston Villa Academy, Birmingham, 9.15am-11.45am
11 February 2025	Safer Internet Day
12 February 2025	Reception Vision Screening Checks
12 February 2025	Young People's Parliament Meeting, Birmingham City University South Campus, Edgbaston, Birmingham 10.00am-2.00pm
14 February 2025	Year 2 Good Work Assembly, 8.55am-9.15am
14 February 2025	Y5.3 Safer Internet Day Assembly, 2.50pm-3.15pm
14 February 2025	Pupil breaks up for Half Term
24 February 2025	Pupils return to school