



MERTON COURT NEWS

Welcome back! So glad to see everyone, following our very successful whole-school phased return.

Improvements in School Spring '20

❖ **Front of school staff/visitor parking and new bin store.**



We are delighted to have completed Phase One of these works during lockdown and Phase Two will take place over the Summer holidays.

❖ **Extra handwashing stations and extra toilets.**

As part of our ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have now fitted twenty handwashing stations for the children's use, fifteen hand sanitiser units, along with two new toilets for use at playtimes. Our Forest School outside toilets have also been refurbished.

❖ **Refurbishment of our existing Astro.**

This is now completed and gives us two excellent Astro pitches (with floodlights) for the whole school to use. Fantastic!



❖ **New Class Allotment Areas.**



It is really lovely to see seedlings growing in our special gardening area and seeing children watering their plants too! If you have any veg plants or spare seedlings, please do send them in for the children to plant.

❖ **'Online Learning Communities'**

Congratulations to everyone for doing so well and learning new skills during our programme of 'Lockdown Learning'. We are very proud of the way pupils and staff adapted to our virtual-school 'new-normal', with between four and seven weeks of on-line teaching.

Well done to our shielding children and families, who remain at home, but who are still working so well together, with the help of school, are continuing 'Online Learning Communities' until the end of term.

❖ **Witnessing History**

Having been in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, I am sure you will agree, there is a real feeling of us all witnessing history, in a way few of us have witnessed it before. We are however so glad, for the children's sake, that they (and especially S4), are now able to enjoy half a term of learning and laughter to complete the academic year. We have worked incredibly hard to reconfigure our school using hope and ambition, creativity and ingenuity.

There is also the real feeling of witnessing history, following the events in Minnesota, USA, of George Floyd's shocking and untimely death. Not for many years has the world stopped to debate so strongly the issues of basic human rights, particularly in the United States, where the need for a thorough review of policing is well overdue. George Floyd's death is yet another milestone in the long and difficult struggle for Civil Rights in the US, and the momentum of the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign should come as no surprise to us. It really does represent a door opening – a door that we should all not let close, without the opportunity of discussion with our children, both in and out of school. Some of the conversations we may have, may feel uncomfortable, however we should have them none-the-less.

We have a rich and diverse school community here, one that makes Merton Court proud to be the school it is, and each one of us is an important part of that school. Recent events have therefore also focused our minds on how we should treat each other and how we communicate with each other. This is especially true in a world where we have so many methods of communication available, yet we increasingly don't talk face-to-face. Acts of kindness and listening are often ignored in preference to acts of confrontation and aggression. Health equality, social equality and race equality remain key issues affecting the UK. The Covid-19 Pandemic has laid bare these issues, especially for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities who may well deal with these issues on an everyday basis. To maintain this conversation, we will be having a series of Parent Fora, using 'Zoom', to allow all members of our community to help make sense of our situation in a positive, constructive and thoughtful way, with some clear points of action to carry forward.

The school itself has a clear curricular and pastoral stance on intolerance, prejudice and lack of empathy, yet 'micro aggressions' practised by some, particularly on-line or 'sotto voce', do have an enduring and negative effect on individuals. We should all, children and adults, both on line and off, think carefully about the impact of what we say, before we just say it and what we do, before we do it.

In the context of a Primary School, we of course have to simplify some of our concepts for better understanding.

In school, we talk about what bullying means – '**Several Times On Purpose**' is our definition. 'S.T.O.P.' can be a great way of asking ourselves whether people are being unkind and how they may need to reflect carefully on the consequences of their actions.

Sporting achievements Spring '20

❖ Kent Primary Schools' Championships

Individuals

James Belton	2 nd	50m Butterfly	SR
Joshua Hill	3 rd	50m Butterfly	SR
James Belton	2 nd	50m Backstroke	SR
Joshua Hill	1 st	50m Freestyle	

All other children swam brilliantly, all achieving a Personal Best Time in their event.

Teams

Boys Freestyle Relay Team	1 st
Boys Medley Relay Team	2 nd
Girls Freestyle Relay Team	3 rd
Girls Medley Relay Team	4 th

The Boys teams went through to Regional finals to qualify for Nationals on 9th May in Guildford. Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic this had to be cancelled.

Very well done to all who took part in all events last term!

❖ Well done also...

'Most improved swimmer' last term was awarded to Millie Singh (S1T).

Past events Spring '20

❖ House Event Winners:

English	-	MERTON
Swimming	-	MERTON
Merit Shield	-	MODERN

❖ Headmaster's Awards Winner

Junior J2H and Senior S2C & S2M

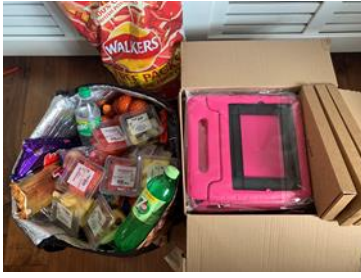
❖ Charities



Thank you for your kind donations to St John's Church Access4All fund. We raised £2,564.74 through our charitable efforts. Reverend Cathy came in at the end of last term to present us with a thank you certificate.

Thanks also to everyone, staff and children, who wore Silly socks for Downs Syndrome raising a super £280.70.





During 'Lockdown' Ms Buery, along with other J1 parents, coordinated online charity-giving and collected a total of £875 towards providing covers for iPads/phones for patients and staff at Queen Mary's hospital, Sidcup which really made a difference to people during 'Lockdown'. Some of these funds were also donated to Food Banks for the Trussell Trust. Fabulous!

❖ **Festival of Dance**

Another great Festival of Dance, with over ninety entrants and with a very high standard of performance, particularly in J3 and S2. Congratulations to all of those who took part, particularly the category winners.

'Best of Festival' was Darcie Flynn (S4B). 'Best Class Dance' were (Juniors) J3M/W.

❖ **Spelling Bee**

A big well done to our English Spelling Bee champions last term, Olivia Uba (J2), Chinweoke Emezie (J3), Aryan Shaikh (S1), Aidan Chan (S2), Ashley Hamad (S3) and Pranav Subbarayan (S4).

❖ **Primary Maths Challenge**

As a result of last term's Primary Maths Challenge taken by S4, four of our children were selected by The Mathematics Association, to sit the Bonus round in February. Alicia Ambler and Shayen Pindoria were awarded participation certificates, Zain Pala a Bronze Award and Pranav Subbarayan a Silver Award – an excellent achievement with strong National competition.

❖ **Academic Success**

Well done to S4 (Yr 6) for their particular successes at Secondary transfer this year and their continued hard work. Twenty-one Scholar's ties last term were awarded in recognition of outstanding academic and sporting achievement in external Secondary Transfer examinations and Independent School entrance procedures.

- ❖ Well done to all of our Irish dancers for a lovely performance as part of St Patrick's Day celebrations towards the end of last term. Slainte!



- ❖ Through the School's membership of the Sidcup Business Investment District, we were able to help improve the Community Garden outside Barclays Bank, High Street, Sidcup through hard digging, green fingers and, of course, a lottery grant! Take a look – it looks lovely!

- ❖ Mr Price was delighted to be asked to read WW1 poetry as part of the 'Sidcup Remembers' evening at Sidcup Library recently, organised by Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society. Our Old Bexley &



Sidcup MP, James Brokenshire also took part in this tribute to 'The Men with Broken Faces': an evening dedicated to the soldiers of the Great War, who went through facial reconstruction, led by Dr Harold Gillies at the Queen's Hospital, Frognal House (now Queen Mary's Sidcup).



- ❖ A really big thank you to all the children who took the time during Lockdown to write letters and emails, send cards and pictures, to really cheer everyone at school up – they were much appreciated.



- ❖ S3 took part in a Young Writers competition and they were lucky enough to get their poetry published in a compilation book – 'The Adventure Zone' – Beyond Imagination, so they are now published authors! Well done!

School events Summer '20

❖ New Responsibilities in School Summer Term 2020

Athletics Captain: Dolly Parsons
William Law
Cricket Captain: Zain Pala
Rounders Captain: Darcie Flynn
Herbie Smith

❖ S4 Leadership and Teamwork Challenge – (Week 1) Monday 22 June – Friday 26 June and (Week 2) Monday 29 June - Friday 3 July.

One of our most popular and inspiring series of events in year 6 is our Leadership and Challenge week. A global pandemic presented the organisation of this with some fresh challenges – which we have overcome! S4 will be undertaking appropriately adjusted challenges which this year include; our 'Dragon's Den' Business/Charity Challenge; a rocket car DT Challenge; a new Mars rover robotic LEGO Challenge; a new Gardening Challenge, an Environmental Challenge; a Performing Arts Challenge; a Cycling Challenge, a Rifle/Pistol Shooting Challenge; Pizza making; First-aid; Water safety/resuscitation and finally our ever popular 'I'm a Yr6 – Get Me Out of Here!'.

❖ **J3 to S1 Transition Talk**

J3 Parents will not be able to have a face-to-face talk about transition between phases, however information will be sent home by Mr Price for parents, via their children. Should parents need to discuss anything further, they are most welcome to telephone or email him.

❖ **'Moving Up' Day – Tuesday 14 July**

This will be an ideal opportunity in the last week of term, for all pupils to meet their new teacher in preparation for the forthcoming academic year 2020-21.

❖ **End of Term**

Junior and Senior Prize-givings will be taking place during the day, by yeargroups, on Wednesday, 15 July. We are hoping to live-stream our prize-givings for parents to watch simultaneously.

Term will end at 12noon on Friday 17 July.

❖ **Prospective Parents' Open Opportunities**

Open Morning – Saturday 26 September 2020 (9.15am-12noon)

Open Day - Wednesday 11 November 2020 (9.15am-2.30pm)

A reminder that any new parents wishing to look around the school with a view to sending their child here will be able to do so - shown round by members of School staff. Anyone wishing to look around the school is welcome to make an individual appointment with Mr Price, via the Admissions Team.

❖ **Merton Court Family Ski Trip 2020**

Our 2020 ski trip to Ischgl in the Austrian Tyrol was sadly cancelled, when Covid-19 brought the European ski season in to a premature halt. After twelve years we had changed our ski-trip provider from Equity to Ski Total and planned a private chalet trip for 60 pupils and parents to Austria. Mr Brady is delighted to announce that Ski Total provided everyone with full refunds for the trip – unlike the vast majority of travel companies. Next season promises to be challenging in some respects; consequently, we will be carefully reviewing travel companies and their cancellation policies/refund records; travel & accommodation options to minimise risks; resort choice; group ski-lesson viability with possible social distancing still in place; insurance changes & foreign-exchange volatility. We will be back on the slopes – and when we get there, it will be brilliant!

❖ **Old Mertonian News**

Adam Sameen (**OM '16 - '18**) will be joining Harrow School in September. After a rigorous process, he managed to secure an academic scholarship. We wish him every success at this prestigious school.

❖ **Staff News**

Farewell, Jeanne Raggett! Starting as a parent, then as an Early Years assistant, then School Secretary, and finally as our Admissions Secretary, Mrs Raggett retired in February after 31 years working at Merton Court. We will miss her lovely smile and wish her every happiness in her retirement.



Congratulations to Miss Woollard who had a beautiful baby girl, Sienna, born Easter weekend and weighing in at 6lbs 8ozs – mother and baby are doing well. Miss Cook will be going on Maternity leave at the end of the Summer term as her baby is due at the end of August – how exciting!

We are sad to announce that Mrs Jean Jones, our Director of Studies, will be retiring at the end of term after a 32-year association with the school both as a parent and as a teacher here. After her invaluable influence in shaping Merton Court's outstanding Teaching and Learning, we wish her a very happy retirement.

From September 2020 Mrs Fiona Mepham will be taking on the role of Director of Studies and Mr David Brady will be taking over the role of Key Stage Two Coordinator. Mrs Jo Meehan will be joining them on the school Leadership Team, as SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) Coordinator and Mr Afzal Sadikali will be taking over the role of Middle Leaders Coordinator.

Sincere thanks to everyone who has worked so very hard during Lockdown and indeed also as we have continued with our phased whole school return. Without hard graft and teamwork, school would not have been able to continue providing education for our children in the way it has.

A massive thank you to Mitch Lewis and his team at 'Sonic', for all the extra, extensive building adaptations and also to Luke Lewis (Head Boy 1994(!) & **OM '85 - '94**) from 'GasSonic' for the amazing installation of new handwashing stations and new toilet facilities in record time.

A huge thank you also to Henry Price, for organising and coordinating our very successful 'Distance Learning' for pupils, in such a short timeframe. In the real world, Henry has a degree in Theoretical Physics and a Masters in Maths and Financial Modelling and is a doctoral candidate in Theoretical Physics at Imperial College and is actively researching cryptocurrency, Reg/Fin - Tech and distributed ledger technology with the University of London. He was the IT linchpin and coordinator of all the logistics that ensured our 'Zooming' and 'Lockdown Learning Programme' went so well.

Don't forget to log on and have a good look at our up-to-date website on www.mertoncourtprep.co.uk

