



MERTON COURT NEWS AUTUMN 2020

Welcome back!

Improvements in School

❖ **White boards**

Following our previous first tranche of new white boards for classrooms and teaching areas, we will be receiving the next six white boards in our programmed upgrade of all areas during the second half of term.

❖ **Library**

Our school library is being restocked and reorganised in the second half of this term. Following the closure of our library due to the Covid-19 situation, we now have plans in place to refurbish and refit our school library with new shelving and seating, over half term.

If you have any book donations of old favourites from home, that others would like to read, please do bring them in to the school office.

❖ **Extra new tented area**

Over the summer break, we have erected another tented structure in school that will be a dual purpose Dance and Music area.

According to newly received Government Guidelines, we are now able to have singing in school (appropriately socially-distanced) in large well ventilated areas, so this will be a first step to getting back to the strong tradition of group and choral singing we have here. Unfortunately, we are still not able to have full choirs yet but hope that this will change as the situation improves. Equally, during the Summer term, and this term, Mrs Saunders has been holding Dance lessons on School field and Drama lessons in classrooms. This temporary tented area will be particularly useful as the Autumn weather turns to Winter.



❖ **BLM and BAME Forum**

At Merton Court we pride ourselves on being an inclusive school where everyone is equal and all voices and opinions are important.

We have now organised a series of Black Lives Matter/BAME discussions open to all school stakeholders via 'Zoom'. The first of these will be on Tuesday 22 September, 7.00pm to 8.00pm and will be led by Emma Aiyere of Safeguarding Now Ltd, who is a training consultant often used by School.

Please advise the school office, should you wish to participate and you will then be sent the relevant link.

Past events SUMMER '20

❖ **Socially-distanced outdoor Prizegiving streamed on-line!**

It was great to be able to share our successes at the end of term, with parents (and grandparents) tuning in from home and abroad too! A real first for Merton Court.



❖ **Socially-distanced Sports Day Results**

Cups and Trophies awarded:

Pilgrim 100m Sprint – Artie Hall

400m Open (boys) – Artie Hall

800m Open(boys) – Oliver Delamain

Morgan Shield Girl 800m – Evie Gannon

(S2) Junior Victor Ludorum – Isaac Uba

Senior Victor Ludorum – Oliver Delamain



Swimmer of the Year – James Belton

Most Improved Swimmer – Millie Singh

❖ Hockey 6-A-Side

3rd (bronze) INSULTING IGUANAS

Capt. Artie Hall **VC.** Peter Chupakhin

Medals:

Safia Hamad, Joshua Hill, Sammy Chappell, Joachim Wong, Oliver Steel-Squires, Adam Nolan, Rafi Smith, Jayna Manku

2nd (silver) BUZZING BEES

Capt. Dolly Parsons **VC.** Herbie Smith

Medals:

Joe Brady, George Byrne, Aiofe Hadland, Elijah Mwenya, Rishi Khosla, Vishal Nagasundhar, Millie Singh and Shaheer Imran.

1st (gold) NAUGHTY NEWTS

Winners

Capt. Leo Jayasinghe **VC.** Joshua Mwenya

Medals:

Oliver Delamain, Eva Stupart, Riya Pindoria, Fleur Humphreys, Artemis Hordiychuk, Imani Ogboli, Prisha Benadikar and Rohan Vyas

Top Goal Scorer: Herbie Smith (11) Artie Hall (11)

❖ **New Responsibilities in School:**

House Captains

MERTON: Ashley & Safia Hamad

MODERN : Daniel Inwang

SCHOOL: Joe Brady

Vice Captains

MERTON: Elijah Mwenya

MODERN: Joachim Wong

SCHOOL: Nininola Aiyeola

Cross Country Captains: Alexandros Kapatos & Daphne Postlethwaite

Netball Captain: Zahra Sameen

Rugby Captain: Joe Brady

Swimming Captains: Joshua Hill & Eva Stupart

❖ **House Event Winners:**

Ellingham Inter House Athletics(Senior) – MERTON

Davies Inter-House Athletic (Junior) - MERTON

Merit Shield - SCHOOL

❖ **Headmaster's Award Winners**

Junior J1A & J1H and Senior S4B & S4Ba

❖ **Charities**

S4 Business Challenge raised:

'Squiggle' - £75 to 'It's my life' trust fund.

'The Sunny Stall' - £15 to Battersea Dogs Home

'The Sweet Shop' - £15 to Cancer Research UK

'Tropical Tangz' - £20 to St Christopher's Hospice

'Snack Snack' - £30 to 'Emily walks 10 miles' for NHS Charities Together.

Little Princess Trust

Well done to Olivya and Onali who cut their hair for charity and raised money for this worthwhile cause.

Olivya's goal was to grow her hair to over 9 inches to donate to the 'Little Princess Trust' which makes wigs for girls who have lost their hair due to cancer. She found that the trust had already a lot of hair being donated at 7 inches so she waited. Onali had already grown her hair past 9 inches.

Olivya has proudly raised over £550, the cost of one wig for a child.



- ❖ **Crossroads Care (Kent)** - will be our adopted charity for this term. Crossroads Care is the leading carers' charity in Kent. They deliver care and support for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health problems.

- ❖ **Groves Public Speaking Award 2020**

Finalists' Medals awarded to:

Barry Harding – Greek Mythology

Louie James – Nelson Mandela

Seth Jayawardhena – Mans impact on the Planet

Leo Jayasinghe – Elon Musk

Zain Pala – Kashmir

Ryan Warner – Computers

With a very moving and passionate talk on Martin Luther King, Ella Fay was the winner.

- ❖ **S4 Leadership and Teamwork Challenge**

One of our most popular and inspiring series of events in Year 6 is our two weeks of Leadership and Challenge. A global pandemic presented the organisation of this with some fresh challenges – which we managed to overcome! S4 took part in appropriately adjusted challenges including; 'Dragon's Den' Business/Charity Challenge; rocket car DT Challenge; new Mars rover robotic LEGO Challenge; a new Gardening Challenge, Environmental Challenge; Performing Arts Challenge; Cycling Challenge, 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!'.



❖ **S4 End of Term celebrations and farewell to S4**

This took place on Merton Field (via a sound stage and big screen with everyone socially-distanced) and S4 entertained us with song and dance, helped by Tony, our fabulous Prom DJ, the rest of the school and of course parents too.



❖ **S4 Legacy Gift**

Sincere thanks to the pupils of S4 for the four donated cherry trees around the Dance Studio and our allotment area – the children planted them with the help of Phil, our gardener.



❖ **Academic Success**

Well done to last year's S4 (Yr 6) for their particular successes at Secondary transfer this year and their continued hard work. A total of twenty-one Scholar's ties were awarded in recognition of outstanding academic and sporting achievement in external Secondary Transfer examinations and Independent School entrance procedures representing, the School's best results since 2014.

LEAVERS 2020

AMBLER	Alicia	Dartford Grammar School for Girls (B, K)
BELTON	James	Colfe's School (B, K) (Sports Schol)
BLANKS	Miley	Bromley High School for Girls (Farringtons Ac Schol)
BODIE	Joseph	Farringtons School
BOOKER	Isabelle	Farringtons School
CASEY	Amy	Bromley High School for Girls (B, K)
CHUPAKHIN	Peter	Beths Grammar School (B,K)
DAVIES	Oliver	Wilmington Grammar School for Boys (K) (Farringtons Maths Schol)
DELAMAIN	Daniel	Knole Academy (K)
DELAMAIN	Oliver	Knole Academy (K)
EAGLE	Thomas	Sevenoaks School (B, K) (Radnor House Sports Schol)
FAJULUGBE	Tamilore	Invicta Grammar School (K)
FAY	Ella	Farringtons School (K) (Sports Schol)
FLYNN	Darcie	Coopers
GANNON	Evie	Farringtons School (Sports Award)
HALL	Artie	Hurstmere School
HARDING	Barry	Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School (B, K)
HASTINGS	Lilac	Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School (B, K) (Ac Schol Gad's Hill)
JAMES	Louie	Hurstmere School (K)
JAYASINGHE	Leo	Dartford Grammar School (B, K)
JAYAWARDHANE	Seth	Eltham College
JOSEPH	Sloane	Wilmington Grammar School for Girls (K)
KIDBY	Rebecca	Bexley Grammar School (B, K)
LAW	William	The Judd School, Sevenoaks (B, K) Colfe's (Ac & Music Schol)
McANALLEN	Oliver	Farringtons School
MWENYA	Joshua	Babington House School (K)
PALA	Zain	Dartford Grammar School (B, K) (Farrington's Ac Schol)
PARSONS	Dolly	Dartford ST College
PETERS	Florence	Farringtons School
PINDORIA	Shayen	Dartford Grammar School (K)
PINDORIA	Yuv	Bexley Grammar School (B, K)
SMITH	Herbie	Sevenoaks School (B, K) (Colfe's Ac Schol)
SUBBARAYAN	Pranav	St Olave's and St Saviour's School (B-Top, K)
UBA	Sophia	Dartford Grammar School for Girls (B-Top, K)
WARNER	Ryan	Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School (B, K)
WHITE	Oliver	Eltham College (B, K)

This is a list of all our Year 6/S4 children in the academic year 2019/2020 - Abbreviations – places achieved but not taken.

Ba H – Babington House School
 B – Bexley Selective Place
 B-Top – Bexley Top 180
 BC – Brighton College
 BHS – Bromley High

C – Colfe's School
 EC – Eltham College
 F – Farringtons
 JAGS – James Allen Girls School
 KR – King's Rochester

N – Newstead Wood
 Schol. – Scholarship
 Sev – Sevenoaks
 St Cats – St Catherine's Bramley
 StO – St Olave's & St Saviour's Grammar School
 WH – Walthamstow Hall

CH – Cobham Hall

K – Kent Selective Place

Autumn Term 2020

❖ J3 to S1 Transition Talk

J3 Parents were unfortunately not able to have a face-to-face talk about transition between phases, should parents need to discuss anything, they are most welcome to contact Mrs Mephram as Director of Studies and Mr Barley as Assistant Head, Academic, who are most happy to talk to you about the Teaching and Learning at School. Mrs Macdonald as Pastoral Coordinator is available too, to discuss any pastoral concerns you may have, as the children move from the Junior to the Senior School.

❖ **Prospective Parents' Open Opportunities**

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

Open Day - Wednesday 11 November 2020 (4-6pm) (Please note the change of timing.)

Open Morning – Saturday 23 January 2021 (9.15am – 12noon)

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 2021**

Mr Brady has been carefully monitoring the situation and holding off making bookings due to the way things look at the moment with the situation regarding Covid-19 and quarantine restrictions.

He has options for 2022 (and he will also keep an eye out for any last minute deals, in case the situation in late Feb/early March dramatically improved).

Please watch this space!

❖ **Friends of Merton Court (PTA) News**

FOMC AGM will be on 'Zoom' this term on Wednesday 16 September @ 7.30pm – all welcome. We will be sending out a 'Zoom' login/password for this next week.

FOMC will be continuing with a series of second-hand Uniform Sales during the term.

All children are requested to bring in their own water bottles, particularly for lunchtimes. School has a stock of plastic bottles and metal ones may also be ordered through FOMC.

Once again, FOMC will be organising Christmas cards designed by the children.

If you need to contact a member of the FOMC, please do so via the school office.

❖ **Staff News**

Farewell to Mrs Jean Jones, our Director of Studies, who retired at the end of the Summer term, after a 32-year association with the school both as a parent and a teacher here. After her invaluable influence in shaping Merton Court's outstanding Teaching and Learning, we wish her a very happy retirement.

A letter of thanks from Mrs Jones:

Dear children and parents

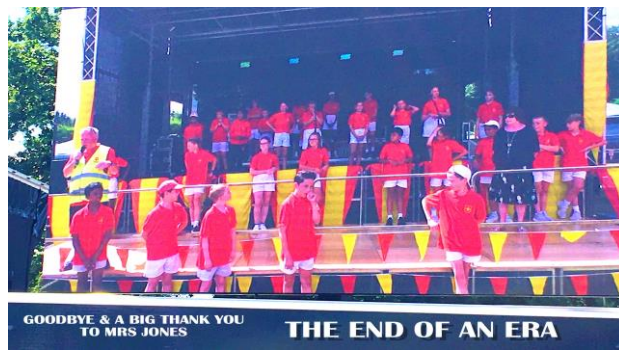
Thank you so much for all your kind gifts, garden centre vouchers, flowers, cards and kind words on my retirement from Merton Court in July. I very much appreciated it.

I am settling well into retirement, albeit our travel plans are currently on hold until it is easier to travel round the world. So in the meantime, I'm enjoying spending more time with my family and my garden is the tidiest it's been in a long time.

As I'm sure you know, I've very much loved working at Merton Court over the years as well as being part of that great school community. I shall certainly miss it and of course all of you.

Thank you once again and good luck in the new school term.

Jean Jones



Welcome to Mr Daniel Patnell who will be teaching S4 alongside Mr Luke Barley. Mrs Fiona Mephram will be taking over the role of Director of Studies and Mr David Brady the role of Key Stage Two Coordinator. Mrs Jo Meehan will be joining them on our 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.

Following a successful gap year here at Merton Court, helping with our 'Rekindling Reading' Programme and having completed her BA(Hons) in Psychology and Philosophy, Lulu Price(OM) will be taking on further studies with a degree in Speech and Language Therapy at the University of Kent/University of Greenwich.

❖ COVID – 19

The Covid-19 situation is obviously still cause for concern. School continues to use all its efforts to mitigate the effect of the virus on our school Community, by using a combination of form and yeargroup bubbles and social-distancing in the few shared public areas we have.

In light of new Government directives, we would ask that, particularly at the end of the day school pick-up times, you do your part by continuing to observe a sensible level of social distancing. Judging by current events, it remains all our responsibilities to limit the damage and effect that the Covid-19 can have, until such time as there are effective measures, to protect us all, particularly as the Winter months approach.

A huge thankyou to you, as parents for your positivity and messages of support during these difficult times. As well as from parents, School has received some fantastic congratulatory correspondence from James Brockenshire, our Old Bexley & Sidcup MP, from James Hunt, the current Mayor of Bexley and also from our own Advisory Board, praising us for managing to run not only a distance learning programme but also for managing to re-open to all pupils over the second half of the Summer Term.

Please continue to bear with us. Running the school, with all the social constraints and Government guidelines we have had to deal with, has been a bit like building a bicycle whilst riding it! We will do everything in our power to see a return to our school routines over the coming term.

It is our ambition, following the publishing of further guidelines, to restart swimming in the next few weeks, along with some Yeargroup after-school clubs, building up to further Yeargroup clubs and activities and the restart of wraparound care.

❖ School Lunches

For safety's sake, for the moment, our yeargroup bubbles continue to have lunch in our temporary building on our front lawn, which now has various nicknames including 'The Mess Hall' and 'The Big Top'!

Our hot meal selection is three times a week with the remaining two days being sandwiches. Salad bowls are available every day, together with a dessert or fresh fruit.

Whilst the children are really enjoying this novel lunchtime experience, we want to reassure parents that it is our intention to be back in our Dining Room as soon as we possibly can, probably in the next month and we will keep you updated of this.

Thank you for your understanding, in these very strange and unusual times.

School events Autumn '20

❖ S3 Trip to Bowles - Wednesday 9 September

Despite not being able to travel to France for our usual Battlefields Tour and two night residential, it was fantastic to be able to take S3 on a yeargroup trip to Bowles Outdoor Activity Centre. The children took part in archery, sledging (on a dry ski slope), team mental and physical challenges, orienteering and a high ropes course (involving a zip wire!) All activities were led by suitably qualified instructors who managed to maintain social-distancing protocols. It was absolutely great! This was followed by a fish and chip supper at School, Bingo and a sing-song – what's not to like?

Well done S3 and accompanying staff! Here's to a great S3 year!



❖ **Harvest Festival – Friday 2 October**

Harvest festival will certainly be different this year but we hope to celebrate it in classes and yeargroups, and to share our celebrations with parents via Form Google Drive. As usual we will be asking for donations of dried and tinned food, which the children can bring into school, to be transported onwards to 'The Simon Community', a charity for the homeless, based in London and to foodbanks, via St John's Church, Sidcup.

❖ **Festival of Speech & Drama – Thursday 8 & Friday 9 October**

This festival will still take place this year but unfortunately without a parent audience. Categories will be sent in a 'parentmail' with details of entry requirements. Form teachers will film their class entries and put them on to Goggle Drive for you to enjoy.

❖ **Maths Week – Monday 12 - Friday 16 October**

The focus for Maths Term is "problem solving." Problem solving is at the core of mathematical activity. It is the content in which children apply their mathematical understanding, knowledge and skills. Many children have little difficulty understanding basic maths concepts but do have difficulties using and applying their knowledge to problem solving. There will be a weekly problem-solving competition for all children from J3-S4. The problem will be uploaded to the yeargroup google drive each week beginning Monday 21.09.20 and answers should be **emailed** with the child's name and form to a.sadikali@mertoncourtprep.co.uk by the Friday of each week. Correct entries will be put into a prize-draw and the lucky winner will receive a "maths based prize." We look forward to some exciting problem solving.

Monday 12 October will be **House Maths Competition**

Tuesday 13 October will be a **Maths Spelling Bee**

❖ **Remembrance – Friday 6 November**

Remembrance, sadly will be a closed event this year.

We will however be conducting an open-air School Service, led as ever by S3 and we are hoping to record this for parents and posterity.

❖ **Parents Evenings – Tuesday 17 & Wednesday 18 November**

These will be conducted via 'Zoom' due to the current circumstances, with any required follow up, using appointments via the School Office.

❖ **Christmas Productions – Thursday 3 & Wednesday 4 December**

These again, will be very different from usual, and will be recorded and shared via class Google Drives. Early Years will be performing their version of 'Twas The Night Before Christmas' narrated by S4. J1, J2 and J3 will perform 'Jesus' Christmas Party' with J3 taking on narrating roles.

❖ **Christmas Lunch, Christmas Jumper Day & House Chess**

These events will take place on **Friday 11 December**. Please send in £2 with your child/ren which will be donated to our nominated charity for wearing their Christmas jumper to school.

Remember your Christmas hat too for Christmas lunch!

❖ **Prizegivings – Tuesday 15/Wednesday 16 December**

Further details to follow – we anticipate, once again, to be able to ensure pupils' families are part of their children's end of term Prizegiving by making this an on-line streamed event.

❖ **'Recovery Curriculum' at Merton Court**

Whilst we managed to achieve good success in both on-line and face to face teaching last term, it is most important to us, that we ensure all our pupils do not lose academic momentum.

A big thank you must go to all staff for their hard work and dedication during what has been a difficult and challenging time for all schools, school staff and children. Our staff's commitment to providing the best possible education for your children has remained paramount. Our passion and drive to inspire the children here, is something we should be extremely proud of, especially so this year.

Michael Morpurgo, celebrated author and former Children's Laureate, said, "so often and for so many of us, it is a teacher who changed our lives, was at our side, through hard and difficult times, who lifted us up when we were down, helped us find our voice, gave us confidence when we needed it most, set us on a path that we have followed ever since."

This is what we have done and this is what we will continue to do. We will continue to support all our children post-lockdown - should you need to discuss any issues, please contact Mrs Mepham, Director of Studies.

If pupils find themselves having to isolate due to family illness, we will provide a combination of on-line and paper/book resources and work, and should we, as a worst case scenario, have to go into another Lockdown, we will ensure that our 'parallel curriculum' for on-line learning continues, as previously.

❖ **'Mentally Healthy' Schools**

The pandemic has had lasting effects on many, economically, socially and mentally. We will be beginning to discuss our lockdown experiences in school with the children and indeed you, as parents and carers, to ensure everyone's wellbeing is addressed, so that we may make our way back to some kind of 'normal'.

Over the academic year, we will be keeping a strong focus on our 'Habits of Mind'. All aspects of wellbeing in our 'Lifeskills' programme will remain high on our agenda for discussion too.

❖ **Relationships & Health Education**

We will be shortly sending out further information on how we plan to teach the new Relationships Education and Health Education curriculum, that will become a statutory taught-requirement for all primary age children from January 2021.

Elements of these new curriculum areas are already taught as part of our 'Lifeskills' programme. It is important for us, both parents and teachers, to teach our children about healthy relationships, looking after themselves and staying safe and to ensure they are respected and valued.

We are required to consult with you, whilst developing our RHE Curriculum, to finalise our policy, which will then be published on our school website.

Therefore, please do speak to or contact, Mrs J Meehan (as SMSC Coordinator) should you wish to comment on the RHE information we will be sending out to you.

❖ **Safeguarding**

An updated version of the Government KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) is available for you to read on our School website in the 'Policies' section, along with a revised school Safeguarding Policy. Should you require hardcopies of these documents or clarity on any aspects of them, please

contact Mrs Macdonald, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), via the School Office.

❖ **Bee keeping – Merton Court Hives – Spring 2021**

Sadly, the parents and teachers who volunteered to take part in our bee keeping course, in readiness for us receiving our first honey bee swarm in May, found their course cut short due to Lockdown. We plan to restart this training early in the new year. We do have one or two spaces on the course, so if you are interested, please contact the School Office.

❖ **Old Mertonian News**

We recently heard from Charlotte Maycock's (OM '99 - '07) mum, Charlotte is now a primary school teacher in London, with her very own class.

Adam Sameen (OM '16-'19) (looking very smart in his uniform below) - has secured a full academic scholarship to Eton College.

We wish him all the very best at one of the most prestigious schools in the UK.



Well done to Frangiskos Kapatos (OM '07-15) and Maxim Habarov (OM '11-15) who both received excellent GCSE results from Dartford Grammar School and are now enjoying Sixth Form there.

Beth Sankey (OM '13-16) (see right of the picture) tells us of her achievements in Year 10 at Bromley High, including an excellent report, performing in the school play 'Made in Dagenham', taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and meeting up with old Mertonian friends, An-Nhi, Joshua and Amy during the summer.



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