



Millbrook Connect

Believe

Achieve

Succeed

Dear Parents and Carers,

It was our hope that school would once again be fully open after half term and that we would be welcoming all the children back for the start of Term 4. Unfortunately, this is not going to be the case, but as soon as we have any further information of when this may be, we will update you.

This term has seen us launch our new online learning platform, Microsoft Teams, to Years 1 to 6. We would like to thank you for your supportive comments about the positive impact that the new platform has already had on your children, particularly in terms of the 'real-time' feedback on learning and opportunities for regular social interaction. Staff are really missing the children and it has been lovely to explore new and imaginative ways to connect with them! We have also been able to keep the 'best bits' of our previous offer and our pre-recorded lessons continue to be enjoyed by our children. For example, Year 2 have been introduced to Mrs Sanhotra's very cute lion puppet; Year 5 have been challenged on a daily basis by Mr Baish's super-tricky Maths challenges and Year 6 have been creating some very powerful speeches! **Find out more about the fun we have had with our 'remote' topics in the 'Curriculum Update!'** We have been extremely grateful for your support, kindness and patience as we navigate this significant change together; if you have any problems with Teams, please do get in touch via teamssupport@millbrook.vale-academy.org. All of our letters; policies and support videos linked to remote learning, can be found on the '**Online Platform**' section of our website: [Online Platform | Millbrook Primary School \(millbrookschoool.org.uk\)](https://www.millbrookschoool.org.uk)

This continues to be an incredibly hard time for many people and we understand the challenges our families are facing. We are at the end of the phone and we encourage you to reach out to us. There may be times when the remote learning proves too demanding and we ask that during these times you take a break from the screen and do what is needed for the wellbeing of your child and family.

Our Teaching Assistants are doing an incredible job touching base via 1:1 video calls to some children; sometimes this is just what the children need to get them back on track! Mrs Kilminster, our Home School Link Worker has also been making daily phone calls to families and helping support them through these difficult times. In addition, Miss Murby, our ELSA is also continuing to give her invaluable emotional care.

We have received device donations from our local community, and we thank those sincerely for their kindness: The Mix in Wantage have been incredible, and we have also received laptops from the DfE. We hope that the delivery of these ensure that each family has access to a device, to hopefully make things a little easier.

Staff are now in full swing with self-testing twice a week, using the LFD tests and we would like to offer our thanks to them, as this does take time and is not the most pleasant experience. We have been incredibly lucky to have not experienced a bubble closure at Millbrook since the start of these tests, but this next layer of defence against this virus could force us to so. Please remember to keep an eye on ePraise, as this will be our channel to notify you and could be at very short notice.

Whilst this may not have been the start to the New Year that we were hoping for, we have been overwhelmed by the response and resulting resilience of our Millbrook community. We wanted to say thank you to each and every one of you – our children, our parents, our staff – watch this space as a little treat should be winging its way to you all before the end of this half term! Find out more about 'Operation Chocolate' later on this newsletter!

Thank you all for your continued support,

Mrs Faye Charlton Mrs Laura Youngman

Head(s) of School

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Digital Safety

Our thanks for your continued support. We appreciate how difficult it is for everyone during this pandemic. It is therefore important that we do not lose sight of what is important, and that is of course prioritising the safety of our families.



It is always worth a reminder as to the importance of **digital/internet safety** to maintain your **child's safety online**. Please continue to remind your child/ren to talk about any concerns they may have. Online safety is always essential but even more so with the current circumstances. This also includes the use of social media and ensuring all children who are using it do so correctly and appropriately. Here is a link to the BBC Bitesize page where there is a parent toolkit. There may be some helpful strategies for you to adopt to ensure the well-being of you all whilst remote learning is in place: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znsmyxc>

Lots of additional resources can also be found on our school website at the following link: <https://www.millbrookschool.org.uk/esafety-3/>

Storytelling Team



Don't forget to check regularly in our fabulous **Storytelling Team** for access to new videos of teachers reading books; support for parents; links to some great websites and quizzes to try. More content is being added each week so please do 'pop in!' If there is a book that you would like us to read – let us know in the Team!

Lovely Baby News!



We are delighted to share the wonderful news with you all that on Saturday 30th January, Miss Meyer welcomed her baby daughter to the world!

May we introduce to you... *Elodie* ❤️

I think you will agree with us she is totally gorgeous!

We are pleased to report both Mum and baby are well 😊



Spotlight On...



This week the spotlight is on our new Year 1 teacher...
Mrs Keymer! We are delighted to welcome Mrs Keymer
to our Millbrook family ☺



For a bit of fun and to allow us to learn a bit more about her, we have asked her some quick fire questions!

1. Favourite chocolate bar? (important things first!) **Boost**



2. Place of birth? **Cheltenham**

3. Favourite place in all the world? **Isle of Tiree**

4. Favourite book? **'I Let You Go' by Clare Mackintosh**



5. Favourite film? **Mamma Mia!**

6. Favourite song? **Summer of '69 by Bryan Adams**

7. Last meal on earth is likely to be? **Roast dinner**



8. If I hadn't become a teacher, I would have ... **Opened my own coffee shop and baked cakes to sell!**



9. Unlikely interesting fact about you? **When I was younger, I sat in a bath of baked beans in a shop window for charity!**

10. In a world of 'no limits', how would you spend a fantasy 24 hours?! **Fly to a desert island in a hot air balloon, swim in the sea, relax, eat, drink and read!**



Thank you Mrs Keymer! Some brilliant answers – I think your answer to question 10 sounds spot on! Next whole school Millbrook outing Mr Rose?!

Curriculum Update!

During this lockdown, much of our focus has been on developing and enhancing our remote learning offer in order that it replicates, as closely as possible, the exciting curriculum that we are proud of at Millbrook.



We strive to ensure that our topics still continue to inspire a love of learning, despite not being delivered in the way that we would usually do. We have absolutely loved seeing the children still embracing and enjoying their topics and taking part in some really fun and exciting activities remotely - for example, Year 3 experienced an exciting virtual Roman Day and Year 4 were 'excavating' cookies as part of their topic about Howard Carter! Great fun was had by all (and some eating we believe too!)

We have continued behind the scenes to develop our overarching curriculum vision and content. Since the last Millbrook Connect, we have held staff training linked to **Science** where staff enjoyed finding out about different ways to ensure that the skills of '**working**

scientifically' and the concepts of '**awe and wonder**' are embedded in our lessons –



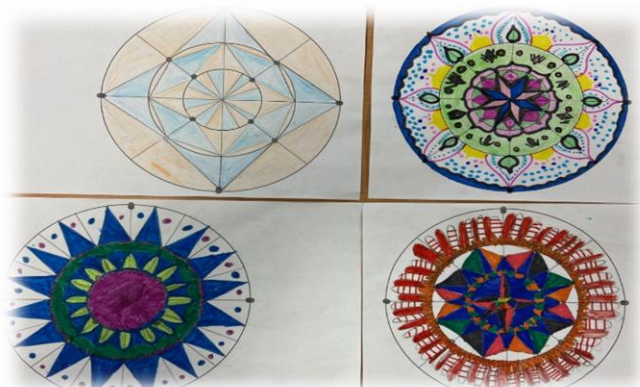
these experiences can also be created and enjoyed at home using simple household resources. Please do look out for this aspect in our remote learning! We have also been working to further develop our approaches to the teaching of RE (Religious Education) and Art and Design Technology across the school so that they are progressive and link closely to our curriculum drivers matrix (*at the top of this page*).

Finally, we are still very excited about launching our new '**Big Question**' themed topic approaches later this year - more information coming soon! 😊



Photo Gallery of Lockdown Learning!







Give us the Pullfect chance
IN Life!

Please Help us Today

contact us Today AT info@cats.org.uk

CATS

you COULD MAKE A Difference IN 4 Easy WAYS

Volunteer

At Cats protection, we welcome visitors with open arms, no matter how much you love your cat or how much you love cats. You can help us by giving us your time and skills. We need people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats. We need people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats.

Donate

It's so easy to help us. Just donate a few pounds. You can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats. We need people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats.

Fundraise

What about fundraising for us? We're looking for people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats. We need people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats.

Adopt

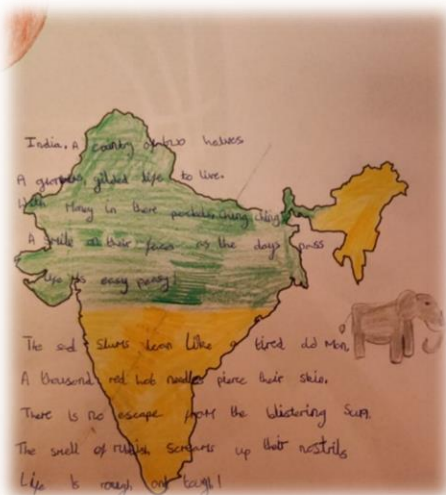
Thinking about adopting a cat or kitten? We can help you with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats. We need people who can help us with all sorts of tasks, from cleaning cages to helping with the cats.

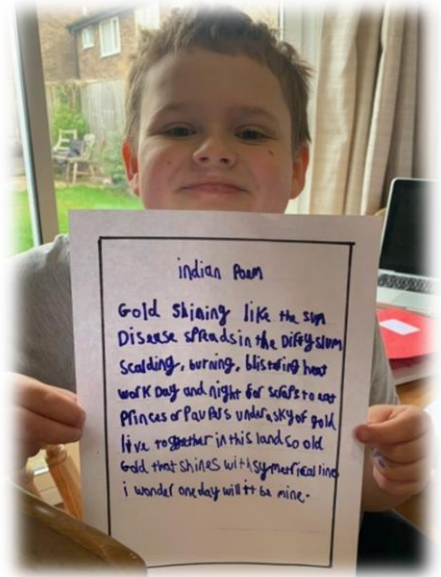
Have fun. Help cats. Win BIG!

\$25,000 could be yours









or	av	al	our	all	others
forty	Shavn	talk	Fourth	Fall	Sean
	naughty	beanstalk	your	Wall	Caught
	haughty	always	four	all	
	daughter	Walk	Court	Calling	
	taught		Pour		
	caught		mourn		
			tournament		
			fourteen		

#Operation Chocolate!

In our last edition of Millbrook Connect, we told you all about 'Operation Christmas Cheer': a school-wide venture which saw all of our staff and children participating in an art day where we made different crafty creations for members of our local community to whom we wanted to say thank you!

Well..... we've been at it again! We wanted to celebrate all of our children's hard work and remote learning so next week, we will be hand-delivering chocolate bars and personalised notes to every single child in school: we are so proud of all of you and hope that this small gesture will show you that!



The chocolate bars were funded by our fantastic FROM team and were supplemented by generous donations from both the Co-op and Tesco Express in Grove ☺

We also couldn't leave out all of the grown-ups at home who have been supporting their children this term with their remote learning, so we have included a small gift bag with a tea bag or coffee sachet inside, with the note: *Grown-ups! We've not forgotten you! So take a moment, put your feet up, and enjoy a nice relaxing brew!*

We hope you all enjoy your treat and have a well-deserved, relaxing half term!

Love from Team Millbrook x

Children's Mental Health Week

This week, 1st – 7th February is Children's Mental Health Week which we have previously supported in school. Given the current circumstances, this is more important than ever. The theme for this year is 'Express Yourself'. To support this, on our INSET day (Friday 12th February) our staff will be uploading to Teams a menu of 'screen-free' activities whereby expression is required. Here is a copy of the menu ideas below:

Maker Hour



Fitness Hour



Genius Hour

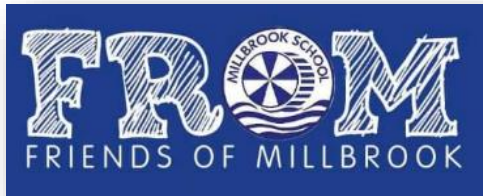


Zen Hour



Make a tall tower using objects in your house.	Create a hide-me stone. Go for a walk and hide it for someone to find.	Have a family bake-off and judge whose is best.	Draw a picture on a cereal box and cut it out to make a jigsaw.	Build a den or a fort (inside or outside).	Make a boat that will float in the bath. Whose will float the longest?
Make up a fitness routine – Joe Wicks style!	Make an obstacle course either inside or outside.	Teach your family a TikTok dance.	Hold an indoor disco (perhaps a kitchen disco!)	Go for a walk and discuss what you see, hear, smell, taste.	Touch every wall in your house and time how long it takes. Improve your time!
Share and read your favourite books with each other.	Write and perform a play script involving your family.	Invent a brand new board game. Challenge your family!	Learn to read/spell 5 new words and teach someone else.	Draw a detailed family portrait including any pets.	Write a letter to a family member in another house and post it.
Help someone in your house (wash the dishes, tidy your room).	Look through a family photo album. Discuss who the people are.	Ask a family member to draw you a picture of your house. Colour it in.	Have a joke competition. Who can tell the funniest joke?	Play a board game or do a jigsaw together.	Listen to some music together. Share your favourite musical artists.

If you do decide to get involved and try any of the activities above, do upload your photos to your child's year group Teams – we'd love to see them!



Our fabulous FROM team are hosting a Zoom brainstorming / social meeting next **Wednesday 10th Feb**. If you would like to come along and join in, the more the merrier! The details for joining the Zoom meeting are below. We look forward to hopefully seeing some new faces! ☺

Donna Zavala, Chair of FROM

Agenda: Mainly a brain-storming evening for future events.

FROM Donna Zavala is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: FROM Donna Zavala's Zoom Meeting

Time: Feb 10, 2021 07:15 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83129924952?pwd=MkdXWUV5aVltOGI1RkRtNGcreXpsQT09>

Meeting ID: 831 2992 4952

Passcode: Millbrook

Do you have any ideas for future fundraising events? Would you like to be part of our FROM team? Please get in touch with us on:

fromcommittee@gmail.com

Please look out for more details in the next edition of Millbrook Connect all about FROM's next big venture, their 'Virtual Bake-Off'!

Art Exhibition



The Young Artists' Art Exhibition is now taking entries for its online exhibition in 2021. Entries are now open and can be submitted up to 26th April, up to 3 entries per child and parents can upload their work! Click on the link below for more details:

[Young Artists' Summer Show | Royal Academy](#)

Remote learning heroes!

We are working hard to bridge the digital divide with the help of our amazing local community; collecting, restoring and rehoming devices to our families! We are incredibly grateful to The Mix in Wantage for their immediate support with this. We have also had some incredibly generous donations from the Cystic Fibrosis Trust - Fighting for a Life Unlimited (<https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/>) for their donation of a set of tablets for distribution to families in need of devices at this time. The Rays Collins Charitable Trust (www.raycollinstrust.org) have also



announced they will be distributing 197 chrome books between us and several other local schools which is just incredible! Please do get in touch with us at:

office@millbrook.vale-academy.org if you need support with access to devices for home learning and we will do our best to help you 😊

[Cystic Fibrosis Trust - Fighting for a Life Unlimited](#)

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to fighting for a life unlimited for everyone affected by cystic fibrosis. Find out more.

www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk

Book Drive!

Next **Wednesday 10th February** at Millbrook,
Mrs Charlton and Mrs Crawshaw will be
hosting a 'book drive'. If you would like to
come down to Millbrook Primary School we will



be running a 'book stall' outside the front of school where you can bring your
child/ren to come and choose books to borrow and read at home over half term.
We ask that our usual control measures are followed: face coverings and social
distancing. Children can borrow up to 2 books each and we will have a selection of
banded books and AR banded books available! We look forward to seeing some of
you next week! 😊

The time slots are as follows:

10.00 - 10.20am Foundation (Otters&Beavers)

10.30 - 10.50am Year 1

1.00 – 1.20pm Year 4

11.00 – 11.20am Year 2

1.30 – 1.50pm Year 5

11.30 – 11.50am Year 3

2.00 – 2.20pm Year 6

NB: If you have children in different year groups, please select one of their year group time slots above and bring them all along.

Reading for Pleasure

Now that we are back in lockdown again, we
wanted to use this term's newsletter to share with
you some useful resources so that you may
continue to promote reading for pleasure whilst
at home. We know that reading skills play a
central role in a child's learning at school. Many



research studies have shown that the ability to read and understand complicated
information is important for success in education, in the workplace, and in everyday
life. The OECD report 'Reading for Change' found that the difference in reading ability
between a child who reads for pleasure for 30 minutes a day and one who never reads
was more than one year.

With libraries and book shops closed, it can be challenging to access a variety of books. However, there are a number of ways that you can still access quality texts during lockdown:

Accelerated Reader- Children in Year 4 and Year 5 have access to Accelerated Reader (AR). AR is a computer-based programme that helps teachers to track children's independent reading practice. Children are provided with a bespoke reading range, which means that they are able to select books within this reading range that are challenging to them but not too hard to read. This concept is called a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and we refer to books within children's range as books within their ZPD. On finishing a book, children log into AR and complete a short quiz on the book. The programme will tell them how well they have understood the text based on their results to the quiz. *AR recommends that children spend 30 minutes per day reading independently.* You can support your child at home by encouraging them to spend 30 minutes a day reading a book from within their ZPD. If your child is unsure of their ZPD, please ask them to contact their teacher via 'Ask the Teacher' on Teams. You can find out the book level of any book using this weblink: <https://www.arbookfind.co.uk>

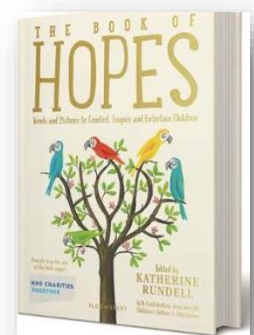




- **Millbrook's Storytelling Team-** Children in Years 1-6, who are accessing



Teams also have access to our Storytelling Team! Here, you will find videos of teachers reading stories, chapters and poems of some of their favourite texts, as well as quizzes, reading resources and a 'just for parents' section. With new content being added regularly, please do check it out!

- **The Literacy Trust-** The Literacy Trust are offering free access to 'The Book of Hopes'. This collection of short stories, poems, essays and pictures has contributions from more than 110 children's writers and illustrators, including Lauren Child, Anthony Horowitz, Greg James and Chris Smith, Michael Morpurgo, Liz Pichon, Axel Scheffler, Francesca Simon and Jacqueline Wilson. It can be found here <https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/9-12/book-hopes>



- **Virtual School Library**- Every week a popular children's author or illustrator will provide you with free books, exclusive videos and their top three recommended reads. You can access here: <https://library.thenational.academy>
- **Oxford Owl**- If you create an 'Oxford Owl for Home' account, you will be able to access advice and support, educational activities and games and a free ebook library for 3- to 11-year-olds. 
- **Overdrive**- If you are a member of a local library and have a library card, you can borrow and read free e-books, audiobooks, and magazines using your computer, phone or tablet. 

Live Meetings

Please note after half term live meetings will be at the following times:

9.10am: Year 3
9.30am: Year 2
9.50am: Year 1
10.10am: Year 4
10.40am: Year 6
11.00am: Year 5



Important dates for your diary



Wednesday 10th February: Book Stall at Millbrook

Friday 12th February: INSET day (teacher training day)

Monday 22nd February: Term 4 begins

Thursday 4th March: World Book Day (watch this space for further details!)

Stars of the Week!



Congratulations to the following children for being this week's Stars of the Week either at home or in school 😊

Beavers and Otters: All the children learning at home and at school

Dragonflies and Ducklings: Brodie & Louie

Badgers: Elliot H & Jack N

Butterflies: Orlah & Elara

Grebe: Esra & Lacey

Swallowtail: Noah & Faith

Frogs and Swans: All the children learning at home and at school

Kingfishers: Ethan & Patrik

Heron: Deri & Savannah

Weasels: Lillie & George

Pondskaters: Tommy

I wonder who our stars will be next week?

Times Tables Rockstars & Hit the Button



We have access to the Times Tables Rockstars online resource. This is popular amongst pupils as they can challenge themselves to improve their times tables as well as trying to improve the time it takes them to answer questions. Similarly, our younger pupils in Year 2 should endeavour to practise their skills on Hit the Button online resource, which aids their multiplication speed and fluency. Both links can be accessed from our school website using the links for children under the Home Learning Extra tab:

<https://www.millbrookschool.org.uk/home-learning-extra/>

Contacting you



Please make sure that we have the most up to date contact details for you. If your details have changed over the summer, please let the school office know:

office@millbrook.vale-academy.org

Safeguarding – What you can do



Parents and carers play a vital role in safeguarding children in their community. If you have any worries or concerns about a family or child, no matter how small, you can raise it with the school safeguarding team, contact the office or get advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This safeguarding hub seeks to enable the sharing of information so that risks to children can be identified at an early stage. It is a link between universal services, such as schools and GPs, and statutory services, such as police and social care. **If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on 0345 050 7666.**

This website is a useful place to find out about lots of support and information about a range of issues that may be worrying you:

[#https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/directory/practitioner_toolkit.page #](https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/directory/practitioner_toolkit.page)

Handwashing advice



It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside).

