



Millbrook Connect

Believe Achieve Succeed

Dear Parents and Carers,

It really has been great to get all the children and staff back in school. Despite some initial nerves and wobbles on the first day, the children were so excited to return, and very much appreciated the 'warm welcome' that awaited them – see the 'Project Welcome Back' article later on for photos of what school looked like upon their return. Never has our school motto - *believe, achieve, succeed* - been so relevant! These past few weeks our children have done just that, and it has been wonderful to see them re-connecting with their classmates, re-establishing routines and moving forwards! They really are amazing.

All teachers took the first two weeks 'back' to have 1:1 reading meetings with every child in their class. They have listened to them read, discussed books and their reading preferences, and ensured they are reading a book at their correct level - hopefully your child will have brought home their new reading book/s for you to share together.

We also welcomed Ofsted for a monitoring visit last week to see the progress we are making. We are pleased to say that it was a very positive visit and validated the actions that we have undertaken. More details to follow once the 'official' letter is published.

Do read on to find out more about Red Nose Day, the recent MP visit, and our new Millbrook Building Learning Power astronauts – Mae and Buzz! We also have the results of our recent parent and pupil survey to share with you. Happy reading!

Mrs Faye Charlton Mrs Laura Youngman

Head(s) of School

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Storytelling Team

Don't forget to check out our brilliant **Storytelling Team** for access to new videos of teachers reading stories and poems; podcast recommendations; support for parents; links to some great websites and quizzes to try! More content is regularly added so please do 'pop in!' If there is a book that you would like us to read – let us know on the team!



MBK Storytelling - We love reading!





Project 'Welcome back'

On the last Friday before the full re-opening of school, our staff and children in school spent the day preparing for the return of all our Millbrook family. Friday involved lots of balloon blowing, colouring, sticking, making and creating – there were banners, paperchains, personalised messages and cards, and lots and lots of balloons! We must thank Mrs Nic Packard from our Year 6 Team who came up with the idea – what a brilliant surprise to ease those first day back nerves! ☺



Spotlight On...



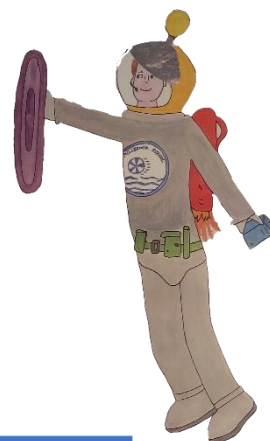
This week the spotlight is on our... **Building Learning Powers (BLP)!**

At the heart of our Millbrook motto 'Believe, Achieve, Succeed' is our aspiration for our children to be lifelong learners, confident to use their 'learning power' in whatever they choose to do. The six key learning skills that form our 'Building Learning Power' offer at Millbrook are integral to achieving this and an important part teaching and learning at Millbrook.



This term has involved exciting developments for Building Learning Power (BLP) at Millbrook, with the launch of our Learning Power superheroes, **Buzz** and **Mae**, named after the astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Mae Jemison (a 'launch' in many senses of the word! ☺)

These astronaut superheroes wear handy tools as part of their outfits which resemble our six key skills:



The 6 items in the astronauts' toolkits correspond to the 6 key skills at Millbrook:



Radio: Collaboration (Term 1)

Shield: Managing distractions (Term 2)

Lightbulb helmet: Questioning and Reasoning (Term 3)

Jetpack: Perseverance (Term 4)

Belt: Resourcefulness (Term 5)

Mirror visor: Reflection and Improving (Term 6)

As listed above, we have a focus on teaching one of the skills explicitly each term but continue to recognise and celebrate the other five skills simultaneously. On Fridays, two children in each class are awarded 'BLP champion' lanyards for showing one or more of these skills. We love presenting these lanyards because this reward represents a tangible change in the learning habits of the children across a variety of lessons, an important step forward in their learning.



The design of our BLP superhero astronauts was created through a collaborative approach between Charlie N in Year 4 and Dexter in Year 6. We are so proud of their thoughtful ideas in choosing items that matched perfectly with each skill, as well as their fantastic artistic designs. We love our Millbrook learning superheroes and look forward to

powering our learning with Buzz and Mae next term!

Curriculum Update!

It has been amazing to have all of our children back in school and to observe how brilliantly they have settled back into their learning in the classroom; we have also loved celebrating their amazing efforts and high-quality pieces of work! Well done everyone!



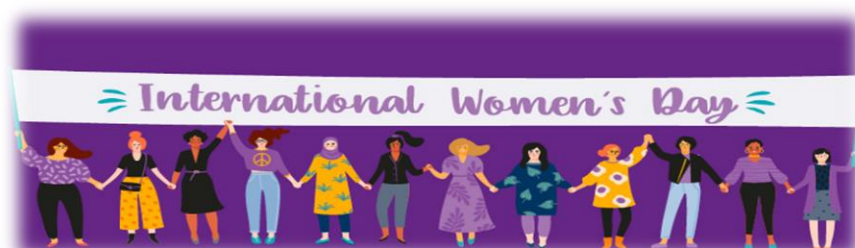
To support children with their return to school, we have focused closely on providing time for children to 'reconnect' with their peers and to feel settled and happy in school. As part of this, we have continued with our 'special people' assemblies and have prioritised opportunities for children to discuss their feelings and learning over lockdown.

We also enjoyed celebrating *International Women's Day* on 8th March by talking about women who have inspired us – lots of mums and female family members were mentioned as role models that our children look up to and admire!

We have continued on our exciting journey to develop our wider curriculum over the lockdown period and are feeling excited about the term ahead. Miss Wood recently led an excellent staff meeting to share our new Art curriculum covering a range of artists and media, and Tom Holloway (VAT Science lead) has worked with staff to develop and enhance their Science planning for the term ahead. We can't wait to put it into practice!

Please look out for the learning overviews that will be sent home to explain what your child/ren will be learning after Easter!

Finally, just a reminder that for **years 1 -6, homework (home learning) is now on Teams!** It has been great to see the fabulous work that has been produced already – for more details and reminders about how this will work after Easter, the letter with all of the details can be found here: <https://www.millbrookschool.org.uk/online-platform/>



School Development Priorities

Lots of work has already been completed towards our SDP this year and we wanted to give you a short update about the great things that 'Team Millbrook' have achieved!

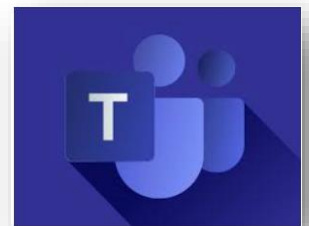
Continue to 're-build' the wider curriculum so that each subject has a clear intent and progression and lessons are coherently sequenced and planned.

- ✓ Staff professional development sessions have taken place linked to many areas of our curriculum, for example Art.
- ✓ New learning overviews have been developed with a '**big question**' and meaningful end product to ensure that children understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. We are looking forward to developing these further!



To fully embed the TEAMS digital platform to enhance opportunities for 'learning at home'; staff collaboration and school operations

- ✓ TEAMS was used to provide an enhanced learning offer and to improve communication during the recent lockdown – thank you for your positive feedback!
- ✓ We are continuing to use TEAMS now that we are back in school to share children's homework; to enhance learning in the classroom and to aid staff collaboration and planning. Look out for some new videos on the 'Storytelling Team' soon from our Year 6 children!



To maintain a rigorous approach to the teaching of reading across the school that develops learners' confidence and enjoyment of reading

- ✓ Staff professional development sessions have taken place for reading this term including the launch of the new VAT Reading Framework!
- ✓ Work continues on growing our 'Millbrook Reading Spine'. The aim of this 'spine' is to expose our children to contemporary and modern literature that encourages thinking about diversity, and challenges 'norms' and stereotypes. This includes a full range of text types: longer class novels; picture books; 'classic' texts; traditional tales from around the world, and other text types including graphic novels. Non-fiction is also recognised as being as important as fiction and encouraged as a valid reading choice – such a text type is introduced from nursery. Poems and rhymes also have their rightful place as a valid and valued text type.

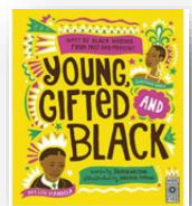
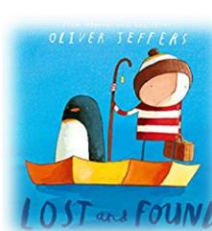
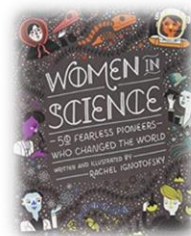


Photo Gallery of Learning at Millbrook – March '21







MP Visit to Millbrook



Mr Rose and I were delighted to welcome Mr David Johnstone MP to Millbrook for a socially-distanced tour of the school recently.

David has been the Member of Parliament for Wantage since the general election in December 2019. Before he became an MP he was the Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation for ten years. He was also a member of the Social Mobility Commission and also sits on the education committee.

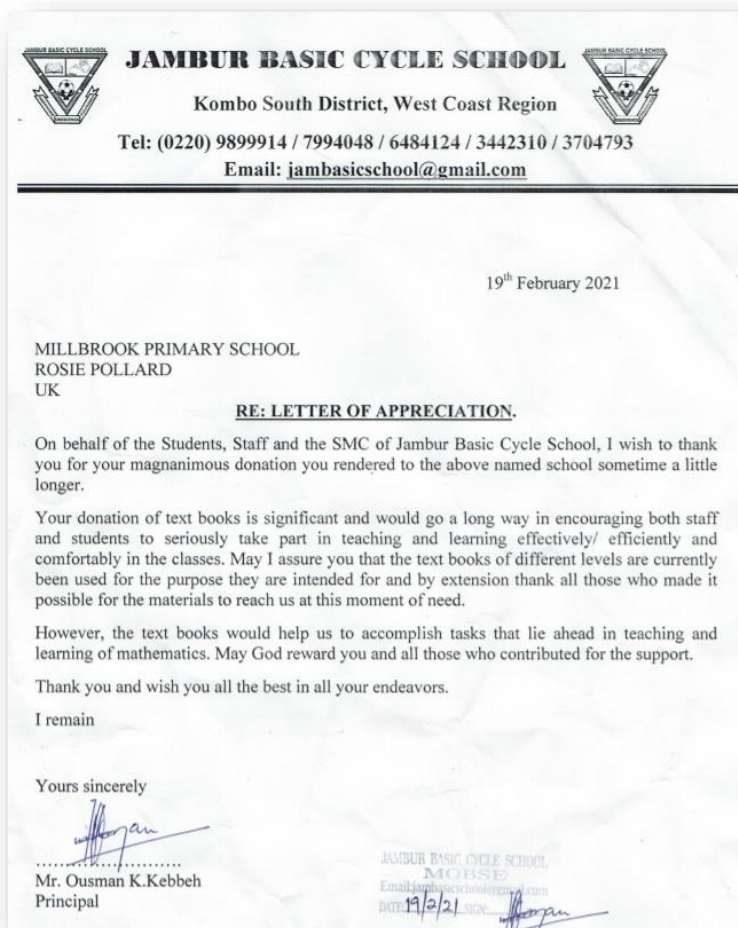
Although our conversation was restricted a little through wearing face masks inside, and keeping at a distance, David started with an introduction about his life as an MP and his role within the constituency. He said he really enjoyed his work in Wantage and Didcot and is particularly keen to visit as many schools as possible to gather, first hand, the challenges school are facing at this present time.

Children that were attending school on the day asked a variety of interesting and probing questions ranging from his opinion of Boris Johnson to whether or not he enjoys playing Fortnite!

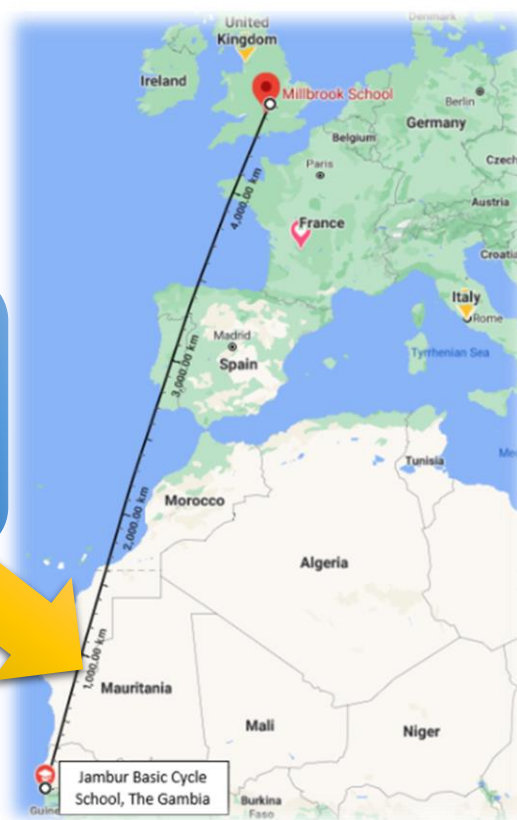
We would very much like to thank and welcome back Mr Johnstone, at another time, especially as many children, of course, didn't get the chance to ask their questions. I am particularly keen that David gets to meet and undertake a 'Q and A' session from our Head boy and girl!

Millbrook Books to The Gambia

Back in January 2019, Mrs Donnellan made contact with a school in The Gambia, West Africa, called the Jambur Basic Cycle School. They were in desperate need of basic necessities, including textbooks. After a long process of communication, around 400 textbooks were sent from



Millbrook and finally shipped from Portsmouth in August 2020. Over three months later, they arrived at Jambur. The children and staff were hugely appreciative to receive them! And then a few weeks ago (March 2021), we received a letter of appreciation from the school! Well done Millbrook! 😊



Did you know?

There are 2,784.41 miles between our schools. How cool that there are children using our Millbrook books all that distance away!

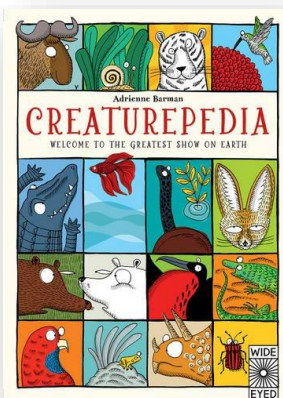




Book Corner! Looking for a good book? In this section, we have asked two of our teachers to recommend a book they've enjoyed recently!

For our younger readers, Mrs Youngman recommends...

Creaturepedia by Adrienne Barman



This book is a huge favourite in my house; my daughter absolutely loves it and we have read it hundreds of times together!

If you love non-fiction books about animals and want to find out lots of weird and wonderful facts about them, this book is definitely for you! The cartoon illustrations are fantastic and the books groups animals into all sorts of interesting, and funny, categories, for example 'the poisonous', 'the giants' and 'the architects!'

I have learnt about so many different creatures and have loved reading this book myself – I hope that you will enjoy it too! Happy reading!

For our older readers, Mrs Charlton recommends...

The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd



This book begins when Ted and Kat watch their cousin Salim get on board the London Eye, he turns and waves before getting on but after half an hour, it lands and everyone troops off - but no Salim! Where could he have gone? How on earth could he have disappeared into thin air?! Since the police are having no luck finding him, Ted and Kat become sleuthing partners. Despite their prickly relationship, they overcome their differences to follow a trail of clues across London in a desperate bid to find their cousin. And ultimately it comes down to Ted, whose brain works in its own very unique way, to find the key to the mystery.

This really is one of those "unputdownable" (!) spine-tingling thrillers – you will love it, trust me!

Have you read a good book recently? If you have let your teacher know and hopefully we can include it in our next edition of Millbrook Connect!



Parent and Pupil Survey

Feedback from all members of our Millbrook family is incredibly important in helping us shape the future of our school. Earlier this term, we invited parents, carers and pupils to provide their views via our annual surveys to help us identify what we are doing well and what we could do to make Millbrook even better.

114 parents and carers responded and we have been delighted with the feedback that we have received. We wanted to share a few of the key headlines below. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the surveys for us – it is very much appreciated!

Parent survey

- **97%** feel that the school is well led and managed
- **97%** would recommend Millbrook to another parent
- **90%** have felt confident in the school's risk assessments and plans to keep those working or learning in the school safe
- **97%** feel that communication is regular, clear and effective

Pupil survey

- **100%** of pupils feel safe at Millbrook School
- **99%** of pupils are happy at Millbrook School
- **97%** of pupils feel that the school provides everything that they need to learn well
- **94%** of pupils would recommend Millbrook to another child

One area that pupils suggested would make our school even better was to develop the outside area and provide more equipment at playtimes – we will be looking into this in the future!

Once again, thank you to all of you that completed the survey.



Red Nose Day!



On **Friday 19th March** at Millbrook, we hosted Red Nose Day 2021. Children were invited to come to school dressed up as either a superhero or in crazy clothes

in exchange for them bringing in a

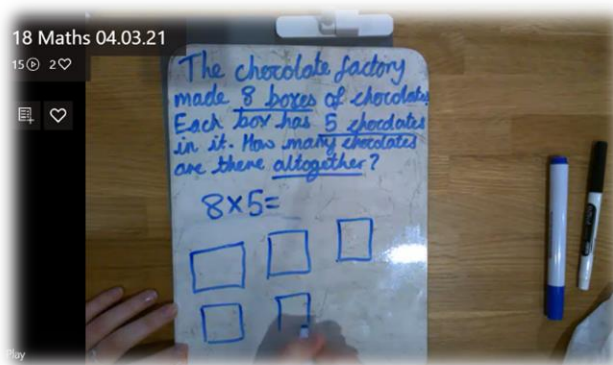
donation for Red Nose day causes. In the afternoon, the different bubbles hosted talent and achievement shows. There were cartwheels, keepy-uppies, knitting and karate to name but a few! It was a brilliant day and saw Millbrook raise a whopping £270.72! Well done Team Millbrook!



Thank you Alumasc!

Due to their close relationship working with the Vale Academy Trust over the past few years, we were recently approached by Alumasc regarding the donation of some funds for IT equipment to help with the new demands for online learning.

This kind and thoughtful donation from Alumasc (£1,000!!) help to purchase a visualiser for each teacher (at Millbrook and Charlton) to enhance remote learning preparation and delivery through TEAMS. These have been a huge success and greatly appreciated by staff at both schools. Now with remote teaching coming to an end these excellent visualisers will find new homes and use in the classroom helping to further enhance the more typical day to day provision we are returning to.



Left: OKIOLABS OKIOCAM A3 Visualiser

Right: Visualiser in action in a Y3 maths lesson!

Our thanks and appreciation again to Alumasc for this kind and generous donation.



THANK YOU!

We would like to say on behalf of all the staff at Millbrook a HUGE thank you to our parent community. This absolutely made our week when it arrived last Friday!

Thank you so much to Laura Drake and our lovely parents for arranging this treat for our staff! It really did mean the world after a very challenging few months for everyone.

From now on, there'll be no set of better-smelling, smoother-skinned staff in any school in the land! Just look at how happy Mr Law and Mr Jacques are with their gifts! ☺



Important dates for your diary



Wednesday 31st March: End of Term 4 (12pm finish)

Monday 19th April: Term 5 begins

Tuesday 11th May: Travelling Book Fair arrives at Millbrook

Friday 14th May: 'Pyjamarama' – *Millbrook's alternative to World Book Day this year!* Pyjamarama is all about getting children excited about reading, and fundraising to make sure every child gets their bedtime story (watch this space for further details!)

Stars of the Term!



Congratulations to the following children for being this term's Stars of the Term!

Beavers: Emily

Otters: Elodie

Dragonflies: Thea

Ducklings: Ethan D

Badgers: Kiyra

Butterflies: Eva

Grebe: James S

Swallowtail: Milly

Frogs: Alfie H

Swans: Jaydee

Kingfishers: Grace W

Heron: Max

Weasels: Finley

Pondskaters: Harry

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).

