



Millbrook Connect

Believe Achieve Succeed

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have made it to the end of the Autumn term 2022! This is also my first time writing to you as full-time 'solo' Head of School of Millbrook! 😊 We've had a brilliant term – we've welcomed new staff, new children, and lots of new additions to our school including a science 'Phizz Lab'; Geography and History wall-art installations; new log-seating in Forest School; new toilets throughout the school, and ongoing refurbishments to our learning environments. We've also not had the easiest of terms though either: the heart-breaking news about Mr Baish's wife, Alex was a shock for us all. I know I stand for all of us when I say that we miss him and continue to send him our love and support. Do read on, to find a message from Mr Baish himself, to you – our parent community – as I know he has been so incredibly touched by all of your kind messages. Its times like these when friends and family really are everything, and I for one, feel so lucky to be part of such a caring and compassionate school community.

As we now approach the Christmas break, I just want to wish you all a very merry Christmas and hope that you manage to find some quiet, relaxing time amongst the mayhem! For now, snuggle up on the sofa with a nice mug of hot chocolate and enjoy this 'bumper' edition of MBK Connect!

Mrs Charlton Head of School

In This Issue:

- ☐ **Millbrook Manners in the Community**
- ☐ **Spotlight on.... Pond Patrol!**
- ☐ **Teaching and Learning Update**
- ☐ **Year 6 Residential**
- ☐ **Bike Ability – The Mix in Wantage**
- ☐ **Operation Christmas Cheer**
- ☐ **BOOK CORNER**
- ☐ **A Message from Mr Baish**
- ☐ **Parent Governor – would you like to join our LGB?**
- ☐ **Stars of the term**



Millbrook Manners in the Community



Our Parents...

This edition sees our Millbrook Manners in the Community focusing on some of our amazing parents who have supported our ongoing drive to improve our outdoor playground space! Jodie and Sian left the AGM FROM meeting determined to make a difference after



hearing about our desire to improve our playgrounds this year. The dynamic duo then found



some 'inspo' from Pinterest and before long were out in the community sourcing paint and chairs to make their idea a reality! MASSIVE thank you to **Reeds in Wantage** for



donating the paint and also to for the chairs. The Reception and KS1 playground now have a 'bus' each and a 'jet-ski'. Thank you so much Jodie and Sian! The children and all of us at MBK are so grateful to you for your kindness and support! 😊

Our Children...

In addition to our parents doing amazing things, our children are also showing their Millbrook Manners out in the community! Mrs Charlton received this wonderful email earlier this month:



"I am the leader of 4th Grove Brownies and I would like to say how impressed I am with 5 of your pupils who attended the unit. Yesterday evening, we had an external visitor come in and do a talk on hair hygiene and show them some tips and tricks before they practiced on each other. During the session, they all worked really hard, listened wonderfully, asked questions and worked extremely well

together when doing each other's hair. The pupils' names are Cleo and Sophia, Millie, Darcey and Eloise.

I would like to say a big well done to them!"

Great stuff girls – we are all so proud of you! What a wonderful email this was to receive! 😊



Spotlight On...

This term the spotlight is on... **POND PATROL!**

Last Friday, the 'Pond Patrol' spent the afternoon monitoring the water levels in the two small ponds and figuring out what could be done by them to improve the pond area. The patrollers had lots of ideas! We began with clearing the path, filling the bug hotel, and even building the start of some small benches! It was great to be out in nature with

the children, and seeing their enthusiasm towards it and the ecosystems we have right on our doorstep. In January, the large pond will be bought back to life with the installation of a new liner, kindly funded by FROM – thank you! Pond Patrol is currently made up of a small group from Year 5, and

earlier in the year they organised a non-school uniform day to raise money for enhancements to the area (they raised an impressive £200!) and they have also recently written to Alan Titchmarsh, inviting him to the school! Keep your eyes peeled for their update and hopefully his response!



School Development Priorities & Teaching and Learning update



As a school, we are really keen to share our development journey with our parents and carers, and we hope that you enjoy reading the latest updates about our key priorities as a school!

Key Priority : High-quality teaching

Focus on ensuring high-quality teaching for all – every day; every class. Improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching through adoption the '5-a-day' approach and instructional coaching to help achieve high quality teaching and learning



✓ We began the academic year with a staff training session during our INSET day in September, where we looked at the 5 areas that constitute 'high-quality teaching' for all children including SEND. We have subsequently held a series of staff training sessions focusing on different areas such as 'flexible grouping'; 'cognitive and metacognitive strategies' with the latter being delivered jointly by MBK and Charlton Primary School by Mrs Charlton and Mrs Campbell.

✓ The Senior Leadership Team have continued to look at books and speak to children about their curriculum– we have been delighted to see some amazing learning and to hear the children talk about the curriculum so passionately! It is clear that children are enjoying lessons; remembering their learning and are making links which will help it 'stick!' We know that they are enjoying their regular 'recap' mini-quizzes!



✓ We have welcomed both Richard Evans (CEO of Vale Academy Trust) and Hazel Pittard (Director of Learning for the Vale Academy Trust) into school twice this term to conduct learning walks across each class in the school. Mr Evans, Mrs Pittard, Mr Rose and Mrs Charlton all commented upon how the teachers in each class were really making a difference to the children's learning, with lots of elements of our '5-a-day' high



quality teaching approach being seen. In addition, the children in every class were engaged, curious and keen to talk about their learning!



Year 6 Residential

What would make the start to a brand-new school year even more challenging?! Year 6 decided that travelling to The Brecon Beacons in Wales just 3 days into the new term would suffice! 45 children and 5 adults packed their bags, boarded the coach and set off - excited for the new experiences that lay ahead!!

The sun was shining as we headed over the bridge to our first stop: Magor Services. Not particularly scenic, but we did acquire four more passengers: meet Myfanwy, Bryn, Carys and Ffion – four welsh dragons. They decided to come along for our adventures over the



following five days and, of course, back at Millbrook for the rest of Year 6!

On arrival, we discovered a 'village' of pods that were to be our homes for the coming week and we soon settled in. For many of the children, this was the first time away without parents and so the concept of unpacking was new too! Neatly packed cases soon became piles of shoes and



clothes that were promptly shoved under beds and into sleeping bags at the mention of room inspections!

Spirits remained high as the first activity approached. Some were faced with wet challenges including giant SUPs (Stand-Up Paddleboards) and others stayed on dry land ... for now...!



As the first night approached, thoughts turned to the next important part of the trip ... dinner! The children queued politely and showed their Millbrook Manners of course although the noise in the dining room got incredibly loud as the children shared their experiences of their first day.

Now as the children had been so busy they were obviously tired and so bedtime was calm and all the children went straight to sleep ... said no one ever! The levels of

excitement continued to grow and the adults braced themselves for a long evening ahead ... made slightly easier by the chocolate, sweets and biscuits that had made their way into the luggage!

After a not-so-good-night's sleep the adults and children alike awoke to sun and the beautiful view over the Brecon Beacons. There was just time to squeeze in breakfast (and seconds for some) before another full day of activities ranging from climbing and caving to archery and rifle shooting. Each and every one of the Year 6s did themselves proud and pushed themselves to heights they didn't think they could; literally for some.

It was always easy to tell which groups had done wet

activities that day: along with the wet clothing came the unmistakable smell of the lake that looked so inviting but was actually quite stinky!



Each and every child (and adult) had their own favourite activity and also those that caused anxiety (Miss Willis didn't fancy

the wet stuff much and Mrs Stockwell showed real fear when faced with the climbing wall) but each and everyone of the group showed great perseverance and resilience; values that will support them through the rest of the school year.

We even managed to celebrate a birthday while we were away!



We made new friends, we faced new challenges and most importantly we laughed ... a lot and we did it together as a fantastic new group of Year 6s.



Well done Year 6 – you did Millbrook proud! Mrs Randall



History Timeline and Geography art installations!

Check out our new Geography and History art installations that have been added to Millbrook this term! As you can see the maps and the timeline have been enjoyed from our youngest to oldest pupils! A massive thank you to the Millbrook Alumni whose 'Just Giving' page donations made this possible! 😊





The Mix

Firstly, we want to say a HUGE thank you to The Mix. The Mix is a community action group located on Mill Street in Wantage. They kindly provided our children with several bikes to not only use during bike ability but to keep after as well!!! They supplied the children with helmets, lights, bicycle pumps and



puncture-repair kits. Several members of the Mix team came to deliver the bikes to the children so they could check the bikes and helmets all fitted properly. We are so grateful that all of our children now have a bike to ride and that they are able to practise their bike-ability skills whenever they want to! THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!!

Bike Ability

In term 1, our Year 6 children all took part in bike ability training. The training consisted of 2 levels. Level 1 involved children practicing their maneuvers and how to cycle safely on roads. Children took to the roads during level 2, to gain confidence and refine their cycling skills.

Our children loved the training and it will help them to keep cycling safely while they are out and about!



Operation Christmas Cheer!!!!



Operation Christmas Cheer is something we began at Millbrook during Covid and decided to continue moving forward as it is such a brilliant way to show our community what they mean to us! Each year we choose members of local community who we want to say 'thank you' to! The children then make a piece of artwork which we then present to them! This year, we took it one step further though and invited our guests in to a special assembly at the end of term where the children had prepared mini-speeches to accompany their year group's artwork, explaining why we



were thankful for them! It really was the most heart-warming occasion and I for one as Head of Millbrook School felt so incredibly proud! A massive thank you to all of our visitors for making the time to come in and see us and receive their artwork They also has the opportunity to have tea and mince-pies afterwards! More photos of this wonderful event follow on the next page!😊

Our nominated community members were:

Nursery – Tesco Express in Grove

Foundation - Grove Library

Year 1 - Postal service

Year 2 - Fire station

Year 3 – Elmbrook Care Home

Year 4 - The Mix in Wantage

Year 5 – Thames Valley Police

Year 6 - Costa in Grove

Nest - Edwards and Ward (our catering company)



Also, a special thank you to Tesco in Grove who not only attended our Operation Christmas Cheer assembly but brought with them a box of toys that had been donated by their customers to our school!



Our School Christmas Tree!

Thank you very much to **Mike Hissey** who so very kindly donated a beautiful, real Christmas tree to our school! As you can see the children absolutely loved it! ☺



Book Corner!

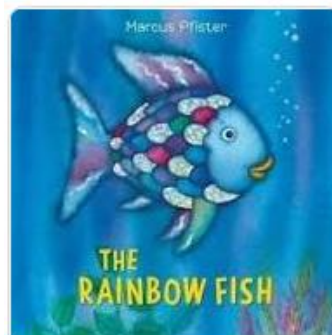
Looking for a good book? In this section, we have asked two of our teachers to recommend a book they've enjoyed recently!



For our younger readers, Miss Farthing recommends...



The Rainbow Fish is a brilliant, heart-warming book about a fish who discovers how sharing can create friendships. This book is great in discussing kindness and how we can make the right choices in day-to-day life.



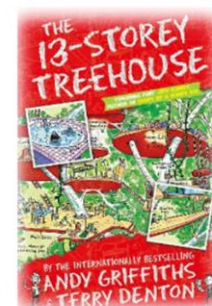
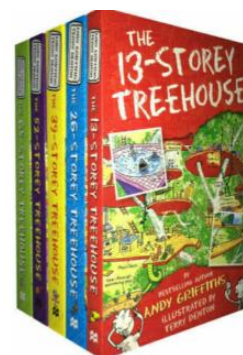
Children often enjoy the colourful pages and talking about what they would do if they were in Rainbow Fish's shoes (or scales)!



For our older readers, Miss Nyland recommends...



My recommendation is 'The 13-Storey Treehouse' by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton. I personally really enjoy these books because they include humour, adventures and brilliant illustrations. I was reminded of these books when someone in Frogs class was telling me about their new favourite book! The story follows Andy and Terry who need to get their next book written but it is seeming impossible, because there are just so many distractions while living in a thirteen story-treehouse!



A Message from Mr Baish

Hi everyone,

Breaking the fourth wall momentarily to say how much of a pleasure it was being back at school today with 'Little Baby Rosie Posie', as her older brother likes to call her.

It was a reminder, not that I really needed it, of just how wonderful our staff and students are at Millbrook, and how lucky I am to still be a part of the Millbrook family.

Everyone's positivity and support has kept me going so much over the last few weeks and I will forever be grateful for that.

It was brilliant to pop into Kingfishers class, and to see how hard-working and focused they all were; it was a lovely, warm atmosphere and I'd like to pay special thanks to Mrs Jackman for doing such an amazing job in my absence - trust me, they're in very good hands!

I think about Millbrook every single day and I miss it dearly. I will be back, and I want everyone to know that I'm OK, and my children are fine, and I'm appreciating every day with them.

I'm already working hard to help as many people as possible who are going through, or will go through, what my wife experienced, and I'm determined for more good than bad to come from this situation.

Thanks, and see you all again soon. 🤗

Mr Baish





Want to become a Parent Governor? We need you!

Season's greetings!

Recently we put out an opportunity for a new school parent governor to join the small local governing body (LGB) at Millbrook. Sadly, we didn't get any responses at all, so I thought as the only current parent governor I would write a small hello and see if I could get people thinking over the festive period about the possibility starting 2023 with an exciting and rewarding challenge – slightly different from the usual new year's resolutions!

The first question on most minds of course, is what does a parent governor actually do?! Well, after almost a year in the post, honestly, I'm still figuring that out myself! A quick google will tell you that we are in a unique position, the parental viewpoint – having first-hand experience of the curriculum and the ethos of the school through our children.

I have always felt the teachers have had my children's best interests at heart, since they both started with Mrs Betts and the team in Nursery. And it's not just been the teachers, but the teaching assistants, the support staff, and the senior leadership team too. My two little ones have their own unique challenges and personalities, and I couldn't be prouder to say my children go to Millbrook.



So, I have always felt, 'how can I give back?' and 'how can I support and help develop this wonderful school environment in the years to come?' The answer was to become a parent governor!!

First and foremost, we are here to ask questions, with the single most important goal of the LGB to aspire to excellent teaching standards for all children across the school. This means working closely with Mrs Charlton and the senior leadership team to set short and long-term goals; ensure

resources are well spent, and monitor standards across the school. There are a number of other important tasks too, but I won't list them all here, this piece is more to raise awareness, get people thinking, and to tell you that in the role you have the opportunity to have a voice and help shape how the school develops over the coming years.

I won't lie, there is a fair amount of essential material to consume. But you don't have to know it all off by heart. It simply wouldn't be possible! There is also a wealth of additional information that, if you wanted to, you could access through the privileges of the training modules available to you. You also aren't alone – Joanna, the current clerk, is super helpful and the rest of the LGB is filled with lovely people who are all enthusiastic about the school and doing the best we can. There is lots of support.

Having been my first reaction, I appreciate that some will feel "I don't think I have the time". Working full time in a very hectic and demanding job, and with two young children who take up my almost every spare moment, I felt the same. But my overriding desire to support my children, their friends, and the wider children in my local community meant I simply couldn't look the other way and expect, or at least hope, someone else stepped up.

We currently meet roughly every other month, and the meetings last two hours. In preparation for the meetings there is material uploaded about a week in advance to read through at your leisure. So, all in all, I don't find myself worrying, "when am I going to read/research that".

Overall, I'm pleased with how the school is performing and the direction we are taking, but, like the rest of the LGB, I strive for continuous improvement. So, my final thought for those who have stuck with my ramblings, wouldn't we all like to have some positive input and impact on our children's education? With this role, you do!

If anyone would like to chat more, I would be happy to do so. Alternatively, I'm sure that Mrs Charlton or someone else from the LGB would also be happy to hear from any interested individuals. You can also find out more information about the LGB on the school website: <https://www.millbrookschool.org.uk/governors-4/>

I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and New Year,

James



Stars of the Term



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

Beavers: Dion

Otters: Scarlett

Dragonflies: Shantaya

Ducklings: Megan

Badgers: Marshall

Butterflies: Mason M-A

Foxes: Phoebe

Swallowtail: Cleo

Frogs: Millie

Swans: William

Kingfishers: Lacey

Hérons: Akira

Kites: Millie

Kestrels: Claire



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Vehicle idling – please STOP!

Unnecessary vehicle idling is a contributor to local air pollution and increased health risk to the children at Millbrook. One of the areas where unnecessary idling occurs the most is at schools by parents waiting to drop off and pick up their children.

We have included a fact sheet with this letter to give you more information on the hazards of idling and to help illustrate just why this issue is so critical.

We are encouraging parents to make an informal "No Idling" pledge and that you become an active participant in improving air quality and reducing health risks by eliminating idling within the school pick up zone.

The simple but critical change in behaviour of idling your vehicle will drastically improve the air quality in the community and the air your children breathe.

Thank you for pledging your support.

Idling Reduction Fact Sheet

Did you know?

- Each of us takes 20,000 breaths each day
- The average person breathes 3,400 gallons of air a day
- Children breathe 50 percent more air per pound than adults
- Vehicle exhaust is a key contributor to air pollution
- Idling wastes more fuel than turning your vehicle engine off and on again

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 recently, please let the school office know:

officemb@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).

