

Learning-Laughing-Achieving

Key Workers

These two young men were so pleased to see Daddy last night when he got home; it was the first night in a long time that he has made it home before they have been tucked up in bed. He is leading a brilliant team of doctors and nurses in the fight against Covid-19. Together, they are on the front line every day working incredibly long hours in pressurised conditions to try and help members of the public who have contracted the virus. It is so important that we continue to follow the government guidance to keep ourselves and staff working for the NHS safe, and ensure that the need for ICU beds doesn't exceed capacity.

Stay Home - Protect the NHS - Save Lives.

Key workers: please email me photos of your children with you to mrjsclosure@millrythe-jun.hants.sch.uk so that we can share the difference you are making to our community at this time. I know this is not something that key workers would feel comfortable doing as they don't like or seek the limelight, but I would like to celebrate the amazing people they are and the jobs they are doing.



School Closure

I have been touched this week by the care that I am seeing by so many people in our Mill Rythe Family. Whether that is parents who are volunteering to deliver food packages or finding the time to write to me and share what they and their families are doing or thinking of new and creative ways to learn, laugh and achieve alongside their children; staff who are working in school with the children of parents who are key workers and making sure they are both happy and safe each day as well as engaged in great learning and fun, teachers who are investing so much time in planning great activities for our children to do at home or making time to have proper conversations with children and parents over the phone and most importantly our children who have just blown me away with their positivity and the quality of the work they are producing. Well done everyone.



Safeguarding and Mental Health

Keeping our children safe is the most important aspect of our work as a school. Our approach to this at a time when so many of our children are not in school has to evolve alongside so many other school systems. There is a crucial role for parents and carers to play in this process at this time and if you have any concerns about the safeguarding of yourself or your family please contact me directly via d.bessant@millrythe-jun.hants.sch.uk

This is also a time when due to the nature of home learning for many children and also the increased time at home, some children may be accessing the internet for extended periods of time. I would encourage everyone to look at our e-safety page from the school website which signposts a number of excellent websites to support parents and families with how to access the internet safely.

<http://www.millrythejunior.co.uk/e-saftey/>

Attached to the email with this newsletter is a great leaflet entitled, 'You're never too young to talk mental health.' Please take a little time this weekend to read this during the weekend. Again, if you would like to talk to me about anything related to safeguarding or mental health and well-being for your children or yourselves please do contact me at school. This is not an easy time and whilst Instagram and facebook may be full of lovely images I know that for many of us this is a really challenging time.



Easter Opening and home learning

We will be remaining open across the Easter holidays for children whose parents are working to stop the spread of Covid-19. The home learning section of the school website will be updated this weekend with some optional learning and fun activities for children to complete in the first week of the Easter holiday. Please do continue to share what you are doing as a family with me via, mrjsclosure@millrythe-jun.hants.sch.uk



Phone Calls

I have loved the messages from parents, children and staff this week following phone calls that have been made to you at home. Our teachers have captured some of these conversations and emotions below:

3SW

We have really enjoyed talking to our children and parents this week-we miss them all so much! It seems we have some budding bakers in our class as so many of them have been busy in the kitchen making cakes and biscuits! It was lovely to hear that they are working so hard on the home learning we have been sending and to hear some of the facts they have learnt about Roman life. Wyatt was able to tell me how old he was in Spanish and ask me how old I was (I didn't know the Spanish numbers high enough to answer him though!) Freddie is challenging himself with some extra maths, Stanley is enjoying reading Horrid Henry books, Leo has moved the furniture in his living room to keep up with his gymnastics and Tommy has been learning more about volcanoes and has smashed the leader board on Timetables Rockstars by playing 124 games in less than a week! Keep up the brilliant learning 3SW, we miss you and can't wait to see you all again!



3IC

3IC were left guessing which of their teachers was going to be calling them this week - Miss Ifould or Mrs Chessell! Half the class had the pleasure of speaking to Miss Ifould whilst the other half spoke to Miss Chessell. It has been lovely to talk to so many of you this week and hear about how well you have all been getting on with home learning. Grace spoke so enthusiastically to Miss Ifould about the planting she has been doing at home and how she has created a greenhouse in her porch. Riley ended up doing double school work in one day by accident but then gave himself a well-deserved INSET day the following day! Tilly has been building Lego creations which she described in detail to Mrs Chessell. While Maya and Martha had a long chat about all the home learning they are working so hard on. It has been so lovely to hear how many of you have enjoyed being outside in your gardens enjoying the warm weather. We are both really proud of how hard you are all working and miss you all a great deal.



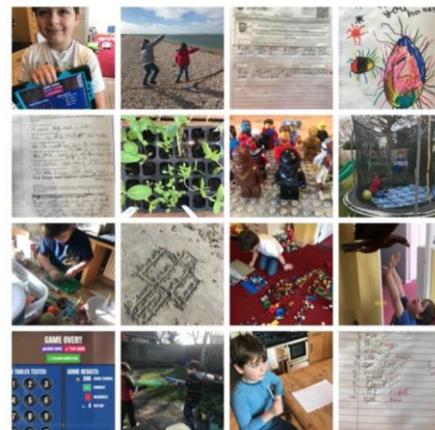
4AT

It has been lovely to speak to families and children this week. Many children have shared with me the fantastic work they have been doing at home. Matthew took the time to read me his diary entry as a Monk at Lindisfarne. He read with confidence and expression and has clearly spent the time learning about what happened. Riley shared with me his excitement of doing some cross-stitch patterns and I was able to share with him some of the cross-stitches I have been doing too. I am pleased that so many families have embraced home schooling and I know at times it isn't easy. The work you are all putting in for your children is invaluable and will ensure, when they come back to school, they will be at a great advantage in their learning. Thank you for everything you are doing and keep up the good work!



4SH

It has been great to speak to lots of members of 4SH and their families this week! Sammy was the first to receive an 'over the phone' house point for his fantastic poem all about a tiger and I am looking forward to seeing the end product of Freya's Solar System project. Alice has been promoted to 4SH Spanish teacher on our return after her excellent song about Spanish colours that she sang to me before sharing her new knowledge of classroom objects. It has been lovely to hear how some of the children have been video calling each other to remotely stay in touch too. I am very proud of how each of them has responded to this situation, being very ambitious and creative in their home learning and finding new ways to have fun indoors. They have proven to be very resilient and brave but none of this would have happened without you being right beside them with your unwavering support (and probably recently more patience too). I look forward to speaking to everyone I haven't managed to speak to yet. Look after each other and stay safe.



4MC

It has been amazing to see some of the photos that have been sent into Mr Bessant and shared on our Instagram page and speaking to parents and children on the phone has been great fun this week! I have been really impressed with the commitment the children have shown towards continuing their education as well as managing to build in some exciting, creative activities too! It was lovely to hear that Riley had been enjoying keeping fit on the trampoline as well as reading lots and writing a range of stories before bed - I would love to read some of these when we get back to school! Lorenzo has been busy making a tsunami, making pizzas and also completed some independent learning about volcanoes. He loved learning about the Viking long boats. It's a shame we didn't get to build our own models of these at school as I still have my model from when I was in Year 4! Although I didn't get to speak to Noah personally, mum said he was working really hard on the activities and was eager to complete them each day. Lily shared with me that she was enjoying the home learning and that she had nearly completed her Home Learning book so would need another one very soon! Amazing effort 4MC! I look forward to speaking to you all again soon!



5JH

5JH continue to show us what we already knew, that in the face of change and uncertainty, they are absolute trojans. It was sooooo lovely to hear the squeals of shock / delight / horror when I called my class and I was massively encouraged by the positive responses from parents. It would appear that Monday to Friday it is business as usual across the class and everyone is working hard. I was thrilled to learn that many children are finding new hobbies. A number of the class are growing their own vegetables with seeds being planted for tomatoes, radishes, corn, courgettes, potatoes and onions. A healthy number of bakers have put on their aprons to rustle up some tasty treats to keep moral up, while a handful of fitness fanatics are raising their heads and heart rates. Keep up the great work guys, I couldn't be more proud of you all 😊



5AF

It has been great to hear what 5AF have been up to over the last fortnight. Well done to children, and parents, for embracing home learning. On our Mill Rythe Instagram page I have seen lots of rainforest shoe box projects - which look amazing! I've also seen some impressive spaghetti structures and some realistic animal collages. Not only have 5AF been stuck into their home learning, but many children have also been taking on extra challenges! Noah has been completing the 30-day lego challenge and Daisy has been baking some delicious cakes. Oscar is still working towards his badges for Cubs and is practising his knots and Lottie has made her own lemonade. Keep up the great work 5AF and keep sending us your photos of what you've achieved.



5MD

It has been a pure joy talking to my children on the phone this week. A teacher is nothing without their pupils, so it has been wonderful to hear the children talk so enthusiastically and passionately about their home learning. It has also been lovely to hear from the parents how committed and diligent their children have been, they are a credit, not only to our school, but to themselves. Too easy would the temptation be to just binge on box sets or lose yourself in the world of online gaming for innumerable weeks, but our children have shown just how much they care about their education, their self-growth and more importantly their parent's sanity. I think the parents have been learning just as much as the children. It was a delight talking to the children and hearing not only about their learning but about what they've been doing to stay happy and the activities that they've been doing as a family. Louie has been helping his Dad with a landscaping project in the garden; Finley and Dakota have started to produce a fine range of delicious vegetables ready to feed their families over the coming months (Dakota's even promised to cook me a delicious stew she has been planning); Emily has been practising the piano every day and has promised to play a two-hour concert to the whole school on the first day back; and Matilda has been busy making her home a fun-packed haven for her new pet Rabbit Oakley. These were just a few of snippets of the many wondrous and varied activities our children have been doing, and every call made me smile and reminded me why this is the best class in the world!



6GR

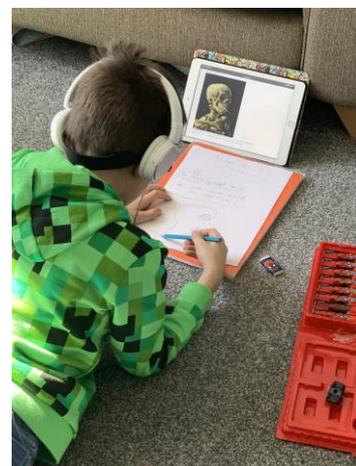
It has been lovely speaking to the children and their families on the phone this week— at a time of worry and uncertainty, it definitely cheered me up. For a small class of 23, 6GR are probably the loudest in the school; therefore, I was really surprised with how quiet many of them were on the phone! Amelie, who could quite possibly talk for 24 hours without pausing for a breath, was the quietest I have ever known her to be! She did, however, say that being stuck in with her brother 24 hours a day was not going well! Cam found it extremely awkward talking to me on the phone- saying it was very weird. Sophia hung up on me - although she claims it was an accident. Annie wanted to chat for hours and in the end, I needed tell her I had to go, whilst when I asked Archie whether he missed me, he replied, “Erm, now and then.” It was lovely listening to all the extra activities the children have been doing with their families: baking, games in the garden, walking, bike rides and Jess has been keeping



her dad busy with decorating her bedroom! There have been a couple of children that I have not been able to contact this week but don't panic- you're on speed dial for next week!

6SG

It was lovely to speak to so many pupils and parents this week to see how they were doing. Many, many children have made such an effort with their home learning despite some of the technical glitches early on and it was so nice to hear about all the other opportunities children have enjoyed from keeping fit with Joe Wicks, playing in the garden, touching up on their drawing skills, connecting with friends and family online, walking dogs, gardening, to baking and even staying in their pyjamas! The calls were a great reminder of what a fantastic school family we have.



6SB

I've found these last few weeks to be very strange and I've missed my class enormously. I'm used to a class full of lively 10 and 11 year olds so it's been an absolute delight to speak to my class this week and catch up with them all. A few children have expressed both relief and disappointment at not being able to sit SATs this year, after all of the hard work they've put in, but I've been so pleased to see that every single one of them has been working hard at home on their English and maths. Jack shared his evolution work with me, where he'd designed a newly-evolved sea otter and it was clear that he'd thought very carefully about how it might have changed. Daniel, Qasami and Ryan have been tearing through the arithmetic, so I've sent them some more challenges to keep them occupied. Brooke has been working hard on her learning, even managing to keep up while moving house! I'm so proud of each and every one of 6SB and they should be proud of their amazing attitudes to learning that have shone through even in these difficult times. I'm looking forward to speaking to them again soon.



And finally...

Take care of yourselves and your families during the Easter break.

David Bessant

Headteacher

The information below has been shared previously but will remain on each weekly newsletter for the time being.



Mrs North

Mrs North is going to be stepping away from our Mill Rythe Family in April. She has secured a job within a local veterinary practice which I know she is going to love and will also enable her to spend more time with her horses, supporting her husband with the farm and hopefully exploring the world.



For me, Nikki is unique. She has a set of gifts that I haven't seen in one person before. If you spend any time in our office, you will see her ability to spin so many plates at one time whilst always wearing a smile and sharing her laughter with those in her presence. Her care for our most vulnerable children and the precision with which she meets their medical needs is so reassuring for their parents. She is never flustered and never fails to brighten the day of staff, children and parents alike. On the occasions when a serious medical situation has arisen in school, Nikki reacts perfectly instilling calmness in those around her whilst communicating with such clarity to paramedics to ensure that child concerned remains safe. She can hold her own with Mr Darby in the staffroom and is someone whose judgement I trust totally and have come to rely upon in the last couple of years at more challenging times.

Nikki - I am going to miss working with you hugely and know that this is a sentiment that will be echoed by everyone at MRJS. We may not get to give you the proper thank you assembly later this term that you deserve but when everyone is safely back in school you are coming back for this - the plans are spectacular! You are going to be missed by staff, parents and children alike. It has been a privilege to work with you and I would just like to say thank you for everything that you have done for me and our school.

When staff leave parents are normally able to come into school to speak to them themselves and share special memories or just to say thank you. If there are parents who would like to contact Mrs North before she leaves us, please email her at n.north@millrythe-jun.hants.sch.uk

Home Learning

We have been inundated with positive feedback about the home learning that has been set by staff for children across our school; thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback which has also been shared with all staff. I have also spoken to a few parents who have had a few teething problems and we have been able to address these quickly. If you are encountering any problems or have questions please contact me via: mrjsclosure@millrythe-jun.hants.ch.uk

Parents are not teachers and as such pupils should be able to complete the work that has been set independently; they will love to share with their families what they are doing and I would love to see work and other activities that are being completed at home. If you would like to share photos with me please email them to mrjsclosure@millrythe-jun.hants.ch.uk with the heading instagram. Some of these will be added to our account and shared with the MRJS family over the coming days and weeks.



There is flexibility for parents to guide children to complete work for the year group above and below their own if this is appropriate. We have also emailed individual learning home for some children. Please refer to the 'home learning during self-isolation' letter that can be found on the home learning page of the school website.

Top tips for supporting families working at home:

- **Opening you new school:** establish a place for your children to work from and get them involved in setting up their learning zones.
- **Establish routines:** draw up a plan with your child(ren) for each day so that they can see what work they will be completing when. Children react well to structured routines but these can also look different for different children. Not all of our children can sit and maintain focus on their learning for an hour at a time. You know your children better than anyone else so build in physical and mental breaks to help them with their learning.
- **Encouraging good learning habits with positive interactions:** think about the teachers that inspired you at school; what was it about their relationships and interactions with you that ensured you fostered a love of learning with them. Now is your chance to apply these with your own children.
- **Feed their love of learning:** it is more important than ever that we are all making good choices with the food we are eating and drinking plenty of water. Avoid sugary snacks and take regular fresh air breaks with opportunities for exercise beyond those that we have planned for each day.
- **Good teachers lead by example:** put plans in place to care for yourself too. Take time to relax; make sure your own diet is varied and balanced and that you partake in physical exercise.

If you would like me to speak to any children whilst they are at home with you then please let me know via: mrjsclosure@millrythe-jun.hants.ch.uk

Audible books

I was delighted to learn that audible books have made all children's books available to families whilst schools remain closed. I would encourage everyone to make the most of this opportunity - there are so many wonderful stories for children to be able to enjoy over the coming weeks. Please follow the link below to access them: <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Mrs Brydon has identified the following broad categories that different year groups may like to choose from initially:

- Year 3 – choose mainly from 'Elementary', although there are one or two classics in 'Littlest Listeners' that children will love, such as 'Timeless Tales of Beatrix Potter' or 'Just So Stories'
- Year 4 – choose from a wide range of brilliant books in 'Elementary'
- Year 5 – Choose from 'Elementary' or 'Tween'
- Year 6 – Choose from 'Tween' or 'Literary Classics' such as 'Moby Dick', 'The Call of the Wild'

Mental health and wellbeing

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology team have shared the following guidance with schools for parents and families to refer to in the coming days and weeks.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf>

The changes that we are all making to our everyday routines are significant and it is essential that we are able to support each other with our mental health and wellbeing at this time.