

# December News

## ***Welcome to the final newsletter of 2024.***

What a great start to the 2024/25 school year it has been! There have been so many wonderful things going on so far this year. I am so pleased to be able to share some of the exciting things that have been happening in Millfield since we returned to school in September. Unfortunately, it would be impossible to share everything so here are highlights from each year group.

The **nursery** children have really embraced the world of construction this term with our new nursery build in full swing. Our interests and learning has been focused on big ideas such as Engineering, Our homes and People who work through the night.

The nursery children visited Ben and the building team on site to see the progress which has been a highlight for our curious little learners.



The hedgehog visit was a highlight for **Reception** this term. The children were excited to meet Pico the hedgehog and loved stroking his spikes and watching him sniffing around the classroom! They had lots of questions and were keen to find out interesting hedgehog facts such as baby hedgehogs being called hoglets, hedgehogs are keen swimmers and The visit inspired the children to create their own hedgehog home for potential hibernating hedgehogs, make clay hedgehogs and draw maps to show the routes hedgehogs could take near their homes. We now have many hedgehog experts who will be happy to answer your questions!

Over the festive period the children loved performing the Nativity. This inspired some great small world play where the children retold the story with their 'mini mes' making paper costumes and a block play stage. Lots of talk, singing and reliving their moment in the spotlight!

**Year 1** were lucky enough to have a visit from Mr Wright with his dad's budgies. Mr Wright told us that they are 'show' budgies and they don't have names, they have numbers. We can tell they are adults because of their size and because when they are babies they have very dark eyes. In the wild, in Australia, they would live in hot, dry and rocky areas. We learned that boys have a blue sere above their beaks and girls have a pinky/brown sere. Not all birds have these distinguishable marks so it is sometimes difficult to identify males and females.

Y1 were also lucky enough to have a visit from the Animal Experience in school. We saw a variety of different animals including, a bearded dragon, blue tongued snake, python, tortoise, hissing cockroach, chinchilla and tenrec. The children were able to handle the animals and ask questions to find out more.

In English I have enjoyed learning about different eggs. I think the best egg is the crocodile because it turns white. We found out about the penguin and ostrich eggs too. We made a fact file about the different eggs, Ivy 1P

In **Year 2** we have enjoyed a wide range of different topics and learning opportunities. Our favourites among these have been: printing in Art, visiting Oliver Cromwell's house whilst learning about activists, habitats in Science and making placards in English to demonstrate peaceful protest with.

We created a glow worm microhabitat in teams.

During our visit to Oliver Cromwell's house we learned about a local activist.

Year 2 children have said *"I have enjoyed English because because I liked water protecting our river and around the world"* Diana (2W)

*"I have enjoyed Oliver Cromwell's house because the wooden swords were great"* Alfred (2E)

*"I have enjoyed Geography because I like flags and countries. We get to learn about different countries including Somalia and England"* Alex (2W)

*"Everything because it is awesome"* Evie (2E)

This term in **Year 3** we have been very busy! We had our first school trip to Flan Fen where we got to make our own clay pots, a wattle and daub wall and light a fire inside a roundhouse just like they did in the Stone Age. In Autumn 2 we moved onto learning about the earth in geography. We now know the 4 layers of the earth, how plate tectonics work and can name and locate some European countries and capital cities using an atlas.

In English, Year 3 classes have enjoyed reading Roald Dahl's "The BFG" which has inspired us to write our own fantasy stories. We are looking forward to sharing these with Year One children at the end of term.

The author C.S.Clifford visited to teach us how to improve and extend our writing and showed us the joy writing can bring.

**4A** children have had a great autumn term of learning and fun! Here are some of the children's highlights:

In PE we had swimming, which was really fun!

We've also been reading The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe. 'If I had to rate the book, it would be 5/5!' *By Rosie*

In 4A we have been learning about Saxons in Hitstory. 'We like History because it is fun and we learnt about West Stow and Sutton Hoo. We all tried on a helmet!' *By Laura and Isabel*

In **4D**, we have enjoyed lots of enriching experiences this half term including an author visit, a trip to West Stow and a particular highlight - a workshop with the Open Theatre Group. Yasmin said, "I liked that we couldn't talk and had to copy the person with the hat on". The children had a great time using mime to communicate and were in fits of giggles throughout. Jamie said, "My favourite part was when the actor pulled out a potion and drank it and pretended to be frozen".

**Year 5** - This term has flown by! We have enjoyed lots of great experiences including our visit to the careers fair at Ely Cathedral and the sessions with Steve, our visiting author. A big 'Well Done' to Y5 for their performance at the Christmas Service on Monday. What a wonderful group of singers you are. The song we sang 'Believe' from the Polar Express also acted as our stimulus for a beautiful art project creating a 'mini magazine' using mixed media collage and monotype printing.

Y5 have also been learning about Biomes in Geography and have researched and presented information about biomes in our books. Some are pictured below for you to enjoy.

**Year 6** had a very busy and exciting Autumn Term. In Geography, we have been learning about Frozen Kingdoms. We learnt about the differences between the Arctic and Antarctic, as well as discovering how climate change is impacting the polar regions. We also had a virtual Arctic day where we learnt about life in the Arctic and spoke to an explorer. On this day, we had a competition to build the best igloo out of sugar cubes!

### **Forest School**

During the Autumn term, Year 3 created their own artwork and sculptures using natural objects. They then shared their creations and ideas in our den museum.

The children also enjoyed exploring the use of tools (secateurs, hammers, mallets, peelers) using wood and material to produce different pieces of work. These included elder beads, geoboards, leaf sticks, wood cookie necklaces, minibeast habitats and hammer printing with petals and leaves.

Firm favourites were the campfires with marshmallows, hot chocolate and making their own bread.

"It's just so fun. I want to do it every day. My favourite bit was roasting marshmallows and using the hand drill as I've never used one before." Kade

"I enjoyed having some free time to play and I liked it when we peeled sticks using peelers".

Amelia.

"I enjoy having free time. I especially enjoyed last week having hot chocolate and marshmallows". Alex

"I like going on the mounds and climbing through the stinging nettles".

Isabella

### **French**

Years 3 and 4 have been learning the days of the week, the months of the year and the numbers up to 31 in French – all so they can understand and create the date in French. Ask your child if they can sing you one of the songs that have helped them!

Year 2 have created made-up sentences in French saying what animals they have.

### **Choir**

KS2 children at Millfield have had the opportunity to participate in choir both in school time and as an extracurricular activity this term. We are very lucky to have been asked to perform at five Christmas events including; Branching Out, The Grange, The Crown's Christmas Fair and the Women's Institute. The children should be very proud of the work they have done and we are all very proud of them! Miss Drury and Mrs Suter

### **BSL Club**

It has been wonderful to be able to run a British Sign Language club this term. The students have covered basic conversational skills, such as introducing themselves and talking about their hobbies, families, pets and what they have been doing over the weekend. We also looked at festival signs so that we could talk about what we got up to over halloween, Guy Fawkes night as well as what we're looking forward to about Christmas. All of the students have worked really hard on learning this new and inclusive language, and it's been lovely to see their skill spill out onto the playground and round the school as they have passed their knowledge onto their friends. We have also enjoyed some SSE (Sign supported English) which we have used to sign along with pop songs and Christmas Carols.  
Mrs Green

### SEND update - PINS project

This term Millfield has started to participate in the PINS project working with the County Council, Health Services and Pinpoint (parental support service). PINS stands for the **Partnership for Inclusivity of Neurodiversity in School**. The aim of the project is to ensure that we are providing the best possible school experience for our neurodivergent children by ensuring that the school environment meets their sensory and physical needs, and by adapting the curriculum to enable the best possible learning opportunities for our pupils with SEND. We have held two parental workshops, supported by Pinpoint and carried out an audit as to how we can improve our provision at Millfield. This will result in bespoke training over the next academic year and a focus on adapting the environment to meet the needs of our pupils. We will be updating you as to the progress of the project as the year goes on.

*Mrs Cusick*

This half term, teachers have received training on using the Read&Write software to assist children with their learning. This will be particularly helpful for children who may be dyslexic and makes our classrooms even more dyslexia friendly! Some children in year 5 and 6 will have the software added to their google accounts as part of a Trust wide trial of the software. Mrs Blunt

### Family Support and Mental Health

As you may know we work closely with partner agencies to support the mental health and well being of our children and families. This year we are continuing to work closely with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) and also started working closely with the Nessie Project.

The MHST has been in school delivering workshops to some of the children around wellbeing online, which is an increasingly important topic. They have also been in school delivering training to staff around emotional based school avoidance. We have further workshops and training booked in the new year also!

A little bit about Nessie:

What Nessie does:

- We offer 1-1 and group therapy for children and young people
- We offer training and supervision to professionals
- We offer webinars and support to parents and carers.

Provide support through partnering with local schools, county councils and community organisations within **Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough** and the surrounding counties. Parents can also reach out to us directly.

Nessie is also running a programme around EBSA. The programme was rolled out to a select few schools in Cambridgeshire and we were lucky enough to be part of the programme.

EBSA stands for Emotionally Based School Avoidance. It is a term used in reference to a group of children and young people who have difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, sometimes resulting in prolonged absences from school

The programme includes staff training and meeting with the school to ascertain need and devise a plan of action based on our specific needs.

Our offer

- Group therapy (has been ongoing this term)
- Parent workshops/information (one held last week)
- Trained staff
- My Feelings and Me training – which can now be run in school

### **School uniform**

Just a reminder for all that, here at Millfield, we believe in school uniforms as it means that all children feel a sense of belonging.

Our requirements for uniform are as below:

- White/pale blue shirt or polo shirt
- Royal blue sweatshirt/cardigan
- Grey/black skirt/pinafore dress
- Grey/black trousers/tailored shorts (No leggings)
- Blue check dress (summer)
- Grey/black tights

For PE our requirements are:

- Plain dark t-shirt and dark shorts (not football tops)
- Plain sweatshirt and jogging bottoms (for outdoor PE)
- Trainers

Footwear should consist of dark shoes/boots or dark trainers.

We do understand that there are times when it may be difficult to ensure your child is wearing appropriate school uniform so if there are any issues, please make us aware of this. We also encourage parents and carers to make use of our second-hand uniforms. If you are looking for anything in particular, please speak to the office as we may have items of clothing available.

### **Parking**

Thank you to everyone regarding the parking at drop off and pick up times. There have been less occasions where the entrance/exits to the school have been blocked which helps with the safety of our children.

### **In other news ....**

*Our Christmas church services were a great success. As we grow as a school, we are finding it a squeeze when we go to St George's Church but we are always made so welcome by Reverend Natalie Andrews and her team. The singing, readings and poems helped to retell the Christmas story. The children were a credit to everyone.*

*We are sorry to share that Miss Badcock, Y6 teacher, will be leaving us at Christmas. Miss Badcock started with us in September 2022 and completed her 2 years as an Early Career Teacher. She has been such a special member of the Millfield team and will be missed by the children, parents and her colleagues. We wish her well in whatever she chooses to do next. We are delighted to announce that Miss Newman, who has been at Millfield for a number of years now, will be taking on 6B from*

*January. She knows most of the children very well having taught them in previous years. Mrs Stevens who the children have met a couple of times, will be joining Mrs Spence in 3S.*

*As we reach the end of this term and the end of this year, on behalf of everyone at Millfield, I wish you a well deserved break with family and friends. For those who celebrate Christmas, best wishes and I hope Santa treats you well. Happy New Year when it comes and as we look forward to 2025, I hope the year brings good health and happiness to all.*

*Mrs Lee and all the staff at Millfield*