



Whole School Newsletter

Friday 1st October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

"All grown-ups were first children. (Although few of them remember it.)"

Antoine de St. Exupéry - Le Petit Prince.

At secondary school, my classmates and I were taken on a day trip to a town in Northern France where we were encouraged to speak French - opportunities were limited to ordering fries and buying a loaf of bread. My overriding memory is one of fear, but - with some prompting from my French teacher, Mr Kelly - I managed to get a few words out. By contrast, many Meridian children in Reception to Year 6 were very confident in sharing a 'Hello' with their peers in a language of their choice at our assemblies on Monday morning (face to face in the top hall for the first time in 18 months!). You'll also be pleased to hear that we have some confident and skilled linguists on our staff team. Joanna - Y3 teacher and Modern Foreign Languages Lead - will be happy to talk to you if you wish to know more about our MFL curriculum.

The national curriculum says: *Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world.*

All Key Stage 2 classes take part in weekly French lessons and, with over 30 languages spoken by children and staff at Meridian, we are always planning opportunities to celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of our community. As last Sunday was European Day of Languages, this week was one such opportunity. Thank you to all the parents who kindly recorded themselves reading a story in their home language so that we could share it with the children. (My own partner was relaxing on Sunday when I presented him with a copy of The Little Prince in French and announced that I needed his help with my assembly!) If, at about this time next year, Jane approaches you on the playground and says, "Can I ask you a favour?", you will know what to expect.

In other news, we are finding ways to return to further normality in school:

- Year 4 children are benefitting from weekly cricket lessons on the playground with cricket expert, Chris.
- Year 5 have enjoyed a final week of intensive swimming lessons and we have managed to secure more sessions for some other KS2 children in the Spring.
- Y1/2 have booked a trip to the Museum of London in early December (information to follow) and, although some museums are not yet open to schools, we are doing our best to organise a trip for each of our classes.
- We have set the dates for **Parents' Evenings - Wednesday 20th October from 3.30pm to 5.30pm and Thursday 21st October from 5pm until 7.30pm** (the last week before half term). Our plan is to invite you into the school building so that you can meet your child's teacher face-to-face, look at some of your child's learning and see the classroom. An email with how to book a slot will be sent out next week.
- We hope to organise an opportunity for parents to come and join their child in the classroom at an informal reading session this term and also at Curriculum Open Mornings in November. We'll let you know more soon.
- All being well, we look forward to working towards Christmas Performances this year.

That's all for now. Have a lovely weekend and good luck to anyone running the London Marathon!

Best wishes, Jo

Jo Graham, Headteacher

To celebrate the **European Day of Languages**, what have our children been learning about this week?

Nursery listened very attentively as Maria, Y2 TA, came to their classroom to read them *Pikku toukka paksulainen* (The Very Hungry Caterpillar) in **Finnish**. They were excellent language detectives, using the book's pictures as clues to work out the meaning of some Finnish words. Children then learnt how to pronounce the Finnish names for three fruits: *omena* (apple), *päärynä* (pear) and *mansikka* (strawberry). Later, they put their newfound knowledge into practice at snack time, by trying their best to ask for their preferred fruit in Finnish!



I speak a different language with my mummy!
Hamudy

Reception really enjoyed watching two videos recorded for them by Hanne, Hilda's mum. In the first, Hanne read *Ich liebe dich so, wie du bist* (I Love You The Way You Are) in **German**. In the second, she taught the children how to pronounce some of the key words from the story - *ich liebe dich* (I love you), *Mama* (mummy) and *Maus* (mouse). After practising saying these words in German, some children shared with their friends words from their home language. They were then introduced to another German word, *Katze* (cat), so that they could play the traditional German playground game *Katz' und Maus* (Cat and Mouse) together!

I sometimes speak Swahili at home - 'Jambo!' means hello!
Wangari



Year 1 had a great time watching their video of David, Iris' dad, reading *Ben ik klein?* (Am I Small?) in **Dutch**. They found that they not only learnt some Dutch words for big and small, but they actually picked up some new English vocabulary as well! Having practised pronouncing four of the Dutch words - *minuscuel*, *klein*, *groot* and *heel groot* (tiny, small, big, very large) - children consolidated their mathematical learning of ordering by size to match the correct Dutch label to small world animals.



Gros is how you say big in French.
Anthea

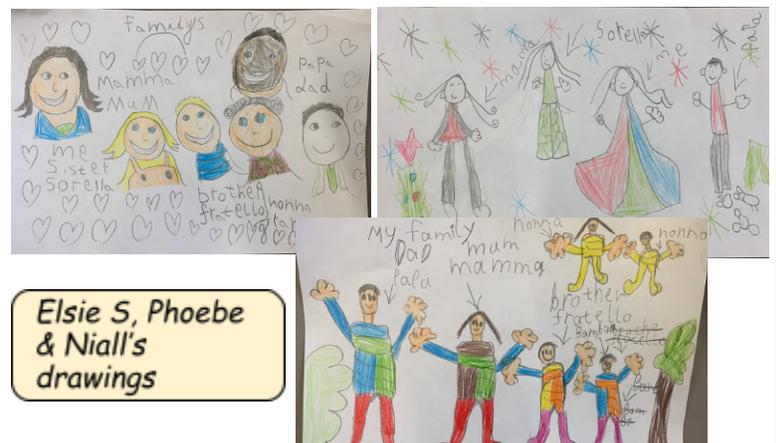
I know how to say big in Hindi - bade.
Ishan

The Dutch word *microscopisch* sounds similar to the English word *microscopic*!
Sean



Year 2 loved watching their video of Marco, Leonardo's dad, reading *Il segreto di papà* (Dad's Secret) in **Italian**. After being clever enough to work out the meaning of *papà* before reading the English translation, children shared what they call their own dads or granddads. They were then taught the Italian names for other family members, which they applied to labelling a drawing of their own family.

I know that the Italian word for dog is cane - Henry and Leo have one in their family, so they might want to add this to their picture!
Maya



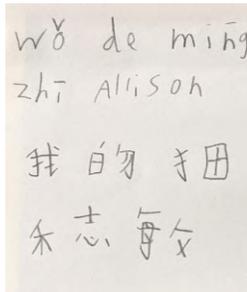
Elsie S, Phoebe & Niall's drawings



Year 3 were captivated by their video of Linda, Axel's mum, reading *In här, ut där!* (In Here, Out There) in **Swedish**. They compared the Swedish and English texts and were able to spot some similarities as well as lots of differences. Having found in the book the Swedish phrases to introduce themselves and others - *jag är* (I am) and *det här är* (this is) - children were taught how to correctly pronounce them by Axel. They then had a go at writing the Swedish sentences in order to annotate a drawing of themselves and a friend.

I noticed that the word for granny in Danish which my family speaks is similar to the Swedish word in the book - *farmor*.
Ada

Allison shared how she introduces herself in Mandarin.



Year 4 very much enjoyed watching their video of Birthe, Max's mum, and Max himself reading *Advarsel! Der er små monstre i denne bog* (Warning! There Are Little Monsters In This Book) in **Danish**. They looked for words to describe the colours of some of the monsters and found *rød* (red) and *lyserød* (pink). This led to them finding out the Danish names for more colours - Jeff was very grateful to Max for being on hand to teach the class the correct pronunciation! Children then read these Danish colour names independently so that they could identify the correct colour needed to colour in each body part of their own alien picture.

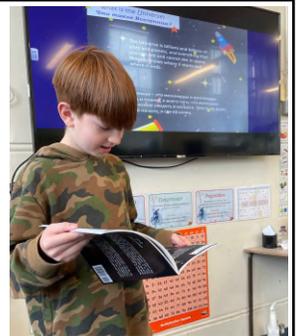
The Danish word for orange has the same spelling as the English word but it's pronounced differently.
Ava

Year 5 listened in rapt attention to their video of Ugne and Lina, mums to Leia and Vanesa, reading *SKAIČIU PASAKĖLĖ* (The Number Story) in **Lithuanian**. Through this, they learned the Lithuanian words for the numbers zero to ten. Having practised counting together as a class, children took part in a nail-biting game of bingo to see who could recognise the Lithuanian number names fastest. Nelly was delighted that Leia, Vanesa and Urte shared their expertise by volunteering as the bingo callers!

I learnt the Lithuanian word for seven is *septyni*. At home we speak Romanian and the word for seven is *Şapte*.
David

When we heard the different languages spoken in Year 5, it was really interesting to hear the similarities between them! I speak Spanish at home and we recognised a few similarities between Spanish, French and Arabic!
Sara

Year 6 were thrilled to listen to their classmate Ivan sharing his home language by reading an extract from the non-fiction book *Космос* (Space) in **Russian**. They were fascinated by the fact that although the words in the Cyrillic alphabet looked completely different to the English words, some of them actually sounded very similar. After being taught by Ivan how to read and say the names of the eight planets in Russian, children consolidated their Year 5 Science learning of the solar system by putting the planets into the correct order.



When we were learning about the planets, most of the Russian names sounded very similar to ours, but Earth - *Земля* - sounds very different!
Keira



There are lots more letters in the Russian alphabet than ours; there was a letter that looked like a '3' but it made a 'z' sound!
Vivienne



Payments

All new parents should now have received their ParentPay account activation letters. Please log in to ParentPay to check your child's Play Club and Breakfast Club accounts on ParentPay and make the required payment against any monies owing.



School Dinners Accounts

Thank you for the payments received so far.

School Dinners for Nursery and Y3—Y6 children cost £2.75 per day or £13.75 per week. The charge for Autumn Term 1 is **£96.25**.

Please note that dinner account balances do not show on Parent Pay—you will need to make a payment based on the charges given above. The amount you pay will be allocated to your child's dinner account as soon as possible. You will be informed by text message on a regular basis if and when your account is in arrears. Please pay the amount given in the text message.

If you want to check your child's dinner account balance, please contact Tina or Sharon in the office.

If you are having trouble making these payments, please talk to Jo, Jane or Sharon.

Please note that if your child is entitled to Free School Meals or is in Reception, Y1 or Y2 there is no charge for dinners.

Nursery children

Please note: for parents of Nursery children who stay for lunch and the afternoon - costs will be confirmed to individuals next week and a separate payment item created on ParentPay.

Thank you for your continued support.

Diary Dates

2021-22 School Year

Term dates are set for our school by the [Royal Borough of Greenwich](#). The school allocates five training days (INSETs) - pupils do not attend school on these days.

Training days for 2021-2022 are:

INSET 1 - Wednesday 1st September 2021

INSET 2 - Thursday 2nd September 2021

INSET 3 - Friday 3rd September 2021

INSET 4 & 5 to be confirmed

Tuesday 19th October - Nasal Flu Immunisation for children in Reception to Y6 in school

Wednesday 20th October from 3.30pm to 5.30pm and Thursday 21st October from 5pm until 7.30pm - Parents' Evenings

Friday 22nd October - last day of Autumn Term 1

Monday 25th October - Friday 29th October inclusive - Half Term Holidays

**Sunday 31st October - Deadline for secondary school applications for Y6 children due to start in
September 2022**

Monday 1st November - first day of Autumn Term 2

Thursday 16th December - last day of Autumn Term 2

Friday 17th December - Monday 3rd January 2022- Christmas Holidays