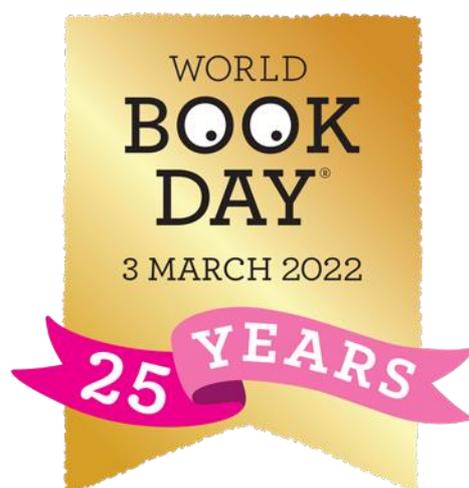




18<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Milton Abbot families,

As we draw towards the end of spring half term, concluding with a school closure due to Storm Eunice, I reflect on many a February during my time in education, where schools have been closed at this time – mainly due to snow, rather than wind! I hope you are all warm and safe indoors and managing to access the online learning which has been provided by the teachers.



### World Book Day 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

A reminder that this year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Book Day, with the message for children, “**you are a reader**”. We’re delighted to share with you the new line-up of £1/€1.50 books for 2022 that children can choose for free with their £1/€1.50 book token. With books for beginning, early, fluent and independent readers, there is something for everyone. Alongside the 12 titles available across the UK, there are two exclusive books for Ireland and a new World Book Day Welsh title! Find out everything you need to know about the books and token exchange [here](#).

We are inviting children to come into school dressed as their favourite book character on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, then on Friday, a reminder that we will be welcoming a local author into school, to share and read extracts from his books and to provide signed copies if desired.

### Information for Parents/Carers-Attendance

This week, the Milton Abbot school governors reviewed and updated our attendance procedures. The link between a child’s attendance at school and improved outcomes and life chances is well documented. We want to help all children and young people to fulfil their potential and get the most out of their education.

In line with our policy and government expectations we would like to share with you the following updated procedures:

- If a child’s attendance starts to drop the school will speak to the child/parent and discuss the reason for absence and any support needed.
- After 10 sessions of absence, you will receive a first attendance letter (there are 2 sessions in the school day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon).
- After 15 sessions of absence, you will receive a second attendance letter and you will be invited to have a meeting to discuss how we can best support your child to attend school more often. You will also be offered an Early Help meeting.
- If your child’s attendance still **does not** improve you will receive a third attendance letter and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.

There may be unavoidable absences for illness or medical appointments, but we want to minimise these where possible. Pupils and families will not be penalised for legitimate non-attendance due to Covid 19.

No term time holidays will be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Every day in school counts, even a small drop in attendance can lead to a child missing a significant part of their education.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with school at any time if you have any queries around attendance expectations and procedures.



### Outdoor environment

Having been lucky enough to spend time with the children and staff at Milton Abbot School over the last couple of weeks, I am still struck by the wonderful outdoor environment. This school and its children are truly blessed with the beauty, richness and variety within the grounds. This week, the playground has been enhanced further by the installation of the play structure. Whilst it is almost ready, we are awaiting the completion of the soft surface over half term which will then enable children to enjoy playing on it. We will be asking one of our pupil leader groups to undertake a 'risk assessment' i.e. safety-first guide to using the new installation.

### Information for parents of pupils aged 5 to 17 years old on the vaccination programme

Vaccinations help to increase protection against COVID-19, which is particularly important for those with underlying health conditions. Being vaccinated minimises the need for children and young people to have time off from school or college and helps them to continue to carry out their hobbies, attend social events and live their lives to the full. Guidance on how to [book appointments](#) for children aged 12 years and over is available on the NHS website. Further information on the vaccination of high risk children aged 5 to 11 years old is available in the [guide for parents of children aged 5 to 11 years](#) published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

Some [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) have been published on the vaccination programme including information on eligibility, accessibility and advice for parents of children at high risk from COVID-19. We are being encouraged to share these FAQs with parents/carers, particularly those of you with children who are clinically vulnerable.

### E-Safety Update

We have recently been made aware of a potential e-safety issue which you may need to consider. The issue is in connection with a popular children's online game, called Roblox in which there is some explicit content, not appropriate for children's viewing. Roblox is a platform that is very popular among children, and allows children under 13. Particularly worrying is children and adults potentially socialise together in these spaces. Part of the game includes an instant messenger where users can talk to each other - and to everyone else playing the game. The following article from the BBC news outlines the issues: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-60314572>.

As a school community, we want to ensure that our children are protected, so we hope by raising this issue with you, it will help to keep your child safe online. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads at school.

### Little Owls News:

We have travelled the world, stopping off at Australia, looking at cricket and aboriginal dot art, then off to Africa for a Safari trip and some African drumming, and then China for Chinese New Year – we loved making our own Chinese dragon and performing it to all our friends! We have tasted foods from around the world, looked at different celebrations and had a look at the weather in each country – we like it when its warm!

It has been a lovely end to the half term looking for signs of Spring and how things grow, which leads us on to our topic after the holiday learning all about animals (even dinosaurs!)

The children have been fantastic in their learning and have been a delight to work with. They truly are a credit to Milton Abbot school! I cannot wait for Spring term 2 and all the exciting things we have in store.

### Barn Owls Update:

My goodness what a wonderful week in Barn Owls! On Monday we welcomed Marie from Animals 2U Southwest to Milton Abbot Primary School as part of our work in Science: Animals including Humans.

We had the opportunity to get up close with Prince, Venus, Blue and Horatio and demonstrate our extensive knowledge, understanding and vocabulary around the subject.



In art, we have each created a barn owl in the style of our featured artist, Kim Kimbro, using the medium charcoal. Within this unit we have explore the seven elements of art, exploring each in detail and developing our skills along the way. Although it's been challenging and particularly messy (sorry parents), the students have been engaged and inspired every stage of the journey.

Our final day of half term was not what we expected thanks to Storm Eunice but the important thing is that we are all happy and safe. The class were able to put into practice our circle time discussions of gratitude, trusted adults and PANTS, as well as planning a week of meals for Miss King by applying everything they've learnt in science.

Finally, our class book challenge continues with another three books finished this week! We completed *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Creature Features* by Natasha Durley and *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers. After halfterm we will begin our next book, *The Fantastic Mr Fox* by Roald Dahl.

### Tawny Owls News:

Another busy week in Tawny Owls. We thoroughly enjoyed our animal visitors on Monday and were so brave when holding the snake, geckos, stick insect and ferret. We have completed our Roman Army dance and Mrs Court thoroughly enjoyed watching our final performance on Wednesday.

Our final treat of Forest School this term was a cup of hot chocolate as well as a cheeky biscuit or two after we carried out an animal hunt in the school woods.

We want to thank Mrs. Curtis for her fun filled sessions this term too.

Mr Matus, our student teacher, has led our Expressive Curriculum end of term



assessments this week too, through the very engaging and interactive platform that is Plickr.

We were all able to show our new knowledge and understanding surrounding fractions in maths, the Roman army, geographical places and features of the UK as well as living things and their habitats.

### Eagle Owls News

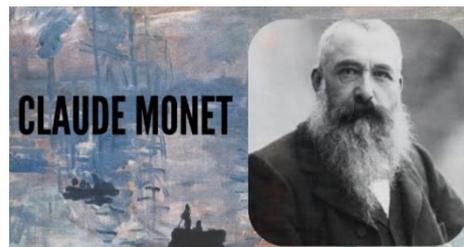
Poetry Writing Competition: The children of Eagle Owls have had a lovely final week of this half term writing poems.



Their poems, which are all about themselves and what makes them special, is part of a nationwide poetry completion that we will be entering called, 'This is Me'.

Mr Walkerdine is really looking forward to sending off their completed work this week and fingers crossed we can get some of their excellent poems published and win some prizes. They loved the creativity and writerly freedom that poetry brings as well as decorating their work to make it engaging for the judges. Excellent work by all and photos of their work will follow shortly.

Art: The children have spent their final session of Art this half term completing their own acrylic painting in the style of Claude Monet. This allowed them to further embed the skills that they have been focusing on during this sequence of learning. This has included them creating and mixing different shades of colours on a palette, using flat headed paint brushes and understanding how Claude Monet used his brush to show the reflection of light / shadows in his impressionism style. In addition, they now know key facts about the artist himself and a number of his famous pieces. A very enjoyable sequence and photos of the children's excellent work to follow after half term.



Memory Recall: It has been fantastic to see this week not only how much the children have learnt this half term but importantly how much knowledge they can confidently recall both verbally and in their written work. This has included low stake quizzes (where they show off how much they can remember) for 'Evolution and Inheritance' in science, comparing the differences between Brazil and the United Kingdom in geography and 'The Roman Legacy' in history. We have seen really enthusiastic learning from all the children.



### FREE E-Bike Hire - Voucher Give Away with Granite Way Cycles.

Ever wanted to test ride an E-bike? Well now you can hire one for the day, free of charge.

Spend the day exploring Okehampton and the granite way on an electronically assisted bike. Whether you're looking to use the car less, or looking to get yourself back into cycling, why not let an e-bike help get you rolling. Vouchers are limited, so this will be done on a first come first serve basis and you can only apply once. Terms and conditions apply.

[Register here](#) to apply for a free e-bike voucher, once you have registered on the link, you will receive a unique code from my colleague (please check your junk folder once you have applied). You will then need to book in with the [Granite Way Cycles](#) bike shop.

The e-bike voucher scheme aims to increase the uptake of e-cycling in Devon, by offering residents in targeted areas a full-day hire e-bike voucher. These vouchers will allow residents to give e-cycling a try from a participating bike shop, for free.

#### Points

- Register on this [link](#). We have 10 vouchers to give away for Okehampton.
- Once registered you will receive an email voucher with a unique code and nearest bike shop information [Granite Way Cycles](#)
- Contact [Granite Way Cycles](#) shop to book in a date and time with your unique voucher code.
- Vouchers will be valid until the **31st March 2022** (in the first instance)

## **And finally....**

This week, in addition to this newsletter, you will also receive an update from the Chair of Governors, Jane Byrne regarding a leadership update.

I will be returning after the half term holiday to work alongside Mrs Debbie Buckingham in order that she may take up the reins as Headteacher. I am delighted to still maintain my connection with Milton Abbot through my role, leading on curriculum.

On behalf of the staff and governors of the school, I would like to wish you all a happy, safe, and relaxing half term break. We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February for the next chapter of their learning journey at Milton Abbot School.

With kindest regards,

**Mrs Elizabeth Underwood**  
**Primary Executive Headteacher**