



To our Milton Abbot families

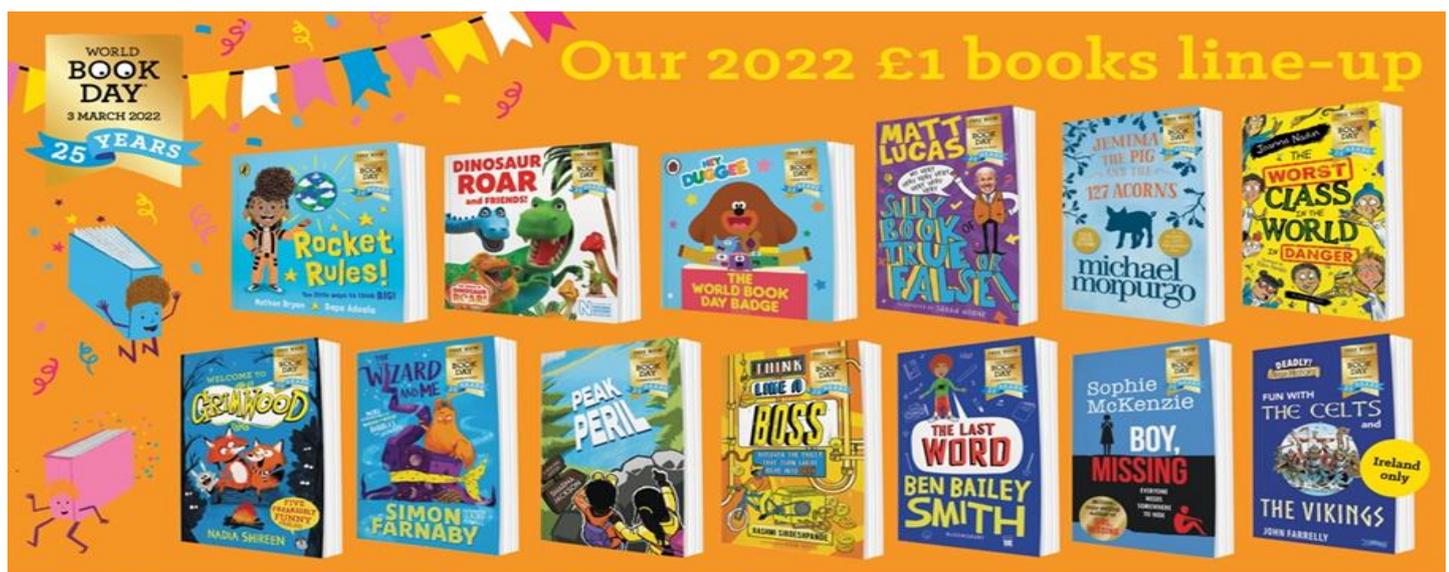
What a great week I have had in school!

I am really excited at the prospect of working with your children. Everyone has made me feel very welcome this week especially your fabulous children. I have been working in education for nearly forty years, twenty years as a headteacher and several years as a school improvement advisor. My last substantial post was at a large school in Exeter for 12 years and I have led several small schools across the county. Last year I was seconded by the Local Authority to run Mary Tavy and Brentor School.



Working in partnership with parents is fundamental to the smooth running of the school and your input is highly valued. Next week we will be starting a regular face to face forum to hear your views, communicating our vision for the school and discussing how a managed partnership with Dartmoor Academy Trust will benefit your children. I would like to hold the first meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm in the school for all parents. We are fortunate to be working with an expert team from Dartmoor Academy Trust and are committed to improving your lovely school to ensure all children achieve their very best. As a Headteacher I have always believed it is important to operate an open-door policy to ensure parents feel comfortable about sharing their views. If you have any concerns or worries about anything don't hesitate to contact the school at any time. One of the first things we need to do is improve communication, both at school and class level. We want to celebrate your children's learning with you and the school's achievements. We want to provide more clarity about what your children are learning and how you can help them. Please come to the forum next week where we can meet face to face and talk about the future for Milton Abbot.

## [World Book Day](#)



Thank you for making such an effort with world book day. It was wonderful to see the whole school dressed up and the children celebrating their favourite authors and book characters. There was a very special shared reading experience across the whole school at the end of the day.



## Ukraine

This week, assemblies have focussed on the crisis in Ukraine. Rather than have a whole school assembly I tailored the assemblies to Key Stage 1 and 2 to suit the age of the children. Your children were very knowledgeable and keen to contribute their thoughts and understanding. Save the Children offer some very good advice for parents when dealing with children's questions.

*"What is happening in Ukraine can be frightening for both children and adults. Ignoring or avoiding the topic can lead to children feeling lost, alone and more scared, which can affect their health and wellbeing. It is essential to have open and honest conversations with children to help them process what is happening,"*

Experts at Save the Children share five tools and tips that caregivers can use to approach the conversation with children:



### **1. MAKE TIME AND LISTEN WHEN YOUR CHILD WANTS TO TALK**

Give children the space to tell you what they know, how they feel and to ask you questions. They may have formed a completely different picture of the situation than you have. Take the time to listen to what they think, and what they have seen or heard.

### **2. TAILOR THE CONVERSATION TO THE CHILD**

Be mindful of the child's age as you approach the conversation with them. Young children may not understand what conflict or war means and require an age-appropriate explanation. Be careful not to over-explain the situation or go into too much detail as this can make children unnecessarily anxious. Younger children may be satisfied just by understanding that sometimes countries fight. Older children are more likely to understand what war means but may still benefit from talking with you about the situation. In fact, older children will often be more concerned by talk of war because they tend to understand the dangers better than younger children do.

### **3. VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS**

It is important that children feel supported in the conversation. They should not feel judged or have their concerns dismissed. When children have the chance to have an open and honest conversation about things upsetting them, it can create a sense of relief and safety.

### **4. REASSURE THEM THAT ADULTS ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE WORKING HARD TO RESOLVE THIS**

Remind children that this is not their problem to solve. They should not feel guilty about playing, seeing their friends, and doing the things that make them happy. Stay calm when you approach the conversation. Children often copy the sentiments of their caregivers – if you are uneasy about the situation, chances are your child will be uneasy as well.

### **5. GIVE THEM A PRACTICAL WAY TO HELP**

Support children who want to help. Children who have the opportunity to help those affected by the conflict can feel like they are part of the solution. Children can create fundraisers, send letters to local decision-makers or create drawings calling for peace.

## After School Club

I am delighted to tell you that from next week Susie Jonas will be running after school club for four nights a week. Ocra will continue to do sports on Wednesday. This will provide continuity for your children. Susie is really excited and is starting to plan some exciting activities and opportunities for your children.

## Early Years



We are delighted to welcome Suzie Stevens from Dartmoor Academy Trust who will be working with our Early Years provision every Friday. Suzie is the Executive Head of St James and an Early Years specialist. She will be working with all staff in the unit to continue to improve the provision and learning opportunities for our youngest children.

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## Tawny Owls

In Tawny Owls this week we have enjoyed starting many new units of work including reading and studying Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' as part of our new English unit. We also began to find out about Roman Chariots ready for our new



Design & Technology project. In History we have developed our understanding of the Romans in Britain and in particular we are focusing on Hadrian's Wall and finally in Science we enjoyed dissecting daffodils to investigate flowers further and learn what happens beneath the bright and pretty petals! We have also loved spending time in our new and vastly improved Reading Corner! We have enjoyed reading under the cosy, leafed canopy as well as sharing new books with friends. We also thoroughly enjoyed many book and story activities that were part of our World Book Day celebrations, our favourite part of the day was reading with our many friends across the school.

## Little Owls

We have had so much fun, reading new stories and making dinosaurs nests! We have all had a go at mixing, and describing what our creation looks and smells like! We can't wait to share. We have been searching for fossils and watching volcanoes erupt.



## Barn Owls



We are in the process of redesigning our reading corner. The class have chosen the theme "Enchanted Wood" and have been busy suggesting ideas and designing the space.

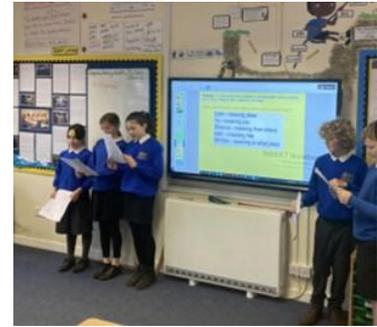
Reading is an integral part of our classroom. We share our favourite books and make time to enjoy reading. Everyday we read in class, so it's important book bags come in everyday.

Today we had a spare few minutes, so a few Barn Owls decided to use that time looking at books from my super special silver box!

Our gratitude tree is growing! Today we began our work on the Christian festival of Easter and looked at Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Lent. We then added kindness challenge hearts

## Eagle Owls

For this half term, the children are focusing on Shakespeare and the play script of Macbeth. They have learnt the story, written detailed setting descriptions of where Macbeth met the three witches and today had the chance to dissect the deeper meanings of Shakespearean English as well getting into role /completing some drama. A really enjoyable sequence so far.



In DT we are focusing on 'Electrical Controls'. This week, they linked with prior learning and constructed and drew their own electrical circuits including the use of bulbs, switches and buzzers. They are going to be working towards designing, making and evaluating their own electrical board game.