

FOREST OAK SCHOOL AND MERSTONE SCHOOL



WINDWARD WAY
SMITH'S WOOD
BIRMINGHAM
B36 0UE



Executive Head Teacher
Miss Donna Luck

24th March 2025

Dear Parents, Families and Carers,

As we welcome the arrival of spring, there is a real sense of renewal and excitement across our school communities. The lighter days and brighter weather bring fresh energy, and we are so proud of the fantastic achievements of our students this term.

Spring Day – 20th March!

We were excited to celebrate Spring Day on Wednesday, 20th March. Students were invited to come to school in non-uniform and wear bright, colourful clothes to reflect the joy of the season. There was a range of fun spring-themed activities throughout the day, celebrating nature, creativity, and the start of brighter days ahead!

Year 10 & 11 Trip to Barcelona – A Huge Success!

We are thrilled to share that our recent trip to Barcelona was an unforgettable experience for our Year 10 and 11 students. From exploring the stunning architecture of Gaudí to immersing themselves in Spanish culture, the trip was filled with learning, laughter, and incredible memories. Our students represented the schools brilliantly, showing independence, teamwork, and enthusiasm every step of the way. A huge thank you to our dedicated staff for making this trip possible!

Book Fair – Starting Monday 24th March!

We are excited to announce that we will be holding a Book Fair in school from Monday 24th March! This is a great opportunity for students to browse and buy books, encouraging a love for reading. If you would like your child to purchase a book, please send in money with them. The cheapest book is £5, and there will be a great selection available.

Bamboozle Theatre Brings 'The River' to Merstone'

We were delighted to welcome Bamboozle Theatre Company to Merstone School for an in-house production of *The River*. This immersive, sensory-rich performance was truly loved by all, providing our students with a magical and interactive experience. The production was tailored to engage and inspire, making it a fantastic opportunity for creative expression and enjoyment.

Whispering Willows at Birmingham Little Theatre & The Crescent Theatre

A group of our students recently had the exciting opportunity to attend performances of Whispering Willows at both Birmingham Little Theatre and The Crescent Theatre. This beautifully staged



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production provided a wonderful experience of live theatre, storytelling, and creative performance. Students were fully engaged and inspired, and it was fantastic to see their enthusiasm for the arts grow!

Outstanding Shakespeare Performances at the MAC

Another highlight of this term was our students' participation in the Shakespeare performances at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC). Their dedication and hard work truly shone on stage, bringing classic Shakespearean stories to life with confidence and creativity. It was inspiring to see their talent and passion, and we couldn't be prouder of their achievements.

Forest Oak Students Set to Perform at the Cavern Club!

We are incredibly excited to announce that a group of Forest Oak students will be playing the ukulele at the world-famous Cavern Club in Liverpool! This is a momentous occasion, as they will be the first group of SEND students from Solihull to perform at this iconic venue. Their dedication to music and performance has been outstanding, and we cannot wait to see them take to the stage. A huge well done to all involved!

Merstone Students Shine at Birmingham Symphony Hall

We are incredibly proud to share that a group of Merstone students recently had the opportunity to represent our gifted and talented musicians at Birmingham Symphony Hall! They took part in a SEND performance of *The Wizard of Oz*, showcasing their musical talent on a professional stage. It was a fantastic experience, and we are so proud of their dedication and achievement!

Merstone Students Visit Warwick Arts Centre

Merstone students recently had the fantastic opportunity to visit Warwick Arts Centre to watch a performance of *Ancient Oak of Baldore*. This engaging and immersive theatre experience was a wonderful way for our students to enjoy storytelling, drama, and creativity in a live performance setting. A group of students attended the show, and they were truly captivated by the performance. It was fantastic to see them so engaged and inspired by the experience!

Science Week Celebrations – A Wild Experience!

As part of our Science Week celebrations, students had the incredible opportunity to get up close with a wide range of animals brought in by a specialist animal company. From snakes and lizards to fluffy rabbits and tortoises, students were able to hold, touch, and learn about these fascinating creatures. This hands-on experience sparked curiosity and excitement, helping students to understand more about different species, their habitats, and their unique characteristics. It was a fantastic way to bring science to life, and the students absolutely loved it!



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Joint Forest Oak & Merstone Project – Over 200 Hedgerows Planted!

We are excited to share that students from Forest Oak and Merstone have worked together on a fantastic environmental project, planting over 200 hedgerows around the school perimeter! This initiative will provide vital habitats for wildlife, improve biodiversity, and enhance our outdoor learning environment. A huge thank you to Janis Smith for organising this wonderful project, and well done to all the students who took part!

Merstone Corridors Refreshed Thanks to Santander Volunteers!

We are delighted to share that the corridors at Merstone School have been beautifully repainted, thanks to the hard work and generosity of Santander volunteers. Their efforts have brightened up our school environment, creating a fresh and welcoming space for our students. A huge thank you to Ruth Taylor for organising this fantastic project—we truly appreciate your support!

Exciting Future Opportunities

Upcoming visits to H2, where students will engage in new experiences and build valuable life skills.

Joint work with Silver Birches Care Home, providing students with meaningful interactions that help develop communication and confidence.

End-of-Year Reports – 15th July

Student reports will be sent out to families on 15th July. These will provide a detailed overview of your child's progress, achievements, and next steps. Please keep an eye out for them!

Parents' Evening – 17th July

We will be holding our Parents' Evening on 17th July, giving you the opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss your child's progress and achievements. Times will be allocated, and further details will be shared soon. We look forward to seeing you there!

Save the Date – Summer Festival!

Mark your calendars! On 18th July, we will be hosting an exciting Summer Festival across both schools. There will be stalls, activities, food, and plenty of fun for everyone! Parents, families, and carers are warmly invited to join us for this special event. More information will be shared soon, but in the meantime—get those festival costumes ready!



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Clothing Donations Needed

We would be extremely grateful for donations of boys' and girls' clothing in all sizes. These will help support students who may need spare clothing throughout the school day. If you have any good-quality items to donate, please send them into school—your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Fruit & Veg Bag Scheme Returns for Easter!

We are pleased to announce that our Fruit & Veg Bag Scheme will be running again during the Easter break to support families. Our Family Support Worker (FSW) team will be in touch soon with more details on how to sign up.

Wishing you all a joyful and refreshing spring!

Best regards,

Donna Luck

Executive Head Teacher

Forest Oak & Merstone Special Schools

Kindness, Patience, Compassion

