

Kindness and Co-operation	Thankfulness	Friendship and Sharing	Respect	Unity	Responsibility
Hope and Peace	Patience and Perseverance	Trust and Honesty	Happiness	Courage	

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY HEAD

This week's newsletter is jam-packed with updates from our classes and subject leaders. Please let us know if there is anything that you would like more information on.

Mulberries parents, please note that your first day back after Easter break is Tuesday 16th April along with the rest of the school.

We look forward to seeing some of you at our Reception and KS1 Easter Assembly and Mulberries drop-ins next week.

I hope that you have a great weekend.



YEAR 6 BIRDS OF PREY

On Monday, Year 6 had a surprise visit from Herrings Green Birds of Prey Centre. Five birds of prey were brought in, including: an eagle owl, a kestrel, a barn owl, a Harris hawk and a Southern-white faced owl.

We were able to hold the Polo – the kestrel and Accio – the Southern-white faced owl. The bird handler, with our adults help, then flew the eagle owl, Milo and barn owl, Midge (who was hand reared by Erin at her home!) over our heads. It was an amazing experience. Fun fact: did you know kestrels can see up to 50m away?



Juniper Class

Last week was a busy one for year 5!

As well as Comic Relief and lots of red hair in the class, on Thursday evening, some of the children came back to school for some star gazing.

Unfortunately, the weather was not kind to us and the cloud cover was too thick to see anything but Paul and Mike, from Sandy Astronomical Society, were able to show us some of the equipment, give tips to see the stars and answer some of the children's questions. If you would like further information about star gazing at home, the Sandy Astronomical Society website (<http://www.sandyastro.co.uk/>) has a calendar of what can be seen and when. Many thanks to the parents who came to help with the evening.



On Friday, we walked up to Sandy Secondary for a morning of arts activities. It started with a music activity, all the children had African djembe drums and played a piece where they all played together, in rounds and there were also some solos. The children's rhythm and timing was very good. Next was art textiles, the children had to create their own African face mask, making them as bright and as colourful as they could. We then finished the morning with some dancing to the song 'I just Can't Wait to be King' from the Lion King. The enthusiasm and movement of everyone was fantastic, interpreting the movement of several animals and putting them together into a routine which was fantastic.



Some of our learning during spring term in Rowan!

English - In English we have been using the book Flood by Alvaro F. Villa to help our writing about our own flood. We have written about a family who have to go away from their beautiful house because it got flooded. We have been learning about verbs and the suffix 'ation' and using prefixes and using 'dis' 'mis' and 'un'. We wrote a non-chronological report about Earthquakes and used headings and subheadings. *By Kyle*

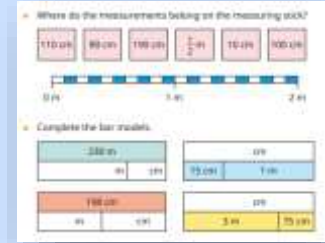


Science - In Rowan we have learnt about plants and that they come in different sizes and colours like green, pink, red and blue. Plants that are healthy give food and oxygen not just for us but animals as well. Some plants have mechanisms to defend them like cacti.

Plants help insects like, bees, butterflies, wasps and hornets. You will find plants everywhere like in the forest, in the jungle and even in the desert. Plants are very good for the world they give us medicine and perfume. Just all from plants. *By Bodie*



Maths - Rowan class are learning about length and perimeter and we have learnt to add and subtract lengths, measure in millimetres, centimetres and meters and find equivalent lengths. We have also compared lengths. We have learnt what is perimeter and how to measure it and more!!! *By Ralph*



Geography - In Geography we've been learning about Antarctica. The first person to stay in Antarctica for fifteen months was Ernest Shackleton. How did he survive in that freezing cold weather for over a year!? *By Harper*

History - In History Rowan class have been learning about Ancient Egypt. We have been finding out about different parts of a pyramid and the names of Egyptian gods. We have found that they wrote differently to us and that they used Hieroglyphics instead. *By Harry*

Music - In music we have learnt musical notes and we listened to 'Night on Bald Mountain' by Mussorgsky. For a mountain scene we played musical instruments to create something that went like climbing up a mountain or falling down a mountain and a snow avalanche. *By Henry*

Art and Design - We have looked at Henri Matisse's cut out artwork. We cut bits of paper out to make our own art. We have also looked at contrasting colours for example blue contrasts with orange. A contrasting colour is a colour that is opposite on the colour wheel.

By Moni

PE - We have been learning about country music over the last two weeks. We have been practising different dances such as: the fan, tap heel, tap toe, step kick, step toe and the grapevine. We have also been practising the cannon in groups of four and our PE unit this term is dance. *By Dexter*

Phonics and reading in Early Years and KS1

Since 2022 we have changed the reading books that we use in reception and KS1. The Government brought out legislation in which schools need to use a new phonics scheme and we decided on Twinkl. Phonics teaches the children sounds that are needed to be successful readers and they are taught in a particular order. These sounds start in reception with s,a,t,p,i,n and other single letter sounds then move on to digraphs, which are two letters that make one sound, such as 'sh' and so forth.



1 Say the sounds and look at the new spellings

/igh/ ie i-e y i

2 Blend the sounds

But/ter/fly	Py/thon	be/hind
cried	hide	tried
fly	dive	slide
wise		



The books chosen to support the phonics scheme are created by 'Bug Club' and have a range of both fiction and non-fiction texts that the children have really engaged with. On the back cover it states which level the sounds are from, this is linked to the teaching in class.

Nursery—level 1

Reception—level 2,3,4

Year 1—level 5

Year 2—level 6

Children are able to read the levels that have been taught but not go beyond.

* The books have 'Phase' rather than 'level' printed.

Books are no longer in colour bands, we now have units. The units are linked to the sounds that are featured in each book. The focus sounds are shown inside the front cover and these should be read with the children before they begin. All books are required to be read with an adult three times. The first read is to decode and blend the sounds, the second read is to become fluent and the third is to discuss it and use comprehension skills. Story comprehension questions can be found inside the back cover to help. When the children are secure on the sound, having read a variety of books in that unit, they will move to the next unit with the teacher's assessment.

<p>After reading</p> <p>Story comprehension</p> <p>What was Si Python threatening to do to Butterfly? How did Butterfly escape from Si Python? Look at page 8. What is Butterfly's plan? Does it work? On page 11, who does Si Python want to see the butterfly that Si Python has? Ask the children to find the object in the picture that contains the: high vowel: spot (page 3) • digraph: igh high vowel: igh (page 11) • low vowel</p> <p>Picture detective</p> <p>Remember</p>	<p>Follow up</p> <p>Speedy reading</p> <p>Return to the words on the inside front cover and read them out loud. Think the children can sound out these words and identify the words to practice them until they can read them quickly.</p> <p>Segmenting for spelling</p> <p>Practice this spelling rule by using the words in the word bank. Write the words in the box for each sound.</p> <p>Children use the sounds all through the unit (beginning) and write with a dot to guide the word sound.</p> <p>Children select magnetic letters to write the segments for each sound, using the sound in the box.</p> <p>Children give themselves a tick for each word they write.</p> <p>Children give themselves a tick for each word they write.</p>
--	---



What is TT Rockstars?

TT Rockstars is an online maths learning platform that helps children build their fluency and recall in multiplication and division. Playing fun games based around an avatar of rock stars, children answer questions on multiplication and division. Regular play will also boost children's confidence. Children in year 4 take a statutory multiplication tables check and TT Rockstars is a great way to support them in the run up to this time.

Logging in:

TT Rockstars is accessible via browser (<https://trockstars.com/>) or via the app, which is free to download on Amazon, Android and Apple devices.

Children in KS2 have a TT Rockstars account (this should be in their reading/homework diary). On occasions, some children may continue to use Numbots in LKS2. This will be on an individual basis that the class teacher will decide upon with your support.

Some of the games you can play are:

Single Player

Jamming

Our only timer-free game, Jamming gives players the choice over the tables they practise and whether to include multiplication, division or both. It's perfect for building up confidence on the tables of your choice, at your own pace.

- Single player
- Player chooses which table(s) to practise
- 4 coins per correct answer for multiplication-only or division-only; 8 coins for multiplication and division questions together
- 10, 20 or 30 questions to answer
- Does not contribute to a player's [heatmap](#)

Note that the **10x**, **2x**, **5x** and **11x** tables may each be **unavailable** for a player if they're already so fast at every question in that table that they don't really need to practise it in Jamming.

Gig

Gigs give players and their teachers a way to check overall performance each month. It's a good idea for players to play a Gig early in their TTRS journey so that you have a **baseline**.

Gigs are optional and, by default, can only be taken after the first login and on the 1st of the month thereafter. Teachers are able to override this and force a player or players to take a Gig at any time if needed.

- Single player
- 100 questions starting with the 10 times table, then the 2s, 5s, 3s, 4s, 6s, 7s, 8s, 9s, 11s and 12s.
- 5 minute time limit
- 10 coins per correct answer
- Contributes to a player's [heatmap](#)

Multi Player

Arena

The Arena is a multiplayer game where students can compete live against other children in their class. Like Garage, specific tables can be turned off by the teacher on the Set Tables page but it's not recommended.

- Multiplayer
- Our algorithm adapts the questions every game for every player.
- 1 coin per correct answer
- 1 minute games
- Contributes to a player's [heatmap](#)

Children will automatically move through each table as they increase their scores and speed. However, we may set a certain table dependent on their scores.







How long should my child play?

We encourage a healthy screen time. Approximately 15 – 20 minutes as children go through KS2.

Headteacher Awards

This week the awards are for... ..always being positive!



Fir: Evelyn 	Yew: Jessica	Aspen: Libby 
Rowan: Sebastian 	Poplar: Toby L	Juniper: Torben 
Sycamore:  Paige	Elder:  Charlie	Well done to you all!

This week's House Winners



Congratulations!

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Monday 25th March 3.30-4.30pm Mulberries parent drop in

Thursday 28th March 9.10am Reception and KS1 Easter assembly - parents welcome

Thursday 28th March 9-10.30am Pre-school Easter activity session. If attending the Easter assembly, please do feel free to join us afterwards.

Thursday 28th March FoMT Easter activity afterschool

Friday 29th March Easter holiday begins

Monday 15th April Teacher training day



Tuesday 16th April Term begins for all, including Mulberries

Term dates for **2024-2025** can be found [here](#).

Attendance Awards

Week beginning 18th March 2024

The best attendance award is presented to:
Poplar class!

Mulberries 91%	Fir (YR) 93%
Yew (Y1) 95%	Aspen (Y2) 95%
Rowan (Y3) 96% 	Poplar (Y4) 97% 
Juniper (Y5) 92%	Elder (Y6) 93%
Sycamore (Y6) 94%	Our target is 97%

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AMONG US

A multiplayer 'social deduction' game set in outer space, Among Us enjoyed a surge in popularity in 2020, and has since maintained a dedicated fan-base (globally, around 60 million regular players each month) thanks to its unique nature, simple premise and ease of access across numerous platforms. The game's on-screen action revolves around danger, disguise and deception – and there are certain parallels to be drawn with some of the real-life risks that parents and carers of young Among Us players need to be aware of.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SENSITIVE PREMISE

In Among Us, up to three players are secretly assigned to be alien imposters, tasked with murdering their colleagues while the survivors try to unmask them. While the concept's not far removed from traditional games like Wink Murder or TV shows such as The Traitors, some parents may feel uncomfortable about their child playing a video game in which deception and killing are prioritised.

VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

The on-screen death of characters may be fundamental to the gameplay of Among Us, but the majority of the animations depicting this are deliberately cartoonish and only appear very briefly. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the game has a PEGI age rating of 7 – meaning that certain elements (however heavily stylised they may be) could still upset some younger players.

CHAT BETWEEN PLAYERS

With up to 15 people participating in each game online, a large part of Among Us' appeal is speculating with fellow players who the imposters might be and making accusations. This dialogue through the in-game text chat can occasionally become heated – and could, of course, involve your child being put into contact with people (including adults) who they don't know in real life.

GOING OFF PLATFORM

While Among Us provides basic ways to communicate, many gamers prefer to use external services such as Discord: a popular app which offers voice and video chat functions. These undeniably make cooperation easier, but also create a potential route for children to hear inappropriate language – or for strangers to message them privately in an environment which isn't regulated by the game itself.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Among Us is free to download on mobile devices, and costs less than £5 to obtain on console and PC. A related longer-term pitfall, though, is that the game also includes options to pay for upgrades such as removing ads on the mobile version or adding cosmetic touches to characters (such as different costumes). It's certainly possible that a child could spend a significant sum without realising it.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER SOFTER ALTERNATIVES

Although Among Us is hugely popular with young gamers, it's possible that some children might find the murder themes unsettling. If so, plenty of similar social deduction games are available (in both digital and traditional board game formats) which downplay the potentially grislier elements; some centre around undercover spies, for instance, and there's even a Marvel superhero-themed variant.

CHAT ABOUT CHATTING

You might feel it's prudent to talk to your child about the risks associated with voice chat while gaming, explaining in particular that strangers online aren't always who they claim to be. Keeping the conversation relaxed will reinforce your child's confidence that they can always come to you with any online concerns – not just about Among Us, but any potential future issues as well.

DISCUSS DISCORD

In general, Discord is an excellent app for keeping online communities together because of its use of dedicated individual servers, which allow comprehensive control over who can join – and who can't. Once you're familiar with the platform, you could set up a secure server for your child and their friends to communicate during games of Among Us, with no access for people they don't know.

AMONG US, AMONG FRIENDS

When your child and their friends get together, they can enjoy a private game of Among Us by choosing a 'local' lobby – that is, only people connected to the same WiFi (your home network, for example) can enter. This prevents any random online users – who may be total strangers – from joining and removes the need for voice chat, as the players are all physically in the same location.

STOP SURPRISE SPENDING

If you're concerned about the possibility of your child racking up an unexpected bill on Among Us' microtransactions, you could consider using a prepaid card with a set limit. Likewise, you could specify in the game's options that adult authorisation is required for every purchase – or you could make sure that no payment methods are enabled on the device that your child plays the game on.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site G4R.com and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new apps, he's also a parent who understands the value of online safety. Writing regularly about tech and games, his articles have been published on influential sites including TheGuardian.com and TechCrunch.com.





**28TH
MARCH**

EASTER GAMES

& EGG'SCAPE ROOM

COME ALONG AND ENJOY A VARIETY OF
EASTER RELATED CHALLENGES.
COMPLETE ALL THE CHALLENGES FOR AN
EASTER EGG!

**£2.50
EACH**

START AT 3:30PM

EASTER GAMES - PLAYGROUND
EGG'SCAPE ROOM - HAWTHORN CLASS (YR 5&6)

