

Hillcross Primary School: Whole School Newsletter 4

Vision 2025: To enable a resilient school community of compassionate global citizens, with a focus on well-being and mental health, fairness and environmental sustainability.

Dear Families,

It seems like we have blinked and the end of half term is upon us!

The term started with some amazing Trailblazers, the Hillcross Choir performed at the O2 arena in the Young Voices Choir and the changes we made to the Hillcross Has Got Talent Competition has encouraged more children to come forward to showcase the amazing array of talent they have! Pupil voice continues to be heard. The Junior Leadership Team and the Equality Committee have followed up on the suggestion made by a number of children that we raise the profile of the festivals celebrated by the different religious groups represented across our school beyond what is learnt in RE lessons and Collective Worship. The first of these events took place with a special Chinese New Year school lunch event, next half term we will be planning an event/s to celebrate Eid—look out for more information on this.

This week has been Children's Mental Health week. We have promoted lots of different things children can do to maintain a positive mind-set as well as sharing strategies they can use (or suggest to others) that can help to regulate negative emotions. Across this term, our TAHMS in school team have been working with an increasing number of children and families. Please do get in touch if you have concerns about the emotional wellbeing of your child, if we cannot help you, we may be able to refer you to someone who can. Please also refer to the flyer on page 11 which has details of a range of online parent/carers workshops that you can join.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the Friends of Hillcross who have once again worked tirelessly to put on two events this half term as well as planning three larger scale events for next half term (see more information below). The Winter Warmer has now become a firm Hillcross favourite after just two years of operation!

Finally, partnership working is really important so please make sure you book an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher after half term. Bookings went live on Thursday 8th Feb, please refer to the ParentMail sent on that day. **Face to face parent meetings are on Weds 21st and virtual meetings on Thursday 22nd February.**

I look forward to another action packed half term after the break—how lucky our children are to have so many varied and exciting opportunities available to them. I wish you all a happy and safe half term!

Best Wishes, *Lisa Francis*, Headteacher.

Sponsored events to raise the final funds for our Outdoor Classroom

Along with FoH, we have been raising funds to put towards an outdoor classroom that can be used by the children during the school day and at lunchtimes. **We have currently got £16,000 to put towards it but we need to raise the final £4,000 before the project can start.**

We would love to have this in place ready for the children to use in the summer term so JLT have suggested that we hold a series of sponsored events next half term to see if we can raise the final amount. Events will take place as follows ([please note blue is new from previous communication](#)):

Wednesday 28th February

- Year 3 will hold a LEGO Towerathon—how high will the tower be?
- Year 4 will complete a skipathon.
- Year 5 & Year 6 will complete a sponsored run (laps of the field).

Thursday 29th February

- Nursery and Reception will hold a 'WakeUpShakeUpathon'.
- Year 1 and Year 2 will do a danceathon.



Please refer to the ParentMail that was sent on Thursday 8th February for specific information about each Year Group's events. There was a sponsor form attached to the email and all children were also sent home with a paper copy of the sponsor form.

If you would like to make a specific donation directly to the Hillcross Children's Fund, you can do so via your ParentMail account, family and friends can do so by scanning the QR code on the home page of website.



Nurturing our children to think critically and creatively within a collaborative community.
School Values: aspiration, challenge, compassion, responsibility and respect



Hillcross Parental Communication Bulletin— Friday 10th February

Whole School

Diary Dates

Monday 19th February - Children return to school for spring term 2
Tuesday 20th February - Clothes Recycling Collection 8:30 –8:45am
Wednesday 21st February - Parents Evening in person meeting via appointment
Thursday 22nd February - Parents Evening remote meeting via appointment
(parent evening appointments will be available to book in advance)
Wednesday 28th February - Sponsored events Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6
Thursday 29th February - Sponsored events N, R, Y1, Y2
Friday 1st March - FoH Quiz Night
Wednesday 6th March - Film Night
Friday 8th March - INSET school closed for pupils
Friday 15th March - Red Nose Day (see info on next page)
Friday 22nd March - FoH Spring Fair
Wednesday 27th March - Nursery last day of spring term
Wednesday 27th March - Progress Celebration Evening 3.05 - 5:00pm
Thursday 28th March - Reception to Year 6 last day of spring term
Click here to view key dates: <https://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk/virtual-office/calendar>

Fundraising in the Spring Term

The Senior Leadership Team have been discussing the various different fundraising events that will be coming up next half term and in recognition of how many there are we have made the following changes/decisions:

- **World Book Day Dress Up (Monday 4th March).** **There will be no expectation that children should make a donation in order to take part in the World Book Day Dress Up fun.** The commission we raise from the book fair will be used to purchase new books that we need.
- The theme for Red Nose Day (Friday 15th March) is 'Do something Funny for Money'. The children love to get involved in this event and we will offer opportunity for them to do so (see information below) but **there is no expectation that children should make a donation in order to take part.** For those families who wish to donate money to the cause via the school, we will have donation buckets on both gates at the beginning and end of the day.

Handwriting Pens and Amazon Wishlist

Following pupil voice, FoH agreed to fund the purchase handwriting pens based on a trial carried out by the Junior Leadership Team. The children in Years 3-6 were delighted and have reported that it has made writing easier for them. However, the pens have now started to run out of ink and we cannot afford to buy new ones. The Eco Committee looked into the possibility of buying refills and found that they are even more expensive than the pens themselves! They have written a letter to the company querying this as they believe the refills should be more cost effective in order to promote environmental sustainability!!

In the meantime, we have added a box of the handwriting pens to each Teams Amazon Wishlist so that children can be given another one when their pen runs out. The alternative will be that they are given one of the old handwriting pens until we are able to afford to buy the preferred pens so if you are feeling generous and are able to help, please do make a purchase of a box of pens for



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Safeguarding: Online Safety

Aside from the more obvious risks such as online bullying, grooming or device addiction, the way children are engaging with the online world means that we have to take stock of their mental health and wellbeing, the type of content they are viewing and what they are posting online.

It is crucial that we protect our data online but children often don't realise just how important it is. The more public information they post the easier it is for people to steal their data.

Talking regularly with your child about online safety can help keep them safe on the internet. Making it part of daily conversation, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed. It also means when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you.

Please look out for our **'Wake Up Wednesday - what parents / carers need to know'** communication. Each week we will share information about **online safety**, which we encourage you to discuss with your children.

Don't forget Interland—games children can access on google that supports our Internet Legends lessons.



Home Learning

The Home Learning set on **Friday 8th March** will be to 'do something funny' and take a photograph or short video (no more than 30 seconds). You might bake the wonkiest cake, run backwards dressed as a lobster or host a silly games night for your friends. We know you will have even better ideas of your own! Each Team will look at any photos/videos uploaded by **Wednesday 13th March** and vote for the funniest one. The winning team entry will be watched by the whole school on Friday 15th March and will be tweeted and put on our school website for everyone to enjoy. The three funniest entries will also win 50, 30 and 15 points respectively for their house.

Family Fundraising

We know that many of our families arrange fundraising events of their own. If you arrange your own fundraising event, please let us know what you did and how much you raised, with photos if possible. We will publish these so that the whole school community can celebrate your efforts.

Wear as much as red as you can!

On **Friday 15th March**, children can swap items of school uniform for red items or official Red Nose Day merchandise. Please remember that health and safety requirements must still be adhered to e.g. no open toed sandals

There is no expectation that children should make a donation in order to do so. For those families who wish to donate money to the cause via the school, we will have donation buckets on both gates at the beginning and end of the day.





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Spring Term Trailblazer Topic

We jumped straight into our trailblazer topics for the first week of the spring term. These topics are chosen democratically by the children and allow them the opportunity to direct the path of their own learning.

Year 1 researched the history of the London Underground using a timeline to sequence changes over time. Year 2 investigated the impact being held in captivity has on killer whales and wrote letters to our prime minister to persuade him to work with other world leaders to end the captivity of whales. Year 3 took a trip around the world as they researched different countries before presenting their research as team museums. Year 4 considered the key events that led to the sinking of the Titanic and worked collaboratively to research its journey. Year 5 demonstrated their tolerance and respect of one another as they researched and celebrated the different religions shared by the Hillcross community. Year 6 travelled back to the Elizabethan era to research William Shakespeare before performing Macbeth.



Write Here, Write Now

Some of our Year 3 children have been taking part in a creative literacy project called **Write Here, Write Now**, which is run by the Polka Theatre, Wimbledon. They have been delivering weekly drama and writing workshops where children share stories, express ideas, increase vocabulary, build confidence and further develop their imaginations. The project is designed to complement the children's literacy classwork.

At the end of the first year of the project in July this year, the whole year group will be invited to Polka Theatre in Wimbledon to celebrate the children's hard work and amazing stories.

Mini Musicians

Year 1 have completed their first half term of the Mini Musicians project which is an innovative pilot programme for the London Borough of Merton, working in partnership with Merton Music Foundation, Sing Up and Roehampton University enabling them all to learn a musical instrument and take part in a finale festival in 2025.



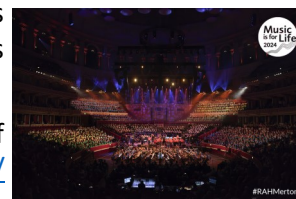
The children are fully immersed and enjoying every session which allows exposure to the profound and unique power that music has to impact on pupils' development socially, academically, physically and culturally.

Click here to watch the video about the programme: <https://youtu.be/iHths9SBdYY>

Music is for Life 2024

Excitement is building amongst our Year 5 pupils and staff as they prepare to showcase their musical talents at the Royal Albert Hall with Merton Music Foundation for their epic Music is for Life concert on Monday 11 March. This incredible opportunity is the result of months of dedication and collaboration and has not only nurtured a love for music but has also provided invaluable learning experiences while leading up to a concert they'll never forget.

Parents, guardians and the whole school community are invited to witness the magic of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. For ticket information, visit: www.mmf.org.uk/



Equality Objective: promoting girls participation in sport

To support our Equality Objective aimed at encouraging more girls to participate in sport, we are delighted to be able to offer a **free Girls Only Cricket after school club** in conjunction with The Old Ruts.

The club will be on a **Monday every week 3:00 – 4:00pm** until from 19th February until 25th March for girls in Year 2, year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and year 6. To secure a place for your child please go to your ParentMail shop.





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The **Hillcross 100 Club** is a fun way to raise additional funds for the school whilst also giving those who take part in the lottery style experience the chance to win some cash prizes.

How does the 100 Club work?

The 100 club is a monthly draw which takes place in school, aiming to raise extra funds for resources for the children. Please note there is no draw in August when the school is closed. Parents, staff or governors can pay £5 per month and are allocated a number (you can have more than one number if you wish to). Each month there are three prizes and the more members we have the more money you could win.

How will it benefit the school?

The prize money will be 40% of the membership fee taken that month. The remaining 60% goes to the school via The Hillcross Children's Fund to help purchase equipment, resources and opportunities for pupils.

Therefore, if 100 tickets are sold, the 1st prize will be £100, the 2nd prize will be £60 and the 3rd Prize will be £40. The remaining money will be spent on your children so even if you don't win, your children will still benefit!

Please click on the link below to view the Terms & Conditions:

<https://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=714&type=pdf>

Please click on the link to view and download an application form:

<https://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=713&type=pdf>



Help to Save the Environment: Our next clothes/textile recycling collection will be on **Tuesday 20th February between 8:30-9:00am**. As we head towards Spring now is the time to sort out your wardrobe and donate anything that you no longer need. This is a fantastic way of having a good clear-out whilst raising valuable money for the school and helping those in need. Our Junior

Eco Committee & Eco Warriors are continually promoting sustainability and they encourage everyone to recycle. They are so passionate about this they will be there to help to receive the donations you bring in on the 20th February. **House points will be awarded for the most bags collected** so please put your donation on the correct coloured table outside the school office when you arrive at school. Thank you in advance for your contribution.



Merton Mencap offers a service you may not be aware of called M.A.P.S. (Merton Autism Parent Service). This service has been commissioned by Merton CCG and is lead and delivered by Merton Mencap staff and trained parent advisors whom all have autistic children themselves. You must have a child or young person aged between 0-25 with a diagnosis of ASD or a referral for a possible ASD diagnosis. The service offers:

- Parents are able to book a 2:1 session via phone or email
- Support and advice on a range of home and community parenting issues using an established toolkit of resources.
- Refer parents to useful websites, local services, apps, parent forums and parenting courses.

Click on the link to view more information on Merton Mencap website: <https://www.mertonmencap.org.uk/services/merton-autism-parent-service-maps/>

Keep up to date!

X Hillcross Primary School are on Twitter! It is a quick and easy way to keep up to date with all the activities happening in school. We try to tweet on a daily basis. This may be information about events or pictures of the teaching and learning taking place around the school.

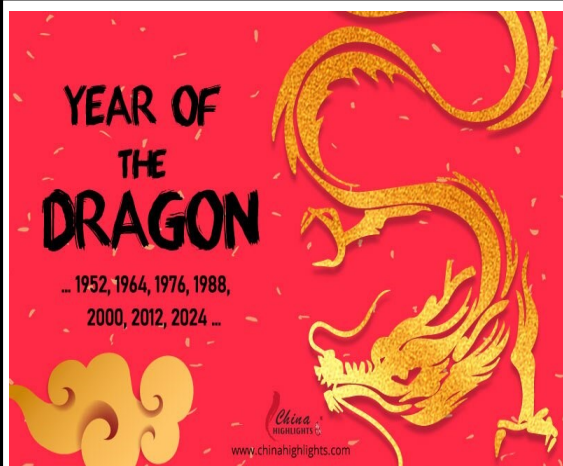
The Merton Music Foundation deliver over 850 instrumental and vocal lessons each week to children in Merton, the majority of them in school. However, they are keen to support more young people to start their musical journey. Please click the to see the film they have made or contact MMF if they want more information.
<https://youtu.be/I9sWlFKT8Mw>



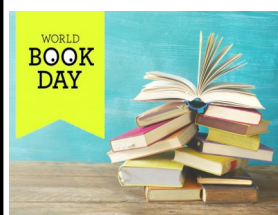


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2024 is the year of the Dragon. This holds a significant place as an auspicious and extraordinary creature, unparalleled in talent and excellence. It symbolizes power, nobility, honour, luck, and success. **2024 is forecasted to bring about opportunities, changes, and challenges.** Years of the Dragon include 2036, 2024, 2012, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964, 1952... People born in Dragon years usually possess natural courage, tenacity, and intelligence, often displaying enthusiasm and confidence. To celebrate the children enjoyed a special Chinese menu that was cooked by our amazing kitchen team on Tuesday and learnt more about the Year of the Dragon during assembly on Friday 9th February.



With World Book Day fast approaching, wearing a costume of a favourite book character has become popular with the children – **at Hillcross our book character dress up day will be on Monday 4th March.** We are not asking for a donation in order for children to take part. Please try to be as environmentally friendly as possible by recycling previous costume purchases or by making a costume from recycled materials/clothes you already have. We look forward to seeing the children dressed up as their favourite character!

Book Fair

In the week commencing 4th March our amazing book fair will be open to the school community where you can purchase fantastic books for your children.

Considerate Parking

Please can we remind all families to park considerately when dropping their children off or picking them up from after school activities. Please do not park over our neighbours driveways and refrain from parking on any double yellow lines -always allow extra time to find a suitable parking space.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and community safe.





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Hillcross Has Got Talent

Our infamous competition returned this year to the delight of children and staff alike! As in previous years the competition was really tough, but the JLT judges managed to whittle the semi-final contestants down to a fantastic line up of acts who showcased their fabulous array of skills and talents at the finals on Thursday 8th (N, R, Y1 and Y2) and Friday 9th February (Y3, Y4, Y5 & Y6). As Hillcross ambassadors, they all displayed a range of positive Habits of Mind including 'Taking Responsible Risks', 'Persistence' and 'Creating, Imaging and Innovating', whilst demonstrating all of our school values: Aspiration, Challenge, Compassion, Responsibility and Respect. Well done to all the children who took part—they are all champions!



Our amazing Hillcross Choir attended the Young Voices Concert at the O2 Arena in January and we were blown away by their incredible performance. The children had worked relentlessly during their choir sessions to perfect popular songs, including a Matilda Medley and some very vocally technical and challenging songs such as a Korean Folk song and a sign language original tune. We were thrilled by their performance and very privileged to be able to share this experience with them.



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FoH Winter Warmer

We hope you enjoyed the Winter Warmer breakfast; it was great to see so many families and friends enjoying a delicious breakfast and having the opportunity to catch up. Thank you to everyone that supported the event, we couldn't do it without you. This year we were fortunate to be sponsored by the NHS who shared information on keeping you and your family well over the winter.

- Vaccinations – winter and childhood vaccines:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>
- Local Community Pharmacies and how they can provide clinical care:
<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/how-pharmacies-can-help/>
- Local Mental Health Services. Help is available 24/7 for people living in Merton through SW London and St Georges crisis line on 0800 028 8000
- The NHS App – download the App to be able to access test results, manage prescriptions and appointments and other services [About the NHS App - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Keeping safe and well in cold weather including simple energy advice.
[Find ways to save energy in your home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

SWL Healthier Together provides trusted information on how to manage common conditions for children at home and when they should be taken to hospital. This fantastic website was developed by professionals and has guidance directing you to services and resources if your child is unwell, as well as information on when children are safe to go to school and when they should stay at home. Visit www.SWLondon-HealthierTogether.nhs.uk for more information.



Martin Way Methodist Church run an **Open Table café** on **Wednesday** lunchtimes, 11.30 – 1.30. A warm space is provided and a delicious lunch. All ages are welcome. For more information, please see the flyer on the last page.

FoH Volunteers & Committee Members

We are still looking for a new a raffle prize co-coordinator to help with the various FOH raffles that we run throughout the year. This can easily be done during hours that suit you, so if you might be able to spare some time to help with sizes, please email friendsofhillcross@yahoo.com.

Could you be one of our next FOH committee members? We sadly will be saying goodbye to a number of our current committee members at the end of the current school year. We will have vacancies for Vice Chair, Vice Treasurer, Vice Secretary and Marketing and Communications. If you're interested in any of these roles, please do speak to one of our committee members who can tell you more about the role/s or email friendsofhillcross@yahoo.com. Being on the committee is a wonderful way to get to know parents throughout our school community and to help make a contribution to your child/ren's school.

FoH Event Dates

The annual Quiz Night will be held on Friday 1st March- Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Tickets are £8 (to include quiz entry and a free drink provided, please bring your own cup/glass) and £14 (to include dinner, entry to the quiz and a free drink). **Dinner options are:** Chicken biriyani/Vegetable biriyani and a samosa **These are available via pta events until midnight on Sunday 25th February.** [Buy your tickets here*](#).

Hillcross Colour Run - Saturday 27th of April (new event)

Children, parents, carers, siblings, grandparents will have the chance to run the colour course and have a lot of fun! Tickets on sale soon via the PTA events platform! Come for lunch, BBQ and Bar will be available. All are welcome. Find out more [here](#)





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Hillcross Children's Fund

(formally the Curriculum Enhancement Fund)

How we use the funds to support projects:



Music Room ✓

Art Studio
(coming in
Autumn 22)

DT Workshop
(fundraising in
2022-23)



Food Tech Room ✓



Examples of how we use the fund every year:

Theatre Performances
(whole school)

Anti-Bullying Workshops
(Y1-Y6)

Playground Equipment
(whole school)

Consumables:
e.g. pasta, flour,
sponges & cooking ingredients

Association Membership: e.g.
Historical Association,
National Trust & Sing Up

Children's newspapers and
magazines (library and in-class)

Update books for library

Other ways the fund is used:

- Curriculum/Topic Resources
- Visitors & Workshops
- Allotment & Woodland Area

Contributions can be made in the following ways:

- ✓ Click on the [Hillcross Children's Fund](#) QR code
- ✓ [Parentmail](#)
- ✓ Monthly standing order
- ✓ Cash, cheque
- ✓ Vouchers from Charities' Trusts

You said

We did



We recommend setting up a monthly standing order as this is a much easier way to contribute for your child. We suggest a contribution of £10 per month (£120 per year) or you can choose any amount that is affordable to you.

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GOOD THINGS FOR YOUR CHILD & SCHOOL

All the info you need to know...

The pupil premium is a Government scheme that provides funding of up to £1,320 per eligible pupil.

The school can use this money to support your child, eg: providing new equipment or possibly additional teaching staff.



THE PUPIL PREMIUM WHAT IT OFFERS...

- 1 Funding to the school** to support your child
- 2 A saving of hundreds of pounds to you** in the cost of school dinners
- 3 Healthy, nutritious food** (which can link to doing well!) provided free of charge

Q: How can I apply?

Simply click on the link below to complete the online form :

<https://vsl.merton.gov.uk/service/Pupil-Premium-and-Free-School-Meals-application>

Q: Why should I apply?

The main reason – you will be helping the school (and therefore your child) as the school will then be able to claim pupil premium funding from the Government. This is worth up to £1,320 per eligible pupil!

It'll only take five minutes to complete the form – why not do it now?

Also, you've probably heard that children in Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) can now receive school meals free of charge. If your child is in Year 3 or above (and you meet the pupil premium criteria), the school will be able to provide them with school meals free of charge. This can help save you hundreds of pounds a year and is a service the school will be happy to provide for you.

Q: My child receives free school meals as they're currently in Key Stage 1. Do I still need to complete this form?

Yes! In order for the school to receive pupil premium funding we need you to complete this form so we can confirm you qualify. Even if your child is already receiving free meals in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, please complete this form – it'll help both your child and their school.

If you think your child may be eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding, please click on the following link below to apply :

<https://vsl.merton.gov.uk/service/Pupil-Premium-and-Free-School-Meals-application>



ONLINE PARENT/CARER WORKSHOPS

Jointly run by Off The Record and Croydon Drop In

Join us online for the following workshops. Sign up via Eventbrite by scanning the QR code below. Cameras and microphones can be turned off.



Helping your Child's Behaviour (Primary age)

Wed 21st February 5-6 pm

Helping your Child with Anxiety and Worries

Wed 28th February 5-6 pm

Looking After Yourself for Parents

Wed 6th March 5-6 pm

Introduction to Autism

Wed 13th March 5-6 pm

Introduction to ADHD

Wed 20th March 5-6 pm



Off The Record also run workshops for parents for support with **Self Harm** and **Emotionally Based School Avoidance** scan the QR code to the left to find out dates, times and how to sign up.



TALK TO US

OFF THE RECORD

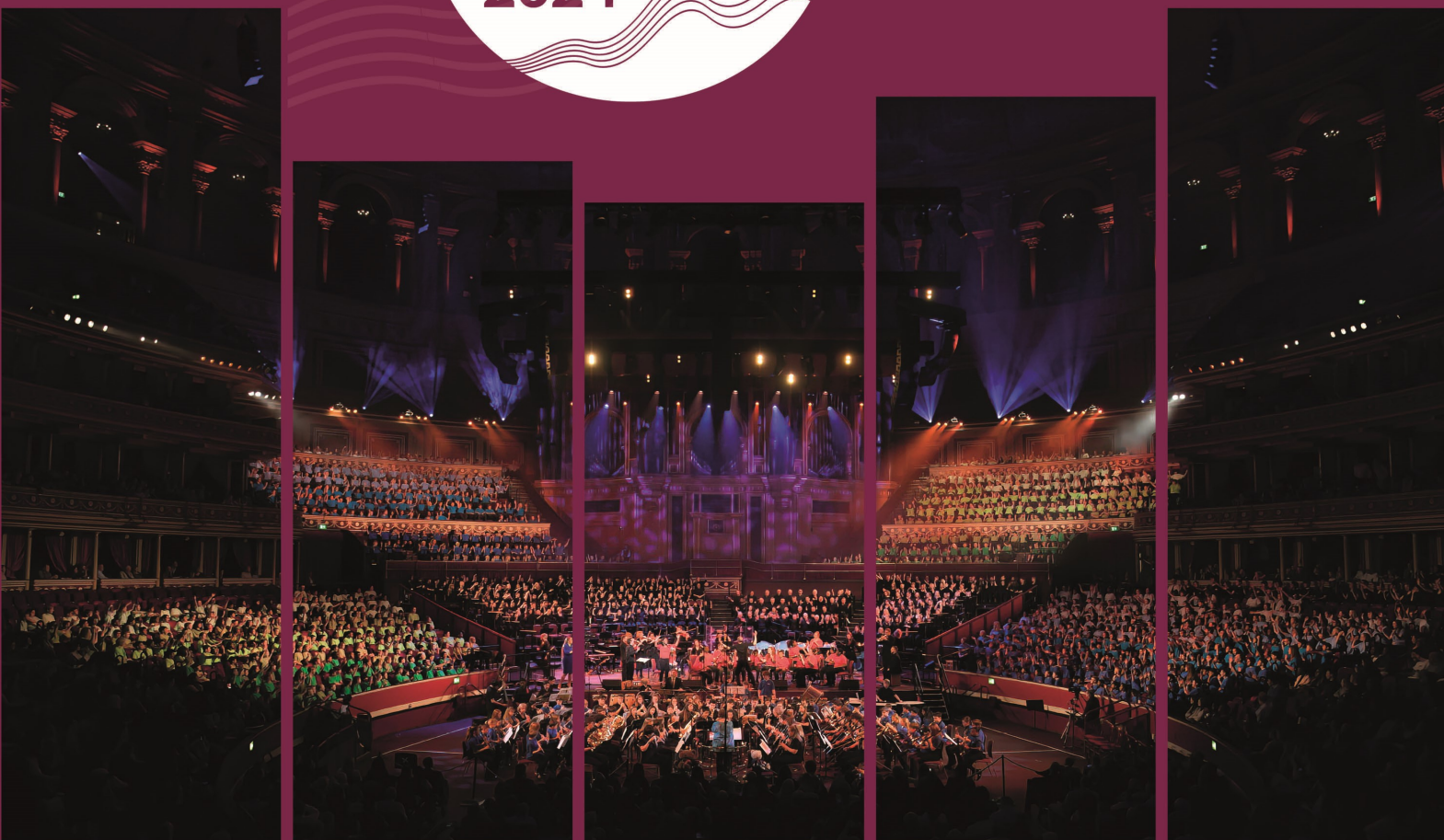


**Are you OK
Croydon?**



**You Talk,
We Listen**
Croydon Drop In

**Music
is for Life**
2024



Merton Music Foundation presents:

CHANGE IS COMING

Monday 11 March 2024 at 7pm **Royal Albert Hall**

Join us for a magical return to the Royal Albert Hall with
1,500 young singers and instrumentalists from across Merton.
Making memories that will last a lifetime.



Tickets: www.royalalberthall.com
www.mmf.org.uk

#RAHMerton

Charity No: 1004122



Love food, hate waste

The Open Table Café

@Martin Way Methodist Church

Buckleigh Avenue, Merton Park SW20 9JZ

Every Wednesday

Tea, coffee and cake from 11.30am

Lunch served from 12pm (last order 1.30pm)

All dishes prepared from surplus food sourced locally

Pay as you feel

All welcome