

Dear Parents and Carers,

In 2019/20 the Foundation Stage children (along with children from 3 other schools and children visiting a museum) were invited to take part in research being undertaken by DeMontfort University. The research was being conducted by Dr Katie Laird, a parent at Sketchley Hill, and was studying the impact of direct teaching about hand washing on children's knowledge of germ transfer and handwashing behaviours.

To study this, researchers tested the children's initial understanding of handwashing by asking questions and watching them wash their hands. The children then completed a variety of different handwashing related tasks including;

- Using 'glo gel' to help children visualise the 'invisible germs' and promote good handwashing technique.
- Sharing a story about where germs may be and why we need to wash the germs away.
- Playing an online game to help the children find where germs may be.
- Singing a handwashing song to encourage good hygiene practises.

After completing these activities with the children, the researchers came back several weeks later to see if they had any impact on the way the children physically washed their hands and their understanding of why they were washing their hands. Dr Laird and her team found that, after the children had taken part in the activities, children showed significantly better understanding of the need to wash their hands and a significant improvement in the quality of handwashing.

Following this research, some of the handwashing activities above have been implemented with our current Foundation Stage children to improve the quality of handwashing. This is particularly important considering the advice related to COVID-19 and the importance of washing hands but can continue to have a positive impact on any kind of germ transfer. The direct teaching about handwashing will continue each year to encourage good handwashing routines with young children.

Please read the full study for further information by following the link below.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0242134>

Kind regards,

Mrs Rachel Hillier

Foundation Stage teacher