

Welcome to Reception!

We have had a lovely first few days together and I have been absolutely delighted with how quickly everyone is settling in. The children are working really hard to pick up new routines in addition to adapting to each new day, filled with new activities, new people and new places. During our time at Willow Brook so far we have been digging, pedalling, building, drawing, painting, singing, counting and writing. I will put a few photographs on the school website so you can see us in action!

Next week will see more elements of our routine slip into place. Each morning will start with a phonics session where we spend time learning our letter sounds. This is usually followed by either a numeracy or literacy session. **In numeracy** we will be working on our number skills, such as practising counting forwards and backwards, in addition to carefully matching groups of objects to the correct numeral. **Literacy** sessions will be linked closely to our topic for this half term, which is 'Voyages of Discovery'. As a class we will be reading books all about Pirates, which will inspire the children to discover more about pirates through a wide variety of activities closely linked to the text. If your child has a pirate book at home that they would like to share with the rest of the class they are more than welcome to bring it in to school.



On a Wednesday afternoon we have **topic** afternoon with Miss Johnston and Class One. This provides a great opportunity for the children to take part in peer learning as well as making a few more friends! This half term, topic afternoons will be linked to the historical aspect of 'Voyages of Discovery'. We will be finding out about some historical explorers, in addition to thinking about what we would need to take with us if we were to embark on a new adventure!



This week I will be sending home your children's **reading** wallets. Within this wallet you will find your child's reading book and their reading diary (also known as their 'monkey book'). The children will have either a reading book with or without words, depending on how many letter sounds they confidently know. If your child has a book without words please encourage them to identify characters or objects they can see in the pictures and allow them the opportunity to invent their own stories. This will help to develop their reading comprehension skills, which is a vital skill for understanding stories and their structure. Similarly, if your child has been given a book with words please ask a variety of questions about what they have read, in addition to what they can see in the pictures, as this too will help to develop their understanding of the story. During their time in school we will carefully monitor how many sounds your child knows and as soon as they can confidently recognise enough letter sounds and are ready to begin blending those sounds for reading then we will give them a reading book with words. With regards to changing reading books, as mentioned in the new parent's meeting, your child's reading books will not be changed every day as it is important that they read their book more than once to develop their reading comprehension. Instead your child will be given a new book on Monday, it will be changed again in the middle of the week once they have shared their book with me (so I can track their progress) and then they will receive a new reading book on Friday, ready for the weekend. Finally, I would like to stress the importance of reading with your child every day as this establishes **a reading routine** with your child and will help support them with making greater progress with their reading. However, reading at home should not be a battle. If your child is reluctant to read then reading a few pages of a book is better than

none at all. Once your child has read at home it essential that you **write a comment** in your child's monkey book as this allows us to track their reading progress at home. Also please feel free to write any other comments or questions in their monkey books as this a great way to establish home-school communication.

In addition to reading, 'Home Tasks' will be set every Friday as a way of sharing the learning that takes place in school with you at home. Home Tasks will appear in your child's pink Home Tasks book and will typically be a short activity with a Literacy, Numeracy or Topic focus based upon what we have been learning during the week. However, this week's home task will be a little different...

This week's Home Task

As a way of getting to know the children a little better I thought it would be a good idea for each child to make a 'Special Book of Me' that they could share with the rest of the class. This Friday, in your child's book bag, you will find an A4 booklet that your child can fill with information, drawings, pictures and photographs etc. of people or things that are important to them. You may choose to talk about family, friends, pets, things they like or dislike, in addition to anything else you wish to include. If this could be completed and returned to school in the next couple of weeks, that would be great!

Just a few reminders...

Outdoor P.E lessons normally take place on a Wednesday with Mrs Graham but, as we may have already said, these sessions may be moved to accommodate the weather or visiting coaches so it is important to keep a P.E kit in school all week. A P.E kit, containing both indoor and outdoor clothing, should include; a white t-shirt, black shorts, dark jogging bottoms and a jumper for if it is cold and either plimsolls or trainers, which should all be **clearly labelled to avoid getting lost**.

Please could your child also bring a water bottle to school every day (again clearly labelled) so they can have a drink during the school day? We do have spare cups should your child forget their water bottle but it does make things a little easier if they can have their own water bottle that they can easily access. Furthermore, if your child would like to have a drink of milk at school you must register through the Nottinghamshire Milk Scheme at the following address:

www.coolmilk.com/nottinghamshire.



Show and Tell takes place in Class R on a Tuesday afternoon and the children are invited to bring something in from home that they can share with the rest of the class. I know that many of the children would like to bring toys but I feel that it would be more beneficial if the children bring in photographs, books, souvenirs or something related to our topic as they will have more information about their objects that they can share with the class. However, children are allowed to bring **one toy** in from home to play with at playtime, if they wish to. This should be something that is small enough to fit in their tray and is not valuable in case it gets damaged or broken.

Please remember that you are more than welcome to come in and talk over any worries or questions you have - however small. Any member of staff is more than happy to chat and help if we can.

Thank you for all your support,
Miss Tarrant