

Willow Brook News

February 3rd 2017



Willow Brook, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5BB. Telephone: 01159149889. office@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with immense pride that I am writing my first newsletter to you as Willow Brook's new headteacher. Your messages of support and encouragement this week, as over the last half term have been so welcome and have once again demonstrated that this is a fabulous school community!

As some of you may know, Willow Brook has been my home for many years and, in my different roles, I have had the privilege of watching this school move from strength to strength. I remember the first day I walked through the door as a new teacher and the determination I felt for each child who sat in my first class. Many of them are university graduates now, but they still write and say how proud they were of being 'Willow Brookers' and how much they remember of their time here! In every year that has passed, I have aimed to work with the same energy and commitment and this will certainly be the case now that I have the honour of inspiring that ethos throughout the school in my role as headteacher. Whilst I have been given the official job of championing English and Creative Arts at Willow Brook in the past, (in the same way that other teachers lead other curriculum areas with great passion) I would like to assure you that I value (and will actively promote and encourage) a balanced and healthy curriculum. Driving maths and science at a whole school level might not have appeared on my job description before, but that never meant that those subjects were any less important in my eyes or in my classroom.

After a very busy week of talking to a lot of adults, it was good to have some time today in classrooms with the children. Willow Brook is often described by visitors and newcomers as having a bit of unique 'magic' – a feeling that is hard to quantify or put into words – and that was certainly evident as I went into each year group today. There were a lot of busy, happy young people who were clearly thriving in their work and play! Our reception children and Year 1 were off on a walk to explore their local community... Pre-school were getting ready to visit the bakery... Year 5 were busily 'exploring the life of explorers' in the computer suite... Year 6 were making shapes and trying to work out where the 'edge' of a sphere was... We announced our new Bench of Glory line up... Year 3 painted... the whole school wrote entries for the Rotary Club writing competition... Year 4 had a climb on the new P.E. wall bars in the hall... (As did Mrs Ballard and Miss Johnston!) The day felt productive and full of positivity!

My only feeling of sadness in moving into the role of headteacher is that I will sincerely miss being with Year 6 in their final term. They have come on in leaps and bounds in the very capable and hardworking hands of Mrs Myring and Mrs Graham and I am impressed with their progress, emerging talents and resilience. They are fast becoming 'secondary ready' young people. I cannot say how much I have appreciated the efforts of such a strong team approach and know that all staff involved with Year 6 are determined that each and every child in that class will leave Willow Brook with their heads held high at the end of the summer term. In the meantime, I can't help but pop in...quite regularly (!) and look forward to getting involved in some booster classes after half term.

Willow Brook is a good school. In my eyes it has always had something about it that has been quite outstanding. We have an eager team of brilliant teachers, who have all shown their commitment and drive over the past term; a strong and experienced governing board who

provide support and challenge and, together with your input and support, we will continue to aim high. There is great momentum in so many ventures that Mrs Toom began – we miss her enormously – and I hope that this new chapter will continue to build positively on all that she worked so hard to achieve. Our next goal will be to appoint a deputy head, thus adding to the strength of our leadership team and, of course, teaching in key stage 2. By appointing after Easter, this will be in place by September.

A few other thoughts that have been brought to my attention...

I appreciate that parking on Willow Brook is difficult at the start and end of the school day, especially if you are late and short of time. BUT we need the zone marked out with yellow lines outside the school to be free of parked cars at key times. This includes the other side of the road. It is essential that there is a clear space for children to cross Willow Brook safely and ask that all parents play their part in keeping this important area accident free.

Parent governors also expressed their concern this week about the level of dog fouling on the verges outside the school. This has been walked in to the building on several occasions and just makes the job of cleaning carpets and shoes unpleasant. Help us by being vigilant and challenge any dog walker who might not share our concerns.

Over the last few years, Keyworth Cricket Club have worked in school and our Year 5 and 6 children have had great fun in coaching sessions and taking part in competitive tournaments at Platt Lane. Barry Baker has asked if I could share details of the Keyworth Girls' Club:

The door is open at Keyworth Cricket Club for Girls!

Girls between 7 and 14 years who would like to give cricket a try are invited to our Indoor Coaching sessions at Keyworth Leisure Centre in the Sports Hall every Monday evening through March and into early April (6.30-7.30pm) - complete beginners through to competent players. Cost £3 per session. Trainers and leisure clothing are all you need. Instruction and supervision from qualified coaches.

Last year Keyworth CC ran more than 30 sessions for Girls and 25 girls experienced playing in matches, both hard ball & soft ball kwik cricket.

New players always welcome. Enquiries to Barry Baker bgbaker@btopenworld.com

(Not forgetting the Ladies, Keyworth CC also run weekly sessions for 'mums' having fun and healthy exercise playing 'social' soft ball cricket. 'New' Ladies, Boys & Men also very welcome to join Keyworth CC.)

I will leave you with a few of the photographs I took on my afternoon in the classrooms. I know more will be put on the website for you to enjoy. Can I take this chance to remind you that if you take pictures of Willow children whilst out on trips or at sporting events, our policy states that they should not be shared in any way on social media without the permission of every parent whose child appears in the image.

Thank you once again for your support over a busy few weeks (and for the Crème Eggs!)

Best wishes,
Louise Ballard

