

Willow Brook News

March 14th 2018



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Dear Parents and Carers,

I tend to find myself starting newsletters with a comment about how busy Willow Brook seems to have been since I last wrote... that feels like a bit of an understatement as I start to tell you about our past fortnight!

Firstly, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your support during our recent Ofsted inspection. Your feedback on the more formal Parentview platform was (in the words of an inspector) quite incredible and each member of staff appreciated your kind words and sympathetic smiles as we continued through parents' evenings! Whilst our report remains confidential until it goes through the whole Ofsted quality assurance process, we know that Willow Brook is a learning community we can all be proud of. Thank you too for attending last week's parents' evenings. I hope that you found the feedback informative and enjoyed seeing your child's work.

On our third attempt, we all had great fun on World Book Day and whether there was Seuss or other book fabulous characters on your agenda, seeing such inventive outfits and playing with rhyme made a day to remember! Every child added a page to our whole school book based on 'Wocket in my Pocket' before designing socks for a fox and enjoying an hour with The Lorax! We hope you enjoy spending the book token – there's certainly some great titles to choose from this year.



Our half term curriculum weeks have been a great success thus far and we are really looking forward to showcasing our work with you on the last Thursday afternoon of term. After a positive week with an anti-bullying theme, our science focus got into full swing on Monday morning and I thoroughly enjoyed seeing a mix of classes all absorbed in practical experiments and challenges. There were frozen Lego characters being insulated in year 4;

paper pond skaters testing surface tension in year 1; acids and alkalis revealing hidden codes in year 5 and dunking biscuits revealing absorption in year 2! Reception were up to their elbows in ice and year 3 were investigating the strength of structures built out of spaghetti and midget gems! (and under strict instructions not to eat them, of course!) Year 6 were busy making periscopes and spinning Newton's wheel to understand light.

Our school Science Showdown starts tomorrow and there are many excited children who are trying very hard not to give their plans away! Some unusual objects are set up in classrooms (many under wraps!) and I imagine it is going to be a day full of new learning for us all. Year 5 are off to the BGS to hear about natural sciences from the village experts and we look forward to welcoming some professional judges to our Show Down Friday finale!

Next week our curriculum changes to focus on a key figures who have changed the shape of history. Each class has its own unique study relevant to their age and interests. This addition to our themed weeks emerged after a number of recent assemblies where it became clear that no Willow Brook children recognised great men and women from recent times. (Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King being amongst them.) Whilst we take on the Tudors, the Vikings and the Stone Age, our history curriculum also requires us to look at *the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements*. There's going to be plenty of fascinating new things to learn.

I'd like to share one thing that Miss Tarrant has included on her recent Learning Letter that I think needs to be a reminder for us all. As you know, Willow Brook does its best to uphold a healthy eating policy. Elaine, our cook, has to go to great lengths to comply with the County Council's requirements and the school invests heavily in providing daily fruit and milk to encourage a positive culture. We are noticing that children are gradually finding chocolate bars and cakes in their bags instead for break times and we would appreciate your support in keeping snacking as healthy as it has been over recent years. Children know that a good balance of food in their lunch box is great and whatever is included is your personal choice. Some of our older children have noticed that litter is increasing after morning break and certainly shows a change in what is being consumed in the playground. Your help would be much appreciated.

A final reminder that the school disco is back by popular demand a week on Friday (23rd)...always a great night out!

Thank you again for all that you do to support us and your children and to make Willow Brook a great school in which to work and learn. As always, I am a very proud headteacher!

Louise Ballard

