

Willow Brook News

March 29th 2018

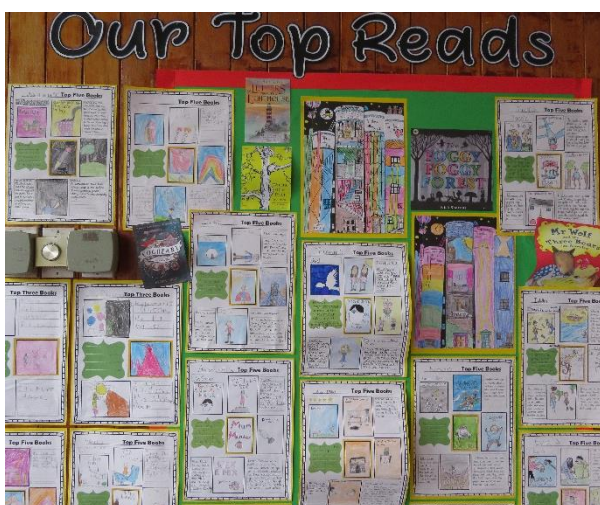


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Dear Parents and Carers,

With snow, rain and just a hint of warmth and sunshine, it's hard to believe that it is the end of the spring term and the summer week are fast approaching! Picnic lunches and playtimes on the field seem a long way off...

This week has been full of busyness and hard work as each class finished and prepped their writing and pictures for today's curriculum showcase. It has taken 3 days to pull together and prepare the unique work that has been happening in every year group and our whole school themed weeks have certainly inspired learning, creativity and exploration. If you had the chance to pop in and see the display for yourself this afternoon I'm sure you'll agree. From practical science and history, to reading and art, this has been a half term with a difference and the children were proud to showcase all that they have achieved. If you were not able to be with us this afternoon, here's a small preview of some of the exhibits...



You may recall that in the midst of our themed weeks, Parents Evenings and snowy days, we received a visit from Ofsted. Whilst they gain but a snapshot of Willow Brook life on the day, I am delighted to be able to now report that the inspection confirmed that we were judged to be a 'solidly good school'. Inspections have changed quite considerably since our last visit in 2014 and, as you'll notice from other primaries, a 'strong good' is considerably harder to attain than it used to be and shows improvement and high standards. In the few hours they were with us, Ofsted observed and understood many key Willow Brook features...*'a dedicated team which is committed to providing pupils with a high-quality education'...* where *'pupils were keen to tell me how much they enjoy learning and being a part of their school family...and routinely take part in lessons that are engaging and stimulating'...* It praises our governing body who it describes as being, *'experienced and passionate'* and describes how we all respond to the care and support our children need with *'prompt action and rigour'*.

In our bid to address previous advice, we have worked hard to put strategies in place to raise teaching standards so that a higher proportion of lessons are outstanding. We have also made sure that we plan a more focussed quality provision for our more able and vulnerable pupils. Both was clearly recognised. Our high results at the end of the reception year have been well above average in recent years and continue to be ambitious. By comparison, key stage one, with its new and demanding curriculum, requires children to demonstrate a huge academic leap in Years 1 and 2. Standard and ambition does not decline as children settle into the National Curriculum, even though the data might shift after the less demanding early years' assessment. Whilst Ofsted highlight this slight fall in statistics as our new target for improvement, we already have this in hand and understand how we can accelerate progress throughout the key stage.

As you will read when our report is published, Willow Brook is described as being a great place to work and learn. Its highlighted sense of family, nurture and care will continue to be as important as its academic rigour and we are, as ever, a community that is determined to be the best we can be. Our Willow Brook 5 C's of commitment, care, community, creativity and confidence sum up our ethos so simply. We move forward with confidence. Thank you for all that you continue to do to support the school and your children's learning. We appreciate it very much.

Whilst I don't mean to end such a positive term on a low note, can I just mention parking... After a great improvement on Willow Brook last term, I have been inundated with complaints this week about cars stopping directly outside the gate and blocking the traffic flow whilst children are trying to cross. PLEASE recognise that this is not safe at busy times of the day. If you are having problems and need assistance in getting children safely into the playground because of other passengers, PLEASE telephone the office and I will walk and collect your children from you. This is far safer than parking your car in a restricted zone. If the problem continues after Easter we will be asking Nottinghamshire County Council's school safety enforcement team to help us to improve the situation. Thank you for your help.

Finally, the staff at Willow Brook wish you a very happy Easter weekend and hope that your two week break provides plenty of rest and fun. We look forward to all that a summer term brings... which, hopefully, includes some warmth and sunshine!

Louise Ballard