

# Willow Brook News

## February 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The first half term of 2020 has flown by and, amidst random snow and sunshine, we have accomplished so much and thoroughly deserve a half term's rest!



Our main topic focus over the past 6 weeks has been geography based. Each year group has explored the world in different ways, and we've ventured as far as the Amazon (on paper) and orienteered around the village (in reality!) As the staff have enjoyed testing the children's geographical knowledge so much, this week's **Geography Mastermind** event seemed the perfect way to revise and show off the fabulously detailed work that has gone on. Whilst it might have seemed daunting, our 12 finalists – the youngest of which was just 5 years old – bravely sat in the famous black chair... (wheeled in from Mrs Ballard's office!) and faced two rounds of Geography and general knowledge. Their efforts were rewarded with the support of their peers, plenty of applause

and a medal! Our champion, Ella was very proud and Lucas and Ben, in second and third place respectively, amazed us all! Confidence is one of our 5 C's and all 12 children certainly took one step forward by being so brave.

On Tuesday, we marked **Internet Safety Day** with an assembly and a workshop for each class. The theme this year centred around building a better internet experience and online identity. We use the book **#Goldilocks** to unlock themes of responsible sharing on social media and (with the older children) took time to consider the digital footprint we leave and the age of responsibility in the eyes of the law. We adopted what soon became known as **Joseph's Law** (thanks to the wise words of one of our Year 6 boys) which clearly stated, 'Don't press send on any words that you wouldn't say to a person's face with Mr Jones standing by your side!' Wisdom indeed. During our class time, children described receiving social media messages late into the night and uncomfortable fears of missing out... as well as feeling misunderstood or upset by messaging and chat. It was clear from their contributions to conversations that your boundaries and vigilance when it comes to children leaving phones downstairs when they go to bed and monitoring their communication to a sensible level, contributes to their feelings of security and wellbeing and is seen as being a positive thing by the children, even when they might protest!



### Our Diary After Half Term

Before I tell you about the next six weeks, a reminder that the first Monday back after half term is an **inset training day**. Staff will be off to different venues to engage with other Rushcliffe schools, so your children will be quite alone if they arrive at Willow Brook!

You should soon receive a letter inviting you to our **Parents Evenings** which takes place in the second week after half term (the week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> March). Please read the availability carefully – because of shared maternity cover staff, year groups may differ on the times available to meet with staff. We'll do our best, as always, to make sure that we accommodate you when it comes to siblings and will be happy to make alternative plans for individuals who may not be able to attend the evenings on offer.

Our whole school topic for next half term is all about books! **Lost in a Library** will aim to boost the power of reading and involve the children in many new ventures to inspire and engage them all. We will be working toward a collective *200 Million Minutes* of reading with other schools nationally and hope to find more opportunities to invite you in to share our reading projects which aim to get our whole community motivated and finding the joy in sharing stories. **World Book Day** falls in our second week back and March 5<sup>th</sup> couldn't pass without us marking the occasion! Please see the details on the flyer overleaf to see how you can support what is always a fabulous day. Years 5 and 3 have already delighted their parents with an assembly all about reading and next half term years 2 and 1 will add their views and voices!

After the success of the Friends of Willow Brook Quiz Night (which raised a tremendous £500) the committee are busily putting together their plans for the **Willow Brook Trail Run and Fun Run on Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>**. This year there's a main run for the more discerning racer and a children's fun run for our younger athletes! I added full details on my previous newsletter, but please see the website and find out how you can enter and get involved. The Friends Group have recently donated a generous sum of money to school to enable us to replace our KS1 reading scheme and buy new classroom books and atlases (to replace our current stock in which Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union still exist!) New projects will help us to build and update more outdoor learning areas over the summer and add those wonderful extra touches that make all the difference to school life and learning.

Finally, we have vacancies for 2 parent governors on the Willow Brook board and will be sending out letters of nomination on the Monday after half term. Neil Rabbitts, our chair, would like to encourage you to consider getting involved. I leave you with his words:

Dear Parents,

My name is Neil Rabbitts, and I am privileged to be Chair of the Governing Board of Willow Brook Primary School. I am writing this having just got back from the Willow Brook Geography Mastermind competition, and as ever I am humbled by the confidence and ability of the children at Willow Brook, sitting in the Black Chair in front of the whole school and visitors, answering some VERY hard questions! Every competitor was a credit to their class, to their school and to their parents, and all of the children in the hall showed enthusiasm, engagement and politeness in their support of the competitors.

Being invited to such events is one of the delights of being a Governor – after all, we are here to work with the school leadership team to make the education your children receive as good as it can be, and seeing the children in action gives us very tangible proof of the excellent work going on at the school. We contribute to the exciting plans that the school has in place to make things even better, review progress, and provide supportive challenge to the leadership team, which gives us a fascinating insight into the running of the school.

Would you like to get involved in this work? If so, please consider putting your name forward for one of two Parent Governor vacancies that we have. You can find more details about the role and what's involved on the school website at <https://willowbrook.notts.sch.uk/governors/> (or via the menu, School Information > Governors). If you'd like to discuss what's involved, please either contact myself at [chair@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk](mailto:chair@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk), or have a chat to Mrs Ballard or any of the other governors listed on the Who's Who page of that section of the website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Neil

With very kind regards and happy half term!

*Louise Ballard*

# WORLD BOOK DAY

THURSDAY  
5 MARCH  
SAVE THE DATE

## Giants of a Genre

Books come in different genres. In a primary school our favourites are *adventure*, *picture books*, *fairytale*s, *classics*, *comic book*, *poetry* and (perhaps) a little futuristic *science fiction*.

Come dressed as a character or book that would fit into one of those genres and you could win a prize! Originality and creativity will, as always, be awarded.

## Save the date!

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March is World Book Day and we have started our preparations for a fun-filled day to promote and celebrate reading and a love of books. We are giving you plenty of notice for some of the activities taking place on the day, as we welcome and hope for your help and participation.

## Share a story...

You may remember in the past, as part of our reading week, we invited parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles into school to either share a favourite short story of their own with the children in an assembly, or to volunteer the last hour of their day to come in and read with children in different classrooms. Not only did the children love this, our willing volunteers did too! We hope to re-create this success on World Book Day this year. **Please email us or send a note through your child's class teacher if you or any other relative may be interested in getting**

## Book Swap Banter

It's a little like Toy Story... Andy grew out of his toys and they were left on a shelf. We are going to rescue all the left behind books and enjoy a giant book swap as part of our World Book Day celebrations. We're asking every child to bring in a book – perhaps you have duplicates or you're just happy to pass one on and in return every child will get to choose a new book to take home. We know this will promote lots of 'book chat' and, if nothing else, will give you a space on your shelves for the book you can buy with your £1 token!

## 200 Million Minutes

Our half term theme running up to Easter, will be 'Lost in a Library'. We will be promoting the love of reading and the fabulous '*other world*' a book can take you to. Each class will be celebrating the work of an author and an illustrator. We will also be participating in the 200 Million Minutes to build up some reading stamina at home and school. Teachers will be sharing favourites of their own and we look forward to making our own reading manifesto to show that we believe there is Power in Books.

Class 3's assembly, an afternoon of snow and 12 fabulous Mastermind contestants... just another week at Willow Brook!

