



Willow Brook News

5th June 2023

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Welcome to the final half term of the academic year! There are seven action-packed weeks ahead, full residential adventures, sporting events, first and final days at primary school and a whole-school topic that, I have no doubt, will prove to be inspiring and memorable!

'The Dig' neatly ties up our autumn term history studies and introduces the children to the fascinating world of treasure hunters and archaeology. After an initial trip together to the Tyrolean Alps to unearth the evidence found with the 5,000-year-old Ice Man, each year group will be off on their own learning adventure and will arrive back in July with a table full of 'finds' to share with you on Open Afternoon! Year 6 are meeting Mary Anning as she digs on the beach at Lyme Regis; Year 5 are off to Pompeii; Year 4 will dig alongside Basil Brown as he unearths an Anglo-Saxon burial mound at Sutton Hoo; Year 3 will be discovering the tomb of Tutankhamun with Howard Carter; Year 2 are diving to the ocean floor to find the Titanic and our youngest children will be excavating dinosaurs in the sandpit and learning all about them!



The half term has to start with a huge 'welcome back' to Mrs. Sampson! She will be settling back into EYFS after her year's maternity leave over the next few weeks before resuming her role as SENCO fully at the start of July. It is good to finally have the Reception team back together and I'd like to add a big thank you to Mrs. Graham for working so hard to make the transition appear seamless.

I am not sure if I am delighted or quite sad to also announce that Mrs Allen is retiring at the end of June. Since her arrival at Willow Brook nine years ago, she has added a huge amount of colour, joy and care to our community – it is no surprise that she is the staff 'social secretary' and is quick to offer nurture and support wherever it is needed. I know that she is delighted at the thought of booking holidays in the sun during term time and making sure that there's more time to appreciate family, art and music. The children Mrs Allen has supported so ably in her role as Willow Brook's classroom T.A. and Emotional Literacy Assistant have benefitted enormously from her patience and understanding. She will be calling in to school to finish some work with children currently in her care, before handing over to a new member of staff who we hope to appoint this week.

In other community news, our Friends Committee are holding their Annual General Meeting on Thursday and invite you all to join them at The Key at 7pm. Whilst I'm still trying to work out the rules, their 'Break the Rules Day' last Friday was a great success – the children really enjoy a 'dress

down day' and, most importantly, £500 was added to the Friends funds. Thank you so much for supporting the event. You'll see from the calendar below that there is a final fundraiser planned in July, and what a better way to end the school year than a school disco!

The calendar below details every event currently planned to take place over the next half term. I hope that the detail included helps you to add any relevant dates to your diaries:

Summer term dates already in the diary for this term	
Friends of Willow Brook AGM	Thursday June 8 th
INSET day	Friday 16 th June
Parents information meeting for our residential	Monday 12 th June at 6pm
Year 5 and 6 away on residential	Wednesday 21 st to Friday 23 rd June
Year 6 transition days to South Wolds Academy	Thursday 29 th and Friday 30 th June
New EYFS children first visit to school New parents' information evening	Thursday June 29 th 1.15 to 3pm Thursday June 29 th 6.30pm *Please note Schoolwear Solutions will be in school between 2.30 and 4pm for all parents on this day for any new orders, collections or enquiries.
Sports Week	July 10 th to 14 th
Sports Day *All parents are invited to join us between 1.30 and 3.15pm to support the children in a fun afternoon of races and events.	Tuesday 11 th July at 1.30pm
Annual school reports go out	Wednesday 12 th July
Class swap transition morning and new EYFS visit	Thursday 20 th July
Open Afternoon *You are welcome to come into school this afternoon to see your child's teacher and visit their new classroom. There will be performances in the hall and a chance to see each year group's Dig Exhibition.	Thursday 20 th July 2.15pm to 4pm
Welcome to Year 6 – information for parents	Thursday 20 th July 6pm
End of Year School Disco	Friday 21 st July
End of term and Year 6 Leavers' Assembly (10am) *Year 6 parents and carers are invited to join us for the children's final assembly presentation.	Tuesday 25 th July 2023

As always, please get in touch if there are any queries, concerns or comments. We are happy to listen to your thoughts and feedback.

Kind regards,

Louise Ballard

THE DIG



The Big Idea

‘With such evidence sealed before us, the mystery gradually dawned upon us, we were in the presence of history and wonder... and when Lord Carnarvon inquired anxiously, ‘Can you see anything?’ it was all I could do to get out the words, ‘Yes, wonderful things!’

Just as Howard Carter heard as he unearthed the treasures from Tutankhamun’s tomb, objects and skeletons from the past will whisper their puzzles and secrets and help us to unlock the exciting world of archaeology as Willow Brook starts to dig...

History

History is at the forefront of our work over the next six weeks. Each class will look back to the topics and historical objectives covered in the autumn term and build on the time periods and skills studied. With an existing knowledge, key events will come to life through the eyes of an archaeologist and their dig. Primary and secondary sources will act as clues as we piece together time and treasure to tell a story of our past. Children will visit the Valley of the Kings and the city of Pompeii... they will dive to find the bow of Titanic and search for fossils that will reveal some terrible lizards!... All of which will help us to understand the thrill of unearthing and interpreting the past. Our learning will begin with an intriguing find in the Otztal Alps where buried clues will lead Willow Brook’s detectives to solve the 5,000 year old case of the murdered ICE MAN...

As mathematicians...

Each individual year group will be studying set objectives to complete the year’s curriculum. After annual assessments are complete, there will be revision of key skills and plenty of outdoor practical problem solving. As children meet their new teachers, transition maths days will provide an exciting taste of shape, space and measure and meet the objectives and challenges of their new year group.

Across the curriculum

As expressive artists

We will be representing the past in drawings, paintings and 3D modelling, using observational skills, imagination and different techniques to respond to learning experiences.

As musicians

Children will be rehearsing a range of songs and musical pieces as we work towards end of year performances. With inspiration from Sing-Up, Sparkyard and the BBC music scheme, children will express themselves through singing and percussion instruments.

As theologians and thinkers

Weekly RE lessons will help children to explore and learn about inspirational/significant people of key faiths and how their actions reflected in their beliefs changed the world.

As fitness and wellbeing experts

We will continue to build on fitness skills and healthy lifestyles through games, activities, dance and physical play. Summer opens up a full programme of outdoor sports and extra-curricular activities, and visiting coaches and trips to local clubs will add exciting opportunities to engage all age groups. Our dedicated Sports Week will include a range of key stage and whole-school events, including a traditional, competitive Sports Day. Active lessons and outdoor learning are regular features of a Willow Brook timetable and our youngest children will continue to find adventure at Forest School.

Ambitious Knowledge connecting us to our past, present and future

Through assemblies and targeted lessons, Willow Brook children will be learning about how shared principles and British values uphold society, promote equality, celebrate diversity and create a thriving community. As our focus turns to history, we will be considering how our past is captured in museums, commemorated with blue plaques, historic sites and statues, and taught in schools. We will debate the changing tide and consider what a primary school curriculum that reflects everyone’s history might look like.

As language specialists

EYFS and Year 1 will be using excerpts from historical fiction and factual texts to underpin their key topic theme of Dinosaurs. There will be many stories to reinforce their experience of narrative, with EYFS learning through *There’s a T-Rex in Town* by Ruth Symons and *Gigantosaurus* by Jonny Duddle. Year 1 will complete their book list by working with the wonderful *Man on the Moon: A Day in the Life of Bob* by Simon Bartram and the classic children’s book, *The Tunnel* by Anthony Browne. The last half term of the academic year sees each cohort completing curriculum objectives in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Opportunities to publish extended pieces and be inspired by one-off Exciting Writing tasks culminate in a portfolio of independent written work for assessment in all genres.

Science/Knowledge and Understanding of the World

The focus in this area of the curriculum looks at living things and life cycles. Whether a dinosaur egg is hatching or a small seed is germinating, EYFS and Year 1 will be investigating reproduction and growth. Making predictions, understanding fair testing, plotting change and drawing conclusions based on observations and prior knowledge are all key components.

Books that we recommend to support our learning this term

With history at the centre of our half term topic, here are some super books that we recommend that will support and enhance your child's learning this half term. Be they fact or fiction, they have archaeology at their heart. As always, if you find or can recommend any titles that fit the theme and would be a great addition to our school library, please let us know.

