

Willingham Primary School



Autumn Term Letter

4th November 2015

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope your child's new school year has begun well and that you have had an enjoyable half term break.

Welcome

Last half term, we welcomed our newest pupils to the school - Reception children. We have introduced a new Buddy System to the school. This involved pairing each of our excellent Year Six children with a child in Reception in order to be their Buddy for the year. At the start of the term, the children spent time with their Buddies, getting to know them and this has really helped our new children feel happy and confident in school and in the playground. They regularly share stories and have lunch together where possible. It is lovely to see our youngest and oldest children playing with each other at lunchtime, with the Year Sixes demonstrating their ability to be kind, helpful and responsible. These two year groups will continue to work together throughout the year. The redesigned and much improved indoor learning environment has further supported the children in settling down to their new routines.



We also welcomed six new teachers who have very quickly become an integral part of our hard-working team of staff - Mrs Musselle, Miss French, Miss Davies, Miss Porter, and Miss Milton-Thomson and, of course, Mr Efford, as the new Assistant Head (who also teaches Y6 on Thursday and Friday).

From January 2016, we are pleased to welcome Katie O'Brien to, the teaching team. Katie will be sharing one of the Reception classes with Lianna Hodson. We thank Kirstie Clark who continues to temporarily cover this post during the autumn term.

Visits and Visitors

Once again, we have welcomed into school many visitors and these include:

- Puppies and kittens
- Snakes
- Geckos
- Hamsters
- Baby hare
- Squire Ogilve – a re-enactor who also designs games around a castle theme
- A fine array of kings, queens, princes, princesses, knights and dragons for the KS1 Castle Day



*Year 1 and 2
children jousting
on their horses!*

Trips have already begun and these are specifically chosen to enhance and enrich children's class based topic learning. These include Hedingham Castle, Flag Fen and Inter School Sporting events.

Achievements

The first half of this term has seen a number of great successes for the children of Willingham and we are proud of every one of them for their hard work and great attitudes to their learning.

- Inter-School Football – Year 5/6 7-a-side football tournament, the children won three group games and drew one, they won their semi final but lost in the final. It was a great experience and the children were modest in victory and humble in defeat. The really good news is due to their performance they have qualified for the county finals hosted at Kings school, Ely, in the new year.
- Inter-School English Competition – we came first out of eight local schools in the heat which was held at Willingham Primary School and the finals will be on 10th December 2015 at Ely Cathedral.
- Running relay competition – Congratulations to our Triathlon team who came first overall in the running relay on Sunday 18th October, and Team Wi-1 who also won outright by quite a margin. They competed against six other schools. All of the children enjoyed themselves, and it was great to see that level of participation.

Standards Priorities for the school 2015/2016

Each year, the standards priorities for the school are identified, using a range of information, including data from end of year outcomes, and inform our Raising Attainment Plan (RAP). A copy of the RAP outline will be posted on the school's website in the next week. These identified priorities help us to decide where to direct funding and other available resources, throughout the year.

1. To continue to raise attainment of all pupils, whilst closing the attainment gaps between our pupils for whom the school receives Pupil Premium funding, and those on our SEND register and those nationally.
2. To strive for outstanding teaching throughout the school.
3. To continue to improve the outdoor learning environment.
4. To fully engage boys in Foundation Stage and Year One in writing activities.
5. To improve the standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar to reflect the more demanding requirements of the new National Curriculum.

Reporting to Parents and the New Curriculum without Levels

As you may know, from this year, National Curriculum levels will no longer exist. The New Curriculum, which all children are now following, is not aligned with the old 'levels' system. Schools must now decide their own systems for measuring progress and attainment of their pupils. At Willingham, we have chosen to adopt a comprehensive assessment framework, Sheffield School Tracking and Assessment Toolkit, which not only reflects the requirements of the New Curriculum, but also supports effective planning, teaching and learning. Because, like all other schools, we are in the early stages of implementation, the system needs to run for a period of time, alongside the New Curriculum, before it generates any meaningful data.

Therefore, for the Autumn Term we will be capturing evidence of pupils' progress from their books, through pupil discussions and classroom observations. At this month's Parent Consultation meeting, as well as discussing how your child had settled into their new class, the focus will be on improved mathematics and writing skills. In addition to this, your child's teacher will discuss with you, the 'next steps' for your child and additional ways you can continue to support their progress.



Learning Champions

We are asking parents and carers who can spare a regular amount of time each week, however small, to sign up to become reading and counting champions. The roles entail working with identified children for up to ten minutes per session on activities set by their teachers.

Reading Champions

Reading Champions will listen to individual children from any year group, reading a short extract from a book chosen by their teacher and then asking them some simple, but open questions about what they are reading. Examples of questions you might ask include:

- Tell me about the book?
- Which is your favourite character and why?
- What do you think might happen next?
- How do you think this character is feeling and what clues have you used?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? How would you describe it to them?
- What sort of book is this? (adventure, mystery, autobiography, fairy tale)



Counting Champions

Counting Champions will work with individual children from any year group, on counting and number pattern activities. The activities will be designed to encourage children to develop fast recall of number facts and efficient mental methods. Resources will be provided. Examples may include:

- Reception child - counting forwards and backwards from 0 to 20
- Year Two child - counting up and down in 7s
- Year Six child - counting up in 80s or 0.8, using knowledge of eight times tables

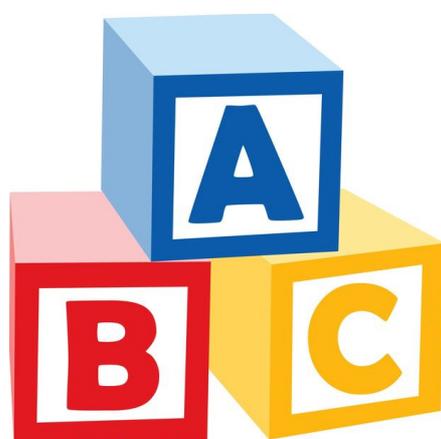
Please note that you do not have to feel particularly confident in your knowledge of maths or english to work successfully with children on these activities. By just having an adult to talk to and to share their thinking with, provides huge benefits for the children in terms of building their confidence and opportunities to practise vital basic skills.

If this role interests you and you can spare the time, we would love to hear from you! We will be holding a short meeting on Thursday 26th November at 9.15am, for anyone who feels they may be interested in learning more about the role. Refreshments will be provided at the meeting.

Curriculum

You will have received your child's link letter, outlining learning for the term. The exciting topics, which the children are studying, have been chosen to engage and inspire them to want to learn more. Judging by their writing, art work and home tasks, these have been successfully chosen. Many of the classes have already been on trips or have welcomed visitors to support their topics and these have provided further enrichment opportunities.

There will be a Phonics Evening (for Reception and Year 1) on Thursday 12th November 6.30pm and a crèche will be available. We would like to invite you to come and learn, experience and ask about the way we teach phonics and reading in school. We will be covering the phonics programme we follow, the methods we use to teach as well as strategies that can be used at home to support early reading.



Keeping Healthy and Staying Safe Week

Over the coming month, we will be running a series of events around the theme of 'Keeping Healthy, Staying Safe'. More details will follow.

Wonderland Week – 30th November – 4th December

2015 sees the 150th anniversary of one of the world's most loved books, Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll. In order to commemorate this literary classic, Willingham Primary School will be holding a week's celebration of the writer and his works. During the week commencing 30th November, the whole school will take part and explore the stories, characters and creativity of some of Lewis Carroll's work at an age appropriate level. There will be opportunities for English, maths, geography, design and technology as well as other curriculum subjects to be explored through the books. During this week there will be a day when children will be asked to come in to school dressed as a character from Alice in Wonderland.

Children In Need – 13th November

Children in Need day this year is on Friday 13th November. We will be participating in this very worthy charity fundraising day, following the Super Hero theme. The children and staff are encouraged to dress up in something spotty or as a Super-Hero, either of their own creations or as well-known characters. A voluntary donation of £1 is suggested and all donations will be collected during the morning.



Voice of the Week

As a way of encouraging pupils' confidence in speaking, we are asking our Year Six children to take turns to be the school's telephone message voice. For those children whose parents consent to this, they will take turns to perform this important duty.

Farewells

This term we say goodbye to two very long serving midday staff.

Gay Bailey has been working at Willingham for the last 28 years and has very ably led the team of lunchtime staff during this time. She is now taking her well-earned retirement and we wish her the very best for the future. Gay has seen children for whom she has cared at Willingham, grow up and have children of their own, on, to now be caring for them in the same role. We thank Gay for her outstanding service to Willingham Primary School and for her genuine care for every child who has come through the school during her time here.

Margaret Ashby has been a lunchtime supervisor for several years. Margaret has brought her own unique brand of energy and fun to caring for the children, happily playing football and skipping with the most agile and sporty among them. She has led various creative lunchtime clubs, generously sharing her real artistic and creative flare with inspired and admiring children. We thank Margaret for her dedication to her role, her hard work and commitment. We wish her the very best for the future.

If you were a pupil at Willingham during Gay Bailey's or Margaret Ashby's time here and would like to sign our farewell cards, please do come to the School Office where they are being held. Alternatively, if you would like to send a farewell message by email we can print it off and put it inside the card for you. If you have changed your surname since being at the school, it would be great if you could give the surname by which you were known at the time.

Finally, we look forward to another full and exciting half term, continuing to work with you to support your child's learning.

Yours sincerely

Vyv Francis - Headteacher