

# Willingham Primary School



## Spring Term Letter

24<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope your children have enjoyed this term, it has been exciting and action-packed!

## Sleeping Beauty



To kick start the term, M and M Productions came in to school to perform the pantomime Sleeping Beauty. The children thoroughly enjoyed getting involved and singing along to the songs. The scenery and costumes were amazing and credit to the four actors and actresses that took on many roles. A huge thank you to the WSA for funding this event, and for organising the popcorn that the whole school enjoyed whilst watching the performance!

## Roman Day



Year 3 had a fantastic Roman day this term. They found out lots of interesting facts and had ten market stalls with activities to choose from. These included: making mosaics, lamps, and charms as well as writing on wax and curing the sick in the apothecary. The children enjoyed a Roman



feast in the afternoon and watched some Roman entertainment. It was a very eventful day, the children all had lots of fun and learnt a lot!

## Key Stage 1 Maths Crime Investigation Morning



Key Stage 1 children turned into detectives with 'The Great Lunch Robbery!'. After discovering all the food for lunch from the kitchen had been 'stolen', the children were presented with potential culprits caught on camera in school at the time. The children were then given a series of problems to solve in order to collect evidence to deduce who it could have been. Tasks varied from fingerprint matching, sorting data, comparing pictures and

reading tables as well as measuring, drawing shapes and solving problems with a purpose! The morning culminated in decoding a message which identified our culprit! It turns out Mr Efford had been a very hungry teacher before school! The children were so excited that they even tried to collect additional evidence during break time! Huge thanks to all staff members who participated. Please be assured that no crime was committed in the making of this event and all children were fed with a delicious roast lunch!

## Dinosaur Hunting in Foundation Stage



The children in Foundation Stage have been learning all about dinosaurs during this term. The children went on a hunt outside, made dinosaur pictures with shapes, measured fossils and even made some out of Plaster of Paris!

## World Book Day



On 3<sup>rd</sup> March it was World Book Day and the whole school had an opportunity to dress up as a favourite character from a book. There was a competition for the best children's costume across the school and the winners were Luca (R), Oliver (Yr2), Theo (Yr2),

Jago (Yr3), Caitlin (Yr6). The winners received book tokens to spend at the Book Fair, which raised over £200 for the school to spend on more lovely books!

## Shakespeare Week



To commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, the school spent a week learning all about William Shakespeare and each class studied one of his plays. We were really impressed by the ability of even the youngest children to follow, act out and retell the plots! Children across the school have produced some excellent written work as a result. Thank you to all parents for helping the children with costumes from a wide variety of plays. The children had the chance to show their costumes in a special assembly and they really did look fantastic – as these photographs demonstrate. We were particularly impressed by the inventiveness of Jessica's Richard III costume!

## Sporting Events

### Primary Schools Duathlon in Milton Country Park



We have a very successful Triathlon club with some amazingly keen and dedicated members who love entering competitions! Well done to our Duathlon team for their success in March – they were Team Winners by a cross-country mile!! Thanks to Don Hutchinson, the coach, and to the parents who get their children to these events at the weekend!

Josh – 1<sup>st</sup> overall  
Oli – 3<sup>rd</sup> overall  
Toby – 4<sup>th</sup> overall  
Abi – 1<sup>st</sup> girl  
Lizzie – 2<sup>nd</sup> girl  
Orla – 3<sup>rd</sup> girl

### Tag Rugby Tournament



In February, twelve Year Six children went to Swavesey Village College to compete in the annual tag rugby tournament. On a freezing cold afternoon, the children did themselves, and the school, proud with their conduct, behaviour and sportsmanship. Willingham won, drew and lost games but came away enjoying every minute of playing, which is the most important thing. Well done to all the children, and thank you to the parents who gave lifts and supported the team.

### County Football



In February, the football team played in the County Finals after finishing second in the previous football tournament. Willingham had three group games which they drew, lost and won. That was good enough to qualify for the semi finals. Willingham eventually came second to the winners of the whole competition, Crosshall. Well done to all the team who played well and have become one of the top teams in the whole of Cambridgeshire! The boys have made the school very proud.

## Performances

### Young Voices at the O2



On Monday 8th February Mrs Palmer-Jones' Key Stage 2 choir took part in the Young Voices concert at the O2 in London. The concert was an extra-special one as it was the 20th birthday of Young Voices, so included celebrities such as Laura Wright, Urban Strides dance group, The Beatbox Collective, Katie Melua, Lemar and Ben Haenow. The choir had been rehearsing the

vast range of songs for months beforehand as well as learning all the dance routines and actions alongside. Singing with nearly 8000 children from other schools, as well as well known artists, was a truly magical experience. The children behaved impeccably and were a real credit to the school, singing their hearts out and thoroughly enjoying themselves. Lifetime memories were indeed created at this event. A big thank you to Mrs Palmer-Jones who once again led this event, Mrs Lenk, Mrs Veeneman, Mrs Wolton-Carr, and Mrs Pipe for supporting this trip as well as Mrs Grummett, who is hidden behind the scenes, but without her help this trip would not be able to take place. A big thank you to the WSA who funded our coach expenses too.

### Year 3 – Hoodwinked



Year 3 wowed us with a fantastic performance of 'Hoodwinked'! The children worked incredibly hard to learn their lines, perfect the songs and create wonderful props for the production. The children and staff in Year 2 had lots of fun rehearsing for this play and everyone enjoyed their performances! Many thanks to parents for such great costumes and also to the members of staff who helped.

## Peer Mediators

Our twelve Year Six trained peer mediators now play an established role every lunchtime. They are doing an excellent job in supporting children in resolving minor conflicts with each other. We are very proud of each of them and grateful for the outstanding service they provide, generously giving up their own time to make a real difference to others. At present, the Peer Mediators are based at the back of the new hall, but they will soon have their own dedicated base. This will be a summer-house, generously funded by the WSA, and this will be in the Quiet Area outside the new hall.

## Storyteller and drama sessions

This term, we have been lucky to have had Richard O'Neill, a well-known Gypsy Traveller storyteller, come in to school for two days to work with every class, as well as Peter Young, who works for the Cultural and Racial Diversity Service (CREDS) at Cambridgeshire County Council. All children took part in story telling sessions and were able to tell and write their own versions. The children were fascinated and Richard O'Neill was extremely complimentary about their behaviour and listening skills. This project was funded through a grant from CREDS.

We have also enjoyed more drama sessions from Barry Evans – who is now firmly established as a favourite amongst the children who get so much out of his sessions. Wherever appropriate, his sessions link to whatever the class is learning, but there are also sessions which focus more on wider social skills. Barry has also delivered drama training to all our teachers. These sessions continue to be funded by the WSA.



## Post Ofsted Plans

We have been working hard across the school to address key priorities for improvement outlined in the Ofsted Report.

Our plan, which falls into three separate sections, focuses on:

- 1- Closing the gap in attainment between our pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and their peers.
- 2- Improving the quality of teaching so for all children, teaching is consistently good or better.
- 3- To continue to improve provision in the Foundation Stage, with a focus on numbers and writing, and further developing the outdoor learning environment.

We, and our School Improvement Partner, are pleased with our progress so far. Our governors do an excellent job of holding the school to account for our work and, as 'critical friends', not only do they set the strategic direction of the school, but they are able to monitor, in a very hands-on way, the impact of our work. Parents have shown real enthusiasm for supporting their child in specific areas and ensuring they practise their individual target skills regularly at home. (e.g., daily reading, letter and number formation, times tables, etc.). In school, our teaching is now considerably more finely tuned to gaps in learning. We are, therefore, seeing the fruits of everyone's efforts, as we closely track every child's progress. Thank you for the real difference you are making.

## **Reports and Parent Consultations**

Mid-year reports have been sent out to parents this term. As explained in the letter preceding the report, our new assessment system, as well as the change in curriculum, are currently being embedded and the mid-year reports did not contain references to Age Related Expectations. They did, however, contain detailed paragraphs about your child's general approach to school, their achievements in reading, writing, maths and spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as targets that you, as parents, can help with in each area.

The reports were followed by our new style parent consultations, held in the new hall. Now we have completed both sessions, it is clear that the vast majority of parents, despite a few initial reservations, appreciated the smooth running of the consultations. As ever, if you have areas to discuss that you feel will take longer than the 10 minute slot available, please do make an additional appointment to see your child's class teacher.

## **Charities**

We have once again supported Sport Relief and raised a total of £379.52 for this worthy cause. Staff and children dressed in a variety of sporting outfits – from ballet to football to karate! Mr Carminati led skipping activities during the day! The school also played host to a quiz night organised by Elliott Aldhouse, in order to raise money for the Big Bike Ride 2016 in Africa – all money raised from this goes to the British Heart Foundation. This raised £646!

## **Learning Champions**

We have been delighted to have a number of parents sign up to be our Learning Champions. They have now been generously giving up their time to support children with their learning for the last half term and they have really been making a difference to the children's confidence and ability. Not only that, but the Learning Champions themselves have loved their time in school and have found it very rewarding. If you are interested in joining this group of parents and you are able to give up a regular amount of time (however small) per week, we would love to hear from you! Please email the office who will pass on your enquiry to me.

## **Attendance**

We, and the Education Welfare Officer, continue to closely monitor attendance and promptness of arrival at school, as we know that any patterns of lateness or absence, have a profound effect on children's progress. This is not only directly when they return to school, but further doing the road, as the 'gaps' in their learning become evident. Thank you to all those parents who, every day, ensure their children arrive on time, ready for their learning.

## **Dance**

Many of our pupils who attend the Ladybird School of Dance will be performing at the Royal Albert Hall over the Easter break. We wish all the children performing all the very best for what promises to be a really memorable experience.

## **WSA**

Many thanks to the WSA for all their hard work in organising events this again term. One of the events, the Co-op Easter Egg Competition, was very popular. The winners were Isla (FS), Lucy (Yr2), Lucas (Yr2), Jordan (Yr 4), Ethan (Yr 4), Rachael (Yr 6), and their designs can be seen on the front cover.

## **Staff**

We will, at the end of the term, be saying a fond farewell to Miss French. The children and staff thank her for all she has given while she has been at the school.

I would like to recognise and thank all staff, in whatever role they perform, for their ongoing and tireless efforts to provide the most interesting and engaging learning experiences for every child, in a safe, vibrant and stimulating environment.

The teachers are always thinking of new and exciting ways to engage their classes and to make learning fun. There may be times when we get a bit carried away with dressing up and theme days but this is only because we know how much more engaged the children are when they are immersed in what they are learning. We do really appreciate the effort you, as parents, make in supporting these days and making them successful – thank you!

We hope you and your family have a restful and peaceful Easter and look forward to seeing your child back in school on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016**.