



Willow Wood Community Nursery and Primary School

Weekly Newsletter

Welcome to our first weekly newsletter of the term—we hope that we will be able to get one out to you all every week, on a Friday!

It has been a wonderful first full week back at school. It always amazes me just how quickly the children settle back in to a routine. I am incredibly proud of our children—their behaviour and attitude to learning is exemplary and they have all started the year brilliantly.

Uniform

Just wow! Our children look incredible! Changing our school uniform was a big decision, but one we made because we want to raise the profile of our wonderful school and show how proud we are of Willow Wood. We have already had a huge number of compliments from visitors and our wider community who have noticed the difference. Our children look amazing because of the support you have shown the school—thank you so much, we really do appreciate it!

New Starters

We have had lots of new starters join our school this week. All of our Early Years team would like to say a huge well done to each and every child. Without exception all of the children have settled in brilliantly and are already showing us their lovely characters. Our nursery is becoming ever more popular, as word spreads about the wonderful provision that we have. This year our Nursery is already almost full, so if your child needs a place in the coming months please do not delay in contacting the school to secure their place as soon as possible.

Buddies:

This week saw the introduction of our new buddy system for our reception children. On Wednesday, each Reception child met their Year 6 buddy for the first time. The year 6 buddies came down to introduce themselves to their Reception buddy. They all shared a book and played in the EYFS setting. All the children thoroughly enjoyed it and Reception have been asking for their buddies to return again. We plan on the buddies getting together at least once per week throughout the year,.



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Year 1 (Palm and Ash)

This week there have been some strange goings on in the Year 1 classrooms! First, a den appeared with some paper planes around the edge! The children have so far discovered that the den belongs to Mia and Ben—our children have been sending messages to Mia and Ben to find out more about them. It will be exciting to see what happens next week! Also, on Monday afternoon a lost bag and suitcase appeared. The children were detectives using clues of what was inside to guess who it belonged to! These activities are part of our English curriculum and really help the children to become enthused about their learning.

Little Willow is Back!:

I am delighted to announce, that after the covid restrictions, Little Willows is back! Little Willows is our free to attend playgroup for parents and young children. It will restart on Thursday 23rd September, between 9am and 10.30am in our Community Room (accessed through the Sunshine Building). Activities include: art and craft, sand play, free play and song and story time—all while you can meet other parents and enjoy a drink and snack. Little Willows is open to any parents and toddlers, not just those who have siblings in Willow Wood. Spread the word and come along.

Macmillan coffee and cake event

On Friday the 24th September we will be holding an event to coincide with the Macmillan coffee morning. Macmillan is a charity that is very close to our hearts at Willow Wood; even more so following the incredible support they gave to Mr Kirk and Mrs Harries. We will be sending out a separate letter with all of the detail on but I wanted to give you early notice so you can pop it in your diary. We will be selling cakes at the start of the day, during break times and at home time. Morrison's and Asda, as well as our amazing cook, Sam have already pledged to donate cakes for us. However, we would love as many as possible to sell, so if you would like to donate some cakes we will be accepting donations on the 22nd and 23rd of September.



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Go red for Mr Kirk:

Linking closely to the cake event, we will be holding a 'go red day' in memory of Mr Kirk next Friday. As you probably know, Mr Kirk was a huge Liverpool fan and the 'go red day' is hopefully a fitting way to help us remember Mr Kirk and to help raise some money for a wonderful charity. This will be a day when everyone associated with the school is encouraged to come to school being as red as possible. Mums and dads, we would love to see you wearing red when you drop your children off or pick them up as well! It will be a non-uniform day so we will be encouraging all of the adults and children in school to wear as much red as possible—be bold and really go for it!

As part of the go red day, we ask that children bring in a donation for a raffle prize. We will then use the donations to make up hampers that children can buy raffle tickets for the following week. Donations can be sweets, chocolates, bottles (for adult raffle prizes, unwanted gift sets etc.). If you know any businesses that would like to donate a prize, please try and badger them! All proceeds from the cake sale and raffle will go directly to Macmillan. Lets make next Friday a wonderful day to remember Mr Kirk—go red!

A message from Mrs Harries:

Please see the message below from Mrs Harries who would like to share her thanks for all of you who have supported her during the recent weeks.

thank you to anyone who has contacted myself with messages of condolence or support and all those who came to the school when Tony's funeral cortège passed by.

The support we have had had been overwhelming and I am most grateful to everyone who has shown compassion and care at such a difficult time - Mrs Harries

After school clubs:

Now we head towards some sort of normality (hopefully), I am delighted to share that we will again be offering some after school clubs. Letters will be going out early next week (so check your child's school bag) with further details. Please make sure that you return your preferences as soon as possible. We plan on starting the clubs the following week (week beginning the 20th September).



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Finally.....

Each week I am going to update you on one aspect of how we have changed what we do at Willow Wood, over the past year or so. Lots has changed and we haven't really had a chance to share all of the details. This week I am going to give you a brief overview of all we have done to raise standards in reading:

- We have spent in the region of £10,000 on new high quality books for our children
- We have introduced a new way to teach reading, called shared reading. This is only part of the bigger picture of teaching reading, but it focusses on understanding the text that is being read and developing complex vocabulary. The books the children now read during these sessions are much more challenging and of a very high quality. The children love them!
- We teach phonics relentlessly! This means that no matter what, our children in early years and KS1 get a high quality phonics lesson every single day. Some children, who need extra support may get an additional phonics lesson in the afternoon.
- We have built a new library in The Sunshine Building. Children now get to visit the school library once per week and at break time and lunchtime, to borrow and enjoy books.
- We are appointing children as school librarians—Mrs Ullein is taking applications from our older children at the moment to become junior librarians, who will help look after our library.
- We now have a 'book barn' on the main playground. This will open officially in the next week or two. Children will be able to spend time at play and lunchtime in the book barn, chilling and reading if they would like to.
- We have introduced lots of different support programmes (interventions) for our children who find reading challenging. All of the children we supported last year make really good progress.
- Every child in the school now reads a book banded book. This means children and teachers know what books the children should be reading, and what they need to do to move up to more challenging books. Last year our children loved the challenge of moving up book bands. We even had to introduce a new book band for some of our brilliant readers in Year 5 and year 6.



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- Every day, the children listen to a story read by an adult. We call this time DEAR time. DEAR stands for Drop Everything and Read. This means that no matter what is going on, we make sure the children hear an adult read to them every day.
- We have invested hugely in our wonderful teachers and teaching assistants. We have had lots of training from an external consultant, who has helped us introduce some of our changes, so that we do it in the best way possible.

As you can see from the list above, we have done a huge amount to make what we do even better in teaching reading. Most importantly, we feel we have really developed a love of reading across the school. Next week, I will let you know about all of the amazing changes we have made to improve the children's writing!

Have a lovely weekend.

Best wishes

Mr Bell and everyone at Willow Wood!