

Dear families,

I hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable half-term break with their families! The past two weeks have flown by, and isn't it wonderful to see the blue skies again? Spring is truly in the air—and the children are loving having the mats out again in the playground. The sunshine has given us all a much-needed energy boost as we settle back into school life.

In classes, our staff have been carefully analysing learning from before half-term, ensuring we tailor lessons and interventions to support every child's progress. Also, Mr Trundle has been busy getting ready for our new music abode, and putting up a shelter/den in our KS2 playground—we are lucky to have such a talented and hardworking caretaker!

World Book Day Magic!

What a day! The school was bursting with creativity as children arrived in their fantastic costumes, celebrating the joy of reading. One of the highlights was our whole-school **Vocabulary Parade** in the hall—words came to life as children proudly strutted their chosen words with style, brilliant props and outfits! Vocabulary is such a powerful tool, opening doors to understanding, creativity, and confidence. Thank you to Mrs. Tweedale for organising such a brilliant day, and to all our parents for your enthusiasm and support (even when testing me on whether 'wounded' was mental or physical—I'm still recovering!).

Secondary School Places—A Big Milestone for Willow Class!

This week, our wonderful Willow Class received their secondary school offers—an exciting (and sometimes nerve-racking) moment! We will miss them dearly, but we are so proud of them. Transitioning to secondary school is a big step, and we work closely with local schools to make this as smooth as possible, including arranging additional visits where needed. If you have any concerns about your child's allocated school or their transition, please don't hesitate to speak to me.

As always, keep an eye on the *Key Dates* section so you don't miss out on any upcoming events—we have lots of exciting things ahead!

Have a lovely weekend,
Sinead Connolly, Headteacher

Diary Dates

7th-16th/03/25 Science Week

26/03/25 Book Fair Arrives

14/03/25 Foodbank Friday EYFS

17/03/25 Beech Class Learning Together

Morning (times tables /number focus)

18/03/25 Early Years Learning Together

Afternoon (number focus)

19/03/25 Willow Class Learning Together

Morning (SATs focus / information)

20/03/25 Lime Class Learning Together

Morning (times tables focus) in hall

21/03/25 Maple Class Learning Together

Morning (times tables focus)

01/04/25 Class Photos

02/04/25 Parent consultations 1-7

04/04/25 End Of term 1pm

An update from Mrs Courtman-Stock, our Geography Lead.

This week, we carried out a Geography Book Look, focusing on three key areas: graphicacy, spatial thinking, and sticky learning. Graphicacy helps children develop the skills needed to represent and interpret information through diagrams, maps, plans, or charts. Spatial thinking supports navigation, such as following a map, and sticky learning ensures that lessons are engaging and memorable, helping knowledge to stick. Across the school, it has been fantastic to see children developing their understanding of these skills in creative and interactive ways.

Early Years explored maps through small-world play, sparking curiosity about places and spaces.

Beech Class mapped their bedrooms and walked the village to identify human and physical features.

Lime Class played directional games and used atlases to explore landscapes through contour mapping.

Maple Class "travelled" to Greece and uncovered fascinating UK population facts.

Willow Class embarked on an Antarctica treasure hunt, uncovering hidden facts in and out of the classroom.

Next step: From hearing the children speaking about their learning. We will continue to embed hands-on activities that bring Geography to life and deepen children's understanding of the world.

Empathy Assembly: *The Girl Who Figured It Out*

This week, our empathy assembly featured the remarkable story *The Girl Who Figured It Out*, a book that celebrates resilience, determination, and the power of believing in yourself. Joe from Maple class read the story beautifully, drawing us into the journey of a young girl who refused to give up, even when faced with challenges. Children were in awe of how many times she failed before succeeding—and the sheer number of miles she covered in her pursuit of a dream!

The discussions that followed were full of admiration and inspiration. Here are just a few reflections from our children:

- ★ "She wasn't afraid to be different – that's what made her special."
- ★ "She failed so many times, but it didn't stop her—she just tried again. That's really brave!"
- ★ "She didn't wait for someone else to fix things—she figured it out herself."

Through this story, we explored the power of resilience, determination, and belief in oneself. It reminded us all that mistakes are not the end of the journey—they are stepping stones to success.

Perhaps the most powerful takeaway? That we can all be the ones who "figure it out," no matter how big the challenge.

Moments like these remind us how stories can inspire us to be more understanding, courageous, and supportive of one another. Ask your child what they took away from the story – you might be surprised by the wisdom they share!



Rights Respecting Schools



Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Article 28

World Book Day, 6th March 2025

Article 28 - All children and young people have a right to free primary education. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can.

Article 15 - All children have the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless in doing so they violate the rights of others.

Article 24 - Every child has the right to good quality health care.



This year, March 6th is World Book Day, a day when people celebrate books and reading – reading for pleasure as well as reading for information. In the UK we may take books for granted. We buy them in shops or borrow them from the library and download them to reading tablets. Our schools and our homes have books, and I am sure we all have a favourite book. During this week's Rights Respecting Assembly, some of our Year 6 children shared some highlights from their favourite books.



However, there are millions of children who cannot get their hands on a book to read, for whom even a school textbook is a luxury. Children from Year 6 shared with us the story of Mina, a girl whose education had been badly affected by the conflict in her country of Afghanistan. We learned that Afghanistan is a country where it has not been easy to get an education for nearly 20 years, mainly because of war. For 20 years, hardly any teachers have been trained and very few textbooks printed.

For the first 10 years of Mina's life, a group called the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. The Taliban believed that girls didn't need to be educated and they didn't allow women to have jobs. Only boys were allowed to go to school. However, Mina's parents wanted her to be educated and, although it was dangerous, Mina attended a secret school in her teacher's home.

In 2002 the Taliban lost power and all children, including girls, were encouraged to return to school. The problem was how schools could open when many were in ruins and there were no textbooks, no pencils, no pens and no exercise books. As the organisation responsible for improving the lives of children worldwide, Unicef worked to help as many children as possible get back to school.



Now Mina is able to go to school. She was the first pupil to turn up at school and collect her bag, books and pens, which had all been provided by Unicef.

We were pleased to hear that Mina enjoys going to school. Mina says, ***"Above all, I am really excited that I will be able to take books home to read."***

There is a saying, ***"The child cannot wait."*** This means that childhood is so short, and there is so much a child needs to be able to grow up healthy and ready to be an adult, their lives cannot be put on hold until the situation gets better – their needs must be met now.

We thought about how our school provides teaching and a place to learn, and it that it is our responsibility to make the most of it.

Thank you to Abigail, Bella, Belle, Max, Ralph and Thea for helping to deliver this assembly.

Mrs Tweedale,
Deputy Head
Rights Respecting Schools Co-ordinator



News from the classes...



This week in EYFS we have been getting stuck in with lots of pirate role play in the outside area! We discovered and counted lots of treasures and coins, using tens and fives frames to help organise our loot, and enjoyed writing labels for our own maps. Making a boat from the tyres, the children used excellent problem solving skills to share the ores and take turns using the map to direct the crew to the treasure. This thoughtful behaviour was also evident in their learning with Harold the Giraffe this week, as they reflected upon how to help their friends. They really enjoyed writing 'shout outs' for their friends, to celebrate helpful and kind behaviour.

It will come as no surprise that the children received their Jewel Jar Treat this week. We enjoyed rowing the boat and flipping pancakes amongst other parachute games in the beautiful sunshine. This game was not only a lot of fun, but it also highlighted the children's listening abilities as we worked as a team to flip the pancakes as high as possible!



The children had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day and dressing up as a word! It was a joy to see them guess each other's costumes and celebrate their creativity. They confidently walked down the catwalk during the whole school assembly and enjoyed seeing the costumes of other children. They also loved having Ms Connolly come

to read them a story.



Early years had the opportunity to share ideas of their favourite books and drew pictures of characters from these stories. Some even went a step further, creating their own books and using their phonics skills to sound out and spell words! The fun continued in the forest, where the children crafted photo frames from natural materials and created pictures of characters from stories, using materials

such as sticks, leaves and stones. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to nurture their imagination and share their artistic creations with friends.



This week, Beech Class was buzzing with excitement as we celebrated World Book Day! The children—and their wonderful parents and carers—put in an incredible effort, creating fabulous 'dress as a word' costumes. It was inspiring to see the creativity on display, with words ranging from 'magnificent' to 'courageous' brought to life in the most imaginative ways. World Book Day is a fantastic opportunity to foster a love of reading and language, helping children to explore new words, stories, and ideas while celebrating the joy of books!



Following our class read of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, our Year 2 children had a fantastic time drawing their own versions of Willy Wonka. With his eccentric outfit and mischievous grin, each illustration showed off their wonderful attention to detail and creativity.

Meanwhile, both Year 1 and Year 2 embarked on an exciting project: designing a book of their own! They worked hard to create characters, set their stories in imaginative worlds, and even thought about illustrations and front covers. This project encouraged them to develop their storytelling skills while deepening their appreciation for how books are



Both Year 1 and Year 2 used a single image as inspiration to write their own stories. Year 1 focused on creating a beginning, middle, and end, ensuring their stories had a clear structure. They worked on using simple descriptive language to bring their ideas to life. Year 2 took it a step further, adding more detail to their settings and characters while also including dialogue and more complex sentence structures. It was wonderful to see their imaginations come to life on the page!



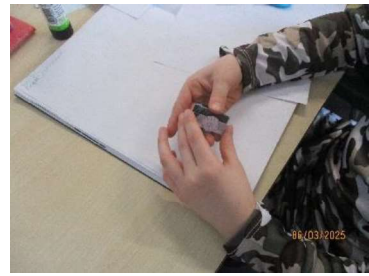
In PE, we have begun our introduction to gymnastics. The children have been exploring different ways to balance, roll, and move with control. We have focused on basic shapes, such as tucks and star positions, and have started learning how to put simple movements together to form sequences. Everyone is showing great enthusiasm and determination as they develop their confidence in movement and flexibility.

In Maths, Year 1 has been exploring odd and even numbers, looking at patterns and using practical activities to deepen their understanding. We have used objects, number lines, and games to make learning engaging and interactive. Year 2 has been focusing on mathematical reasoning, explaining their thinking and justifying their answers. We have been challenging them with problem-solving tasks that encourage them to think critically and apply their knowledge in different contexts. The children have enjoyed discussing their strategies and learning from each other's approaches.

This week in Lime Class, we have been busy writing non-fiction pieces to explain what happens when a volcano erupts. Explanation texts can be tricky because we have to think like our readers and make sure we include all the information they need to understand the process. Everyone worked really hard to make their writing clear and informative!



In maths, we explored the difference between capacity and volume, measuring in litres and millilitres. We had fun using different containers to see how much liquid they could hold! Our PHSE lessons focused on our rights—what they are and why they are important. We had some great discussions about which things we believed were rights and which were not.



French lessons took us back in time as we learned how to say "Stone Age," "Iron Age," and "Bronze Age" to support our history topic. Speaking of history, we investigated why the Romans invaded Britain, why Julius Caesar didn't stay, and why Emperor Claudius eventually returned. We also considered what this meant for the Celts—who would win this time?



In computing, we learned how to spot fake news and explored different terminology related to it. We discussed how to check if a source is reliable, what misinformation and disinformation mean, and why people might spread false information online. It was really interesting to think about how we can be smart and safe when reading things on the internet.

In music, the classroom was full of rhythm as we samba'd our way through the lesson! For DT, we experimented with concertina pop-outs and folded pop-ups as part of our research for making books with moving parts.



Finally, World Book Day was a fantastic success! We were amazed by the creative costumes and the wonderful range of words chosen. Thank you for all your support in making it such a fun and memorable day.

In Maple class, in their English lessons, the children focused on enhancing their descriptive writing by incorporating vivid sensory details and figurative language. They also used dictionaries to

explore the meanings of words, linking this activity to World Book Day. Drawing inspiration from a carefully chosen picture prompt, they crafted their own narratives, making precise vocabulary choices to bring their stories to life. After writing, they evaluated their work, reflecting on their use of language and storytelling techniques. Needless to say that their stories were brilliant!



In Geography, the children identified and located the counties of the United Kingdom, using a UK Counties Map. Working in pairs, the children engaged in a true or false activity to reinforce their understanding of the country's geographical divisions. Building on this, and linking to our PSHE lesson, they examined the responsibilities of local councils, discussing and debating which areas of responsibility are the most significant. This discussion connected to our *Rights Respecting School* ethos, as the children considered how these responsibilities impact communities and support children's rights.



In DT, the children identified the features of torches and investigated their uses. The children made notes about the uses of torches. They then labelled a cross-section diagram of a torch deepening their understanding of its components and how they work. In Maths, the children worked on adding fractions. Year 4 pupils explored how to add fractions with the same denominator and Year 5 pupils learned how to find a common denominator when adding fractions with different denominators. Using visual bar

models, they deepened their understanding of fraction addition and applied their knowledge to solve problems.



In PE, their children worked in groups to perform actions and skills using synchronisation. The children focused on moving in unison, maintaining rhythm, and coordinating simple movements and balances with their teammates to create sequences. They also used the ropes and apparatus to improve their strength, balance, and agility.



On Thursday, we celebrated World Book Day by participating in the 'Vocabulary on Parade: Dress as a Word' event. The children thoughtfully selected and creatively represented powerful vocabulary choices through their outfits. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and imagination in action!



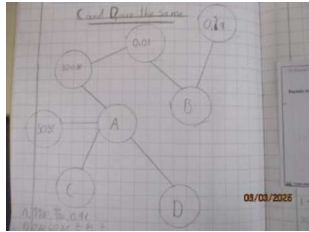
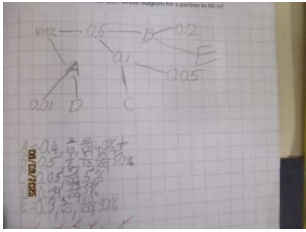
As we bring another engaging week at school to a close, Year 6 has been a hive of curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. Here's a glimpse into what we in Willow have been up to!

In History this week, we asked the thought-provoking question, "What made the Titanic so significant?" To start our exploration, we shared our prior knowledge about the Titanic and her infamous maiden voyage. Our enthusiasm was palpable as we discussed various facts and myths surrounding the great ship. Following this, we delved deeper into the construction of the Titanic and the events that unfolded during her ill-fated journey across the Atlantic.



To consolidate our learning, we created a timeline of significant events to ensure we grasped the chronology of this historical tragedy. We look forward to diving even deeper into the short yet impactful life of the Titanic in the weeks to come.





Maths has been equally engaging this week, as we focused on finding fraction, decimal, and percentage equivalents. We enjoyed creating part-whole models, which we shared with our learning partners to solve using our knowledge of equivalence.

In our PE lesson, we focused on volleyball, where we learned the importance of the set and the ready position. We demonstrated much enthusiasm while ensuring our hands were in the correct position, forming a triangle with our thumbs and first fingers ready to receive the ball. To aid our learning, we used a beach ball to slow the pace of the game as we practised our skills, including the fast catch, enhancing both our coordination and teamwork.



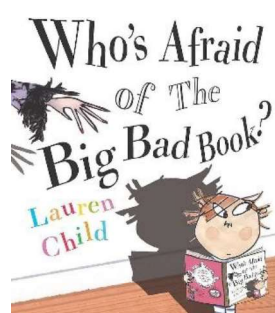
This Friday sees the start of Science Week with the fascinating theme of 'Change and Adapt'. We do love a hands-on experience in willow Class and this week did not disappoint! Our lessons this week have spotlighted the human circulatory system, where we explored the intricate journeys of blood flow and the impact of plaque in arteries on the overall health of the body. To demonstrate the concept, we conducted a hands-on experiment where we modified the diameter of a straw, our variable, while keeping the amount of 'blood' – represented by water – and the size of the cup constant.



Linking our investigation to the real-world, we discovered the remarkable contributions of scientist Marie Maynard Daly, a pioneer in researching the effects of cholesterol. We sorted various foods based on their cholesterol content, with some revelations that surprised us all—such as discovering that eggs contain a high level of cholesterol. To put our learning into practice, we ended our lesson by making butter! The transformation of cream from a liquid to solid was truly magical. After draining the buttermilk, we savoured the butter on crackers. The consensus was a resounding 'delicious!' However, reflecting on our learning about cholesterol, we talked about the importance of enjoying such treats in moderation.



Wednesday saw our teachers swap classes for story time. We had the pleasure of Ms. Dyson reading the story of Ada's Violin by Susan Hood. It is the story of Ada Ríos who grew up in Cateura, a small town in Paraguay built on a landfill. She dreamed of playing the violin, but with little money for anything but the bare essentials, it was never an option...until a music teacher named Favio Chávez arrived. He wanted to give the children of Cateura something special, so he made them instruments out of materials found in the trash. It was a crazy idea, but one that would leave Ada—and her town—forever changed. Now, the Recycled Orchestra plays venues around the world, spreading their message of hope and innovation. What an inspiring story! Whilst we enjoyed this beautiful picture book, we heard that Mrs Tweedale was next door with Lime Class enjoying the Lauren Child classic 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?'



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Year 5 Maths Stars Shine Bright!

Last week, eight incredibly enthusiastic Year 5 pupils took part in the HFL Education Annual Year 5 Mathematics Challenge Competition. This thrilling event brings together schools from across Hertfordshire and beyond—both state and independent—to put their problem-solving skills to the test.

The challenge, held online, is designed to stretch mathematical thinking while fostering teamwork. And what a performance from our pupils! We are absolutely thrilled to share that **Team A has made it through to the next round!** What an incredible achievement for our small school!



Mrs. Afenti-Sassis, our Maths Coordinator, was full of praise for the team: *“Our children approached every challenge with enthusiasm, resilience, and a real love for maths. It was fantastic to see them working together, thinking critically, and most importantly—having fun!”*

A huge well done to all our Year 5 mathematicians—we can't wait to see what Team A accomplishes next! And a huge THANK YOU to Mrs Campbell for your support too!