



Happy New Year!

Dear Willow Bank Families,
Happy New Year! We hope you all had a joyous and restful Christmas break. It has been absolutely wonderful to welcome the children back to school, all looking so smart in their uniforms.



Reminders for PE Days

A gentle reminder that children should wear their school PE kit on PE days. Hoodies are not part of the PE uniform, so please ensure they are left at home. This helps children participate fully and comfortably in their PE sessions.



Exciting News: Kent Cricket Coaching with Coach Juan

This week, we were thrilled to welcome Coach Juan from Kent Cricket. He will be delivering six weeks of cricket coaching for our Year 2, Year 3, and Year 5 classes. The children thoroughly enjoyed their first session, engaging in fun games that focused on developing their throwing and catching skills. We look forward to seeing the progress they make over the coming weeks!

Spring 1 Hook Lessons

The school has been buzzing with excitement as children dive into their new Spring 1 topics. From tea tasting to volcanology, the hook lessons this week have sparked curiosity and enthusiasm across all year groups. Be sure to read on to see highlights from each class.

Spring 1 Clubs Announced

The list of Spring 1 clubs was sent out today. If you would like to reserve a place for your child, please complete and return the slips by Monday.

A special mention goes to our brand-new Hair Braiding Club with Beyond Braidz. This club is open to children in Year 4 and now Year 5 as well. It's a fantastic opportunity to learn exciting braiding techniques to try on yourself or your friends. Spaces are limited, so be sure to sign up quickly!



Curriculum Overviews

Each child has received a curriculum overview outlining their learning for this half term. Talking about these topics at home can really help reinforce and deepen their understanding. Please take a moment to review it with your child.

Welcoming New Staff

We are delighted to introduce two new members to our Willow Bank family:

- **Miss Benna**, who will be taking over as class teacher for Magnolia Class while Mrs. Lee begins her maternity leave. Miss Benna is an experienced EYFS teacher, and we are excited to have her join our team.
- **Miss White**, who joins us as a teaching assistant in Hazel Class. We warmly welcome her and look forward to the contributions she will make.



Wishing You a Wonderful Weekend

Thank you for your continued support as we start this new term. We hope you all stay warm and enjoy a fantastic weekend.

Warm regards,

Mrs Oldfield and the Willow Bank Team



Year R

This week has been full of fun and learning as we dove into the story of The Little Red Hen! We brought the story to life through reading, drawing, role-playing, and retelling, making the experience so much more exciting. This book provided an opportunity to explore the life cycle of a chicken. We also kicked off Phase 3 of our phonics journey and continue our exploration of numbers 0 to 5. What an amazing week of discovery and creativity!



Year 1

Today we received a set of instructions on how to make a recycled shaker. We worked together to read the instructions and make the instrument. We also read our model text – Ossiri and the Bala Mengro, and made predictions and inferences using the text to help us.



How to Make a Recycled Shaker

What You Need:

- An empty plastic bottle (clean and dry)
- A handful of rice, lentils, or dried beans
- Colourful paper or stickers (optional, for decoration)
- Tape or glue

Steps:

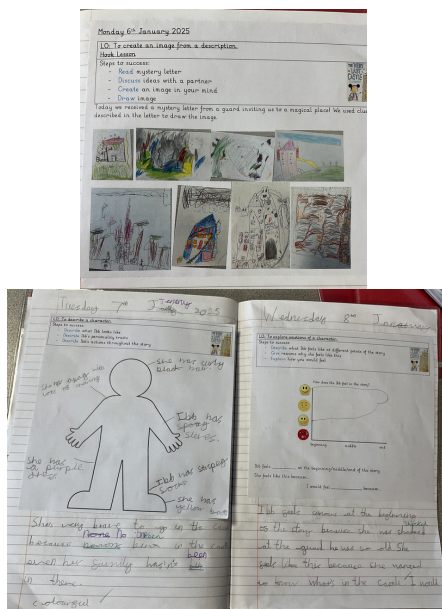
1. **First**, take your empty plastic bottle and make sure it is clean and dry.
2. **Next**, pour a small handful of rice, lentils, or dried beans into the bottle. This will make the sound.
3. **Then**, tightly screw the lid back on the bottle. You can also use tape around the lid to make sure it doesn't come off.
4. **After that**, decorate the bottle with colourful paper, stickers, or drawings to make it look fun!
5. **Finally**, shake your instrument and listen to the sound you've made!

Now you have your own recycled shaker to play music!

This activity is simple, safe, and creative for young children, while also teaching them about reusing materials.

Year 2

In Year 2, students received a mysterious letter that arrived without any return address. The letter described a grand, ancient castle, towering and full of secrets. Intrigued, the class set off on an imaginative journey, reading the text carefully to unravel every detail. Their task? To bring the castle to life on paper, drawing their own interpretations of the words.



Year 3

During our hook lesson, children were volcanologists who were tasked with looking at volcanic eruptions and how they occur. To simulate our own volcanic eruption, we performed the coke and mentos experiment to show how a volcanic eruption spills over the crater and causes damage to the surrounding area.





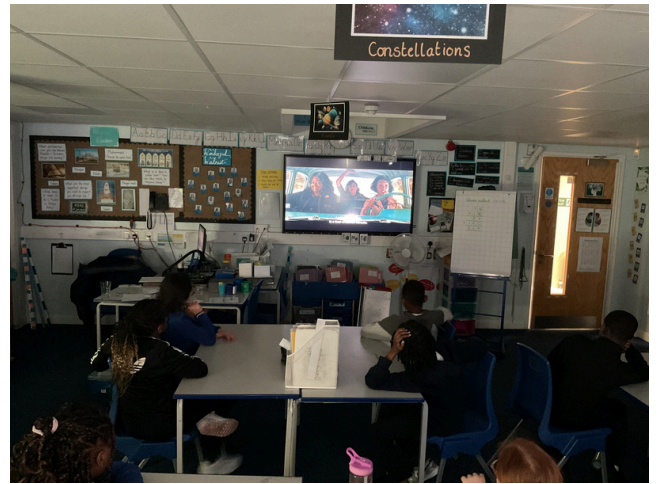
Year 4

Almond Class had a delightful tea-tasting session immersing themselves into this term's core text 'Cloud Tea Monkeys' this sparked curiosity and thoughtful discussions about which tea they preferred.



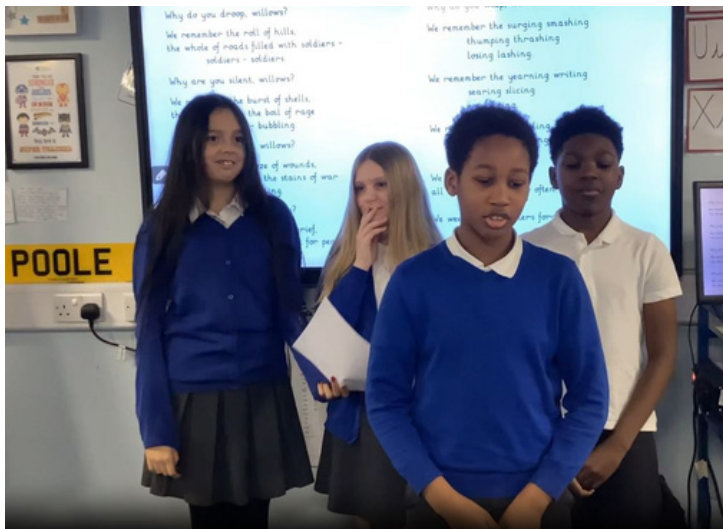
Year 5

In year 5 we watched the film "Hidden Figures" about Katherine Johnson and the other computers at NASA during the 1960s. The film deals with the themes of segregation, aspiration and perseverance.



Year 6

Year 6 began their new topic 'How did World War II Unfold?' by being introduced to the sights and sounds of The Blitz. We looked at images during an air raid, discussed how Londoners took shelter and shared what we already knew about the war. We then read the poem, 'We Remember' by Laura Mucha, discussed its imagery and meaning before performing the poem in small groups. The aim was to convey the sorrow and sadness of war in an appropriate manner.



OUR CORE VALUE FOR SPRING 1 IS KINDNESS

KINDNESS
is a gift
everyone can
afford to give.

UNKNOWN

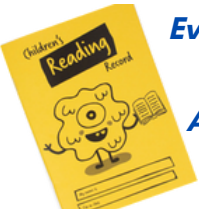
STORIES by storie



KS1 & EYFS Parent Reading Morning

Every Thursday from 8:40-9:10am



All parents and carers welcome!



We are looking for Read with Me volunteers at Willow Bank! These volunteers will visit our Yr 1 & 2 classrooms and listen to our children read.

If you are interested in volunteering with us for 30 minutes or an hour each week, then please pop into the office to express your interest and pick up our application pack.



Well done	Our target is over 96%
Magnolia - 90%	Yew - 90%
Hornbeam - 88%	Redwood - 92%
	Almond - 95%
★ Hazel - 100%	Walnut - 93%
★ Larch - 98.5%	Sycamore - 92.5%
	

School Reminder

Children should not arrive earlier than 8.20am, for Bagel Breakfast club from 8.25am - 8.35am
School gates close at precisely 8:50am. After this time, entrance is via the school office and parents will need to sign your child/children in using the screen.

A reminder that we have our Chance To Chat.

As a school we provide ongoing support for the children's wellbeing and mental health to which one of the methods is they can fill out a form while in school to express their worries. The form then gets placed in the 'Chance to chat' box where it will be addressed by the wellbeing team.

We also have an online form which is located on the school website named 'Chance to chat'.

The children can complete the form if they are worried about something or need some advice? A member of staff will get back to the child at school.

Please copy the link below and paste in the search bar and it will direct you straight to the form.

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=MvrWB2Z-r0qnuEuN-giOI1CAPQc0X4RFje43giTliLNUOE5BWUFISE40VjBXODZYRVFITLNXvzZYNCQLQCN0PWcu>



SEND Coffee morning



Dear Parents,

We invite you to meet with our SEND Team on Tuesday the 14th January at 9 AM.

This is a great opportunity to share the SEN support across the school and the local authority that may be available for your child.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Willow Bank
Primary School

**Calling all parents
and carers!**

**Do you have children
who are due to start
School Reception
in September 2025?**



**Bexley
Early Years**





At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO RETURN TO ROUTINE

Most of us look forward to the school holidays as an opportunity to slow down and relax, stay up later, sleep in and generally approach life in a more leisurely fashion. However, this does mean that returning to normal school-day routines can feel like an uphill battle. Here are some practical tips to ease that transition, reduce stress and set children up for success.

1 START SMALL AND EARLY

Begin reintroducing elements of the school routine at least a few days before term starts. Gradually adjust bedtime, wake-up times and mealtimes to be more in line with school-day rhythms. Small changes can make a big difference in avoiding last-minute panic and helping children to readjust smoothly.

2 REVISIT THE SCHEDULE

Involve your child in mapping out their daily routine so they understand what's going to change. Visual tools like charts or calendars can help keeping to that schedule feel more engaging. When children understand and anticipate their personal timetable, they feel more secure and in control.

3 CREATE A SLEEP PLAN

Sleep can present one of the biggest challenges, as children can sometimes become night owls, prone to staying up late during the holidays. Limit screen time before bed and encourage winding-down activities like reading or listening to calming music. A restful night's sleep improves focus, mood and overall wellbeing, making mornings much smoother.

4 ENCOURAGE FRIENDSHIPS

Help your child to reconnect with school friends by organising playdates, catch-ups or arranging to go to after-school clubs. Re-establishing social bonds can make the return to school more exciting and less intimidating, allowing youngsters to focus on the positive aspects of the new term.

5 GRANT RESPONSIBILITY

Give children control over some aspects of the morning routine. Maybe they could be in charge of waking everyone up, serving breakfast or choosing the radio station that everyone listens to while getting ready. Something that gives them a sense of ownership over their morning schedule can help them view the task as one they've chosen to do, rather than being told to do it.

6 FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Make sure children are receiving balanced meals (with regular healthy snacks to boost energy and concentration), putting them in the best possible state to return to education. A nutritious breakfast is particularly crucial for a positive start to the day. Involve children in meal planning to make it enjoyable and collaborative.

7 COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Talk with your child about how they're feeling about returning to school: whether they're excited, anxious or a mix of both. Validating their emotions helps them feel supported and understood. Try asking them about the things they're looking forward to at school, such as seeing their friends again. Focusing on the positives can be useful for children struggling with change.

8 RECONNECT WITH LEARNING

Ease children back into a learning mindset by incorporating fun, educational activities into their home life. Reading a favourite book, playing games that involve maths or discussing an interesting topic can gently reawaken their focus and prime their minds to learn, which can have helpful impacts on their academic performance.

9 PREP TOGETHER

Turn preparation into a shared activity, to shoulder the responsibility together and provide support where needed. Pack school bags, lay out uniforms and plan lunch the night before. This not only reduces early morning stress but also gives children a sense of ownership over being ready for school.

10 BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE

Transitions take time, and every child adjusts differently; so, it's important to stay calm and supportive, especially if they're reacting adversely to the change in their daily life. Be ready to tweak routines as needed, and work with the child to make the return to education as easy as possible for them. Patience can go a long way to setting a positive tone for the new school year.

Meet Our Expert

Becky Dawson is an education expert with a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Passionate about empowering adults who spend time with and care for young people, Becky specialises in creating practical strategies that promote wellbeing and resilience in children during life's transitions.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-to-return-to-routine>

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