

May 2017 Update

Our values are to ASPIRE at Willow by being:

Achievers, Self-Motivated, Positive, Independent, Respectful & Engaged

Lessons and homework

- 'Bug Club' Reading website/ app is being well used by many children at home.
- 'Mathletics' has been a huge success and children have really engaged with it.
- Teachers have focused on providing children with very specific feedback about how to improve their work and the children are learning how to respond to this feedback in each lesson.
- Teaching Assistants now work with individuals or groups of pupils to provide additional support or intervention during afternoon sessions.

Curriculum

- The launch of our creative, project and skills based curriculum for foundation subjects has helped to inspire the children. Feedback from pupils shows they really enjoy their sessions and are making progress. Parents have been invited to more in school events to allow the pupils to showcase their work. We aim to run more of these sessions.
- We have had a focus on Internet safety across the academy with our 'Internet Awareness month' in March.
- The summer term is our Anti-Bullying and 'Respect' focus term; we will be training some of the children to become Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and have lots of activities and debates planned. We have started to work towards the Doncaster Anti-Bullying Charter mark and look forward to updating you with our progress.

Playtime and Lunchtime

- The new 'family dining' style approach to lunch service has reinforced social skills, table manners and has successfully promoted older children as role models to the younger children.
- The new lunchtime structure has reduced lunchtime incidents by over 65% in the last half term- this is really impressive and is due to the positive response from the children and staff.
- Year 5 and Year 6 Active Playground Leaders are now supporting structured play and games over lunchtime; this is also developing their leadership skills and promoting healthy, active lifestyles.

Behaviour consequences and rewards

- We are continuing to reinforce high expectations through the updated behaviour and rewards policy and there has been a significant reduction in the amount of low level disruption and behaviour incidents over the Spring Term.
- Golden Time is still used as a reward for most children.
- Children have engaged in collecting stamps/signatures on their ASPIRE reward cards and the ASPIRE Assemblies recognise children's efforts in demonstrating the behaviour and attitudes we promote. Over 360 ASPIRE certificates were awarded over the Spring Term to encourage and promote positive behaviours.
- 30 of our Year 5 children have volunteered to become trained Peer Mentors to support younger children across the academy. Their training is underway.

Parents and community links/ communication:

- Feedback about the online Parents Evening booking system has been very positive and we hope to use this system for future events.
- The parents information sessions and coffee mornings have been well attended (over 160 people joined us and the friends of Willow for the Mother's Day event). More events are planned such as a Breakfast with Dad/ Grandad in time for father's day, SEN/ Autism Awareness event, the Summer Fayre and Sports Day.
- The regular 'Curriculum Newsletters' are available to ensure parents know what the children will be learning over the term.
- We have continued to update the website to ensure it is the first point of contact for information and news.
- The use of our wearelistening@willowacademy.org for parents to communicate directly is increasing.
- We now have over 100 followers of our new Twitter account @AcademyWillow
- We continue to raise expectations around presentation and uniform; parents can now purchase logo uniform from Tesco website www.tesco.com/direct/ues/

Morning and after-school clubs

- More children are attending the morning Multi Skills sessions which are now split into age groups.
- The success of our new Street-Dance session has led to us now having two sessions per week.
- We now have a choir club, organised by Mrs Bedford.

Leadership and governance

- We now have a permanent leadership team including a permanent Headteacher.
- The Interim Executive Committee (IEC) has been working alongside the existing Governors to provide support and guidance. New Governors have started to express interest and we expect a full Local Governing Body to be in place by September 2017.
- External reviews of the Pupil Premium, Special Needs Provision (SEN) and Governance, as well as a WCAT review of Teaching, have taken place and have resulted in clear actions that are being addressed. All external reviewers recognised the positive actions that are being taken.

What can parents and carers do to support us?

- Continue to make sure that the children focus on their work and learning. On the last update we respectfully asked that children do not bring any items or toys into school that may cause a distraction from their learning and the response was very positive. This request does include 'fidget spinners'; unless they are agreed as part of an educational support plan, they are classed as a toy and are not permitted in school.
- Set up a Parent Pay account that includes an up to date mobile phone number and email address as we intend to develop our use of the text/ email communication system further. From September, our newsletters and letters will be emailed to parents so its important your details are up to date.
- Our attendance has been affected by term time holidays recently, please avoid arranging holidays during the term so the children do not miss out on important time in school.
- To continue to raise standards across the academy, please ensure your child is dressed in the correct school uniform (please refer to the website for clarification if needed).

The relationship between parents, staff and children is crucial to our success in moving the school forward. By working together we can ensure that children enjoy their time at Willow Academy and make good progress. Thank you for your support.

Mrs D Sumner, Headteacher.