



Dear Parents and Carers,

This week has been a truly magical time at Willow Bank Primary School as we embrace the festive season with a variety of heartwarming activities and events. Here are some highlights from the week and a preview of what's to come:

Magnolia Class Spread Christmas Cheer!

Magnolia Class delighted the residents of our local care home with a joyful performance of Christmas songs. The children's medley brought smiles to everyone's faces, and the residents were thrilled to welcome the children with squash and snacks before the performance. A huge thank you to the parents who supported this wonderful visit—your help is greatly appreciated!



Christmas Dinner Celebration

On Wednesday, the school was filled with festive cheer as we enjoyed our much-anticipated Christmas dinner. Our fabulous catering staff served up a delicious meal that the children shared with their teachers in a celebratory atmosphere. With crackers, jokes, and festive outfits, it was a truly memorable day for all.

Winter Wonderland Extravaganza

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Winter Wonderland event on Thursday after school! It was a magical afternoon filled with delicious refreshments, creative arts and crafts, a thrilling raffle, and vibrant face painting. Of course, the highlight for many was a visit from Father Christmas himself. We hope you enjoyed the festivities as much as we did!



Upcoming Christmas Celebrations

- EYFS and KS1 Nativity: The Bethlehem Bakeoff
- Our EYFS and KS1 children have been busy rehearsing for their nativity play, The Bethlehem Bakeoff. They will perform for the school on Tuesday 17th December and for parents on Wednesday 18th December at 2:30pm. We can't wait to see their hard work come to life!
- Key Stage 2 Christmas Singalong
- To round off our festive celebrations, Key Stage 2 will be performing a selection of Christmas songs on Thursday 19th December at 3pm. Join us for this heartwarming performance to get everyone in the Christmas spirit.



Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm as we celebrate this special season. Wishing you all a relaxing weekend and looking forward to another festive week ahead!

Warm regards,
Mrs Oldfield and the WBP Team



Year R

This week Magnolia class have been working to identify squares and rectangles. We went hunting around the classroom to find our own rectangles and squares. 'This has a square on!'



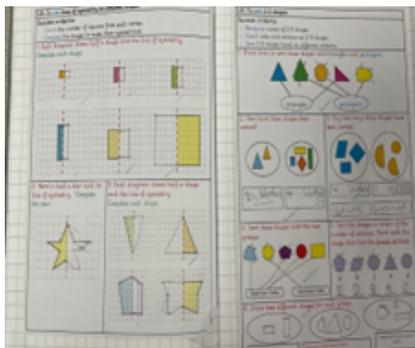
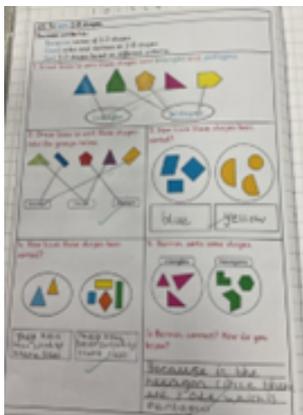
Year 1

This week in Maths, Year 1 have been identifying and comparing numbers to 20. We have been using number lines, tens frames and counters to support us. We have also been using our number lines to help us to count forwards and backwards to 20!



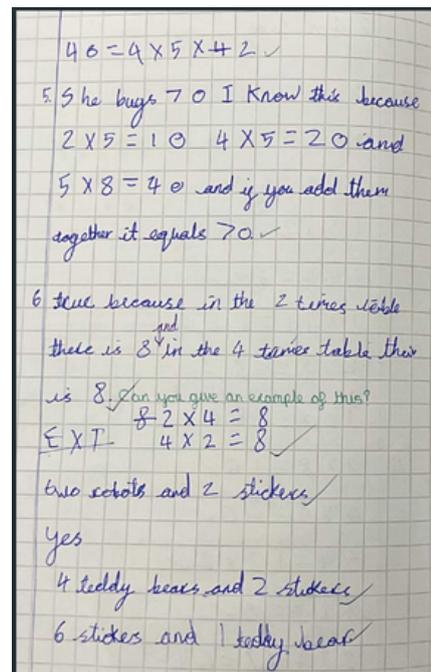
Year 2

In Year 2, students have been sorting shapes by exploring their different properties. They've learned to identify and categorise 2D shapes based on features like the number of sides, angles and symmetry, grouping them into categories such as triangles, quadrilaterals, and polygons with right, acute, or obtuse angles.



Year 3

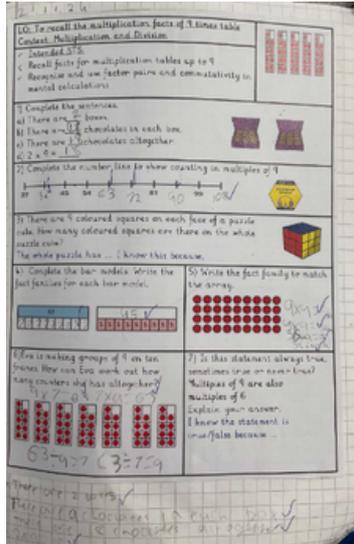
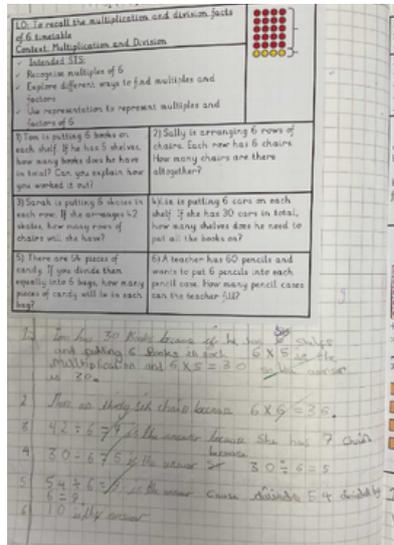
In year 3, the children have been identifying and understanding the pattern between the 2, 4 and 8 timetables. To do this, they have used inverse methods as well as cumulative law when working out their timetables.





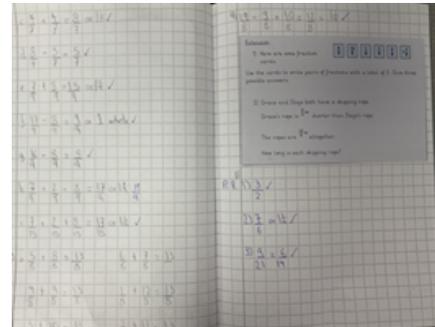
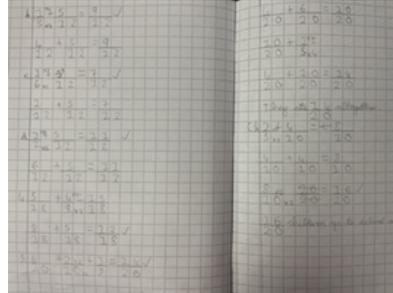
Year 4

This term in Year 4, the children are diving into an exciting adventure with their times tables from 3 to 12! They will engage in interactive games, hands-on activities, and friendly challenges to master their times table knowledge.



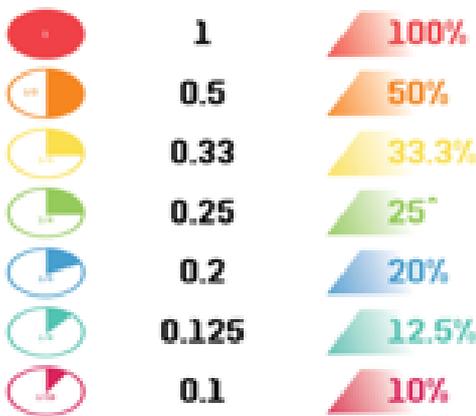
Year 5

This term in Year 5 maths, the children are exploring fractions! They are deepening their understanding by learning how to add and subtract fractions with different denominators. Through engaging activities and practice, they are building confidence in working with fractions in new and exciting ways.

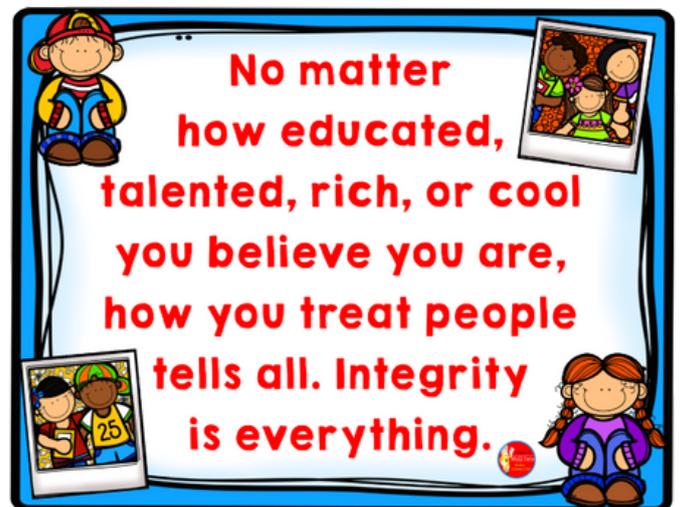


Year 6

In Maths, Year 6 have been exploring decimal and fraction equivalents, using a hundred square to represent the numbers. Children have been working together to solve problems, making connections with decimals and fractions to understand $\frac{1}{10}$ as a fraction is 0.1 and to know that 0.01 is $\frac{1}{100}$.



OUR CORE VALUE FOR AUTUMN 2 IS INTEGRITY

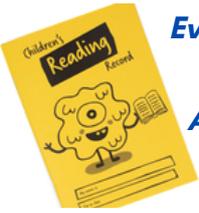




KS1 & EYFS Parent Reading Morning

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 - 95%	★ Yew - 96%
Hornbeam - 91%	Redwood - 95%
	★ Almond - 92%
★ Hazel - 98%	★ Walnut - 90%
Larch - 97%	★ Sycamore - 93%

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>



Dates for Your Diaries!

Here is a quick reminder of the events happening in the coming weeks:

- **EYFS & KS1 Nativity Performance to Parents:** Wednesday 18th December at 2:30pm
- **KS2 Christmas Songs:** Thursday 19th December at 3:00pm
- **Class End-of-Term Parties:** Thursday 19th December from 1:30pm
- **Last Day of Autumn Term:** Friday 19th December 3:20pm

EMOTIONAL BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE (EBSA) PARENT/CARER SUPPORT GROUP

To take place on: **Tuesday 7th January 10am – 11.30am**

Venue: **Bexleyheath Central Library in the Dickens Room.**



Bexley Educational Psychologists are providing parent/carers the space to share their experiences, hear from others and gain support as part of a network for those supporting children and young people who are experiencing anxiety-related difficulties around attending school (including Emotional Based School Avoidance).

If you are interested in joining this group, please email:

parentebساسupport@bexley.gov.uk



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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>

X @wake_up_weds

f /www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.12.2024