



THE WILLOWS
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Friday 2nd October 2026

Headteacher's Message

Dear parents and carers,

Today marks the 10th birthday of the Berlesduna Trust.

I know that for some (all?) of you this won't seem of much importance. There are many staff and children who are probably unaware of this fact as well. However, for those of us that were there at the start it is a moment to pause and think of the journey.

12 years ago, I arrived at The Willows as Deputy and SENCo with Mr Freese. We had a very clear brief. Make The Willows great. It didn't need much, most of the staff were fantastic (and are still here!) and the most important people, the children, were just brilliant. The successes were quick and it was on the back of that first year that Whitmore joined the informal support which within a year became the Trust. The first three schools (Merrylands, The Willows and Whitmore) formed Berlesduna and then were joined over time by Fairhouse, Cherry Tree, Felmore, Crays Hill, St. Marys, Canewdon and St. Nicks. We are now a large family of over 3000 children and close to 400 staff.

We work together, support each other and help one another to make improvements and sustain our successes. In the last 10 years there are thousands of children who have been educated under the Berlesduna banner; who have gone out into the wider world into secondary schools, colleges and universities. This means that the work that the whole Trust does, has great potential the shape the future; something that we understand and embrace.

Here's to the next 10 years,

Have a great weekend everyone,

Mr T Robinson

Headteacher

The Willows Primary School



BERLESDUNA ACADEMY TRUST – VACANCIES

SEN LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT closing date 9 October
MERRYLANDS – FIXED TERM CLASS TEACHER closing date 11 October
WHITMORE – PART TIME CLASS TEACHER closing date 5 October
WILLOWS – CATERING ASSISTANT closing date 9 October

For more information and to apply for any of these exciting opportunities, please follow the link to our website [Vacancies – Berlesduna Academy Trust](#)

WELL DONE!



Star Pupil of the Week

Yr1— Natalie, Imama, Andi-Rose

Yr2— Arete, Lilly, Lorelai

Yr3 — Lily-Rose, Roxy, Oliver

Yr4 — Chimamanda, Charles, Emily

Yr5 — Olly, Mayra, Isabelle

Yr 6— Danaya, Noah, Elle



Superstar Writers of the Week

Yr1— Kamdi, Noah, Lucas

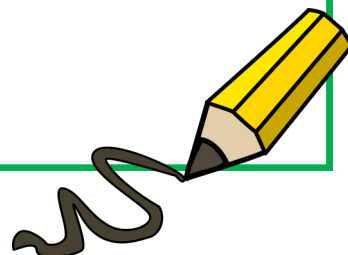
Yr2— Jires, David, Bella

Yr3 — Ruby, Lucas, Victoria

Yr4 — Joshua, Delilah, Bella

Yr5 — Harrison, Frankie, Camilla

Yr 6— Galena Lillie-Anne, Freddie



Our Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Hope, Justice, Compassion, Integrity, Wisdom

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ACADEMY TRUST



MERRYLANDS
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CRAYS HILL
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CHERRY TREE
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



FAIRHOUSE
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



ST MARY'S CofE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPAL

Laundry basket 	Suitcase 	Wooden spoons 	Action figures 	Plastic crates 
Dress up items 	Cars 	Dinosaurs 	Pans 	Plastic dolls 
Lego 	Small balls 	Scooter 	Plastic tubes 	Tarpaulin 
Beach spades 	Buckets 	Trowels 	Skateboard 	Cardboard tubes 
Guttering 	Wooden planks 	Helmet 	Aprons 	Chalk 

Please try to keep these items in mind as these are the kinds of donations that our school needs as part of our Outdoor Play and Learning initiative. These items will make playtimes outside much more exciting, engaging and fun! Please give your child's class teacher any donations and these can then be passed on. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

**Miss Hudson and Miss Dorrington -
OPAL Leads**

Our top readers for this week!



KS1: 1R – 64

LKS2: 2D—70

UKS2: 6H—72%



Phenomenal Phonics



Yr1— Noah, Dawud, Zendaya

Yr 2— Evelyn, Vincent, Okkes

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THIS WEEK...

Year 1

This week, we were very lucky to have a special play come into school linked to our topic, 'Once Upon a Time'. It was a fun and exciting twist on Little Red Riding Hood, with lots of other well-known stories and fairy tales woven in too! The performance was really interactive, and we even had the chance to join in by auditioning for different characters, including the wolf. We had a fantastic time!

Year 2

This week in Year 2, we have been busy adapting our 'Bob's Space Adventure' story with our own ideas. This week, Bob got stuck in a crater, which made for some very imaginative writing! We have also enjoyed learning about what Victorian schools and classrooms were like, and the children have certainly agreed that school today is much more fun and much warmer.

Year 3

This week, Year 3 have continued their soils and rocks exploration in Science with a hands on workshop. We completed our adventure stories in English. In maths we have started a new unit, looking at number bonds to 1000, using our knowledge of number bonds to 10. We explored farming tools in Ancient Egypt, comparing them to items we might find today and we have practised our skills ready to make vegan apple pies in DT.

Year 4

Year 4 have had another fantastic week of learning! In maths, we have been exploring Roman numerals and developing our understanding of how they work. In DT, the children have been developing their practical skills by learning how to knot, weave and thread. They have also finished writing their instructions for their pranks, putting their writing skills to the test! In history, we explored the difference between fact and opinion, using pictures of Iron Age artefacts to encourage the children to look closely, share their ideas and consider what we can learn from historical evidence.

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Year 5

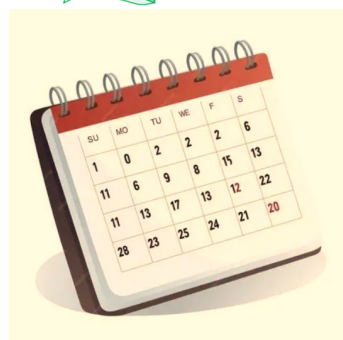
This week in year 5, the children have once again been impressing us with their English work, while writing film narratives. The children had to include information about the characters facial expressions, as well as what the camera was doing. Some children even pushed themselves and included sentences about how the background music was changing to reflect what was happening in the clip. In DT we were being taste testers as we tried some different cheesecakes in preparation for making our own in a few weeks. The New York Cheesecake was the clear winner!

Year 6

This week, Year 6 enjoyed an exciting and highly engaging science workshop led by a visiting scientist, who taught the children all about DNA and how characteristics are inherited through genes. The pupils took part in a range of practical investigations, including extracting DNA from strawberries, using litmus paper to discover whether they were supertasters, and exploring eye colour inheritance with paint charts and many more. Through these hands-on activities, the children learned how certain traits are passed down through families and gained a deeper understanding of the fascinating world of genetics. It was a fantastic opportunity to bring science to life and inspire our young scientists.

This week also saw the completion of our netball trials. Thank you to all the children who took part and demonstrated such enthusiasm, determination and excellent sportsmanship throughout the process.

Congratulations and good luck to the pupils selected for the new netball team; we look forward to seeing them represent the school this year. The high level of interest and participation has also enabled us to create a new basketball team, providing even more opportunities for children to develop their sporting skills and enjoy competitive sport. We wish both teams every success for the year ahead.



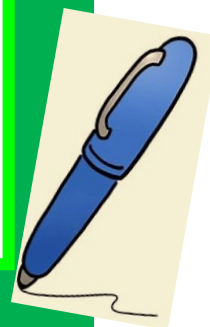
Dates for the diary

07/10/2026—Year 5 Activity Afternoon

13/10/2026—Happy Days Photos

14/10/2026—Egyptian Workshop

15/10/2026—Reading Cafe Year 2



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ST MARY'S CofE
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Whole class attendance
trophy winners this week
are

6F

with 98.9%



Reporting Absence

Please report your child's absence to the office by emailing admin@willows.essex.sch.uk, on your [PA connect app](#), or by leaving a message on the office telephone by calling 01268 470880.

The school must be informed **EVERY school day** that the child is absent.

Please ensure that you have reported your child's absence by **9.00am**.



If you or your child have an appointment, or know that you will be arriving to school late for any other reason, **please inform the office via email your child's lunch choice for that day**. This is so the kitchen can be provided with the correct number of lunches. Should we not receive your lunch choice, we cannot guarantee your child will be able to have their preferred option. Should your child's choice be baguette, please state which filling they would like to have.

PLEASE REMEMBER

**WE ARE A NUT
FREE SCHOOL**



Thank you for your understanding.



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Keeping Children's Records Up to Date

To help us provide the best possible care for your child, please ensure we are informed of any changes to their dietary requirements, allergies, medical conditions, medications, care plans, or other relevant health information. This also includes emergency contact details.

If there are any updates, please email us as soon as possible so that our records remain accurate and up to date.

admin@willows.essex.sch.uk

Thank you for your support and cooperation.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Every child that is diagnosed asthmatic or has an EpiPen for allergies, must provide the school with an up to date care plan, should we not already have one. You will also need to provide the school with emergency medications to keep on the school site, if we do not already have this.

Care plans can be acquired from your GP, hospital or specialist nurse if you have one.

The document should include your child's name, DOB, address and emergency contact details.

All medications will need to be signed for also, please come to the office should you need a form.

Thank you for your co-operation

The Willows Primary PTA

Keep an eye out for any events under the '**PTA Events**' section on the contents page of the **PA connect app**.

For more information, or to register your support please email: pta.thewillows@gmail.com.



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As you may be aware, the new [secondary school admission](#) round is now open, for parents of current Year 6 children to apply for a secondary school (Year 7) place for September 2027.

The statutory national closing date for applications is 31 October 2026. Applications can be made online via www.essex.gov.uk/admissions. 99% of parents in Essex applied online last year.

All of the application information is available on the website above. The website also has a copy of the Secondary Education in Essex 2027-28 booklet which contains details of all secondary school admission policies.

Should you need any help or support, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Should you have a visit booked, please ensure you let the office know and pre-order lunch should your child wish to have a school dinner.

Thank you

The Willows Primary School

[Primary school places for September 2027](#)

From 9th November 2026 you can apply online for your child's primary (reception) or junior (year 3) school place.

Applications received after the 15 January 2027 are considered late and will reduce your chance of being offered a place at your preferred schools.

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