

Willow Primary School Newsletter

Issue 86 - January 2026

Message from the Senior Leadership Team

Dear Parents and carers,

Happy New Year 2026 from the Marish Academy Trust staff team. With a new year and fresh starts in mind, may I urge all parents and carers to maximise their child's opportunities at school, by ensuring they attend every day and arrive promptly?



We all know about the traffic in Slough, especially around our schools, but if we work together to park, drive and even walk, considerately, it makes everyone's life much easier. Children who consistently arrive in school on time, have a better start to their day and those who attend more than 95% of the time have considerably better outcomes, both now and into adulthood than those who miss out on even a few school days, especially in the primary phase. These outcomes transfer into life chances and what parent doesn't want the best possible life chances for their child?

So, If you are having any difficulty getting your child into school for whatever reason, please talk to your child's teacher or another member of staff you trust. We know that sometimes this can be very challenging, or even embarrassing, but you are not alone and we will help you.

Let's make 2026 a really positive year for all our children, by working together in empowering partnership, including improving attendance and punctuality.

Best wishes for a very happy and prosperous 2026
Mrs Denham

Excellence in Outcomes for Disadvantaged Pupils

We are incredibly proud to share that Willow Primary School has received national recognition from the Department for Education for the excellent outcomes achieved by our disadvantaged pupils. This is a real celebration of our children's hard work and the dedication, care and high expectations shown by our staff every day.

**A message from
Bridget Phillipson**



Dear Amanda,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at Willow Primary School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Your sincerely,



Bridget Phillipson
Secretary of State for Education

Attendance Statistics

Our attendance..

Reception: 86.9% **OH NO!**

Year 1: 91.7%

Year 2: 96.2% **Well done**

Year 3: 94.2%

Year 4: 96.4% **Well done**

Year 5: 96.0% **Well done**

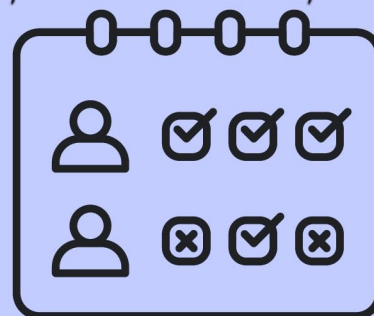
Year 6: 98.3% **Well done**

Our target is 96%



Attendance Matters

Every student. Every day.



Below 90%: Serious Concern

Far too much time missed. Big impact on learning. Serious impact on academic success. This must improve.



95-90%: Cause for Concern

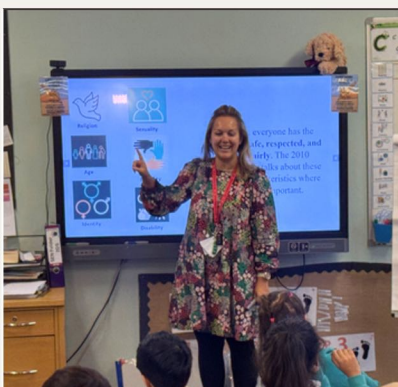
Negatively affecting academic success. Some gaps appearing. Let's aim higher.



96-100%: WELL DONE!

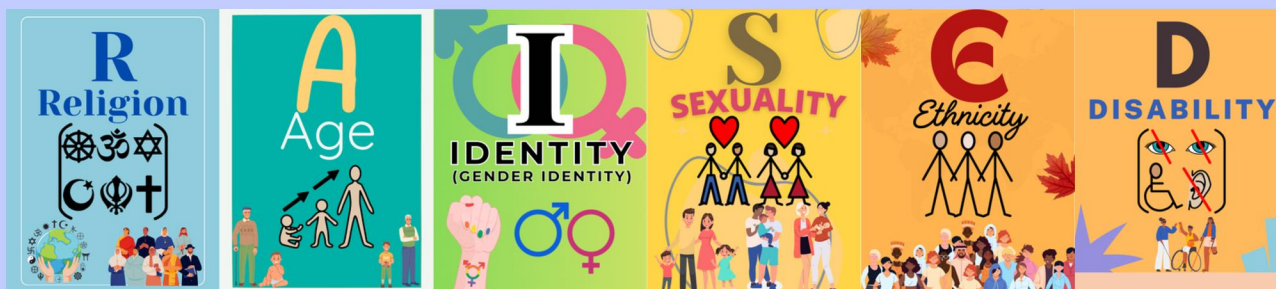
Achieving full potential. Excellent effort! You're smashing it!

RAISED - Teaching Equality



Over the past week, our pupils have been exploring what it means to treat everyone fairly and with respect. The children have been learning about the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Through engaging discussions, the children have discovered how we are all RAISED differently – and how these differences help shape who we are today:



“We are all RAISED differently, and that shapes our character growth.”

Our pupils now understand that treating everyone with respect means not discriminating against, harassing or victimising anyone because of these characteristics. They have explored how celebrating our differences and showing kindness to everyone creates a positive school community where all feel valued and included. This important learning helps our children develop into respectful, thoughtful individuals who understand that diversity makes our school – and our world – a richer place.

Our character values

We are delighted to share some wonderful images of our children demonstrating what it truly means to be part of the Willow Primary School community.

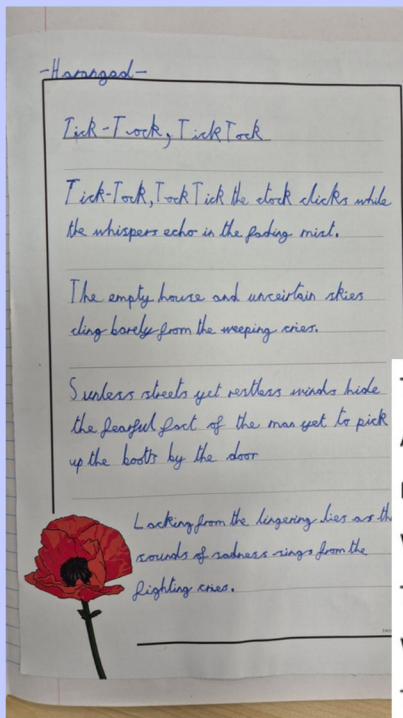
Throughout the school, you will see our pupils being Motivated in their learning, showing Aspiration as they reach for their goals, displaying Resilience when facing challenges, being Inclusive to everyone, celebrating their Success, and remaining Hope-filled about their futures. These photographs capture the heart of our school and show our values in action every single day.



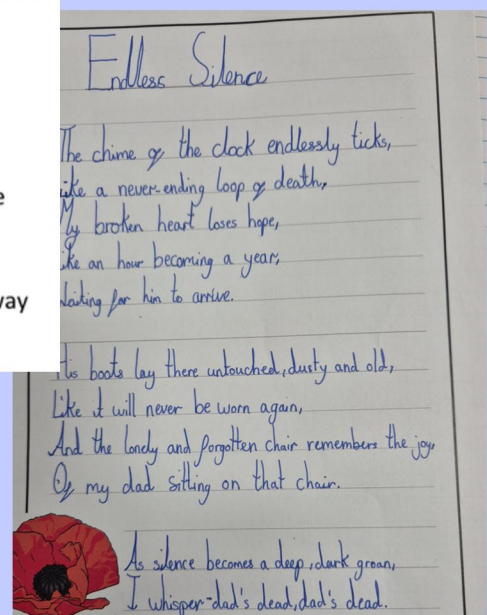
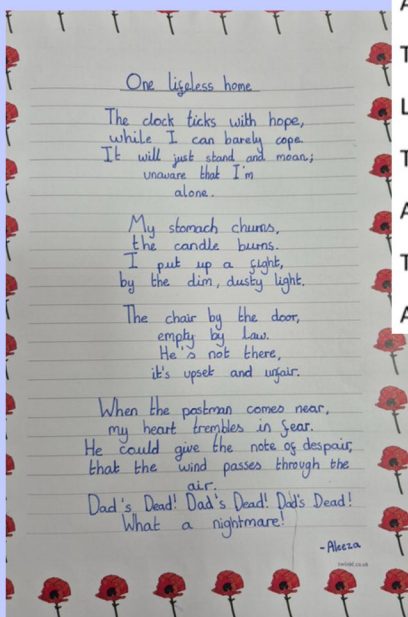
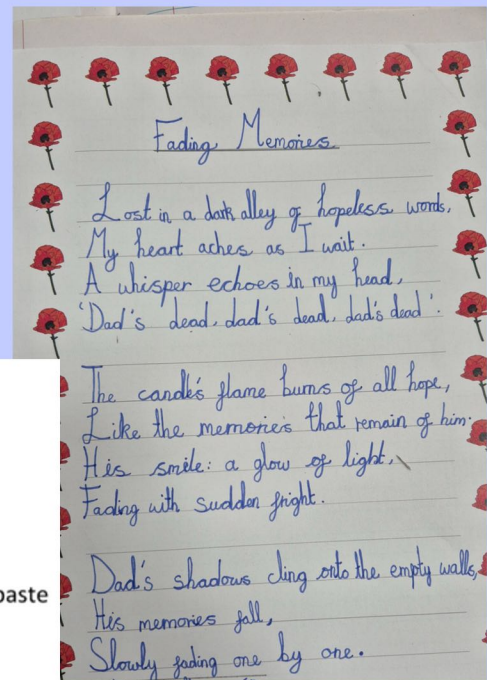
We would love you to talk with your child about how your family incorporates these values into daily life at home. Perhaps you could discuss a time when they showed resilience by not giving up on something difficult, or how they've been inclusive by including a sibling or friend in an activity. Sharing these conversations helps reinforce the important character traits we are nurturing together.

Year 6 Learning

Year 6 have been exploring the powerful text Stay Where You Are and Then Leave in Literacy. Inspired by the story, the children wrote thoughtful poems from the perspective of a child whose father has gone to fight in a war. Their writing shows real empathy, imagination and maturity as they explored feelings of fear, hope and love during difficult times.

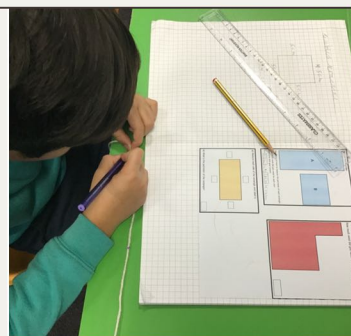
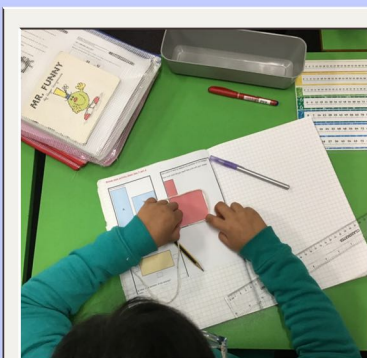
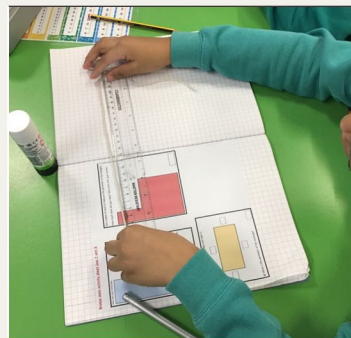


Trenches dug seven feet deep
A place which soldiers mostly weep
Many rats scurry on the ground
Where not much food can be found
The rain makes the ground's soil like paste
Where the soldiers see only waste
The ground made the soldiers fingers cold
As the ground still becomes mould
The sky makes an explosive boom
Leaving the soldiers life on doom
The soldiers wish for being back home
As they stay mostly alone
Their hope still waits as freedom is away
As they wait in the trenches to stay



Year 3 Learning

Year 3 enjoyed a hands-on maths lesson this week as they explored perimeter in a practical and engaging way. The children worked together to measure and calculate the distance around different shapes, using equipment to support their thinking. It was fantastic to see such great teamwork, focus and confidence as they applied their maths skills in a real, practical context.



Willow Tree 3 Learning

WT3 have been enjoying time in Art. The children have been creative, engaged and proud of their work, showing a positive attitude and enjoying the process of making and sharing their ideas.



Healthy Living - Hanks 7

Tentacle Challenge

Hank is a special kind of octopus as he only has 7 tentacles. Each one has a mind of its own – can you remember what they're all doing?

Players: 2 or more

Where to play? Indoors or outdoors

How to play

1. You and your friends are going to be like Hank's tentacles, so line up and hold hands.



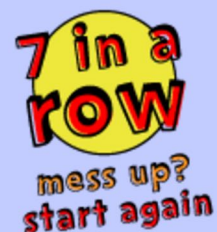
2. The first person shouts out a move, like "Jump!", then everyone does it together.



3. The next person repeats the move, then adds their own, like "Twist!". Everybody jumps then twists.



4. Keep repeating and adding moves – see if you can get to 7 in a row. If someone forgets a move or breaks the chain, then you have to start again.



Healthy Living - Chunky chicken and sweetcorn soup recipe

This creamy soup is easy to make and utterly delicious!

Prep: 15 mins

Cook: 25 mins

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 15g lower-fat spread
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 250g potatoes, scrubbed and chopped into small chunks
- 600ml reduced-salt vegetable stock
- 100g sweetcorn (fresh or tinned)
- 100g cooked chicken, chopped
- 300ml semi-skimmed milk
- 2 tablespoons cornflour, mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 4 wholemeal rolls (optional)



Method

1. Melt the spread in a large saucepan and gently cook the onion for 2 to 3 minutes, until starting to soften.
2. Add the potatoes and stock. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer, part-covered, for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
3. Add the sweetcorn (drained if tinned), milk and chicken, and cook gently for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring often.
4. Information: To ring the changes, next time use a leek instead of the onion, and frozen peas instead of sweetcorn. You could also try chopped cooked turkey instead of chicken – or if you like seafood, cooked peeled prawns (defrosted if frozen).
5. Add the cornflour mixture and stir until thickened. Add the parsley (if using) and cook for another few moments. Ladle into bowls and serve with the rolls, if having.

International Language of the Month – Hungarian



Facts about Hungary:

OFFICIAL NAME: Hungary

CAPITAL: Budapest

POPULATION: 9,825,704

MONETARY UNIT: Forint

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: Hungarian

AREA: 68,890 square kilometres

MAJOR MOUNTAIN RANGES: North Hungarian, Transdanubian

MAJOR RIVERS: Danube, Tisza, Drava, Raba

Hungarian is a unique language spoken mainly in Hungary.

People who speak it call it *Magyar*.

It belongs to a special group of languages called Uralic languages.

Other languages in this family include Finnish and Estonian.

Unlike most languages in Europe, Hungarian is not an Indo-European language.

However, it has borrowed many words. These words come from languages like Slavic, Turkic and German.

Around 13 million people speak Hungarian.

Most of them live in Hungary.

Another 1.5 million speakers live in Romania.

You can also find Hungarian speakers in Slovakia, Serbia (especially in a region called Vojvodina), and Ukraine. In some areas, like Vojvodina in Serbia and parts of Slovenia, Hungarian is also an official language.

Hungarian is one of the official languages of the European Union.

Hungarian grammar is quite different from languages like English.

One interesting thing is that Hungarian has no grammatical gender. This means there are no separate words for "he" or "she." Instead, there is one word, *ő*, that means both.

Szia! = Hi! / Bye! (informal, used with friends and family)

Sziasztok! = Hi, everyone! / Bye, everyone! (informal plural)

Jó napot! = Hello / Good day (more formal, for general public)

Kérem = Please (formal)

/ Kérlek (informal)

Köszönöm! = Thank you!

Igen = Yes

Nem = No

Elnézést! = Excuse me! / Sorry!

Szeretlek = I love you

Ölelés = Hug

Boldog = Happy

Szomorú = Sad



Upcoming workshops for children with SEND



GEMS

Autism & ADHD Support Service
East Berkshire



01753 373 244 / 0800 999 1342
weekdays 9am to 5pm



<https://www.gems4health.com>



gems.4health@nhs.net

GEMS works with parents and carers, sharing understanding of autism & ADHD and collaborating on strategies that respect each child or young person's ways of being in the home environment.

GEMS supports families living or has a registered GP in Slough, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

AuDHD - 7pm to 9pm
Tuesday 3rd February 2026

Autistic Burnout - 7:30 to 9:30pm
Wednesday 4th February 2026

Sleep - Autism and ADHD , 7-9pm
Wednesday 4th February 2026

Sensory Processing - 7 to 9pm
Tuesday 24th February 2026

Interoception - 7 to 9pm
Tuesday 3rd March 2026

Barriers to School, Can't Go, Not Won't Go - 10am to 12noon
Wednesday 25th March 2026

Visit our website to book your space - www.Gems4Health.com



Upcoming workshops for children with SEND

THE CONNECT COURSE

HOME
START
Berkshire East

A 5-week journey for parents whose children do **better** with routine, structure or extra support

Starting
24th FEB
12:30PM-
14:30PM

EVERY
TUESDAY
FOR JUST
5 WEEKS

What is The Connect Course?

A warm, supportive 5-week course for parents whose child is on the pathway to a diagnosis or who are raising a neurodivergent child or parents with children who need additional support to thrive.

You'll gain:

- Stronger, more connected relationships
- Healthier relationships between brothers and sisters
- Practical tools to lead with confidence and calm
- Confidence parenting a neurodivergent child in a world that often doesn't cater to their needs
- A safe space

WHERE?

Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Romsey Close, Langley SL3 8PE.

To learn more and register your space call 01753 572958

or email: office@homestartberkshireeast.org.uk

Parenting can feel isolating – you're not alone!

Join The Connect Course and find clarity, confidence, and community.



5 weekly sessions | Gentle guidance | Real connection

Promotional material around the fire service



Take part in a consultation on how your fire service is funded. The consultation closes at 9am on 2 February 2026. Please contact us for more information:

 rbfrs.co.uk/haveyoursay  precepting@rbfrs.co.uk  0118 945 2888

Upcoming workshops for children with SEND

online talk by Jane Keyworth



Supporting a Child with ADHD

Challenging the stereotypes, offering practical support and explaining more about this condition

3rd February 10-11:30am

3rd March 7-8:30pm



Book online

facefamilyadvice.co.uk

£24 or Free with a school membership code



FEBRUARY 2026 Timetable

All sessions delivered live online via zoom. 90 minutes long

£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours (excluding Free Talk)

Autism - Improving Communication	2 Feb 10am
Improving Family Communication	2 Feb 7pm
Supporting A Child with ADHD	3 Feb 10am
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	3 Feb 7pm
Anxiety Based School Avoidance	9 Feb 10am
Anxiety Explained	16 Feb 10am
Cannabis and Ketamine Awareness	16 Feb 7pm
What is ACT?	17 Feb 10am
Introduction to OCD	17 Feb 7pm
FREE - Reducing the Harm from Screens	19 Feb 7-8pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	23 Feb 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	23 Feb 7pm
Decreasing Depression	24 Feb 10am
Supporting Healthy Sleep	24 Feb 7pm
Understanding Anger	9 Mar 7pm
Facing Defiance	10 Mar 7pm

Slough Borough Council's offering of parent workshops



Growing a place of opportunity and ambition



Best Start Family Hubs

16th January 2026

Dear All,

Re: Parenting Programmes Staff Professional Development Opportunity

During the summer we launched a survey around the current offering for parenting programmes and support in Slough. Using the responses received and the impending Best Start in Life delivery expectations for local authorities, we have commissioned the Centre for Emotional Health to deliver training. The first round for professionals to be trained is proposed to be on the 3rd 4th 10th and 11th February. A further timeline of all training for professionals, community workers and the faith leaders will be shared shortly, with the aim to start the roll out of parenting workshops for under 5s in April from Best Start Family Hubs, then progressing with a planned programme in each locality in Slough.

The Centre for Emotional Health training programme is based on the evidence-based Nurturing Programme, it equips professionals to deliver courses that promote emotional well-being and positive relationships in families, schools, and workplaces. The core philosophy is that feelings drive behaviour, and developing self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and positive relationship skills is crucial for leading an emotionally healthy life.

Key Aspects of the Training Programme

The training is designed for practitioners (such as family support workers, teachers, and health visitors, early years, community, voluntary and faith sector) to become accredited Parent Group Leaders or facilitators, enabling them to run programmes for parents and other adults in various settings.

Core Programmes for Practitioners to Deliver

The Centre offers a range of specific training courses to equip practitioners to deliver the following programmes to parents and carers:

The Nurturing Programme (10 weeks): The core, universal programme for parents of children of all ages (particularly effective for ages 3-12), which aims to improve emotional health for both adults and children and strengthen family relationships.

Welcome to the World (8 or 5 weeks): An antenatal programme focusing on the emotional health of expectant parents and their baby, as well as the relationships between them.



UK Government

Slough Borough Council's offering of parent workshops



Growing a place of opportunity and ambition



Talking Teens (4 weeks): Focuses on improving family relationships and communication for parents of teenagers (ages 11-19).

Keeping Your Child in Mind (4 weeks): A programme for parents focusing on the impact of adult relationships and conflict on children.

Parenting Puzzle Workshops (various durations): Shorter workshops for parents of children under 5, focusing on areas like the power of play and positive discipline.

The ultimate goal is to create emotionally healthy environments that lead to improved self-esteem, resilience, better relationships, and positive outcomes for individuals and communities. The aim is to develop a sustainable delivery programme across Slough with partners committing to be part of a collective pool of trainers thus ensuring long term impact. If each organisation commits to training one member of staff over the next year, a planned and coordinated offer can be delivered through Family Hubs, schools and key community and faith venues.

I have attached some FAQ that I hope will answer any questions.

The only way to ensure a sustained long-term available programme for families is by joining together, delivering the help and support in the community, at the time of need. We look forward to working with you.

Please complete the expression of interest form using the QR code or clicking the link by Friday 23rd January. This will support us to plan the whole training calendar and offer places for the first training programme.



[Expression of Interest: Parenting Training – Fill in form](#)

Your sincerely,

MC Avis

Marie-Claire Avis
Head of Service Children's Centres and Family Hubs
Education and Inclusion



UK Government

Support group for parents of children with ASD/ADHD



GEMS

Autism & ADHD Support Service
East Berkshire

Virtual Coffee Morning Life events and changes

Friday 6th February

10:00 - 11:00am

**25 spaces
available!**

Join our online informal discussion.

What to expect?

A supportive coffee morning for parents/carers to discuss how they navigate big life events and transitions. From weddings and blending families, birthdays and proms, to school changes and deaths in the family and much more.

Please note this is not a workshop but support group for parent/carers and any medical advice should be sought from your medical practitioner.



Sign Up Today!

Available for families who reside in or have a registered GP in East Berkshire with a child who is Autistic/ADHD (suspected/awaiting assessment/diagnosed)

To book your place contact GEMS:



Gems.4Health@nhs.net



0800 999 1342