



Dear Parents and Carers,



We have had a fantastic 'Reading for Pleasure Week' filled with exciting activities to inspire a lifelong love of books! The children started the week with a special assembly where staff shared their favourite books and stories, sparking wonderful discussions and enthusiasm for reading.

On Tuesday, our Buddy Reading session saw children enjoying stories together, fostering a sense of community and shared enjoyment of literature. Yesterday, we celebrated World Book Day with a jam-packed schedule of events. A huge thank you to all the parents who joined us for our whole-school Parent Reading Morning—it was wonderful to see so many of you sharing the joy of books with the children. The children also had a special story time with different teachers and took part in our spectacular Vocabulary Parade, where they proudly showcased their imaginative and creative outfits inspired by words.



A special thank you to everyone who entered our Extreme Reading photo competition! We have loved seeing the unusual and creative places your children have been enjoying their books, from inside a wardrobe to reading while doing gymnastics, at the shops, on the stairs, and even in the bath!

Today, we rounded off our Reading for Pleasure Week with the exciting WBP Masked Reader quiz. The children have had great fun trying to guess which staff members were reading poems in disguise!

In other news, eight of our Year 5 and Year 6 girls attended the Charlton Athletic National Women's Day Event at Thamesmead Sporting Club, accompanied by Mrs Adeel and Mr Derenevsky. They had a fantastic time meeting girls from other local schools, taking part in workshops, and playing in a football tournament. Well done to all who participated!



Looking ahead to next week, children in Years 2-6 will be completing their spring term assessments in reading, writing, and maths. Teachers are also looking forward to meeting with parents during our upcoming Parents' Evenings to discuss your child's progress and next steps. Please remember to book your Parents' Evening appointment via Arbor if you haven't already.

Best wishes,
Mrs Oldfield and the Willow Bank Team



Year R

This week, the reception class has been focusing on a fun and engaging math activity where we practiced matching our number numerals to the correct amount of objects, up to 20. Using the classroom whiteboard and iPads, the children had the opportunity to explore numbers in an interactive way. They worked on identifying the number written as a numeral and then matched it with the corresponding quantity of objects. This activity not only helped them reinforce their understanding of numbers but also allowed them to develop important counting skills, visual recognition, and fine motor abilities. The use of technology, like iPads, made the learning experience even more engaging and dynamic, encouraging active participation from every child.



Year 1

In Year 1 we revisited how to stay safe online by learning about the importance of keeping personal information private, recognising trusted adults, and knowing what to do if they encounter something that makes them feel uncomfortable.

The children were then introduced to coding by learning the basics of giving clear instructions to a computer. They explored how commands are used to make something happen, such as moving a character in a game or drawing a shape. We then gave each other using instructions using voice record!



Year 2

In Year 2, children develop their understanding of algorithms by learning that they are sets of step-by-step instructions. They explore how to create and follow simple sequences, debug errors, and understand why precise instructions are important in coding.

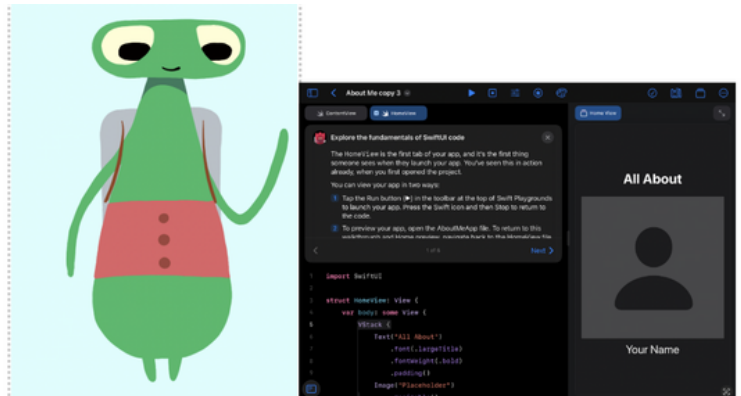
Activity
Can you walk a square of sides 3 steps?

Question 1: Why is the order of commands important in coding?

- a) It is not important at all
- b) It confuses the computer
- c) It makes the commands longer
- d) It helps the computer understand what to do

Year 3

This term, year 3 have started to explore the world of coding! They have been using the app Swift Playgrounds. Whilst using Swift, the children have started to learn the fundamentals of coding and the importance of checking their codes to ensure they work correctly.





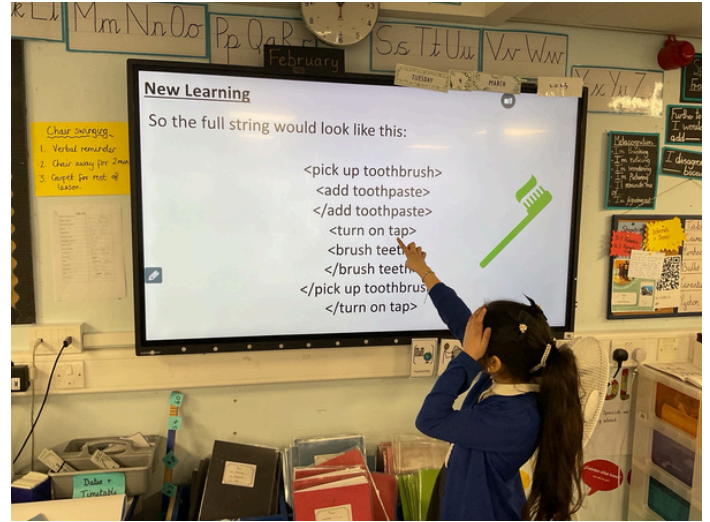
Year 4

This term, Year 4 has been exploring coding using Swift Playgrounds! The children have been developing their computational thinking skills by solving puzzles and creating simple programs.



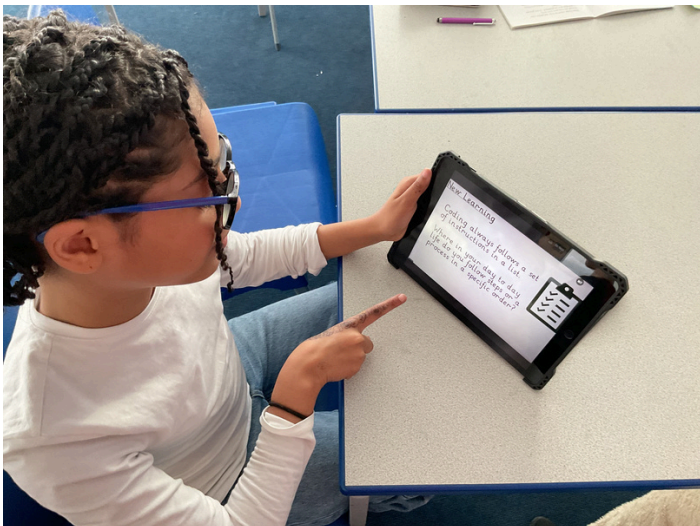
Year 5

In year 5 we are exploring HTML functions. This week we looked at a string of code and how to put it inside tags.



Year 6

Year 6 will be learning about HTML coding, reviewing previous concepts and creating and styling tables. We will also be having a workshop reminding children how to safe online and exploring the risks of social media.



OUR CORE VALUE FOR SPRING TERM 2 IS RESILIENCE





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 - 96%	★ Yew - 97%
★ Hornbeam - 97%	Redwood - 95%
	★ Almond - 96%
★ Hazel - 99%	★ Walnut - 99%
★ Larch - 96.5%	★ Sycamore - 96%

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 25th March at 9am.**

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

WELCOME TO GIRLS ON THE SPECTRUM - BEXLEY



Supporting Autistic Girls and their families throughout the diagnosis process and beyond.

We meet at St Johns Welling, every other week. We hold supportive, informative sessions for parent/carers and fun, social sessions for the girls.

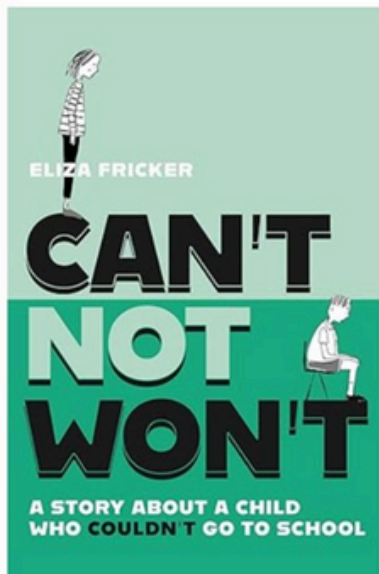
We've found that autistic girls mask so much but being around like minded girls really helps them to socialise and thrive.

www.facebook.com/groups/girlsonthespectrum
bexley

www.bexleynas.co.uk/gots Gotsbexley@gmail.com



Recommended Reads



Can't Not Won't by Eliza Fricker

A story about a child who couldn't go to school.

Can't Not Won't is a relatable and insightful book that helps parents feel seen when dealing with school avoidance. It highlights the challenges of navigating health, social, and educational systems. The book also includes guidance for parents and professionals on how to best manage school avoidance.

Mindful March 2025

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2 Notice three things you find beautiful in the outside world	3 Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive	4 Notice how you speak to yourself and choose to use kind words	5 Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them	6 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	7 Take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day
8 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture and smell of your food	9 Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others	10 Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face	11 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	12 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	13 Pause to watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today	14 Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that you do
15 Stop. Breathe. Notice. Repeat regularly	16 Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity	17 Look around and spot three things you find unusual or pleasant	18 Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels	19 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	20 Focus on what makes you and others happy today	21 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
22 Notice something that is going well, even if today feels difficult	23 Tune into your feelings, without judging or trying to change them	24 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	25 Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted	26 Choose to spend less time looking at screens today	27 Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are	28 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible
29 Choose a different route today and see what you notice	30 Mentally scan your body and notice what it is feeling	31 Discover the joy in the simple things of life				

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



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 USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, *Neuroteachers*, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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