

October 2024

Parent Update

Behaviour & Attitudes

*In a community of kindness where all belong:
be positive, be resilient, be creative*



Bitham Brook
Primary School

Contact us: admin@bithambrook.wilts.sch.uk
01373 859 172

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been a good start to the term. Children have typically settled very well into their new classes. All are working hard but I have to say that the **Year 6 classes** have stood out! Their care for one another has been excellent and they are showing growing determination to rise to the new learning challenges they face this year. They really are leading by example! A special mention must also go to the Reception children who are enjoying a very confident start to their Bitham Brook journey.



Year 6 are setting a great example to the other children!

Thank you to all of the parents who completed the **parents' survey**. The overall profile was very positive and encouraging. The vast majority of parents felt that their children were making good progress, were happy at school, and that children behave well. It was also pleasing to see that 92% of parents responding would recommend the school to other parents. The results of the survey can be found on the school website or by clicking on this [link](#).

Of course, it is always good to see the positive results and comments but the purpose of the survey is also to identify key areas where we could be even better. I think these survey results indicate that there is headroom for improvement with some aspects of behaviour. To put this in context, I have to start by saying that the behaviour at Bitham Brook is good and I have never worked with a group of children who are so caring. However, it is noticeable children are reported to feel safer and happier in their classrooms but less so around the school (see question 6).

To an extent this is to be expected. There are always some ups and downs in children's relationships and how they learn to resolve low level issues is a natural and important part of growing up. However, there are times when the excellent **self-control** children show in the classroom, is not shown by some when they are out and about the school. This is something that can also creep into online behaviour as children get older.

The children's explanation for this is straight forward. They simply say that they get excited about playtimes especially when they are on the field. Excitement is a healthy feeling and we want children to look forward to their social times together. However, when bigger issues do occur, over-excitement or a lack of self-control are often found at the start of the problem. The same issues also seem to occur on line. Knowing where the boundaries are, and knowing how to keep inside of them, is a key skill children need to learn to enjoy all aspects of school life.

The children's response to this thinking has been very encouraging. In whole school assemblies, phase assemblies and in our general conversations around the school, they are really reflecting on the need to independently show responsible and caring behaviour wherever they are and not only when they are with their teacher.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Simons – Headteacher

Contents

Page 1

- Message from the Headteacher

Page 2

- Fall in attendance at BBPS
- The school's response to the parent survey
- Phase Teams

Page 3:

- What does great behaviour look like at Bitham Brook?

Page 4:

- Class of the week
- How to seek help appropriately?

Attendance – the negative impact of holidays in term time

Last year our attendance was on par with the best in the country and we were consistently in the top 20% of schools. This year our attendance is **below** the average for Wiltshire schools. 131 Wiltshire schools have better attendance than Bitham Brook. We are in the bottom third of schools.

The main reason for this is parents taking children out of school for cheaper holidays. The picture here is even worse. Out of 192 Wiltshire schools, we are ranked 166th putting **Bitham Brook in the bottom 25% of schools** so this is a specific issue for our community.

This level of absence will reduce progress for all children. Each time a child is away, the gaps in their knowledge need to be filled, as well as possible, when the child returns. To put it simply, this takes teaching time away from the rest of the class.

Department for Education Attendance Monitoring

Attendance measure	Percentage	Ranking ^①
Overall attendance	96.4%	You are ranked 132 out of 192 schools
Overall absence	3.6%	You are ranked 132 out of 192 schools
Authorised absence	1.7%	You are ranked 79 out of 192 schools
Unauthorised absence	1.9%	You are ranked 166 out of 192 schools

The school's response to the parent survey

In light of the insight into behaviour provided by the parents' survey, we are working with the children to improve behaviour around school by:

- making sure that children who always behave well are lifted up as an example to others and ensuring that they get the praise, attention and kudos that they deserve ('the world seems to be upside down' with those doing the right thing all the time getting less attention than those that don't)
- making sure that all staff and children have a consistent understanding of what positive and helpful behaviour looks like at Bitham Brook Primary School
- making sure all children understand how developing these good habits of behaviour benefit themselves and others, and how they make Bitham Brook a great place to be
- providing parents with a simple aide memoire that exemplifies behaviour expectations at Bitham Brook (see below)
- strengthening the sense for each child that they are valued and belong by creating smaller 'teams' within the school, each with its own dedicated senior leader (see below)
- making sure that rewards and sanctions (where they are needed) are consistently applied by staff so that children are clear on expectations and boundaries
- focusing senior leadership capacity on ensuring the needs of all children are looked after along with those who may need extra help from time to time
- introducing a new class of the week award to encourage teamwork

The Governing Body are also planning to respond to the survey and discussions are taking place on how we can improve children's playtime experiences and the older toilet areas.

Phase Teams

We are aiming to increase children's sense of belonging and feeling individually valued even further. To do this, children will spend more time within their phases Each led by a senior leader and keeping staff within their phase as far as possible. We hope this consistency will give the children the sense of being part of a smaller team, where everyone knows each other well, even though we are quite a large school.

Mrs Leighton (Deputy Headteacher) will be the senior leader for the **Foundation Stage and the Kingfisher Room**. Mrs Hinder (Deputy Headteacher) will be the senior teacher leading **Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3**. Mrs Sampson (Assistant Headteacher) will be the senior teacher leading **Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6**. Mr Simons will be working across all the phases as needed. In the absence of the Headteacher, Mrs Leighton will be acting Headteacher on Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Thursdays and Fridays, Mrs Hinder will be acting Headteacher.

What does great behaviour look like at Bitham Brook?

At Bitham Brook, we want to recognise and celebrate the many children who respect their own and other children's:

- **right to learn without disruption**
- **right to feel happy and safe**
- **right to belong and feel valued**

To enable children to reflect on their behaviour, their successes and their growing maturity, we will encourage them to think about being self-responsible and caring for others. This will help children to develop the self-control to turn good intentions into habits of behaviour that serve them and others well. Every child who deserves it will be recognised. It is not a competition but a challenge which we want every child to meet.

Q. What does it mean to be self-responsible? Answer. Doing things that are good for me.

What does being self-responsible look like?

- Concentrates on learning in class
- Is on task but may have one or two minor reminders over the week
- Shows motivation and determination in their learning
- Is resilient in the face of difficulties with their work
- Looks after the school and environment
- Looks after them self, eating healthy foods, taking exercise and staying safe online
- No significant incidents at play times but may have one or two minor issues

Why is this good for me?

- My attitude to learning helps me to learn well
- I will have pride in my achievements and my work will typically be my best
- I will learn to overcome challenges but know when I need to seek help
- I will generally get on well with others
- I'll be looking after my diet, physical health and my well-being
- Others will trust me and enjoy my company
- My playtimes will be enjoyable

How will this be noticed?

- Children will be praised by teaching staff and senior teachers
- Every one of these children will be celebrated in an assembly each week
- Self-responsible children will be given a red headteacher's sticker so all know of their achievement
- Parents will know their child's achievements and be able to praise and encourage them

Q. What does it mean to be caring? Answer. Doing things that are good for me and other people.

What does being caring look like?

- Concentrates on learning in class and is always on task
- Shows very strong determination and resilience in their learning
- Always looks after the school environment
- Always lines up well and moves calmly around the school
- Often helps others and is always kind
- Sets a great example to others at all times including playtimes, dinner times, assemblies and when using the toilets

Why is this good for me and others?

- My attitude to learning will help me to make the best possible progress
- I will have pride in my achievements and work and know I have done my very best
- I will overcome more difficult challenges but still know when I need to seek help
- Others will always be able to learn well alongside me and find my company helpful
- Others will always trust me, feel relaxed with me and enjoy my company
- My playtimes will be enjoyable
- I'll be looking after my diet, physical health and my well-being
- I will be a role model to younger children and they will learn helpful behaviours from me

How will this be noticed?

- Children will be praised by teaching staff and senior teachers
- These children will be given the highest level of attention in an assembly each week
- Caring children will be given a gold headteacher's sticker so all know of their achievement
- Parents will know of their child's success and will be able to praise and encourage to keep up their high standard of behaviour



Most children consistently received the red sticker with some golds. A large group of children do earn a gold sticker every week or nearly every week. We aim to congratulate these children who are **always setting the best example** to others at the end of term.

Classes of the week – our first winners

Congratulations to Mr Perry's class and Miss Fry's class for being the first 'class of the week' winners!

Mrs Hinder chose Doves (Miss Fry's class) for their teamwork and always thinking about behaving in a way that is good for them and other people.

Mrs Sampson chose Owls (Mr Perry's class) for their calm, self-responsible behaviour during play and lunchtimes – particularly when it was 'wet play'.

Mrs Leighton has also given out some special awards to children in the Reception class who are helping other children to learn how to make the most of being in school.

The Headteacher's class of the week

Not to be left out, occasionally Mr Simons will choose his class of the week. Last week's award goes to Miss Gascoigne's class.

Mr Simons said, 'It was a privilege to join one of Miss Gascoigne's lessons last week. The children's concentration and teamwork was literally faultless. Every child was totally on task throughout and the class was a wonderful place to learn.'

How to seek help appropriately?

Has contacting the school changed?

No. The [Home-School Communication](#) Policy sets out how to get in contact with the right person if you have a question or need some help. The senior leader for each phase, or the most appropriate person will respond and get back to you.

Should parents who 'shout the loudest or the hardest' set school [policy](#) and practice?

No. As a school team, we are here to look after all of the children. Our school policies aim to ensure that all children learn to the best of their ability and are well looked after. From time to time, some children will need extra help or something will go wrong. School leaders will always use their professional expertise to support the needs of children within our school or resolve issues.

We will always listen to concerns but this does not mean we will always be able to agree with requested solutions. All children have a:

- **right to learn without disruption**
- **right to feel happy and safe**
- **right to belong and feel valued**

Resources are limited and have to be used fairly and legally. For example, we would not agree to a child being exempt from our behaviour policy including the sanctions. This could have a very negative impact on other children. Nor would we agree to making changes that stop other children from learning or having the help they need.

However, what we can promise you is that we will always try to work in the best interests of the child and all the children without '**without fear or favour**', using the resources we have as well as we can.