



# Westhouses Primary School Spring 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

It may have been wet this term, but we didn't let that dampen our spirits! Despite the incessant rain, we didn't have too many wet playtimes, so thank you to you for ensuring that the children came with wet weather gear. Thank you also to the intrepid staff who weathered the weather!

You will have noticed that the new outdoor EYFS area is nearly complete. However, the tarmac resurfacing needs attention as water was pooling in a couple of areas. The company is coming to remedy this during the first week back and then it will need leaving for a few weeks before the painted track can be added ... we will have the grand opening when everything is complete.

Have a wonderful half term break and let's all hope the sun makes an appearance!



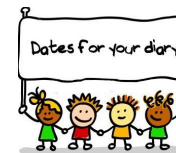
## ATTENDANCE

From September 2025

Little Explorers:	~	95.6%
Big Explorers:	~	97.3%
Pioneers	~	95.5%
Philosophers:	~	96%
Trailblazers:	~	96.4%
<b>Total Attendance:</b>		<b>96.2%</b>

**Attendance target is 97%.**

*Moments Matter, Attendance Counts*



Monday 23rd February	Back to school
Tuesday 24th February	Re-tarmacking of EYFS area
Wednesday 4th March	World Book Day celebration
Monday 9th March	Science Week Y5/6 Building Bridges Project—Tibshelf Community School reading mentors to visit
Tuesday 10th March	Valley CIDs assembly
Wednesday 11th March	Welcome Wednesday for Y1
Thursday 12th March	Wellbeing Workshop for Y5 Dental Nurse in for Reception and Y1 children
Monday 16th March	Pupil Parliament at Blackwell Primary School: focus on mental wellbeing
Thursday 19th March	Wellbeing Workshop for Y5 SEND parents Networking meeting
Friday 20th March	Holocaust Centre trip for Trailblazers KS1 Dance Festival at Tibshelf Community School
Monday 23rd March	Resource Management Committee meeting 4pm
Tuesday 24th March	Teaching and Learning Committee meeting  Parents' Evening for Explorers
Wednesday 25th March	Parents' Evening
Thursday 26th March	Wellbeing Workshop for Y5 Parents' Evening
Friday 27th March	Break up

## SEND Parents Networking meeting

Date: 19.03.26  
Venue: The Cabin  
Focus: relationship and sex education.  
The school nurse should also be attending for more general enquiries.  
Coffee and biscuits provided.



## Explorers

Last week we started our Outdoor Learning sessions. We had lots of fun creating a big den and getting inside it. We enjoyed splashing in puddles, exploring nature and collecting leaves.



We had a visit from a

dentist to find out about brushing our teeth properly. We had a practise brushing teeth on the model. We knew lots of foods and drinks that were good for our teeth.

In Music, we have tried playing the glockenspiels. We followed the instructions on the screen to play in time to the music. Well done everyone!



## Pioneers

Pioneers have been so busy this half term learning about the seasons and weather. They enjoyed making rain gauges and using them to track the rainfall. In science, they wrote beautiful sense poems to describe winter and were able to confidently explain the changes that take place in each season. Computing has been super fun, as we love getting the Beebots out and learning how to read algorithms and use them to code the bot. P.E. has been a blast this half term! We have thoroughly enjoyed exploring Alice in Wonderland by the Royal Ballet: we have been creating some excellent motifs in character as Alice, the Madhatter and the Queen of Hearts. In Art, we have thoroughly enjoyed our collage topic and have mixed paints to create our own textured papers to collage with! It became a mixed media piece as we used tissue paper and acrylic markers to complete our fish and final decorations! They were superb!





## Philosophers

In Philosophers' Class this half term, we have been busy with lots of exciting learning across the curriculum.

In History, we have been learning about Ancient Greece. The children have loved exploring Greek myths and legends, finding out about the Olympic Games, and using different sources to learn what life was like during this time. Acting out some of the myths in class was a highlight!

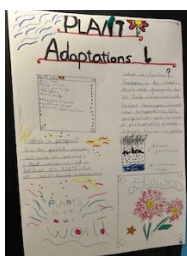
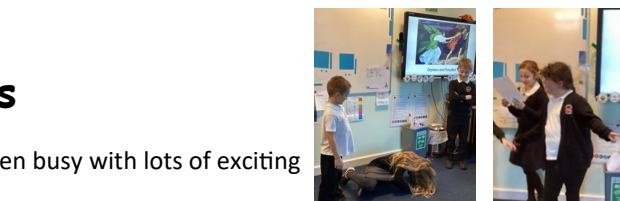
In Science, we have been learning about Living Things and Conservation. The children showed great interest when exploring air and water pollution and enjoyed discussing the ways we can all help to look after our environment.

In English, the children wrote sequels to *Frindleswylde*. I have been so impressed by the children's creativity, enthusiasm and use of descriptive language.

French lessons have been great fun as we've practised counting to 12 and learnt the catchy song "1, 2, 3, nous irons au bois."

In DT, the children designed and made their own pneumatic toys and were very proud of what they created.

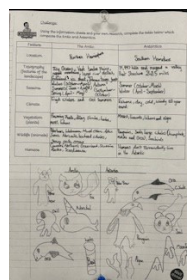
Well done to everyone in Philosophers' Class for their continued hard work and positive attitude to learning this half term — I am very proud of them all!



## Trailblazers

Trailblazers have had another amazing half term. Here are just a few highlights. We started our topic 'Frozen Kingdom' imagining life in the polar regions having an ice lolly in January to help! Within this topic,

we have learnt about these extreme locations; how plants and animals adapt as well as people. Did you know that Antarctica is probably the most expensive place to buy Coke Cola?! We have also been thinking about global warming and thinking of little changes we can make to make a difference to our planet. Within English we have been learning about historical issues through the books: 'Freedom Bird' and 'Stonewall' Yet again we have been wowed by the children's work. The Year 6's are pushing themselves every week with our SATs preparations and working hard. Looking forward to next half term.



## Sports and PE:

This half term our Year 5 and 6 basketball team took part in a competition at Frederick Gents School. The matches were 4 v 4, meaning that the players had to run their legs off to attack and defend! Throughout the matches we gained more and more confidence, scoring some great baskets! The spirit of the games award was presented to Alice for showing tremendous grit and determination, whilst continuing to be a great team player.

Our Year 1 and 2 pupils represented our school by taking part in the Infant Agility event hosted by Bolsover School Sport Partnership. The children participated in a number of activities involving running, jumping, balancing and working as a team. Congratulations to Mrs. Ramsdale's team who came third overall!

We have begun a new dance unit of learning. Our theme is Alice in Wonderland from the Royal Ballet and Opera House. It has been wonderful to see staff and pupils throw themselves into dance whole-heartedly. The children have been extremely creative and imaginative. Mrs Green gets the prize for the best tutu!

We have seen great progression in swimming skills this half-term. Well done to all swimmers, keep it up! Thank you for supporting your child's swimming.

## Pupil Voice:

The Arts Ambassadors have had a busy half term. They have been exploring the artist Diane Bleck and making some beautiful and bold paintings. Using the skills they have learned, the Ambassadors hosted an Arts Take Over week in the Station House! Each day on the last week of term, the Ambassadors set up a Valentines' art station that the whole school could access during their play! Many children were able to make a bold and beautiful love heart using paint sticks and pastels supported by the ambassadors. Well done for hosting such a brilliant week and for leading an arts project in our school.



## Online Safety

Our online safety focus for this half term was: Online Relationships and Reputation

Our focus for next half term is: Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyle

Please make sure you talk to your children about their online experiences.

**What Parents & carers Need to Know about VIRTUAL REALITY**

Virtual reality (VR) for entertainment has existed for decades, but it's only in the last 10 years that the technology has really become available for consumers. VR is a type of computer-generated simulation that allows users to interact with a virtual environment. It's a type of computer-generated simulation that allows users to interact with a virtual environment. It's a type of computer-generated simulation that allows users to interact with a virtual environment.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

**PREMATURE EXPOSURE** (13+)  
While VR has many benefits, it's also important to be aware of the risks. Children under 13 should not use VR. This is because their brains are still developing and they are more susceptible to motion sickness and other side effects. It's also important to be aware of the risks of social VR, which can be used to interact with other people in a virtual world. This can be a great way to connect with friends, but it can also be a place where children can be bullied or harassed.

**EYE STRAIN**  
VR can cause eye strain, which is a common side effect. This is because the eyes are forced to focus on a virtual world that is not real. This can cause eye fatigue, dry eyes, and blurred vision. It's important to take breaks from VR and to use eye drops if needed.

**PHYSICAL ACCIDENTS**  
VR can cause physical accidents, such as tripping or falling. This is because users are often unaware of their surroundings while wearing a VR headset. It's important to be aware of the risks and to take precautions, such as clearing a path and using a safe area.

**SOCIAL VR**  
VR can be used to interact with other people in a virtual world. This can be a great way to connect with friends, but it can also be a place where children can be bullied or harassed. It's important to be aware of the risks and to take precautions, such as not sharing personal information and reporting any inappropriate behavior.

**MOTION SICKNESS**  
VR can cause motion sickness, which is a common side effect. This is because the brain is confused by the virtual world and the real world. This can cause nausea, dizziness, and headaches. It's important to take breaks from VR and to use anti-nausea medication if needed.

**VIOLENT CONTENT**  
VR can contain violent content, which can be disturbing for children. This is because VR is a very immersive experience and it can be easy to get lost in the virtual world. It's important to be aware of the risks and to choose age-appropriate content.

**Advice for Parents & Carers**

**START OFF SLOWLY**  
If your child is new to VR, start with short sessions and gradually increase the time. This will help them get used to the experience and reduce the risk of motion sickness.

**NO SURPRISES**  
Don't let your child use VR without your supervision. This is because you need to be aware of the risks and to take precautions. It's also important to be aware of the risks of social VR, which can be used to interact with other people in a virtual world.

**ANTI-NAUSEA OPTIONS**  
If your child experiences motion sickness, there are several options available. These include taking anti-nausea medication, using acupressure wristbands, and taking breaks from VR.

**RESEARCH CONTENT**  
Before your child uses VR, research the content they will be using. This will help you to be aware of the risks and to choose age-appropriate content.

**Meet Our Expert**  
We've asked Dr. Sarah-Jane Blain, a leading expert in VR, for her top tips on how to keep your child safe while using VR. She says that the most important thing is to be aware of the risks and to take precautions. This includes clearing a path, using a safe area, and not sharing personal information.

**National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

www.nationonline.com @nationonline

## A Few Words From The Governing Board

The full board met at the end of January to both hear from our very productive team and plan. We welcomed newly elected parent governors further strengthening our team and we thank them for their time and energy. Welcome also to our exciting new play area! The EYFS playground is almost at the end of a massive makeover! We've even added special aspects, so the children can play outside even when the British weather is doing its worst. We heard about how staff are improving lessons with teachers receiving extra training in gymnastics and dance; our RE and music plans have been refreshed to keep our standards high. Our new digital safeguarding system is now embedded and will help us continue to keep every child safe. The governors enjoyed hearing about the new 'Aye up me duck' Fridays - a great way to respect how every child communicates and enable every child to speak and write effectively. I hope that the half term break is restful for you ahead of no doubt, a busy spring for Westhouses. (Simon Taylor, on behalf of the board of governors.)

## Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

There is clear evidence to show that days off school impact on your child's attainment and progress.

365 days in each year	175 non school days a year <span style="float: right;">→</span>				To spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments
	190 school days in each year	12 days ab- sence			
		178 days of education	19 days ab- sence		
			171 days of education	29 days ab- sence Half term missed	
		161 days of education	38 days ab- sence	152 days of education	
100% to 95%	94%	90%	85%	80%	
GOOD Best chance of success.	WORRYING Less chance of success		SERIOUS CONCERN Not fair on your child Possible legal action		