Westhouses Primary School

Newsletter

Spring 1 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a very special half term particularly because we started our new nursery provision in EYFS. The children have settled in beautifully and it's like they've been coming for months. Well done to our littlest Explorers!

To accommodate her young family, Mrs Coupe has decided to reduce her work days to Wed, Thurs, Fri from April. We have appointed Mrs Laura Gregg, another local Early Years teacher, to work in parallel with Mrs Coupe on Mon and Tues. This will begin after the Easter break. Mrs Gregg has over 10 years experience in a similar class nearby and has worked with Mrs Hardy previously. She and Mrs Coupe have also worked together through cluster networking events. We are confident that this transition will be a smooth one, with Mrs Gregg visiting in the next half term to get to know the school, staff and pupils. If you have any further questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask.

We would also like to officially welcome Alison Edwards, our new school cook, who started this week. The dinners have been delicious so far with positive feedback from the children.

ATTENDANCE

From September 2024

Little Explorers:	-	95%
Big Explorers	-	94.8%
Philosophers:	-	96.4%
Trailblazers:	-	96.3%

Total Attendance: 95.9%

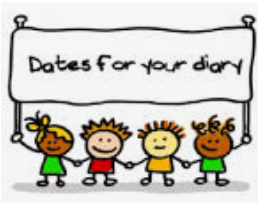
Attendance target is 97%.

Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

INSET DAYS 2025/2026

Provisional dates as follows:
Thursday 4th September
Friday 5th September
Monday 5th January

Two further dates will be confirmed later in the year.



Key Dates

Friday 14th February	Break up
Monday 24th February	Back to school
Thursday 27th February	Maths workshops for parents
Tuesday 4th March	Valley CIDS assembly
Wednesday 5th March	World Book Day
Thursday 6th March	SEND support meeting for parents
Tuesday 11th March	Wellbeing workshops for Big Explorers
Wednesday 12th March	Welcome Wednesday for Y2 parents
Friday 14th March	Science Fair for parents
Friday 21st March	Red Nose Day— non-uniform day (minimum £1 donation) Explorers' Music and Dance Performance
Monday 24th March	4pm Resource Management Committee Meeting
Tuesday 25th March	Managing Worries Workshop for Trailblazers with the school nurse Teaching and Learning Committee meeting
Tuesday 1st April	Parents' Evening Pre-loved sale (FOW event)
Wednesday 2nd April	Parents' Evening Pre-loved sale (FOW event)
Thursday 3rd April	Egg Hunt
Friday 4th April	Break Up

Little Explorers

This half-term has been a very exciting one as we have welcomed our first ever Nursery pupils to our Early Years class. They have settled in brilliantly and have thoroughly enjoyed getting involved in all activities and aspects of school life.

We have been learning about people who help us, including who can help in an emergency. We have learned about jobs in the past and present and how jobs have changed over time. We have also been learning about our own talents and goals.

We have also enjoyed learning about Lunar New Year. We found out how it is celebrated and made our own dragon for a carnival dance. We loved playing instruments and dancing with ribbons alongside the dragon. It was great fun!

Big Explorers

Big Explorers have had a fantastic time learning about Tremendous China! We loved pretending to go to a Chinese restaurant and tasting lots of different Chinese food. Although, it was a little tricky to try and eat using chopsticks!

We have had a fantastic time in English too! We've been learning about how to write news reports and had to go on a pretend trip to a theatre! We had a grand time reporting on the amazing performance we saw of a bear on the piano!

In maths, I have been so impressed with how hard the children worked when using tens and ones apparatus to add and subtract. It has been super tricky to learn this new skill, but all of the children have shown great resilience and perseverance! What a super busy term! Well done, Big Explorers.

Philosophers

I have had a very warm welcome from the Philosophers this half term and I'm delighted to have joined such a vibrant and positive classroom environment. The children have been helpful in showing me their routines whilst also embracing some new ones and I've been blown away by their excellent attitudes towards their learning.

In Science, we've carried out investigations and experiments to learn more about the properties of rocks, which has also supported our learning about volcanoes and earthquakes in Geography.

The children have displayed great teamwork whilst researching the Empire Windrush in English and they produced some very impressive writing during this unit, based on the book *'Granny Came Here on the Empire Windrush'.*

Additionally, our music lessons on Wednesdays have been a real highlight. To help me learn the flute alongside them, they have been giving me lots of top tips!

Trailblazers

Trailblazers have been learning all about 'Brilliant Britain' this half term. In Georgraphy, we have been exploring different types of maps and conducting research into our local area. The children produced some brilliant pieces of writing about Blackwell Parish and found out lots of interesting information about the history surrounding us. In English, we have been learning all about the Suffragettes, the children have written persuasive letters to the Prime Minister and a recount about the day two women stormed into a parliamentary meeting and wanted answers! In art, we've been creating floral paintings using a range of media. In our final week, we were able to chose our favourite and create our own floral design. It's also been Internet Safety Day this half term, we invited the parents in and ran different activities throughout the day exploring all things surrounding online safety.

Artwork by Amelie

Artwork by Indi

Online Safety

Our online safety focus for this half term was **Online Relationships and Online Reputation.** Our focus for next half term is **Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyle**.

Thank you to all of the parents who were able to join their children in class for part of our Online Safety Week followed by the parent workshop. We hope it was a helpful conversation starter with your child and that we were able to offer some useful information and suggestions of how to navigate parenting in an online world.

Please click on the link for further information about keeping your children safe online https://www.westhouses.derbyshire.sch.uk/online-safety-parents/

Also if you need advice about setting parental controls on your devices at home, please contact the office and we can book Dave Holland, out IT technician, to come into school to walk you through it.

PE:

This half-term our Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in the local schools Basketball competition. The matches were played in 4 quarters with boys v boys and girls v girls. All of our children put in maximum effort showing passion, determination and great teamwork. It was a very challenging competition and our team came third. The spirit of the games award was presented to Indi for resilience and bounceback-ability.

Last week our Big Explorers took part in the KS1 Infant Agility event. This year's theme was Aladdin! They participated in many different activities in which they earned jewels for the team. Everyone participated brilliantly and tried their best.

The children have been asked to give their opinions on playtimes and plans are in place to follow some of the children's suggestions. Some of the play equipment they requested has already been delivered and should appeal to a range of interests.

Community

A huge thank you to Pam Stocks for coming into school to work with our Arts Ambassadors and Mrs Ramsdale to teach them how to use our new geli printing resources. I'm not sure who was more excited—the children or Mrs Ramsdale?! The ambassadors are going to hone their skills before inviting their parents in for a demonstration. Once they are confident they plan to run a take-over day to teach the rest of the school!

Governors

The full Board of Governors met on 28th January. We I recognised at our meeting how busy an academic year this has already been. We have welcomed lots of new people to Westhouses Primary School, including most recently, our new Cook—Alison Edwards

Last term we also recruited two new nursery teaching assistants, Mrs Hardy and Mrs Eley-Jones. They both are bringing great experience and enthusiasm to our EYFS setting. Governor visits to our new nursery are planned for the next term to experience how the new setting is thriving.

Also a slightly belated welcome to Mrs McGuire, who is now well-established as classroom teacher for Philosophers.

At the board meeting, we also heard about the enthusiasm that new parent members are bringing to the Friends of Westhouses (FOW). Ever-due are ongoing thanks to fellow Governor Pam Stocks, who has ensured FOW has thrived over the years. We also thank all those who have recently brought new energies to the events and fundraising of the group.

I hope your year has started well and that the half-term break is restful ahead of no doubt, a busy spring for Westhouses.

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 →			To spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments	
	190 school days in each year	12 days absence			
		178 days of education	19 days absence		
			171 days of education	29 days absence Half term missed	
				161 days of education	38 days absence
					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	