

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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A very Happy New Year to all our children, families and staff. The children have settled back into their routines really quickly and are busy finding out about the exciting challenges and topics they will cover this term. On Wednesday, we were pleased to welcome some consultant staff from the LA to school and they were extremely complimentary about many aspects of school life, especially the behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning. One lady described Westfield as “one of the calmest schools she had ever visited.”

Mrs Hickey

New Year Challenge

As part of our work on British values and our social, moral and cultural curriculum, we constantly encourage pupils to be respectful of one another and develop a sense of support for one another and those in the wider and global community. This year the children have been set a New Year Challenge. During assembly on Tuesday, we discussed showing appreciation and gratitude towards others and how this develops a sense of team, belonging and encourages us to think of how we can help others. We have introduced our Tree of Gratitude and staff and pupils have been challenged to show appreciation for one another by placing “leaves” on the tree to acknowledge when someone goes out of their way to show kindness and consideration. Congratulations to Gabrielle in Y4, who was the very first person to be mentioned. Let’s hope the tree starts to “blossom” in the coming days and weeks.



Staffing Changes

This term we are delighted to welcome Mr Dusher, our new caretaker, to the staff team. I am sure that many of you have already seen Mr Dusher at the start and end of the day and he is busy finding his way around the site and getting to know both staff and children. We are also delighted to welcome Ms Sharp, who joins our brilliant team of support staff and will be supporting Y5 during the morning sessions.

As Winter approaches we would like to remind parents of our procedures regarding potential school closures during severe weather. The decision to close the school is never taken lightly. We will always endeavor to make a closure decision as early as possible. If possible, parents will be informed via the school text message service. However, parents should also ensure that they check the school Twitter account and website and listen for announcements on BBC Radio Humberside and Viking Radio.

Please be assured that we will always endeavour to keep school open and will only close for health and safety reasons.

The above information will be a constant newsletter item during the winter months.



How can I support and encourage reading at home?

The above question is one which we are frequently asked in school, we hope the following information may help:

Some children love to read—in fact, it can be hard to tear a book out of their hands. But it can be difficult to motivate a child who doesn't love to read. It may even seem impossible. But it doesn't have to be. Children who are motivated to read will actively seek out books to enjoy and are happy reading quietly by themselves. Research confirms that motivation is a key factor in becoming a successful reader. When children are motivated, they read frequently, which in turn helps them become skillful readers. And children who are skillful readers learn well and deeply and successfully. However, for reluctant readers it may take a lot of extra cajoling and a bit of creativity to convince them to spend time reading. And it may take even more effort to help them enjoy reading. There are many reasons why children might not enjoy reading. But before you can work on motivating your child, it helps if you understand why they resist reading in the first place.

Does your child fit into one of these categories?

“Reading is hard!”

Most people don't choose hard work as a leisure activity, and that's true for reading too. A child who has to work at reading is not likely to find reading fun. Does your child have issues with fluency, or have gaps in their phonic knowledge? Maybe they are struggling because they are guessing at words or haven't developed strong vocabulary skills. If your child feels that reading is too much work, try to begin by identifying and addressing the areas of weakness. As they become a better reader, they will grow to enjoy reading much more. Reading takes much more patience than the relative ease of watching television and playing video games. Limiting “screen time” may increase a child's interest in reading.

“Reading is boring!”

For some children, reading isn't hard, but it isn't fun either. But it may be that they just haven't found reading material that motivates them. So think about what your child loves to do. Do they have a hobby or special area of interest? Do they like dinosaurs? Do they like gymnastics? By finding reading material that piques their interest and draws them into reading, you're giving your child a motivational boost that can propel them to increased enthusiasm for books.

More Tips to Help You Motivate a Reluctant Reader

- Make time for reading. If you and your children have jam-packed schedules and reading is shoved between gymnastics and Brownies, reading may seem like an unwelcome chore. Allow reading to be a relaxing and enjoyable time.
- Set aside a regular read-aloud time with your children. Reading aloud helps your child develop an interest in reading.
- Choose a variety of high quality literature that appeals to your child's age and interests. Don't abandon read-aloud time when your children get older—even teenagers love being read to. Don't forget about audio books, either; they can offer another great option for a reluctant reader.
- Create a cozy reading nook for your child. A special reading space may be all the encouragement your child needs to settle down and spend time with a good book!
- Make sure the reading material isn't beyond your child's reading abilities. The interest may be there, but if the book is hard to read, your child's motivation will wane.
- Look for a variety of reading material. Children often gravitate toward the fiction shelves in the library, but don't stop there. There are many other genres to consider. Picture books—even for older children—can be sentimental favourites. Joke books, cookbooks, how-to books, graphic novels, and biographies are all great non-fiction possibilities and children's magazines can be a great “out-of-the-box” way to encourage a child to read.
- Have your reluctant reader read easy picture books to younger siblings. This provides excellent practice yet it doesn't feel like work.
- Try buddy reading with your struggling reader. Buddy reading can help improve a child's fluency by making them feel more comfortable with reading on their own.
- Let humor work its magic! Select a funny book at your child's reading level and read the first chapter aloud. Then stop reading. If your child wants to find out what happens next, they'll have to read it for themselves!
- Exhibit a love of reading. When your children observe that you love to read, they will likely develop a love of reading themselves.
- Provide access to books. Use your public library. Create a home library. Keep books accessible. When your child decides they want to read, you want to be sure there's a book at their fingertips!

Diary dates— Spring term

Wednesday 16th January	Y2 Scooter training
Wednesday 23rd January	EYFS / KS1 Dance workshops
Monday 28th January	Y3, Y4, Y5 Dance workshops
Friday 15th February	School closes—Half term holiday
Monday 25th February	School reopens
Friday 15th March	WSA disco
Monday 25th March	Y4 swimming starts (10 week course)

