

Westbrook Lane Newsletter

Spring term review



I think it is safe to say that spring term 2020 was one of the most unusual I've ever experienced in over 25 years of teaching. It is thanks to the support of the parents, staff and governors that we have



continued to work to the best of our ability and with almost all staff in school throughout the lockdown. Dealing with last minute announcements made by the government has definitely had its challenges when trying to support parents and pupils and staff! However, I feel we have been very fortunate to have received so much positive feedback from parents - particularly when families have been facing such difficult times themselves.

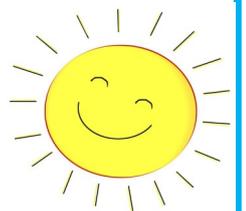
It has been a balancing act for teachers when setting work for home learning: some parents have been under enormous pressure just sorting childcare and managing children being at home all day; others have wanted extra work as they have the capacity to do more home schooling. I know some parents have felt obliged to complete school work for several hours every day, doing a million engaging, educationally challenging activities involving long division, accurate use of semi-colons, and a high degree of understanding of the social context of the periods when England was invaded - what *did* the Romans ever do for us? However, as a parent myself, I understand the challenges of working full-time and trying to engage children in home learning, and, as I have said in countless emails and letters, we have to be kind to ourselves. Our first priority continues to be a focus on wellbeing - our children's and our own ... and to avoid the unrealistic expectations often posted on social media.

We have had some wonderful emails, photos and videos of how families have been spending their time together, and Mr Hooson has done a great job of updating the website with examples of what you have achieved at home. The staff have also commented on how interesting it is getting your class emails, so keep them coming for the rest of term.



Looking ahead to summer and beyond

Many people are beginning to ask about the summer holidays and our plans for September. School will be closed for the duration of the holidays due to major building work (see over for more details). Don't forget, we break up on Friday 17th July.



With regards to the autumn term, at this point in time, the government has said that it is their intention for all children to be back in school in September. Obviously, this is subject to change by the government, and we can only plan with what we know. However, as soon as we get more information, we will let parents know.



In the meantime, we will plan for children to be back in September. We are aware that children will come back into school with a wide range of different experiences of life during the pandemic and lockdown. Therefore, there will be a wide range of needs, both academic and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) wise. Parents should be reassured that staff will focus on assessing children's individual needs, and we will work closely with families to provide a supportive transition back into school.

Staff changes



Mrs Gibbons will be starting her maternity leave in September, and we are pleased to announce that Miss Hutchinson will be teaching Reception class in her absence. Miss Hutchinson, who had a placement with the current Reception class this year, has already been working in school during the last term. She is also working closely with Mrs Gibbons and the early years team planning for September.



We are also saying goodbye to Mrs McKenzie who worked with us this year on a fixed-term contract. She has supported children from many different classes throughout the year; we thank her for her hard work and wish her all the best.

And finally, after 29 years of working at Westbrook Lane Primary School, Mr Walsh will be retiring at the beginning of September. Mr Walsh has seen many staff and pupils come and go since he started as superintendent in June 1991. He has survived many years of staff playing footloose and fancy free with glitter and their almost reckless use of clay! He has kept us clear of snow every year, and even put up with me and Mrs Bourke directing him when putting up the infamous blue backdrop for all the concerts!

Mr Walsh was due to retire in June; however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are unable to go through the usual recruitment process, so he agreed to put back his retirement to support us through the pandemic. I am sure you will join us in thanking him for his hard work over the years, and in wishing him all the very best in his retirement.

Class teachers for September 2020

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes			
Reception Miss Hutchinson until Easter 2021 Mrs Gibbons from Easter 2021	Year 1 Mrs Murphy and Mrs Hopkins	Year 2 Mr Campleman	

Key Stage 2 classes			
Year 3 Miss Woollven	Year 4 Mr Hooson	Year 5 Miss Hall	Year 6 Mrs Bourke

Building work over the summer holidays

School will be closed for the duration of the summer break. For the second year in a row, we are having major building work to improve the school premises. This year, we are having our heating system replaced - our second project funded by Leeds City Council. The heating system and air handling units have been in situ for many years, and it is now no longer financially viable to continue with repairs. Over the summer these will all be removed from the building and replaced with a modern - and more economical - system. We have been waiting several years to get a new system installed so we are looking forward to the completion of this project... and not having to wear coats, hats and gloves inside next winter!

And finally ... please keep checking your emails, and the website and Twitter feed, for updates on the next phase of school opening. I thank you for all your support and patience during the pandemic; it has been a challenging time for everyone, and I feel very fortunate that we have been able to keep the school open throughout, albeit with reduced numbers. I have enjoyed the emails, photos and videos that have been sent in by you all and I am impressed with the wonderful ways you have kept yourselves busy during lockdown. I will be sending out a letter, before we break up, about end of year reports and by then we may even have updates about September. Until that time, stay safe and have a relaxing summer.