



Newsletter

September 2020

A place to
SMILE

Dear Parents/Carers,

I can't tell you how good it feels today be writing one of my usual half termly newsletters this week—the first I have produced since February! I can't promise that there will be no mention of Covid or health and safety, but it's lovely to be able to share some other news and information today as well! The return to school has been tiring for staff and children alike, but hopefully we are all benefiting from the return to a daily routine and some sort of normality.

I'd like to welcome our new families whose children have just joined YR, as well as those who have joined further up the school. We hope you and your child will enjoy becoming part of the WPS community. We are so pleased with the way the new children have settled in to school. We know that it's a little harder for us to get to know parents at present, but if you have a questions or concerns, feel free to email. Our home-school link worker, Mrs Bevan, is also on duty outside the office gate most mornings so feel free to let her know if you have any worries or concerns about your child.

There will be a set of diary dates coming out soon, although it will be a bit thinner than usual! We are recommencing our local trips, risk assessed for the current situation, and we will be having some individual visitors into school for class bubbles to enhance the curriculum where we can do so within our risk assessment. However, we will be making decisions about some of our other events and activities nearer the time, dependent on the latest guidance.

We have been really pleased to be able to arrange day visits to Stubbington Study Centre for each of our current Y5 classes who missed out on their residential in April—they will have sole use of the centre for a full day (9 until 9), concluding with a visit to the animal hide to see if they can spot the badgers. I am excited for them! They are due to go the week after next—let's hope this lovely weather continues into October.

Lesley Pennington—Headteacher

INSET Days

Please don't forget that the school will be closed to the children for staff training on Fri **25th** and Mon **28th Sept**. On Friday, all classroom staff will be having training on dealing with anxiety in children—this had been booked prior to the Covid situation as part of our focus on developing provision for children's mental health and well-being, but is more relevant than ever in these current times. On Monday, teachers will be receiving IT training to develop their skills, relevant to the delivery of remote education, should this be required again.



Hampshire Education Awards

Congratulations to Mrs Bunyan who was shortlisted for the Hampshire Education Awards 2020 in the 'teaching support' category. Mrs Bunyan oversees our physio and speech and language programmes in school. Sadly, the judging process was stalled during lockdown, but we hope that this will be rescheduled for a later date.

YR Admissions 2021

If you have a child who is turning 4 this academic year, applications for Reception school places open on 1st November with the deadline of 15th January 2021 for applications. We will be unable to offer our usual school tours, so will be recording a virtual tour which will be available for prospective parents later this term, with small group external tours offered if guidance allows! If any of our current parents have questions about YR 2021, please email and I'm happy to have a chat with you over the phone.



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Contact Details—Updates

If any of the contact details for your child have changed (including those for second/third contacts), please let the school office know asap so that our records are kept up to date. We increasingly find people changing mobile phone numbers (or swapping their phone with someone else in the family) which can delay us being able to contact someone in an emergency.

Welcome back from the Governors.

It has been wonderful to have all the children back into school this week. This is a very different return to the new academic year and no one can predict what will happen next, however we would like to thank the children, staff, parents and carers for adapting, supporting and being the school community that makes Whiteley Primary so special.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself: I am Rebecca Livings and I have been appointed Vice Chair of the governing body this year and have been a Governor at Whiteley since 2017. I sit as Chair on our Curriculum Committee and am very proud to support the school to provide our children with a quality, broad and balanced curriculum. You may hear from me from time to time as we seek your views on new initiatives such as the changes to how we teach RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) - we were grateful for your responses from the RSE survey last academic year and will feedback soon regarding the new RSE policy.

Rebecca Livings—Vice-Chair of the Governing Body

YR/1/2 Universal Free School Meals—Census Day

Funding for the universal free school meals for YR/1/2 children is based on the average meal take up on the two census days in Autumn and Spring, which is why we always encourage as many children as possible to have a school lunch on these two days. For the past two years, thanks to your support, we had nearly 100% take up of meals on the census days which has resulted in increased funding for our school. We are keen to continue with the same approach this term. We will therefore be offering some of the most popular lunch choices on the census days again, with the kitchen also offering a picnic lunch (with either cheese or ham roll) to YR/1/2 children, instead of the jacket potato option on these two dates.

This October, the national census day falls on **Thursday 1st October**. That week, we will be swapping the Thursday and Friday 'red' choice so that the fish fingers and chips option will be on the Thursday. The green option will be vegetable goujons with chips. We have sent home an online form so that parents of YR/1/2 children can select the option your child would like to enable the kitchen to plan, particularly if your child chooses the picnic box option. We hope that all YR/1/2 parents will support us with this. It is *so* important for us to receive the funding we are entitled to for meals through the census. The kitchen need to know the order by Thursday 24th September.

Reading Challenges

Well done to all the children who've kept up with their reading over lockdown and the summer. For those of you whose children have got out of routines, now is the time to get back into those great reading habits! Last week, we launched our Super Star reading challenge for Y1-3—your child should have brought home the bronze reading card and you should have received a letter about how the challenge works. We hope this helps to motivate your child to read aloud at home, along with access to Bug Club which we have rolled out across the school. It is such an essential skill that reading homework should be seen as a 'non-negotiable!'

Children in Y4 will also be receiving the first of the reading ambassador challenge cards which continue into Y5 and Y6. All children in the upper school are encouraged to continue with these challenges, reading independently as well as reading aloud or discussing their book at least once a week. Y5/6 teachers are currently carrying out a reading challenge 'amnesty' to make sure that everyone has got a copy of the right challenge card to work on—do let the teacher know if you need one sent home.



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Y6 Parents—Secondary Transition

We would like to remind Y6 parents that you will need to make your choice regarding which secondary school you would like your child to go on to by 31st October 2020—the on-line admissions form is already available for applications. We are aware that Henry Cort will be offering a virtual open evening in October, and an opportunity to join a live Q&A session with the principal, and suspect that other secondary schools will also be offering virtual tours this year. We suggest that you check the websites for those schools you are interested in for up to date information.



School Grounds Development

I'm aware that most parents won't have had the opportunity to see the new developments in the school grounds which were completed over the summer, and so have included a few photos below. In the KS2 adventure playground, we now have a new accessible play structure called 'Whiteley Folly'.



The name was voted for by the Y2 keyworker group—thank you to Jessica in 3DH for the suggestion. This equipment was funded through the support from customers at Co-op, Park Gate, and includes two 'play panels', a shop front for role play and a tunnel. The Y3 class bubbles are currently enjoying sessions in the adventure playground on a rota for their play/lunch times—this will rotate to Y4 very shortly.

The governors also agreed to fund two additional pieces of play equipment for the Y1 adventure playground to replace some equipment which could no longer be used.



A puppet theatre and 'Whiteley Castle' have become popular additions to this play area which is being used by Y1 classes on a rota basis. We are currently sourcing boxes of role play props and costumes to enhance these areas.

In addition to the new play equipment, new fencing has been completed around the KS2 adventure playground; there is a new retaining wall on the playcourt to replace the wooden structure which had to be removed; the YR patio area outside the classroom has been tarmacked to level up the surface; and a tarmac slope has been installed into the YR outdoor classroom area to improve the access through the gate to the inner play area.

With outside spaces being so important at the moment, the site team and YR staff have developed an additional outdoor classroom area at the rear of the Reception base in a woodland clearing which includes an area for den building and other forest school activities. Each class is using this for a week for their outdoor classroom on a rota basis to enable us to keep the class bubbles separate. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have such extensive grounds, particularly at the moment!



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Update on Volunteers in School

Just to make you aware, we are not currently having volunteer parents in school, other than those who are undertaking classroom based training. Once we have settled in to the new routines, we are hoping to re-introduce the use of regular volunteers, in particular to support with activities such as paired reading which can be done outside the classroom. We will be in contact once we are in a position to welcome back our regular volunteers—and hopefully to welcome some who are new!



Introducing Ms Kate Bolton—Acting Deputy Headteacher

I am proud to be working as part of the Whiteley Primary School team for the coming **academic year, and thankful to Leesland Federation for supporting my secondment.** I have lived and worked in Hampshire for over 20 years, after completing my teacher training in Chichester and deciding to stay in this beautiful area. I have taught in secondary and primary schools, and held inclusion manager and leadership roles in different settings.

Outside work, I love the outdoor environment, and am often heading for a bike ride, run or a walk with my partner and two teenage sons. My children have taught me many things as they have grown, and in my role I draw on the experience of being a parent: helping them navigate through the education system with all the successes and challenges that brings.

I would like to extend a big thank you to all the staff, and the parents/carers that I have met already, for such an incredibly warm welcome to Whiteley Primary School. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the coming weeks, and having the opportunity in this next year to support your child's ongoing progress through the Whiteley SMILE values.

Has your work or family situation changed?

Have you checked to see if your child is eligible for Pupil Premium Funding?

If you are in receipt of certain benefits, your child may be eligible for Pupil Premium funding. These include Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190), Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit and Universal Credit.

You can check eligibility by going online at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/caterers/hc3s> or contact the school office. (You will need your National Insurance number). Pupil premium funding comes directly to schools to support pupils from low income families. If eligible, your child will also be able to access free school meals, whichever year group they are in. We always deal with such enquiries discreetly and even your child doesn't need to know that their meals are free. You will also receive a £30 school uniform credit with our main supplier once your registration is complete.

Writing Competition Update

There were so many fantastic entries for the 'Life in Lockdown' writing competition—it's taking a little longer than I'd expected to work our way through! Please reassure your children that we haven't forgotten about it and all those who entered will receive a handwriting pen next week. There will also be a prize for the winner in each year group. Having already judged the entries from Y5/6, I can tell you that there was some very emotive writing and I am looking forward to sharing the shortlisted entries with you, and produce a book which can be purchased as a memento of these strange times.