



Dear Community,

This time last Autumn, I wrote and passed comment upon the departure of a summer like most others and how we were moving towards an autumn and winter also like, I am sure, most others. It seems strange now though to read my previous contributions to school newsletters following the trials of the last six months or so... It is very much the start of a new academic year and the weather changes in line with a new year as it always does but this year's Autumn Term is like no other that I have ever experienced and, I am sure, like no other in school's history.

Traditionally, at this time of year, I would reiterate the importance of community and togetherness. Such a tradition has never been more important. Our Christian Values underpin our curriculum approach and for this half term we are thinking about 'Hope and Thankfulness.' We are considering our 'Thankfulness' for the support, love and guidance shown to us this year whilst focusing on the 'Hope' of what's to come. We recognise the need to look back and reflect but are determined to stride forward and be excited for what is ahead of us.

There's no doubt that coming back to school after the school closures has been difficult for both adults and children. There has been, and will continue to be, natural anxiety and worry. However, we are thankful of being able to rely on each other and hopeful of a good year ahead of us. As a school, we are thankful of being able to welcome all of our children back to school. Yes, it is very different still and yes, it isn't quite the school that closed in March but it is *our* school. It is still the place where we can come together to play, learn and worship. A place where we can communicate our thanks and be hopeful of what is to come.

I just want to thank you all for your positive support for our arrangements since coming back to school. We are so pleased to have the children back and are committed to having the best of years in the circumstances we find ourselves. Whilst there will always be teething problems at the start of a new year, this year was always going to present challenges. We won't get everything right but we will listen, work with all of our community and ensure West Monkton continues to be a happy and thriving learning space.

Wishing you all the very best...

James Blackmore
Headteacher

School Photographs

On Wednesday 14th October we have arranged for Tempest Photography to come into school to take individual school photographs of the students. Tempest will only be taking individual student photos and there will be no photos taken of siblings together or pre-school siblings. You will be able to order photos online which can be delivered for free to school. Tempest will ensure social distancing guidelines are met. Please see Parent Mail for more details.

Applications to West Monkton Primary & Heathfield Community School

If your child is due to start or transfer school for September 2021, it is now time to make your application.

The deadline for primary phase applications is **15th January**.

The deadline for secondary phase applications is **31st October**.

Please apply online by visiting:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/>

Heathfield Community School also has a virtual tour on their website ,

<https://www.heathfieldcommunityschool.com> (under the news section, click on link).

Parents' Consultations

In a letter outlining dates for the year ahead, Mr Blackmore communicated dates for parent consultations. In order to ensure the consultations are in line with COVID guidance, Mr Blackmore has had to change the dates and format of the consultations. These plans are currently being ratified with more information to come, next week.

Plastic Straws Ban

With the nationwide ban on single use plastic straws coming into force today, we were delighted to receive notification that West Monkton had been recommended by a member of our school community to win a pack of Joe's Heroes compostable drinking straws this very morning! It has been estimated that more than 8 billion plastic drinking straws pollute the World's beaches and oceans. We are always delighted to support and promote any initiatives that raise awareness and help to protect our environment and it seemed fitting to try out our straws in our school farm area with our school chickens looking on! Members of Falcon Class gave a unanimous thumbs up to the sugarcane straws we tried – best of all, these can be safely and disposed of in food waste or compost bins. Thanks to Blossom and Root Wellbeing and Lifestyle Store for our prize. www.blossomandroot.co.uk



What's coming up ...?

Friday 9 th October	Harvest Collection
Wednesday 14 th October	School Photographs
TBA	Parent Consultations

Monday 26 th October	Half Term Begins
Monday 2 nd November	Inset Day
Tuesday 3 rd November	Return to School After Half Term

Headteacher: Mr James Blackmore Chair of Governors: Mr Paul Spencer

A: Bridgwater Road, Bathpool, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8FT **T:** 01823 412582

E: office@wm.oak.education **W:** www.westmonktonprimaryschool.co.uk

West Monkton C.E. Primary School Newsletter

Where everyone has the courage and confidence to fly.

Pastoral and Safeguarding - Firstly to introduce myself, in case you didn't know, I am the new Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school, with Miss Paling and Mr Blackmore as deputies. It's been fantastic to have the children back in school and I'm delighted how well the vast majority have settled in! With each newsletter, I would like to share some key information to help keep all children safe in and out of school. This month I'd like to draw your attention to e-safety, in other words, being safe online and when using technology. Here are my suggestions this month:

Advice from Rio Ferdinand...

<https://www.bt.com/skillsfortomorrow/home-life/supporting-your-kids-online-with-rio-ferdinand>

And

A new website to help you find the 'RIGHT' video games for your family...

<https://www.taminggaming.com/>



This database is a unique way to find games for children, teenagers and young adults. Every game is presented for parents and carers to understand, to empower informed choice through understanding. It provides one page for each game with a jargon-free overview, hand-picked video, official game ratings, in-game spending, how many players and how long it will take to play. At the bottom of each game page, it suggests alternative games of different age ratings. After all we don't want to deprive them of playing games online, just ensure they're playing the 'right' ones that will keep them safe from harm...Have fun exploring!

Kind Regards

Helen Newstead – Deputy Headteacher, UKS Phase Leader & Safeguarding Lead



School Councillors

A huge well done to all the children that were voted into the school council this year.

Announcing the school councillors for the school:

Yellow Wagtails - Isla G and Dexter H

Pelican - Maxim B and Cora P

Robin - Toby V and Freya W

Puffin - Stella T and Max D

Falcon - Braydon W and Hayley H

Crane - Minty L and Joshua A

Red Kite - Bethany B and Ethan W

Buzzard - Amelia K and Reuben L

Magpie - Reagan G and Isla C-H

Eagle - Elsie R and Archie G

Kestrel - Isla C and Danny W

I am looking forward to all the exciting projects we are going to take on this year 😊

Mrs Barker

Family Learning

We are excited to continue our journey of Family Learning at West Monkton this year. We have secured funding from SS&L to enable us to provide adult learning opportunities throughout the year. Family Learning is a great way for adults to learn skills and knowledge, which not only help them to support their children but can be a pathway to further adult learning. Thank you to the Year 1 parents who attended our first virtual phonics workshop! Look out for future dates of virtual opportunities this term and hopefully practical sessions in the future.

Lucy Lawrence

Year 1 Teacher and Family Learning Coordinator

Dates for the Diary

Individual School Photos – Whole School	Wednesday 14th October 2020
Parent/Carer Consultation Evenings + Progress Reports (format of evening to be decided)	TBA
HALF TERM HOLIDAY	26th Oct – 1st November 2020
INSET DAY	Monday 2nd November 2020
Children in Need Day	Friday 13th November 2020
Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day	Wednesday 16th December 2020
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS	19th Dec 2020 – 3rd January 2021
INSET Day	Monday 4th January 2021
Progress Reports Due Out	Friday 5th February 2021
Parent/Carer Consultation Evenings + Progress Reports (format of evening to be decided)	10th and 11th February 2021
HALF TERM HOLIDAY	13th - 21st February 2021
INSET Day	Monday 1st March
World Book Day	Thursday 4th March 2021
EASTER HOLIDAYS	2nd – 18th April 2021
HALF TERM HOLIDAY	29TH May – 6th June 2021
Sports Day*	Thursday 17th June
Sports Day Reserve Date *	Thursday 24th June
Parent/Carer Consultation Evenings + Progress Reports (format of evening to be decided)	14th and 15th July
End of Year Progress Report	Monday 19th July
Last Day of Academic Year	Friday 23rd July

Useful Websites and Other Information

ParentMail

<https://pmx.parentmail.co.uk/>

Reading Scheme Books (EYFS/KS1)

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books/free-ebooks/>

Bug Club Phonics – Reception and KS1

www.activelearnprimary.co.uk

Educational Psychology Service

EPSHelpline@somerset.gov.uk

Times Tables

<https://trockstars.com>

Magicbooking

<https://oakpartnership.magicbooking.co.uk/>

Please remember West Monkton is a NUT FREE school. We ask our families to support us in this, and not send children to school with any products containing nuts.