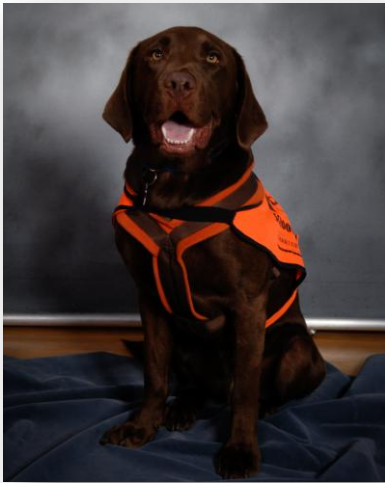


## Meet Fernie, Our School Dog



Here at Winford Primary, we have an educational assistance dog, Called Fernie. He is a 'chocolate' Labrador who lives with the Headteacher, but comes into school daily. He is still a puppy, but is in the process of undertaking training and certification with a charity called 'Dogs Helping Kids'. The training can take in excess of 18 months so he is still officially a 'school dog in training', while he settles into the school community and is trained to meet the high standards expected of him.

Fernie is based in the Headteacher's office, but will often be seen on a lead with Mr Gardner in classrooms, assemblies at playtime and around school. Eventually, Fernie will be used as a dog to motivate, provide therapy and read with children.

It has been proven that working and playing with a dog improves children's social skills and self-esteem. Many studies have been undertaken that give credit to the benefits of dogs in the school. There is no better place to educate our children on how to treat animals than that of the school environment. Animals in schools can encourage children to respect all life, teach responsibility, motivate those children who are often not that attentive, help calm children down and improve academic achievement.

In addition to this, if children are wary of dogs, they can be supported in approaching, handling and gaining confidence in managing their fears, through the presence of a specially trained dog in school

Please do take a look at the 'Dogs Helping Kids' website to read about the benefits of school dogs and what they can do.

<http://www.dogshelpingkids.co.uk/>



Fernie has been fully risk assessed but if you have any questions, concerns or reservations then please do contact the school for further information.