

# West Pennard Church of England Primary School

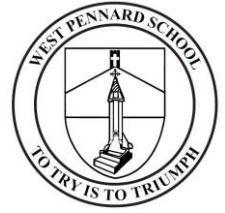


Church Lane, West Pennard, Glastonbury, BA6 8NT

Tel: 01458 832866

Email: westpennardprimary@gmail.com

Headteacher Miss J. Hale



## Welcome Letter

4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to a new academic year at West Pennard CE Primary School. I hope that you all had a lovely summer with your families and were able to make some lovely memories. I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to our new families – both those with children starting in our Reception class and also families with children starting in other year groups. I look forward to getting to know you all as the term progresses. I am available most mornings on the top playground, so do please come and find me if you want to have a chat.

It is really positive to remain a school of choice in the local community, especially as so many rural schools are struggling with numbers. You are probably aware from the local press that school budgets are decreasing with many schools having to make redundancies. Fortunately due to an increase in numbers we are able to keep our staffing structure and are in the fortunate position of having a teacher and TA in each class. We also retain our 7 class structure meaning that all year groups are taught separately with no mixed classes – this enables teachers to focus on one year group's curriculum ensuring that the curriculum is covered and taught in depth.

### Learning

This year it is really exciting to be part of two learning projects.

1. The Bolean Maths Hub (Led by Mr Wheat)
2. A science project through Bath University called Focus 4 TAPS (Teaching and Assessment in Primary Science) (Led by Miss Holmes)

The Maths Hub will provide training on teaching for mastery in mathematics. This 'Mastery' approach stems from high performing countries such as Singapore. When taught to master maths, children develop their mathematical fluency without resorting to rote learning and are able to solve non-routine maths problems without having to memorise procedures. It is built upon a classroom culture that has high expectations for all and believes that all children are capable of achieving highly in Mathematics. Mr Wheat will keep you abreast of all developments on the weekly newsletter.

The Science Project gives us access to planning and assessment resources in science. For the first year this will be trialled in Year 5. Again we will keep you updated.

### Re-decoration

It has been a fairly busy summer at West Pennard. Years 3, 4 and 5 have been redecorated to create brighter learning environments for the children and staff. We have also had new, more efficient LED lighting installed which is fit for purpose compared to the old fluorescent tube lighting. It will provide a consistent lighting experience with less flicker.

### Planners

Continuing on from the success of last year, every child in the school will be bringing a planner home this week. The planners provide a consistent way for teachers and parents to communicate effectively. We felt that this was especially important as we have many parents who are unable to have regular contact with class teachers. For each week, there is a double page spread. One side is to be completed by school and the other side is to be completed by home. If you want to pass on a message to the class teacher, then write it in the message box and ask your child to put it on the teacher's desk. Teachers will also use these as a way of passing on messages so please check planners regularly. The second purpose of the planner is to record reading completed at school and at home. Please record reading done at home in these planners and sign. It is a school expectation that children read at least 4 times a week at home. Near the front of the planner there is a 'Home /School agreement, please could you read this through with your child this week and sign in the appropriate places. Thanks ☺. There are also other useful learning pages and information pages in the planners including our term dates, so please have a browse through them with your child. Planners should be in school every day and go home at the end of every day. Finally, please encourage your child to take good care of their planner as replacing them will incur a cost.

### Reading

At West Pennard, we believe that reading fluently and for enjoyment unlocks the doors to a whole range of learning opportunities. We provide opportunities for both guided reading – reading the same text together and individual reading. Teachers also plan in opportunities to develop reading skills across the curriculum. Our outcomes for reading are rapidly

becoming a strength of our school. Phonics results at the end of Year 1 have been above national averages for the past two years as have our end of Key Stage Two reading SATS results. We believe that this is a direct result of developing a positive reading culture at school. The introduction of Accelerated Reader last year has had a direct impact on our outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 as almost half (45%) of our Year 2 children reached the higher standard compared with 26% nationally.

However, despite having really positive outcomes, as a school we have noticed that a significant proportion of children from year 3 – 6 (KS2) do not read often, if at all, at home. As a parent I understand the pull of technology and although our children are developing a range of skills important for our technologically developing world, I would like to ask parents to really support us by encouraging all children to read at least 4 times a week at home for 20 - 30 minutes. I understand that children who find it more difficult to learn to read may find reading a chore but this partnership between school and home really does lead to accelerated progress. Children in Key Stage Two will still benefit from reading to an adult. If you are finding it difficult to encourage your child to read 4 times a week at home, then speak to your child's class teacher.

We are looking for volunteers to hear children read – if you could commit regularly to an afternoon once a week, then we would really love to hear from you. Please speak to the office staff who will be able to begin the safeguarding process. You would need to hold a DBS for West Pennard School and have a safeguarding induction.

### **Homework**

Homework is always a contentious issue in schools. Some parents don't want any whilst others feel their children do not get enough or that it is not challenging enough. Homework is a widely researched area, which suggests that homework given at Primary level does not appear to lead to large increases in learning. However, the broader evidence base suggests that short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be the most effective. At West Pennard we would like to gain parental views on homework so that we can create a homework policy and some consistency within our school. I am therefore proposing an informal tea and chat afternoon to discuss all things homework.

**Homework meeting (tea and chat) Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2:45pm in the library (all welcome ☺)**

### **Enrichment**

Children in years 1 – 6 will continue to receive ½ a day of enrichment activities on a Thursday. The new OFSTED framework states, 'The curriculum provided by schools should extend beyond the academic' At West Pennard we are very aware of the importance of developing the whole child and provide a wide range to develop children personally. This year, we will be continuing with Forest School (led by Mrs Frost) which has been a firm favourite with a range of year groups. We also have Mrs Robertson leading Tai Chi and mindfulness. We are also pleased to announce that some year groups will receive First Aid training organised by Mrs Wade through St John's Ambulance. We will also be continuing with arts and crafts, knitting and sewing as well as PE and Eco education. We are really proud of our enriching curriculum and the opportunities that we are able to provide. Our 'Excellent' SIAMS inspection report highlighted our broad and balanced curriculum as a strength.

### **PE coach**

Mr Bisgrove and I have decided to use a new company for our specialist PE coaching. We will be using TLE coaching and our new coach is Mr Jarrad Cave. TLE are the company that organise all of the area competitions such as rounders, netball and football and having a coach that can train the children in the lead up to these competitions was seen as a positive.

Finally, if you have any concerns or worries regarding your child then your child's class teacher is your first port of call. Teachers are always happy to discuss any concerns that you may have. The end of the day is always better than the beginning as this is the time that teachers are getting set up.

I look forward to another positive year at West Pennard ☺

Kindest Regards

Jo Hale  
Headteacher