

A challenging and rewarding educational experience



January 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dates for your diary

Monday 8 th January	School reopens for Spring Term
Wednesday 10 th January	Flex dance workshops (Reception and years 3,4,5,6)
Wednesday 17 th January	Leeds Rhinos rugby coaching – year 5
Friday 19 th January	Year 4 Drum performance 2.40pm – All parents’ welcome
Monday 22 nd January	Year 2 Skipping workshop
Monday 29th January	School closed – training day
Friday 2 nd February	Celebration Assembly 2.40pm – All parents’ welcome
Friday 9th February	Break for half term
Monday 19 th February	School reopens for Spring 2 term
Monday 26 th February	Northern Ballet workshops – year 1 and 2
Wednesday 28 th February	Parent Consultation Evening
Friday 15 th March	Celebration Assembly 2.40pm – All parents’ welcome
Thursday 28th March	Break for Easter holiday (school closed on Friday)
Monday 15 th April	School reopens for Summer 1 term

School Term dates 2023/24

Schools open	Schools Close	Holiday
Monday 4 th September 2023	Friday 27 th October 2023	Half term: 30 th Oct– 3 rd Nov
Monday 6 th November 2023	Friday 22 nd December 2023	Christmas: 25 th Dec – 5 th Jan
Monday 8 th January 2024	Friday 9 th February 2024	Half term: 12 th Feb -16 th Feb
Monday 19 th February 2024	Thursday 28 th March 2024	Easter: 29 th March– 12 th April
Monday 15 th April 2024	Friday 24 th May 2024	May Bank Holiday: 6 th May Half Term: 27 th May – 31 st May
Monday 3 rd June 2024	Tuesday 23 rd July 2024	Summer begins: 24 th July

Training Days:

Monday 4th September, Monday 6th November, Monday 29th January, Monday 22nd July,
Tuesday 23rd July

Happy New Year!

Welcome back to the new term and the new year – I'm sure it will be as busy as ever. I always think the Spring term is the one where we really begin to see children building on previous learning. In lots of our units of work we are recapping and extending the learning undertaken in the Autumn term and it's great to see children making links between different aspects of the curriculum. Children are settled into their classes; routines are embedded and children are working hard!

In assembly this week we talked about New Year resolutions and what we want White Laith to be like in 2024. We shared ideas and agreed that we want school to be fun, for everyone to be kind, for everyone to look after things and for classes to be hard-working.

We also talked about the Christian feast of the Epiphany, the arrival 3 wise men and the gifts they brought – gold, frankincense and myrrh which could symbolise love, peace and joy.

We decided that we are going to try to share the gifts of love, peace and joy in school every day. We can do this by being kind, smiling, looking after each other, working calmly, being positive and getting involved. We did say that we needed to do this at home too!

We are looking forward to another positive and successful year at White Laith.

A note from the Governors – Chantel Johnson (Parent Governor)

It was great to spend some time in school at the Parents Consultation Evening in November. I'd like to thank all the parents and children who took time out to chat about their reading at home and in school. There really is a love of reading amongst the children and it was so encouraging to see you all taking advantage of the resources available – particularly the suggested reading lists. If you missed the display and would like access to the resources shared do reach out to the school.

Being A Parent Governor – Alexster Pearson-Clough (Parent Governor)

I chose to become a parent governor to enable me to get an insight into how the school operates and be part of the board where decisions are made on behalf of the school and agreed upon to ensure that our children have the best possible opportunities.

It also means I am assigned a link class (mine is currently Year 4) where I go each term for a couple of hours to sit and observe and compose a report on what I saw, in-line with curriculum and key teaching areas for the school.

It gives me opportunities to see how our children are taught and it was refreshing to see the added touches factored in during the day, alongside support for SEND children.

Ultimately, we need another Parent Governor to join us on the board and it's someone who can commit a very small amount of their time once each term through the day and once or twice per term in the evening to attend the appropriate Governors Meetings, which usually last around a couple of hours.

It also allows you to really engage with school and other governors to put forward any ideas, suggestions and observations in a constructive way which is going to benefit the entire school community.

Parent Governor vacancy

We still have a vacancy for a Parent Governor position on our Governing Body. If you are interested and would like to find out more about what this entails, please do get in touch with me or with Mr Barker and we can have a chat about it. We would really appreciate your support so please don't be shy!

Mr Barker will be sending out more information (via parentpay email) next week.

Reading at home – a New Year resolution – read a little every day!

As you know our reading ambassadors have been recording % of children who have read everyday and returned their reading bags/diaries on Monday.

Unfortunately, there are some classes where less than half the children are reading every day. Please do help your child by setting aside 10 minutes each day to read with them – your support is vital.

Christmas Singing.

I would just like to thank again the year 5 and 6 children who gave up their time to come singing at Tesco and Cross Gates. These singing sessions are one of my favourite things that we do at Christmas – the children are always fantastic! We raised £1024.23 which we will be splitting between school fund (to subsidise visits/visitors) and the Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

Attendance

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

From 8 January, the Government is launching a national campaign to remind parents and carers of the importance of school attendance. The Government states that improving school attendance is everyone's business and, to tackle the challenge we face, we need to work together.



The Government sets targets for attendance and as a school we are usually in line with those targets. However, this year we are falling below targets and we do have more children in school who are classed as 'persistent absentees' (attendance below 90%) than in previous

years. Our challenge is to improve attendance for the remainder of the school year to ensure we do not fall too far short of national expectations.

Thankyou to all parents who work hard to ensure children are in school on time consistently. Thank you also to parents who remember to contact school and keep us fully informed of any absence. We know that children may be ill from time to time however the aim is for all children to be in school every day.

Please remember that all messages relating to attendance/absence should go directly to the school office and not to the class teacher. Please telephone 0113 2930280, text or email john.barker@whitelaith.leeds.sch.uk or Clare.ashmore@whitelaith.leeds.sch.uk. Please remember that holidays in term time cannot be authorised and may result in a fine.

News from the classes

Foundation

This half term our topic for Nursery and Reception is 'Hot and cold.'. We will be talking and finding out about different countries, the animals that live there and how they are adapted to live in a hot or cold place. This week we have discussed colours that represent hot and cold and created a contrasting collage. We will also be playing with and watching ice melt and thinking about how the grounds have changed now the we are in the season winter.

Nursery

Nursery will continue to do lots of activities to help develop their fine and gross motor skills- pre-skills for writing. They will also continue their key worker group each day where they will be developing their listening and taking turns skills. The children really enjoy their group time – lots of smiling faces during and afterwards. It is a great start to the day!

The older Nursery children, who will be starting Reception in September, will also start to do short focus maths and phonics this half term. The activities are very practical to keep the children engaged e.g. playing with musical instruments and going on listening walks. The younger children won't be missing out either they will continue doing squiggle while you wiggle and also play lots of circle games to help with listening and communication skills. Please look out for this exciting learning on Tapestry.

Reception

In English we will be reading different books linked to our topic including, 'Look who's poorly too?' and 'Handa's surprise.' We will be challenging the children to use their phonics learning to write two- and three-word phrases relating to these books. We will also be doing some non-fiction writing about animals that live in the hot and cold. During phonics lessons we have moved onto phase 3 sounds- these sounds are digraphs so two letters that make one sound e.g. ch, sh, ng. We will have a big focus on reading and writing the words with digraphs in.

In Maths we will be continuing our learning on numbers beyond 5. We will be looking at what numbers add together to make the numbers. We will be using the sentence stem 2 and 3 makes 5. Please encourage your child to use this at home too.

I am hoping you are finding Tapestry useful and seeing some of the learning the children are doing at home. Please add any home learning or activities you have doing at home as the children love to show it on the big screen.

Please continue to read at home with your child daily and practise new tricky words. If you have any questions, please send us a message on Dojo or speak to an adult on the door. Thank you for your continued support.

Nile - Year 1

This term we are starting our new topic 'Explorers and Adventurers'. We have started exploring the world by being scientists and have been investigating what materials things are made of. We will then look at the properties of materials - which things float, are stretchy or are transparent.

Then we will use our history skills to find out about Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his expedition to the South Pole. Why is he still famous today? What things went wrong on his expedition? Should we carry on exploring today?

As usual, we will be completing art and DT tasks linked to the topic as we go along and reading novels and non-fiction books that help develop our knowledge and understanding of these themes.

Please keep reading at home, learning spellings and working on Maths Seeds. This work really helps develop confidence, embed skills and build learning.

Yangtze – Year 2

This term our topic is 'Leeds and Beijing.' We will be finding out about our city and will be comparing it to the city of Beijing in China. We will also be finding out about the countries of the United Kingdom and their capital cities. We will be making a 3d map of a city with human and physical features.

In English we will be reading Paddington Bear and will be busy writing letters, postcards and diaries. We will be reading The Owl who was afraid of the Dark and writing non-chronological reports about owls. We will also be reading and writing stories about Chinese New Year. We will continue to work hard to learn our spellings each week.

In Art we will be creating cityscapes, flag artwork and collages of owls.

In Maths we will be continuing to learn to add and subtract 2-digit numbers. We will also be learning about 2d and 3d shapes.

Our Science topic is 'Animals, including humans.' We will find out about different animal groups and we will be writing explanation texts to describe animal life cycles.

Our MindMate topic is Life Changes and our PSHE topic is Medicines and Me.

In PE we will be developing our co-ordination (footwork) and balancing skills. This half term we will have our skipping workshop and have sessions with the gymnastics coach each week.

Danube – Year 3

For the first 3 weeks we will be continuing our History topic "Who lived in the rainforest long ago?" (Maya civilization). Then our topic is linked to science and we will be learning all about 'pushes, pulls and magnets'.

Linked to this topic, we will be studying the book 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes. We will use the text for our reading, writing and grammar lessons. We will be writing descriptive pieces, newspaper reports, recounts and poetry.

In Maths we will continue to work on our multiplication and division fluency and will then learn all about charts, graphs and statistics. We will also be practicing 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 times tables every day and key skills every week.

In PE we will start our swimming lessons, on Wednesdays. We will have a real PE lesson on Monday and Friday.

Our R.E topic is 'What makes a good leader?' In PSHE our focus is 'Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Education'. Our Mind Mate topic is 'Life Change'. We will also be continuing the 'zones of regulation' lessons.

- Please ensure your child reads every night and completes their reading diary.
- Homework will be set at the start of the week (spelling test on Mondays) Please continue to use your independent (Maya topic) homework books. New challenges will be sent home in 2 weeks.

Zambezi – Year 4

This term in Zambezi our topic is 'Did the Ancient Greeks change the world?' We will be finding out how the Ancient Greeks have influenced life today and about some important events. We will also be making our own Greek pots. We will find out about the Greek Gods and Goddesses and read different myths and legends.

In English, we will be writing instructions and our own myths. We will be looking at a book called 'Leo and the Gorgon's curse'.

In Science, our topic is 'Animals including humans' where we will find out how we can sort and classify different living things.

In maths, we are learning about multiplication and division. We will be working hard to learn more times tables and division facts, including our times tables rock stars session every morning. Make sure children are using this at home too.

In PE, we will be practising our skipping skills in preparation for a skipping competition in March.

Amazon – Year 5

This half-term we will finish off our topic on Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain and will be starting our topic 'What was it like to live in Leeds during WW2?'. We will be learning all about how war affected Leeds. We will link our learning to the book 'Goodnight Mister Tom' and will also be taking part in drama workshops linked to this. In science, we will be learning about different life cycles including flowering and non-flowering plants, mammals, amphibians and insects.

In music this term we will finding out about, listening to and composing Jazz music.

In RE, we will continue our topic on 'What do we know about Islam?' and move on to 'Codes for Living'. In PSHE we will be studying Mindmate (coping with big changes in our lives) and continuing our topic on keeping safe. In PE, we will be working on our cognitive skills.

- Please encourage your child to read at home and write a question linked to their reading each night
- Homework is set on Mondays and children need to complete: spelling shed, grammar shed, TTrackstars and Athletics.

Mississippi – Year 6

This half term our topic is the Vikings which the children and I are already very excited about!

In History, we will be looking at Viking life, people, houses, clothing, food, longships and the invasion at Lindisfarne as well as finding out about some famous Vikings. We will be making our own longships, dragon eyes out of clay, using pastels to create Viking portraits and will be making bags embroidered with Viking runes. In Science, we will be finishing our topic on

light then we are going to be looking at classification. We will find out how to sort animals and plants into different groups according to their characteristics. In PSHE, our Mindmate lesson will be on Life Changes. We will then begin our Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco topic. In Spanish we will be starting our unit all about 'The classroom' where we will learn how to say some classroom objects, will learn how to ask questions and reply in full sentences. In PE we are going to be playing dodgeball in our REAL PE unit.

In music we will be finding out about Baroque music and finding out about some of the key composers of that time in history.

In English, we will be reading Beowulf. We will write our own versions of the story, write descriptions, reports and much more! To make reading this book even more exciting, we will be taking part in four drama sessions led by a drama specialist called Pavla. The children have already worked with Pavla and really enjoyed the sessions so I am sure it will be a great success. All of the drama we do will link directly to the book which will help us to improve our writing. In Maths, we will continue to revise our written methods before moving on to shape and time. These are some things your child MUST know by the end of this half term so please support them:

- 7, 8, 9 and 12 times tables
- names and properties of quadrilaterals (square, rectangle, rhombus, parallelogram, kite, trapezium)
- types of angles (acute, obtuse, reflex, right angle)

Many thanks for your continued support,

Mrs Sheerin