



West Dean Church of England Primary School
West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0RJ
Telephone: 01243 811247



We do our best in all we do, with God's love.
'Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.' **John 13**

Newsletter 4 29.09.23

Don't forget Rev Sarah's 'Rectors Ramble' which can be found at: <http://thevalleyparish.org/from-the-vicar>



Woodland Wellbeing All of the children and staff enjoyed our first fabulous Wellbeing Walk of the year at West Dean College on Wednesday morning. The younger children explored the beautiful gardens next to the main house, whilst the older children took on the challenge of the full circle route through the arboretum and over the hill.

Beech and Chestnut children stopped for a 'Forest Church' period of reflection, during which they listened to a reading of 'The Way through the Woods' by Rudyard Kipling and the rather beautiful 'Prayer of The Woods', which apparently adorns entrances to many of the National Parks in the USA. It was a wonderful, healthy morning of appreciating nature around us.

Dear Parent/Carers

With the half term holiday rapidly approaching, no doubt some families will be making plans to travel or spend some family time on day trips during the week long break. I write today with news of some very exciting school related travel that I will be embarking on myself during the half term break. I have been invited to visit Xilitla, in Mexico, the town with which West Dean has a link through the story and life of Edward James.

Many of you will know that our school has a long association with West Dean College and Estate, as well as with the visionary Edward James, who, in 1964, gifted his estate to a charitable trust, laying the foundation for the establishment of West Dean College as a place to develop and protect arts and crafts learning.

The part that you may not know, is that Edward himself moved to the Americas in the 1940s, settling in the subtropical rainforest of Mexico, in the small town of Xilitla (pronounced Hee-leet-la), where he lived, on and off, for the last forty years of his life until he passed away in 1984. There, in the rainforest of Xilitla, Edward James built a surrealist sculpture garden, now recognised as a World Heritage Site.

Edward James was laid to rest in West Dean Arboretum and our children regularly pass his simple, but beautiful gravestone whilst on our Wellbeing Walks through the woods. From 1944 on, Edward James spent much of his time helping to nurture a spirit of creativity in Xilitla and Mexico. Thanks to this spirit, and Edward James' extraordinary story, we have a completely unique link with Xilitla in Mexico, which over many years, our school has tried to develop in a number of ways. One of our initiatives won the 'Guardian' Classroom Innovation Awards. The prize was shared with the school in Xilitla to which we donated two laptops and other equipment which enabled the children to have a more global access to the world.

Part of our school improvement plan is focussed on developing further links with our community; on a local, UK wide and international level, enabling the children to deepen their understanding of their place in the world, as well as the views, culture and life experience of those who live in very contrasting locations to West Dean. Consequently, we have an ongoing project to rejuvenate our link and relationship with schools in Xilitla so that there can be a continued exchange between teachers and children in Xilitla and West Dean.

Supported by charity fundraising organised some years ago by one of our school governors, Dr Sharon-Michi Kusunoki, as well as a generous donation from a supporter who has a long association with West Dean and Xilitla, I have been invited to travel to Mexico this October. The aim of the trip is to meet with members of the school community in Xilitla, and to discuss and plan how we can work in partnership to enrich the learning of the children in our schools through collaborative projects.

I feel it is really important to reassure you that school funds are not being used for this trip. We are excited by this project, but it is not a priority to which we would direct school funding. Some years ago, through some incredible fundraising work with the Embassy of Mexico in the UK, funds were donated expressly to support this cultural exchange. It is our hope that we will be able to welcome some teachers from Xilitla to West Dean in the future, as well as facilitate further travel for others from West Dean.

This is an unusual and exciting opportunity, in which I feel truly privileged to be involved. To facilitate the lengthy travel, our School Governors have approved that I will be away from school for four days prior to the start of half term and the rest of the trip will be within the half term break. Careful plans will be in place to ensure the smooth and safe running of West Dean School in my absence.

I plan to send photos and video back to the children in school, before they break up for half term, to raise their interest and excitement in the project, as well as share progress on the trip, potentially using Google Classroom – more details to follow on this. Longer term, our vision is for the children themselves to communicate and learn with the children in Xilitla, again embracing the tools we now have to collaborate online.

Very exciting times indeed!

With best wishes, Chris Williams



We are once again pleased to be holding our School Harvest Festival Service in St Andrew's Church this year. We ask parents and carers to bring children directly to the church for the service on **Friday 6th October by 8.35am** ready for an 8.45 start, rather than coming to school first.

Staff will be available to welcome the children between 8.25 and 8.35 and we ask that you access Church Lane from the A285, operating a one-way system, dropping off at the Church and exiting through the village.

Parents, carers and relatives are welcome to join us for the service, which will last for approximately half an hour. If you intend to do so, please drop your child off first, as described above, before finding parking. There will be a limited amount of space available in the church car park.





Supporting your child's online activity

In the fast moving world of the internet and social media, we all know that it can be very challenging to balance the need to monitor a child's online activity and ensure they are safe, whilst also giving them the freedom to discover all of the positive aspects of being online.

Later this year, we plan to run an information evening for parents, hopefully with an expert speaker, where advice will be shared in achieving this balance.

In school, we have filtering and monitoring procedures in place, which ensure that the children do not encounter any negative or harmful influence whilst online in the course of their classroom learning.

However, there are occasional instances of children feeling upset in school, due to language or behaviour that they have experienced online, outside of school. It is very much part of our duty of care to the children to support in protecting them from this as well, even though in the physical sense we cannot monitor what the children do online outside of school.

Parents and carers may find the following websites useful in supporting children in being safe in their online activity:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

<https://cyberbullying.org/category/resources/parents>

Watch this space for detail of the internet safety event coming later this year.

Chartwells Hot Lunches & ParentPay

As you are aware the system for ordering Chartwells Hot Meals changed in January 2023. Ordering is now the responsibility of parents and not school. If you have not registered with ParentPay, you would have received a welcome message yesterday (28th September). We are pleased to advise you that we have booked our Chartwells Christmas Lunch for Wednesday 13th December. If you wish for your child to have a Christmas lunch, it is important that you register, as we are unable to place your order. Please contact the office if you have not received a welcome message or you require any further help. Thank you.

YOUR PTA NEEDS YOU!

West Dean School PTA is tremendously supportive in raising funds and running events to enhance the life of the school. Last year these funds helped to purchase new iPads, run the swimming pool, renovate the library and much more. We need more enthusiastic and keen members to help with the work of the PTA. There will be a meeting on **Monday 9th October, 7.00pm at The Selsey Arms**, where you can find out more and help to plan the year ahead. Please do come along—we would love to see you.



Clubs and Care Bears It is wonderful to see so many children enjoying our range of clubs this term. We do aim to provide as much variety as possible and ensure that there is an offering for most age groups. Thank you for your support and your children's enthusiasm at clubs!

Our Care Bear provision is also well used, but there is a need to clarify that it has a specific and different purpose to our clubs.

We understand the challenge of being a working parent (most of us are one too), and we hope that Care Bears enables a little more time for families who, for whatever reason, cannot pick up at 3pm. Care bears is however, not a club and should not be seen as such.

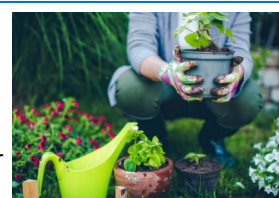
Where possible, we need to know well in advance of the day that your child will be attending Care Bears, so that appropriate planning and resourcing can be put in place. Again, thank you for your support.

THANK YOU

...to the green-fingered parents who have given their time after school to carry out some gardening jobs around the school grounds. Your help is really appreciated.

There is always lots to do, so we still need more help if you are able to give a little of your time.

A number of parents have suggested to us that, as everyone leads such busy lives, this approach, instead of having a grounds morning, may attract more volunteers.



Pupil Absence due to illness - a polite reminder

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please email or telephone the school office:

01243 811247 or office@westdean.w-sussex.sch.uk, preferably by 8.30am on the day of absence.

Mrs Shears and Mrs Bailey will pick up your message, ensure that this is noted in the register and will inform your child's class teacher.



Attendance

Our pupil attendance figure was at **96%** last week (22-09-23) and has dropped slightly to **95.6%** this week. Authorised absence, including illness, accounted for **2.5%** this week.

Governor News

There have been some changes to our governing body for the start of this new school year.

After many years of dedicated service as our Chair of Governors, Mrs Wendy Goacher has stepped down from this role. We thank Wendy sincerely for the love, care and tremendous support that she has given to our school. Fortunately, Wendy is staying on the governing body as a Foundation Governor appointed by the Diocese of Chichester, so we say THANK YOU, but not goodbye!

We are delighted that Mr Edward Younghusband has been elected by the governors as our new Chair. As well as being a parent of two children at the school, Edward brings a wide skill set and wealth of business experience. We look forward to working with him as Chair of Governors.

Also joining the governors is Mrs Christine Standing, a member of our local church congregation and resident of West Dean, who has been appointed as a Foundation Governor by the Diocese of Chichester.

In addition, Mr Ian Graham, who is Director of Estates for West Dean Estate, and now an Apple Class parent, has been appointed as a co-opted governor. Welcome to the team Christine and Ian.

Finally, following the recent election, we are very pleased to welcome Mr Henry Forbes as our new Parent Governor. We look forward to working with you, Henry.

We now have a full compliment of 12 governors, which puts us in a strong, supported position to move forward this year.

Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) is a childcare top-up for working parents. It can be used to help pay for accredited holiday clubs, childminders, or sports activities. This enables parents and carers to access childcare during the school holidays, also saving them money. It is estimated that there are 1.3 million working families who are eligible for TFC in the UK however only a small percentage are making use of the scheme. Around 75% of families are losing out on this support.

TFC is available for children aged up to 11, or 17 if the child has a disability. We can signpost families to Childcare Choices so they can see if they are eligible. Find out more about the scheme by visiting www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare.

Many parents don't realise that TFC can be saved up on their accounts. Even if childcare is not required throughout the school terms, there is still the option to save up funds which could be used for holiday clubs or out of school care. As the new term commences, it is a good opportunity for us to remind families of these schemes so they can plan for the upcoming half terms and holidays.

Foodbank Friday 29th September

Thank you for supporting our 'Food Bank Friday', we had an amazing array of donations. This is an opportunity for us all to support Chichester Food Bank, a project founded by local churches and community groups, working together towards stopping hunger in our local area.

Non-perishable, in-date food is donated to a foodbank. Volunteers sort food and pack it into boxes ready to be given to people in need. Over 40,000 people give up their time to volunteer at foodbanks. Foodbanks partner with a wide range of care professionals such as doctors, health visitors, social workers and police to identify people in crisis and issue them with a foodbank voucher. Foodbank clients bring their voucher to a foodbank centre where it can be redeemed for three days' emergency food. Volunteers meet clients over a warm drink or free hot meal and are able to signpost people to agencies able to solve the longer-term problem.

Your help is greatly appreciated. If you weren't able to make a donation today, we will also be collecting items to donate to the Foodbank at our Harvest Service next week.





West Dean CE Primary School
Acorn Awards
Friday 29th September 2023



- Yr R** **Hugo O** - for being a fantastic independent learner and sharing your ideas with others. Well done!
- Yr 1** **Edith** - for your super reading! You have worked really hard at home and school. Super!
- Yr 2** **Sophia** - for being so kind and caring towards the younger children on our walk to West Dean Gardens. You were a wonderful role model!
- Yr 3** **Berti** - for an amazing week in Beech Class. You are becoming more confident with every single day. We are very proud of you.
- Yr 4** **Reuben** - for your hard work and enthusiasm for learning. You are such a positive role model for Beech Class.
- Yr 5** **Iris** - for your kind, caring and nurturing attitude in school, especially towards the younger children; you are a super role model.
- Yr 6** **Aven** - for your fantastic, systematic approach to problem solving in maths. Your perseverance and quiet determination is admirable!



Diary Dates 2023/24



2023/24 INSET Days

Friday 1st September 2023

Tuesday 2nd January 2024

Monday 19th February 2024

Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd July 2024

Autumn Term 2023 - Monday 4th September - Friday 15th December 2023

Spring Term 2024 - Wednesday 3rd January - Thursday 28th March 2024

Summer Term 2024 - Monday 15th April - Friday 19th July 2024

Tuesday 3rd October	Apple Class Visit from Tom's Talking Reptiles
Tuesday 3rd October	2.30, Chestnut Class Young Voices Meeting
Thursday 5th October	10.00, Bishop Luffa Worship
Friday 6th October	8.45, Harvest Service at West Dean Church (details attached)
Monday 9th October	7.00pm, PTA AGM at The Selsey Arms
Wednesday 11th October	GAS Maths Enrichment Event (details to follow)
Wednesday 11th October	Apple Class Dinosaur Museum (details to follow)
Thursday 12th October	Maple Class visit to Winchester Science Centre
Thursday 12th October	Yr 6 NHS Programme
Tuesday 17th October	Beech Class visit to The Novium Museum, Chichester
Wednesday 18th October	GAS Enrichment Day at West Dean Gardens (details to follow)
Tuesday 31st October	Hugo Van Driel Assembly
Tuesday 7th November	Yellow School Photographs, Individual and Sibling
Friday 10th November	8.45, Remembrance Assembly
Tuesday 14th November	Parents' Evening
Wednesday 15th November	Parents' Evening
Thursday 16th November	8.45, Beech Class Assembly
Friday 17th November	Children in Need
Tuesday 21st November	Flu Vaccination programme in school
Friday 24th November	Food Bank Friday
Tuesday 28th November	Hugo Van Driel Assembly
Thursday 30th November	8.45, Chestnut Class Assembly
Thursday 30th November	Full Governing Body Meeting

After School Clubs
Autumn Term 2023

Autumn 1
First half of Autumn term

x5 weeks

Day	Adult Lead	Max	Club	Cost	Year Group	Description
Monday	Miss B Evans	14	Choir	£25.00	Yr 3,4,5,6	An opportunity to come and have a sing-a-long and explore music and singing in a group.
Tuesday	Mrs A Chilton	12	Arts and Crafts	£25.00	Yr R, 1, 2	An opportunity for the children to experiment with different art materials, primarily junk modelling, age appropriate.
	Mrs S Johnson/ Mrs S Goacher	20	Swimming WBH	£25.00	Yr 3,4,5,6	Children must be able to swim 25m of any stroke (not all strokes!) and want to work towards competing in galas. Rather than swimming lessons, this club will be focussed on building stamina and preparation for competing in Galas.
	Mr C Williams	20	Sports	£25.00	Yr 3,4,5,6	A variety of different sports activities, learning new skills, competitiveness and sportsmanship.
Wednesday	Ms J Boxall and Mrs S Muggieridge	8	Cookery	£30.00	Yr 3,4, 5, 6	Making a variety of recipes, teaching kitchen and knife skills with tea to bring home.
Thursday	Mrs E Holder	14	Dance	£25.00	Yr 2,3,4,5,6	A structured dance club for children to explore music and movement in a variety of dance styles.
	Mrs L Plackett	14	Board Games	£25.00	Yr 1 & 2	Come and play a selection of different board games each week in small groups, age appropriate.
Friday	AAA Coaching Mr B Johnson	14	Multi-sports	£25.00	1,2,3,4,5,6	A variety of different sports activities, learning new skills, competitiveness and sportsmanship.

We are delighted to be able to offer a varied programme of after school clubs for our children again this term. We are also pleased to be able to offer this provision with no increase to the cost again this half term. The cost of our clubs will remain at £5 per child, per session, with the exception of Cookery Club which is £6, towards the cost of ingredients.

Dates: W/C 18th, 25th September, 2nd, 9th, 16th October 2023.

In addition to our after school club programme our **Care Bear** provision is available on the following days **Tues/Weds/Thurs**, 3.00-4.00pm. Our **Breakfast Bears** Club is also available, Monday to Friday, 8.00 – 8.35, £4 per child (including breakfast). Please make sure that you book in. All clubs run from 3.00-4.00, apart from cookery which will finish at 4.15pm and Westbourne House swimming, which is at 6.30pm.

For all clubs, breakfast and care bears, you can make your bookings on-line at Schoolmoney.co.uk. Please contact the school office if you require a reminder of your log-in details.

Places for clubs are limited and will be allocated on 'first come, first served' basis. If there is insufficient numbers to make the club viable, we reserve the right to cancel this provision and make a full refund of any monies paid. Clubs will go 'live' on Wednesday 13th September at 7.30am.