

14th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is my first communication to our whole Early Years family, from our youngest children in Nursery right through to Reception, so I wanted to introduce myself properly and share a few important updates now that we are entering our second week of the academic year.

A little bit about me

I think it is important for you all to know a little bit about my background. Western has been my home from the beginning of my teaching career. I have taught in Key Stage One and, for almost five years, have had the privilege of leading KS1 as Phase Leader.

My undergraduate degree in Childhood Development involved lots of experience across Nursery, Day Care and Reception settings, so moving into Early Years feels both like an exciting new chapter and a return to where my journey in education began.

I have a real passion for child-led curiosity and provision-based learning, with children's interests, ideas and wonderfully big voices at the heart of what we do. Just as importantly, I value the partnership we have with families. You are the experts in your children; we bring our professional expertise in how young children learn and develop. Together, we can give them an incredibly strong start to their school journey.

A few changes

As always with a change in leadership, some things may look or feel slightly different this year if you have experienced EYFS at Western before. Any changes will be carefully considered, with the aim of creating a clear and consistent approach across Early Years while keeping our staff's time and attention where it matters most – with the children.

Communication with the EYFS team

Our main point of contact for general EYFS queries will be: eyfs@wes.rklt.co.uk

For anything specific to your individual child, teaching staff and Room Lead email addresses can be found on the school website under 'Our Staff'.

Our whole-school staff communication hours are 7:30am–5:30pm. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails outside of these times, so messages received outside these hours will likely be replied to during our usual communication hours.

Family

We know that, particularly for our youngest children, Family provides families with a lovely window into their child's day and we absolutely value that connection.

Moving forward, the Family messaging function will **no longer** be used to contact the EYFS team. Please use the email routes above instead, allowing communication to be managed clearly and consistently so that nothing is missed and you receive a response in a timely manner.

We will continue to use Family to share children's learning and experiences but we want this to be purposeful. Our priority is safeguarding, caring for and interacting with the children. Some of the most valuable Early Years learning happens when practitioners are playing alongside children, talking, questioning, noticing and extending their ideas. We never want documenting an experience to become more important than being part of it.

Our approach from September will therefore be:

- WOW observations: At least one individual WOW observation for each child, each term.
- Weekly updates: EYFS learning, news and celebrations will be shared through the whole-school weekly newsletter rather than separate weekly Family updates.
- Photos and celebrations: Photographs may be shared periodically to celebrate wonderful interactions, experiences, events and special moments.
- We will also use the whole-school daily update for reminders and information, giving you one central place for day-to-day communication without needing to continually check Family too.

There may naturally be some weeks where you see more on Family. This is not a reflection of how much your child has been doing or learning – often, a wonderful day in Early Years is one where the adults have been far too busy learning and playing alongside the children to reach for a device!

For the small group of you who are not yet signed up to Family, the Office team are currently working through this and should have it sorted by the end of the week at the very latest.

Western Primary School Cold Bath Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 0NA

☎ 01423 502737 ✉ office@wes.rklt.co.uk www.westernmps.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs J Slack



Learning Trust Alliance Teacher Training Teaching School Hub

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Curriculum Letters, dates and events

Our Curriculum Letters are sent termly and contain important information about what your child will be learning, alongside key dates, upcoming events and things to remember for the term ahead.

Any additional information or changes will, of course, be communicated with you as necessary.

Parent/Carer Open Session – as per Mrs Magill's letter last week, our Nursery and Reception classrooms will be open for you to pop into (children welcome) on **Wednesday 16th September from 3:30 p.m.** There will be a very short presentation running on the screens with some key information. I also want to clarify that the recorded Reception presentation will be sent to you, via a secure link, on Friday 25th September. This will be specific around curriculum, learning and phonics.

Other important information

Reception PE

Reception PE will take place on a Thursday afternoon. Reception children can come to school wearing their PE kit on Thursdays. This should consist of:

- a white T-shirt;
- black jogging bottoms or black shorts;
- jumper/cardigan; and
- appropriate footwear for physical activity.

Drop-off and collection

Please bear with us while we all get used to the routines at the beginning and end of the day. We really value the relationship between home and school and absolutely want you to feel able to check in with us. However, drop-off and collection are particularly busy times when our immediate priority has to be safely greeting or handing over every child. We are trialling different ways to do this in the most efficient and effective way but we ask kindly for your patience. We are also getting to know lots of new parents, carers and family members at once, so please don't be offended if we don't immediately recognise every face!

If you would like to speak to a member of staff at these times, **we therefore ask that you move to one side and allow us to greet or dismiss the other children first.** Once everybody is safely accounted for, we will be very happy to come back to you. For anything requiring a longer or more confidential conversation, please contact us to arrange a suitable time rather than discussing this at the gate.

Please label everything!

A small but very important plea from the team: please make sure **EVERYTHING** your child brings into school is clearly labelled with their name. Coats, jumpers, cardigans, PE clothing, bags, water bottles, lunch boxes and anything else that may find its way off your child and into the Early Years environment all need a name on them.

What a brilliant first week!

Finally, I couldn't finish our first whole-EYFS letter without saying just how proud we are of the children.

Their first week has been brilliant. Starting a new school year – whether joining us for the first time, moving into a new room or beginning Reception – is a huge transition for our youngest children and they have impressed us enormously.

We know you are trusting us with the people most precious to you and we never take that lightly. We have some wonderful plans for involving families in children's learning this year and I am genuinely excited about what we can build together.

Warmest wishes,

Jaycee Ward
EYFS Lead

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