Winterbourne Valley CE VA First School
Winterbourne Abbas, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9LW
Email: office@winterbournevalley.dorset.sch.uk
Web: www.winterbournevalley.dorset.sch.uk
Telephone: 01305 889297
Head Teacher Mrs E Sleightholme

Our Mission

Where we are all nurtured in our learning and personal development according to the beliefs of the Christian faith.

Our Values

Respect • Courage • Kindness

School Newsletter No 1 18th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the start of a new academic year! It has been such a pleasure to see the children return to school and settle so well into their new routines and classrooms. They have made a fantastic start and I have been particularly struck by the care and kindness they have shown towards one another. It has been wonderful to see our school values of Kindness, Respect and Courage shining through in their everyday interactions.

We are especially excited to be restarting our Buddy Reading across the school, which will take place every Friday afternoon. This is a lovely opportunity for our older children to partner with our younger pupils, sharing stories and enjoying books together. It is always a joy to see these relationships develop and we look forward to seeing our children learning from and supporting one another.

Our term dates are attached to this newsletter for your reference and we are already looking forward to our Harvest Festival on Thursday 22nd at 9.00am in the school hall. Everyone is warmly welcome to join us as we come together to celebrate harvest and give thanks.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It has been a wonderful start to the year and I look forward to sharing all the exciting things happening at Winterbourne Valley in the weeks ahead.

Kind regards,

Emma Sleightholme

Headteacher

Whole School News

Clubs

The children have really enjoyed trying out the range of free clubs on offer this term, including gardening, singing, art, LEGO and multi-skills.

If your child would like to continue attending any of these clubs, please sign them up on Arbor so that teachers know who to expect. We would love to see children making a commitment to the clubs they choose and attending regularly.

We also have a range of paid clubs available, including IMA Rising Stars Kickboxing, Forest School and our exciting new Dodgeball Club, which will run on Thursdays after school from 3.00pm to 4.00pm.

Dodgeball will be led by Mr Woodward from PH Active, our new PE teacher who teaches the children every Thursday. We're looking forward to offering the children this fun opportunity to develop their skills and enjoy being active together.

Please refer to the clubs table included in this newsletter for further information about the clubs on offer. If your child is interested in joining Kickboxing or forest school please click on the following

Kickboxing - https://app.classmanager.com/portal/ima-rising-stars/login

Forest School - https://bookwhen.com/forestyogiminds/e/ev-sgqap-20260908150000

Day	Club	Year groups	Time	Teacher
Monday	Gardening	Rec - Year 4	12.30 - 1.00	Mrs Joslin
	*Kickboxing	Rec - Year 4	12.45 -1.45	Mrs Farran
Tuesday	Lego/Computer Club	Rec - Year 4	12.30 -1.00	Ms Pearce
	*Forest School	Rec - Year 4	3.00 - 4.00	Mrs Hedgehog
Wednesday	Singing Club	Rec - Year 4	12.30-1.00	Mrs Jolin

Thursday	Multi Skills PE Club	Rec - Year 1	12.30-1.00	Mr Woodward
	Art Club	Rec - Year 4	12.30-1.00	Mrs Rogers
	*Dodgeball	Year 1 - Year 4	3.00-4.00	Mr Woodward
Friday	Multi Skills PE Club	Year 2 - Year 4	12.30-1.00	Mrs Macswiney

* Clubs have a cost

Music Lessons

We are pleased to offer our children the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, with lessons available in guitar, piano and recorder.

If you are interested in guitar lessons for your child, please contact Simon Mathewson at srjmat@gmail.com

For piano or recorder lessons, please contact Wessex Music at wessexmusic@wessex.ac

Learning an instrument is a wonderful way for children to develop their musical skills, confidence and creativity.

PTA Fundraising

We are absolutely delighted to announce that our PTA fundraising has exceeded our £10,000 target! This is a fantastic achievement and we would like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful PTA, our children and their families, Palmers Brewery and Winterbourne Abbas Parish Council for helping us reach our goal. We are incredibly grateful for everyone's support.

We are now in contact with a number of school playground specialists who are creating some wonderful designs for replacing our front playground equipment. Once we have the designs, we would love for the children to be involved in choosing the new equipment, giving them a real say in how their playground develops.

Volunteers Wanted!

To prepare for the new equipment, we need to dismantle and remove the old play equipment in the front playground, including the condemned equipment on the school

field. We are really keen to reuse as much of the existing equipment as we safely can to create additional play opportunities on the field.

If you are able to spare some time on Saturday 26th September from 10.00am to help dismantle the old equipment, or if you have any experience or knowledge of building play equipment, we would be very grateful to hear from you.

Please contact the school office if you are able to help. Every pair of hands will make a difference!

Coming Up – PTA Events

The PTA have also planned some exciting events for the children this half term!

👻 **Halloween Disco – Thursday 15th October, 5.30pm–6.30pm**
Get ready for some spooky fun, dancing and Halloween-themed entertainment!

🎃 **Non-Uniform Day & Bake Sale – Friday 23rd October**
A lovely way to celebrate the end of half term, with the added bonus of some delicious treats!

DOMVS Children's Writing Competition

We are delighted to be taking part in the Story House: The DOMVS Children's Writing Competition for 2026. This is a wonderful opportunity for children who enjoy writing and storytelling to use their imagination and develop their creative writing skills.

Taking part is completely optional. Children who would like to enter can write their story at home in their own time. Further information and details about the competition will be sent to families shortly.

This year, all stories must begin with the opening line:

"The sound was like nothing I had ever heard before…"

Stories should be handwritten wherever possible, although digital entries will be accepted for children who find writing difficult. The deadline for entries is Friday 16th October 2026.

There are different word limits depending on year group:

- Years 2 & 3: up to 300 words
- Years 4 & 5: approximately 400 words

The competition will be judged by Lord Julian Fellowes, and shortlisted children will be invited to an awards ceremony in Dorchester in January 2027.

We hope this will inspire some of our budding young authors to get creative and see where their imaginations take them!

Dates for your Diary

Please find attached the dates for the Autumn term

Strong roots, successful futures!