

Dear Families,

Welcome to the first Headteacher Update of the new year, which means that the first thing I should do is wish you all a very Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break. As we welcome 2025, we're already off to an action-packed start here at school, and I'm excited to share some of the fantastic things we've been up to since the term began.

Our first week back was nothing short of extraordinary. A group of our students had the privilege of visiting the Houses of Parliament—a truly inspiring trip that sparked lively discussions about democracy and leadership. The students were a credit to the school, impressing everyone with their insightful questions and impeccable behaviour. Who knows, we might just have a future Prime Minister among us.

This week, we've been celebrating Literacy Week, and the energy around school has been electric. From the Year 7 Spelling Bee to the Murder Mystery in Year 8 and 9, it's been fantastic to see students embracing their inner bookworms. The week has been a wonderful reminder of the power of words to transport us, inspire us, and bring us together. It felt like a good time to celebrate our very own West Exe Literary Canon, and so I have added a little information about what we are currently reading on the third page for you. We also held our first parents evening of this new year, but the final one for our lovely year 11s. It was a bittersweet event, as we enjoyed meeting parents for the last time but had those all-important pre-exam conversations. Keep up the good work year 11 – you're so close now! ★

Looking ahead, there's so much more to come this term, and I'll be keeping you updated on all the exciting events and opportunities. As always, I'm incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and resilience our students bring to everything they do. Thank you for your continued support in making our school such a vibrant and welcoming community.

& finally, Please also find a message from our Trust CEO, Moira Marder, [here](#).

Very best wishes,

Julie

## Celebrations

Literacy Week at WestExe has come to an end with a shocking crime: there has been a dastardly murder in the library! Luckily our daring Year 8 detectives solved the crime. Super sleuths Sonia W, Amelie V, Jess C and Freya L pieced together the clues to discover 'whodunit'. Students at WestExe can enjoy a brilliant selection of detective and mystery stories in the library...if they dare!

On Wednesday, 15 January a small group of West Exe students were invited to visit the Houses of Parliament. After an early start and a long journey, the group made it to London. There was time to visit the National Gallery and admire the amazing artwork, before eating lunch and heading to Westminster. The visit began with a tour of the Palace of Westminster where the knowledgeable tour guides told the students lots of interesting information about the building and the work of Parliament. Then there was the opportunity to see this work in action with a visit to the public gallery to see MPs debating. After the tour, the students took part in a workshop, creating petitions. The visit ended with a Q&A session with Exeter's MP, Steve Race. There was then time for a quick visit to McDonald's before a slightly shorter journey back to West Exe.

The students had a great day. They were all brilliant and a huge credit to the School. Thank you to Mr Salter, Mrs Haynes and Mr Green for supporting the trip and enabling the students to enjoy this unique experience.

"I really enjoyed the tour of Parliament and watching a debate in person. It was super interesting to find out all of the traditions as well as meeting our local MP, Steve Race, during a fun workshop." Mia W, Year 11

Congratulations to Cora E, Sophia I and Leo DC who have set new school records this calendar year! Well done on this brilliant achievement and for your superb performances! We are really proud of all you have achieved and look forward to seeing your performances in the summer term!

Cora E: A new 100m record for Y7 girls with a time of 13.94 seconds, beating the previous record of 14.1 seconds from 2010.

Sophia I: A new long jump record for Y9 girls with 5.55m, beating the previous record of 4.73m from 2017. Sophia also set a new 100m record for Y9 girls with a time of 12.57 seconds beating the previous record of 13.1 seconds from 1983.

Leo DC: A new 1500m record for Y9 boys with a time of 4 mins 31 seconds, beating the previous record of 5 mins 17 seconds from 2010.

Our students had a fabulous last term, check out the memories they made by clicking [here](#).



# Update continued

Well done to all Sports Leaders in Cycle 1, we are so proud of you!!!

Over the course of the cycle our Sports Leaders have officiated at and organised the following events;

- Year 6 Sports Festival
- Year 4 Cross Country
- SEND Festival

They have all been amazing throughout and because of their fantastic efforts they have all been awarded the Sports Leader Qualification from Active Devon and have also received lots of positive comments from our local primary schools about how well they communicate and interact with the primary students.

## Whole school information

West Exe School Celebrates Work of Student Anti-Bullying Ambassadors - for the full story click [here](#)

Welcome Week focused on the student attribute of 'Pride' and being punctual.

There were over 52,384 merits awarded over the course of the week. 7MTK, 8EE, 9ALH, 10EKS and 11SBN were the winning tutor groups and have chosen a tutor time activity for next week. A raffle is taking place in each year group assembly this week to award the lifestyle voucher.

We will be posting fortnightly on our social channels, E-Safety posters surrounding different topics - keep an eye out for these when they land. They will also be available on our [website](#).

We'd loved to hear from you to give a 'shout out' for your child/children involved in a club/group, activity or just trying something new outside of school. Please email [admin@westexe.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@westexe.devon.sch.uk) with photos and a brief explanation and we will celebrate this in our next update.

Key dates

Half Term: Monday, 17 – Friday, 21 February 2025

Non Pupil Day Monday 24 March 2025

End of Term Friday, 4 April 2025

Start of the Summer Term Tuesday, 22 April 2025

You can also visit our website here.

## YEAR GROUP INFORMATION

### YEAR 7

We are excited to share that we will be offering Bikeability Level 3 sessions this year for our Year 7 students. This course helps students develop the skills needed to safely navigate more challenging roads and traffic situations, including busy streets, roundabouts, complex junctions, and queueing traffic. It also covers route planning for safer cycling. A letter has been sent to you this week regarding this opportunity.

Students are settling well into cycle 2 of the elective programme.

### Year 8

Year 8 students have shown maturity, professionalism, and great engagement as they continue to manage reception duties and interact with visitors throughout the day.

Students are settling well into cycle 2 of the elective programme.

### Year 9

#### Year 9 Subject Evening - Thursday 30 January 2025

The Intermediate Maths Challenge (IMC) is taking place for Y9, Y10 and Y11 students on Wednesday, 29 January. This is an exciting opportunity for our gifted mathematicians to compete against others in their age group across the country.

Students are settling well into cycle 2 of the elective programme.

### Year 10

#### Year 10 Progress Event - Thursday 13 February 2025

The Intermediate Maths Challenge (IMC) is taking place for Y9, Y10 and Y11 students on Wednesday, 29 January. This is an exciting opportunity for our gifted mathematicians to compete against others in their age group across the country.

Year 10 sports leaders helped with the after school netball league for our local primary schools.

Continuing work experience sessions focusing on contacting employers and preparing for their time in the work place.

Students are settling well into cycle 2 of the elective programme.

### Year 11

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# Canon Reads at West Exe

A brief summary of the books your children will be exploring through reading at WES



Year 7:

## **You're Awesome**

"A positive and empowering guide to being your best self!"

## **Noughts and Crosses**

"The story focuses on a relationship, which is frowned upon by society, and explores the discrimination they encounter at every turn by reversing traditional racial stereotypes and presenting the 'White' population as the oppressed race. This is a thrilling book that asks some very thought-provoking questions"

## **Private Peaceful**

"An excellent story about family and friendship. Set during World War I, Private Peaceful charts the life of Tommo, a young soldier at the Front, as he looks back over the formative events of his life: his father's early death, his relationship with his loving mother and brothers, Big Joe and Charlie, and their beloved schoolfriend, Molly"

Year 8:

## **Diary of a Young Girl**

"An unbelievable story that reveals the true horrors of the holocaust and World War II told to us through the diary of the teenager, Anne Frank."

## **Percy Jackson and the lightning thief**

"A tale of heroism and friendship. A fantastic adventure and introduction to the Greek Gods and classical world"

## **Refugee boy**

"Alem's moving story helps the reader understand the difficulties refugees face coming to England, from a child's perspective, but also points out the huge advantages we all take for granted – free education, no war, a support system that tries to help, and a legal system that tries to bring justice and security to refugees"

Year 9:

## **Perks of being a wallflower**

"The book follows Charlie, the main character, as he navigates life as a high schooler with social anxiety and other mental health issues. Rather than being an outgoing popular kid, Charlie is someone who feels like he's an outsider, an observer and a wallflower. Aimed at building empathy and providing an opportunity to tackle hard topics head on, Perks has been a favourite book for many students"

## **I am Malala**

"Malala didn't deserve anything that happened to her. But still, even after she was shot, she kept fighting for what she believed in. She didn't back down, and kept fighting for girls to get an education, to be equal with boys. This is a book that everyone needs to read."

## **The Five People you meet in heaven**

"It is a beautiful story of life and death. This book invites us to look at the meaning of life differently. It tells us that we all have the potential to change the lives of others even through our simple actions."

Year 10:

## **The Curious incident of the dog in the nighttime**

"A beautiful, heartfelt story of a young boy on the spectrum, processing the complicated nature of life, love and human relationships"

## **The 57 Bus**

"This intriguing book shares the ideas of two individuals – both fighting incredible amounts of social stigmas – taking the reader through their lives and the challenges they face. The 57 Bus teaches the importance of understanding each person's situation before making a judgment"

## **The Outsiders**

"The Outsiders has something for every reader; there are star-crossed lovers, misunderstood teenage boys, thrilling fighting scenes, and suspense creeping up through every page. A compelling portrayal of teenage struggles and class conflict."