

WEST LEA SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME FROM THE CEO

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our newsletter for this half-term, focusing on the development of our curriculum which is a central priority for West Lea. Although the pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for each of us, it also provided an opportunity to re-evaluate what’s most important, and that’s exactly what we are doing with our curriculum! To achieve this, we have refined, expanded and future-proofed our curriculum offer so it supports all our pupils.

Our new curriculum covers the following refreshed learning domains:

- Being healthy and staying safe (including PSHE/RSE, Physical Development and Catering)
- Social and communication (including English, Reading and Functional Skills)
- Creativity (including Art, Drama and Music)
- Employability and community engagement (including Life Skills, Careers, Travel Training, Work Experience and College ‘taster’ days)
- Numeracy and problem-solving (including Maths and Financial Literacy)
- Knowledge of the world (including RE, History, Geography and Science)

Our Learning Domains are closely linked and provide the tools pupils need to prepare for their adulthood, relationships and the world of work. Our values are at the heart of our curriculum, as well as independence, literacy, numeracy and ICT, which are embedded across all curriculum areas.

Our curriculum was developed around the needs and interests of our pupils, so they receive the support and opportunities they need to flourish. Parents and carers are central to this. Please reach out to your child’s teacher, senior leader or head of school if you have any questions or suggestions. Your feedback and support is always valuable, essential and very much appreciated.

As we move further into the colder winter months, please do stay safe and well.

With every good wish,

Paul Quinn, CEO, West Lea School

READING AT WEST LEA - OUR STRATEGY

Reading is a real adventure - not only does it provide us with new knowledge and stimulate our brains, but it transports us to exciting places where we can meet old and new friends, explore different worlds and share common experiences. At West Lea, we want children to embrace reading with enthusiasm, confidence and competence.

Building the foundations

Our new reading strategy begins with introducing phonics across reception and year one (this also applies to those children in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 who find decoding words on a page tricky). Books are allocated based on age and children will be encouraged to learn connections between sounds and written letters using schemes approved by the Department for Education. They will also be introduced to words that don't follow the usual spelling and pronunciation rules to help them understand the differences.



Developing reading for meaning and pleasure

Once children have developed a level of phonic awareness, they will be introduced to a range of texts that encourage reading for meaning and pleasure. Using the Big Cats scheme, which helps develop readers at Key Stage 2 and 3, parents can access handy hints to help develop reading at home. For those children who struggle with phonics, we will introduce a different approach and work with you to make sure the right strategies are reinforced in all reading situations.

Structured reading

Structured reading activities take place every lesson across all Key Stages to help children build the skills to become confident in understanding different types of texts and levels of challenge. This includes stories, poems and plays, letters, newspapers, articles and essays, textbooks reports, and instructions.

The next step is for children to follow accredited courses throughout Key Stages 4 and 5, and both fiction and non-fiction will be used - matched to reading confidence as well as the interests and world views of our young people.

Building independence

We want children to be independent, not just in their ability to read but in their enthusiasm for choosing books and appropriate online material that interests and excites them. This should be reflected both in and outside of school. Across all sites, reading for pleasure will be promoted in lessons and at break times. Books will be available for children to borrow, as well as encouraging them to bring them in from home or from the local library.

Our book corners, shelves and Star Books cafe will encourage students to engage with reading, with teachers on hand to help select those most appropriate to the level of each child, where necessary.

Most importantly though, we cannot instil a love of reading without the help of our wonderful parents and carers. We would really welcome you all to get involved - after all, research has proved that children who read with a parent or carer at home make significantly more progress in all their learning than those who don't.

For more advice on our reading strategy, please visit our website or speak to your head of school.



CURRICULUM UPDATE

Context

It's incredibly important for us to make sure that every aspect of our school - from the environment through to the curriculum - takes into account the individual needs of each student to help build positive communication, optimistic attitudes, and high expectations. Our flexible approach to teaching and learning means we can deliver a personalised curriculum for every student.

Across all our campuses, our mission is to make long-lasting changes for our young people to improve life opportunities beyond the school gates, helping them to succeed in society.

As part of this, our curriculum aims to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need for adulthood, while also supporting them with employment, good health, independent living, friends, relationships and community.

Our aims

Our values of 'community', 'kindness', 'learning for life', 'innovation' and 'inclusion' run through everything we do. These values are also embedded within our curriculum to help children participate in the community and be armed with the knowledge and skills to be successful in relationships, in life and in work. To do this, our curriculum aims are to:

- Prepare pupils for adulthood and equip them with skills for life
- Empower pupils to have a voice, exercise choice and increase independence
- Develop communication, reading and social skills to build relationships
- Instil an understanding of the local, national and global community
- Encourage good mental and physical health and enable pupils to stay safe and regulate emotions
- Develop skills that promote digital confidence, creativity, innovation and problem-solving
- Promote kindness, consideration, resilience and responsibility

Everything we do starts with the pupils. Understanding them and their learning needs combined with practical opportunities and targeted pathways including training and employment, means we can provide personalised learning that maximises their potential and increase their confidence and independence.

Curriculum overview - our learning domains

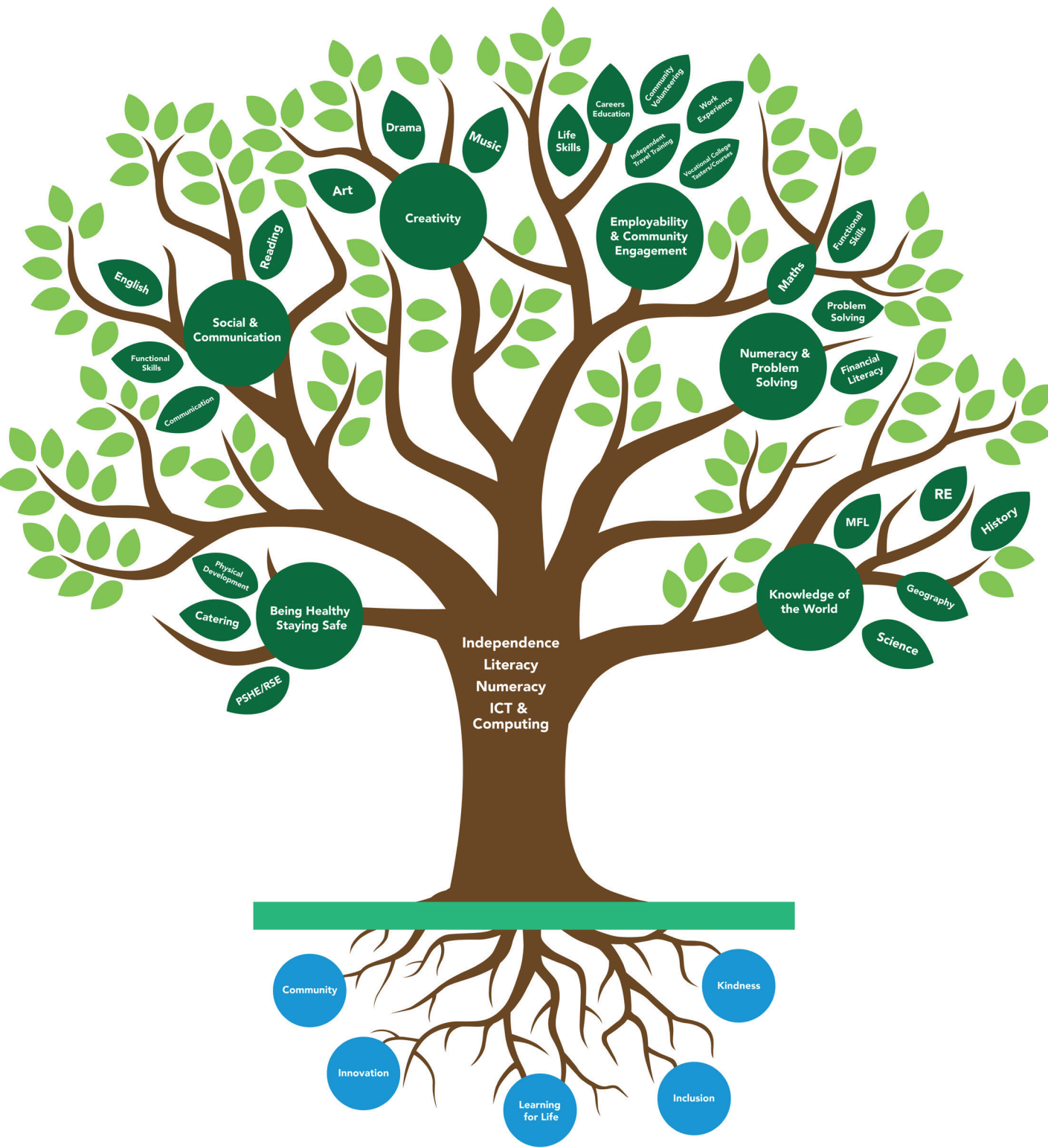
Our learning domains, which are closely linked and weave through everything we do, have been created by taking into consideration the views of pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors. They can be defined as:

- Being healthy and staying safe
- Social and communication
- Creativity
- Employability and community engagement
- Numeracy and problem-solving
- Knowledge of the World



Our West Lea curriculum tree represents how closely linked and intertwined our learning is, with our values and core skills rooted in everything we do.

We fully appreciate every child is different, so we take the time to understand their goals and preferred methods of learning. Our curriculum then weaves core knowledge and skills into pupils' days, helping them to build on previous learning goals as they move through school and into adulthood.



Our curriculum pathways

As part of the curriculum, West Lea offers four pathways - Willow, Oak, Sycamore and Birch - that run from Early years to Post 16 and are assigned based on students' individual needs. Each pathway delivers a mix of academic (national curriculum) programmes of study, life skills and preparation for work and adulthood.

Students can move between pathways freely, meaning they are never limited in their development. Across all pathways, children have equal access to resources, therapies, support and enrichment opportunities. For more detail on each of the pathways, please visit our curriculum pages on the website.

Building independence and cultural capital

As pupils move from one Key Stage to the next, we continually build on their learning and challenge them to further their independence. This learning journey is captured in an 'independence passport' which motivates them to acquire skills wherever possible, including at home and within their community.

Enrichment and extracurricular activities are also an essential part of the school day, providing rich learning experiences that broaden learners' cultural capital. This learning is invaluable and contributes to the school's overall curriculum intent.

Learning for Life

Our "Careers Offer" promotes community inclusion and independence, aligning with many of our values including 'Learning for Life', as well as the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and the National Careers Strategy.

At West Lea we recognise the importance of including careers education throughout the school rather than just when students are considering their options for Post-16 education. By building this into our curriculum, we encourage students to explore, consider and plan for their future, working towards independence and the world of work.

We run a number of independence programmes to help students become more integrated with the local community including a Work Experience Programme, local Independent Travel Training programme and a Supported Internship Programme. Our strong partnerships with local employers mean we can provide high-quality careers education and access to training and job opportunities within and beyond the local area.

As an innovative school we are always exploring new ways to support our students to work towards leading fulfilled lives with increased independence.



UPDATE FROM LEARNING FOR LIFE CHARITY

Learning for Life Charity is based in Edmonton and seeks to support the education of young people with special educational needs, prevent and relieve poverty, provide pathways to employment, and promote social inclusion. It has a unique partnership with West Lea School and is part of the Enterprise Cooperative Trust. The charity is currently running two projects, which you can read about below:

Life in the Community

We aim to establish and operate a not-for-profit 'bijou' café and mini conference centre in the former girl's charity school on Church Street, with the help of Local Authority partners and community volunteers. The London Historic Building Trust (LHBT) and Learning for Life Charity (LFLC) are working together to regenerate this historic former charity school (£2 million project), so that it can once again provide learning, training and employment opportunities for young people in Enfield. In addition to running a café, activities will include hosting meetings, cinema experiences and activities for local schools. The centre will provide opportunities for young people with special educational needs, or who are unemployed/socially excluded to access work experience and develop key employability skills.

It will act as the centre of excellence and good practice for quality work experience and training and ultimately improve job prospects. We want to create a place where the different communities of Edmonton Green can come together, creating an innovative community space that supports economic regeneration and recovery.

Additionally, our Coffee Cart (complete with a touch screen barista quality coffee machine) is moving to St Aldhelm's Church in Edmonton to become part of our Community Café, which serves coffee and baked goods.

All Works of Life

Our ambition is to establish and operate as a not-for-profit supported business. Our project titled 'All Works of Life' aims to expand the existing successful furniture upcycling project run by West Lea School and Learning for Life Charity. It will provide young people with a warehouse space (currently at Building Bloqs), in which they can design and deliver commercial services for business, such as labelling, packaging, light assembly, printing, furniture upcycling and restoration of disability equipment.

This project will provide warehouse and carpenter skills and training opportunities, which may eventually lead to paid employment. It aims to support young people with disabilities and other members of the local community who may be marginalised from the job market.

Running alongside this will be an outreach service, designed to offer advice, guidance, educational programmes and life skills training to our young service users. This will help them overcome barriers to employment and develop independence. In doing this, 'All Works of Life' will promote social inclusion and community cohesion. It will act as a community hub by providing holistic services under one roof.

We want to thank our partners, Fortuna Healthcare, Taylor Woodrow, and Building Bloqs, for kickstarting our project while fully supporting the Trust's mission. Thanks to them, we have secured a venue, funding for equipment, customers and young people who are raring to go. Together, we will turn this dream into a reality!





UPDATE FROM ENTERPRISE COOPERATIVE TRUST



A message from the Chair of the Enterprise Cooperative Trust, Janet Leach

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am thrilled to be involved in the Enterprise Cooperative Trust, which aims to support the learning and career journeys of Enfield's young people, regardless of their abilities. We want all young people to be encouraged and supported to reach their potential. Our members and partners include West Lea School, the Learning for Life Charity, London Borough of Enfield, Enfield College, Chace Community School and Waverley School.

The Trust is supported by The Representative Council, a group of parents/carers, business owners and charity workers who discuss ideas and projects based on their knowledge and community insight. They also help the Trust determine its priorities.

For example, we are working on a number of projects with our partner, Learning for Life Charity, which you can read more about below. These include a baking enterprise project, where students learn about baking, hygiene, using electrical items and trading too, and a printing enterprise, where students will produce book bags for primary schools and bags for life for local charity shops.

In the future, we hope to organise a borough-wide employment fair in partnership with businesses, employers, schools and the Local Authority. We want to broaden the horizons of students and support Enfield's excellent schools.

For more information about the Trust, please visit our website: www.enterprisecooperativetrust.org.uk

WEST LEA IN THE NEWS

This month, West Lea featured in The Headteacher magazine, in which we explored our four pillars for achieving success for students and staff.

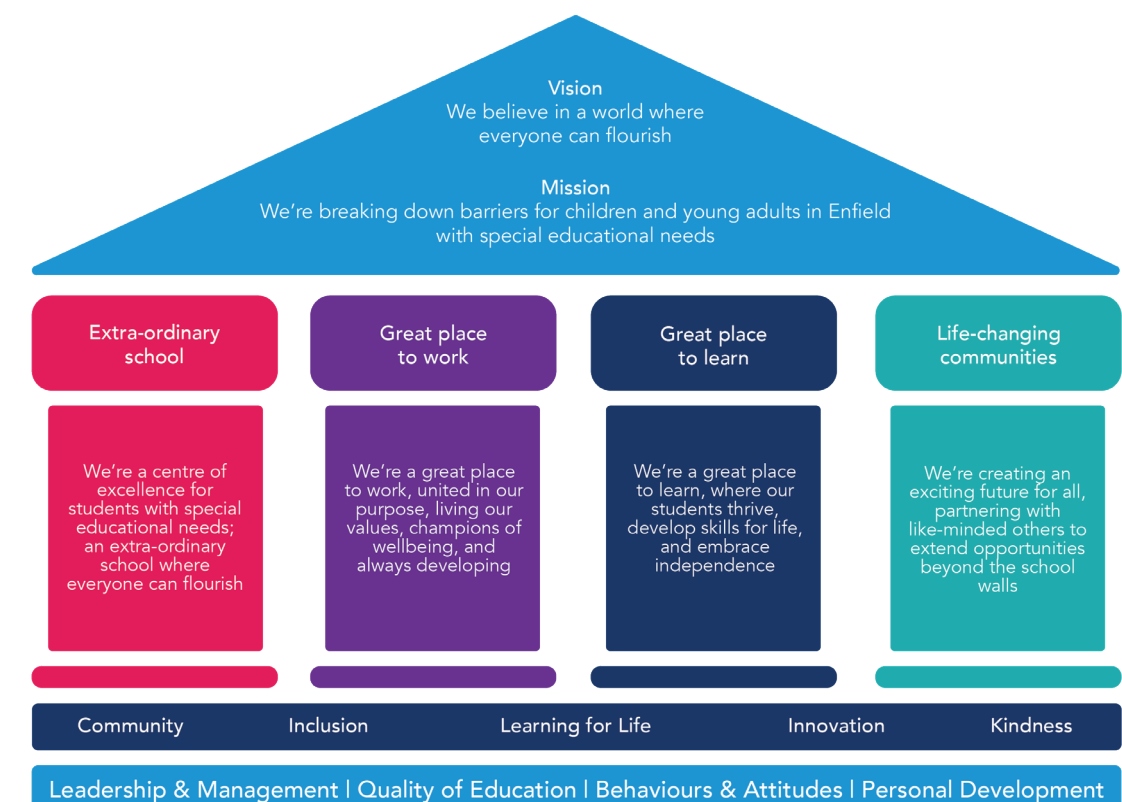
The piece covered our recently established strategic framework which provides us with the foundations on which we can achieve vision of a world where everyone can flourish, by becoming a centre of excellence for students with special educational needs; uniting and supporting staff in the best way possible; being a hub for pupils to develop skills for life; and developing relationships within the community to provide life-changing opportunities.

Our first pillar is focused on our vision of being 'an 'extra' ordinary school' and a centre of excellence for students with a diverse range of special educational needs. We continuously develop our offer to provide better outcomes for our students and support mainstream schools with outreach services.


Our second pillar is focused on making our school 'a great place to work' – with staff uniting in our purpose, living our values, becoming champions of wellbeing, and developing both personally and professionally.

Our third pillar is focused on being a 'great place to learn'. Learning for life permeates everything at West Lea; it is deep-rooted in our values and across our teaching. It's no surprise that our third pillar focuses us on being a great place to learn. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on every aspect of disabled people's lives, and so we understand now more than ever, the importance of setting our pupils up for success through lifelong learning.

Our fourth pillar reflects our vision of the life-changing power of community. Every young person at our school has something to offer beyond our walls. Through our non-profit foundation, the Enterprise Cooperative Trust, we build community relationships with like minded groups, schools, businesses, and charities who share similar values and who can provide our pupils with innovative ways to develop their interests and skills.




OUR CAMPUSES




West Lea
MERIDIAN CAMPUS

Dysons Road (KS2)
174 Dysons Road
Edmonton
N18 2DS

Springfield Road (KS1-2)
Springfield Road
New Southgate
N11 1RR






West Lea
LEARNING FOR LIFE CAMPUS


Broomfield School
Wilmer Way
N14 7HY

St Marys (KS1 & KS2)
Lawrence Road
Edmonton
N18 2HN

Ponders End
219 – 221 High Street
EN3 4DZ


Chace ARP (KS3 & KS4)
Churchbury Lane
EN1 3HQ





West Lea
HASELBURY CAMPUS

Haselbury Campus (KS3)
Haselbury Road
Edmonton
N9 9TU





West Lea
HORIZON

Learning for Life Centre
24 Cyprus Road
Edmonton
N9 9PG

College
College of North
East London



INTRODUCING JOSE NEGRIN AND OUR APPROACH TO WELLBEING

We are very happy to introduce our head of therapeutic support, Jose Negrin, who reinforces West Lea's commitment to mental health and wellbeing. Jose graduated from his degree in Psychology in 2003 at University of La Laguna, Canary Island, where he also completed his Masters in Clinical Psychology and Health in 2005. As part of this, he focused on mental disorders, diagnosis, interventions and links between mental and physical health. He began his work as a psychologist in 2003, before becoming a clinical psychologist three years later, working mainly with adults and the elderly.

In 2012, he moved to the UK and started working with children and families with learning disabilities, such as Downs syndrome, ASD, ADHD and ODD. In the years to follow, he worked with the NHS (CAMHS) and a Local Authority, before accepting his role at West Lea School in 2020, where he now supports students with special educational needs and manages a therapeutic team.

At West Lea School, we believe young people cope with challenging circumstances in different ways, and that we, as a school, should be mindful of this and help students find their methods for coping. We believe in making time for staff wellbeing as well as that of students,

so we have developed a whole-school approach to addressing mental health. With the support of Jose and the wider team, we plan to achieve this by organising workshops for staff on wellbeing and stress management, so they not only have the provision they need, but also the skills and expertise to identify and support student wellbeing.



We are also establishing a long-term strategy and pathway for support across the whole school. Benefitting from internal expertise and resources, we will work to streamline support across all our campuses.

For example, in any instances where students may act out, rather than treating it as an isolated case, we assess the student's surroundings (including their peers, the classroom environment and staff) and consider what may be motivating or facilitating the frustration which caused the student to act out. These insights will then help other students and will provide more effective support in the form of whole school intervention.

We are incredibly excited about Jose's role and the support he, and the whole West Lea team, will provide to students and staff across all four campuses.

KEY TERM DATES 2021/22

Here are some dates for your diary for the autumn term.

November 2021

22nd

West Lea reading launch parent workshop, 9.30-10.30am and 2-3pm, Haselbury Campus

December 2021

6th

West Lea reading strategy launch with parents and students (Learning for Life Campus)

17th

End of autumn term for pupils

January 2022

4th

Return for new term

7th

Annual review day (school closed to pupils)

February 2022

13th - 18th

Spring half-term holiday week

21st

Inset day

22nd

Pupils return from half-term holiday

April 2022

1st

End of spring term

19th

Summer term begins

22nd

Annual review day 2 - school closed to pupils

May 2022

2nd

Early May Bank Holiday

30th

Summer half-term holiday begins

June 2022

6th

Pupils return from summer half-term holiday

July 2022

15th

Annual review day 3 - school closed to pupils

22nd

End of summer term





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