

# Courthill Infant School

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Headteacher: Mrs Alison Carter



20<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Dear Parents / Carers



We wanted to introduce you to a loved (but unusual) member of the Courthill Infant School team: Winnie the Golden Retriever, our school dog!

Winnie – who lives with Mrs Johnston from the office and her family – has had specialist training since she was a puppy. She is a three-year-old Golden Retriever, a breed with the ideal temperament for therapy and support dogs (eg guide dogs) as they are, by nature, gentle and friendly. Winnie comes into school most days, taking part in activities such as listening to children read or helping when someone feels sad (a little stroke and a look into her big brown eyes helps make people feel happy again).

There are many benefits to having a school dog, as they can:

- have a calming effect on pupils and staff, reducing stress and improving self-esteem.
- improve behaviour and concentration.
- encourage expression and participation.
- foster a sense of responsibility among pupils.
- encourage respect and improve pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers.
- help teach children to nurture and respect life.
- help children build confidence in reading.

We appreciate that some children may be unsure around dogs. Please be assured that we will do everything we can to reassure children who are fearful and that no-one will be forced to have contact with Winnie. When in school, Winnie's main place of residence is the school office, which is secure and separate from classrooms. Whilst moving around the school, Winnie is always on a lead and with an adult. Children are only able to interact with Winnie under strict supervision at certain times.

When we first introduced Winnie to our school two years ago, we organised a series of class talks with the dog trainer who trained Winnie and many other school dogs (including the school dog at Baden-Powell & St Peter's Junior School). The talks focused on what to do and, more importantly, what not to do around a dog. Later this term, these talks will take place for our new Year Reception classes (details to follow).

We hope you will be as happy as we are to have Winnie in school. However, if you have concerns – or if you do not wish your child to be involved with reading or other activities involving Winnie – please email the office or speak your child's class teacher.

Many thanks,

Mrs Carter, Headteacher



the sandwell well-being charter mark



PROUD TO BE A MUSIC MARK SCHOOL  
2023 - 2024



BCP Council  
School's Environment Award  
Platinum 2023



Coastal Learning  
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