



Handbook

Witton Middle School

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A warm welcome from the Witton Middle Team

Witton Middle School is a happy, caring and vibrant school with a positive approach. Every child deserves to be successful; we nurture our children and support them to believe that anything is possible.

Our aspirational primary ethos ignites a lifelong zest for learning in our children, building independence, high self-esteem and a strong determination to succeed through our pride values. We have high academic and personal expectations and prepare our children to embrace challenge. Our very strong values promote excellence in academic performance, as well as the arts and sport. Inside impressive, extensive grounds our specialist facilities help us provide memorable and stimulating learning experiences.

Our team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants know our children well and work together to tailor the curriculum for the children in each class. We provide an effective bridge between first school and high school by encouraging children to be increasingly independent learners. Our children transform from being primary pupils to secondary students. We pride ourselves on developing confident and assertive individuals who will make a positive difference in the world.

Our school has been recognised as good by Ofsted (2016) and we continue to build upon best practice, always aiming to be at the forefront of developments in learning and teaching.

At Witton, it is our duty and privilege to work in partnership with everyone to build a firm foundation for our children's future lives. We warmly welcome you and look forward to beginning the journey together.

From all of the Witton Team

Our values



*Developing PRIDE and preparing our
children to go out into the world
to make it a better place*

Perseverance - Responsibility - Independence - Determination - Empathy



PRIDE

Developing PRIDE and preparing to go out into the world to make it a better place.

At Witton:

We always **P**ersevere to be the best we can be:
we never give up!

We act **R**esponsibly for ourselves, our school, our community and the world!

We strive to be **I**ndependent by being organised, creative and taking risks to solve a problem!

We are **D**etermined to succeed by facing our challenges and working together to achieve our ambitions!

We show **E**mpathy and care for others, and the world around us by being honest, considerate and kind!



How do I make contact?

We welcome parents and carers into school and are always willing to work in partnership with you and listen to your comments about our school. Your first point of contact should be with the school's office team on 01905 773362. The office is open between 8:00am and 4:00pm. We pride ourselves on being a warm and welcoming school, with many parents and carers preferring to drop into the office in person.

What if I need to see my child's teacher?

A member of the office team will find out when he or she is not teaching and make an appointment for you, or they will ask the teacher to contact you when they are free. Office staff will ensure the teacher receives the message and we guarantee someone will contact you within 3 working days, though it is usually much quicker.

What if my child is late/absent?

Please contact the office team.

What if I need to urgently speak to my child?

The office team will be able to get a message to your child.

What if I need to speak to a senior member of staff?

We have a team of people who can help such as Year Team Leaders, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy and Headteacher. The office staff will decide where to most appropriately direct your enquiry.

What if I have an urgent concern?

Once again the office staff will decide where to direct your enquiry.

Meet the team



Senior Leadership Team

Mrs Suzie Bourne	Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Mrs Hannah Walsh	Deputy Headteacher & Deputy DSL
Mrs Leanne Neeson	Assistant Headteacher & Deputy DSL
Mr Simon Marshall	SENDCo & Deputy DSL
Mrs Marie Smith	School Business Manager
Mrs Sharon Wilkins	Office Manager

Year 5 Team

Mrs Jo Bradburn
Miss Jilly-Anne Diggett
Mr Stephen Lake
Mr Steve Osbaldiston
Miss Anna Brenwald

Year 6 Team

Mr Lawrence Crabb
Miss Chloe Biddle
Mrs Clare Lally
Mr Alex Pegg
Miss Lisa Quine
Miss Cathy Richards

Year 7 Team

Miss Jemma Carr
Mr Oliver Alcorn
Mrs Libby Miele
Mr Brad Tudgay
Mrs Kirsty Watson
Miss Charlotte Wyles

Other Teachers

Mrs Christine Walker Teacher of MFL
Tom Barker-Phillips Pastoral Mentor

Teaching Assistants

Mrs Sarah Harris (Lead TA)	Mrs Danielle Hickey
Mrs Julie Andrews	Mr Andrew Hooper
Mrs Kathleen Beasley	Mr Declan Lines
Mrs Veronica Bentley	Mrs Kathryn Lloyd
Ms Ailie Mullin	Mrs Alison Mountford
Ms Alison Chorley	Mrs Jo Nicholas
Mr Will Cocker	Mrs Marlene Sanchez
Mrs Isabel Grace	Mrs Lynn Swanson
Mrs Clare Griffith	Mrs Carol Taylor

Office & Support Team

Mr Steve Brown	Site Manager
Mrs Sam Butler	Administrative Assistant
Ms Alison Chorley	Science Technician
Mrs Helen Cole	Finance & Administrative Assistant
Mrs Louise Davis	Administrative Assistant
Mr Matthew Gwilliam	ICT Technician
Mrs Julie Higgins	Data co-ordinator
Mrs Nicola Lewis	Administrative Assistant
Mrs Sarah Strange	Librarian

When is my child required to attend?



The school day

School starts at 8:25 am prompt. We expect our pupils to arrive at school no later than this unless there is a very good reason, it is advisable to aim to be at school by 8:15 am. Lunch is at 12:35 pm, which being later on in the day, it is advisable to provide your child with a snack for the 10.00 am break, alternatively our caterers sell breakfast items during the break time. All children enter and leave through the rear entrance and parents may wait on the back playground once the gates are open. There is an after-school club run by an external local provider on site – please ask the office for details.

8.25 – 8.50 am	Registration and Guided Reading
8.50 – 10.00am	Lesson 1
10.00 – 10.15 am	BREAK
10.15 -11.25 am	Lesson 2
11.25 – 12.35 pm	Lesson 3
12.35 – 1.20 pm	LUNCH
1.20 - 1.25pm	Registration
1.25 - 2.35 pm	Lesson 4
2.35 - 3.00 pm	Assembly (whole school or year group)
3.00 pm	END OF SCHOOL DAY

When is my child required to attend?



Attendance

At Witton Middle School our expectations for attendance is high because we know that this leads to excellent progress. We have a strong belief, which is supported by research, that attendance and success go hand. We aim high, the national average for attendance was 96% in 2018 and our Witton target is currently 97%.

We adhere to the strict guidelines laid down by government policy regarding authorised and unauthorised absence. If your child requires medicine this can be given by the Main Office provided we have written consent.

If your child is unavoidably absent please contact the school office on the first day of absence. Unless we know that pupils are going to be absent our Attendance Lead will undertake first day calling for all absent pupils to ensure that your child is safe.

It is against the law to take your child out of school unnecessarily and all absences need to be properly explained.

The Headteacher can only sanction a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to be considered for a leave of absence you should complete the form at least three weeks before the planned absence. A letter will be sent which may authorise the absence. This is to ensure that we safeguard every child in our care.

Parents and carers need to understand that holidays in term time, which do not fall into exceptional circumstances, will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Term Dates 2019 - 2020



AUTUMN TERM 2019

Monday 2 nd September	Teacher Training Day (School closed)
Tuesday 3 rd September	Teacher Training Day (School closed)
Wednesday 4 th September	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 25 th October	School closes at 3.00pm – half term
Monday 28 th October	Half term week starts
Friday 1 st November	Half term week ends
Monday 4 th November	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 20 th December	School closes at 3.00pm – end of Autumn Term

SPRING TERM 2020

Monday 6 th January	Teacher Training Day (School closed)
Tuesday 7 th January	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 14 th February	School closes at 3.00pm – half term
Monday 17 th February	Half term week starts
Friday 21 st February	Half term week ends
Monday 24 th February	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 3 rd April	School closes at 3.00pm – end of Spring Term

SUMMER TERM 2020

Monday 20 th April	Teacher Training Day (School closed)
Tuesday 21 st April	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 8 th May	Bank Holiday (School closed)
Friday 22 nd May	School closes at 3.00pm – half term
Monday 25 th May	Half term week starts
Friday 29 th May	Half term week ends
Monday 1 st June	School starts at 8.25am
Friday 17 th July	School closes at 3.00pm – end of Summer Term
Monday 20 th July	Teacher Training Day (School closed)

How will my child arrive at school?



School transport

Children within the school's prescribed catchment area, but live over three miles away from the school, are entitled to free transport to and from school. Please contact Worcestershire County Council's Transport Section (01905 844392) for more information (including their 'vacant seats scheme' for out of area children).

We encourage children to walk, cycle or use a scooter to get to school as part of making healthier choices on the understanding that their bike or scooter is in good working order and they wear a properly fitted and approved cycle helmet. The security of bicycles and scooters is the responsibility of the individual (a secure bike lock is recommended).

Pupils who repeatedly put others in danger by cycling or scooting on paths in or near school, or do not wear their helmet, will be asked to leave their bicycle or scooter at home because of concerns for others safety.

We ask drivers to take special care when near school, particularly during the start and finish of the day. Please keep driveways clear and strictly observe the highway code for the safety of all our children.



What happens at break and lunch times?



Our school operates a health eating policy and we encourage all children to bring 'healthier' snacks. We suggest fruit, vegetables, low-sugar cereal bars and other healthy options. We discourage crisps, chocolate or sugar-based sweets. Our aim is not only to promote healthy eating, but also to reduce litter on the school grounds. All snacks should be brought in re-usable containers as no wrappers will be allowed on the playground. Nuts are not allowed anywhere on the school site due to allergies. Water is available and your child may have a water bottle in the classroom. Please provide your child with a full bottle of water each day, which they can top up later – no squash, juice or fizzy drinks except with their lunchtime meal please.

Pre-school breakfast club

Children can come in through the front entrance from 8.00am for a pre-school breakfast, with toast, cereal, yogurts, fruit and drinks available each morning.

Breaktime

A variety of hot and cold snacks (including fruit) are available to purchase at breaktime.

Lunchtime

During lunchtime children have the option of choosing a tempting school meal or to bring a packed lunch. Meals cost £2.30 for a main course and a dessert. Drinks, other than water, are available at an additional cost. School meals are freshly prepared and offer quality and value for money. Children in receipt of free school meals have the same choice. Vegetarians are also catered for on a daily basis. Parents and carers of children with specific food allergies are requested to contact the school in advance. Children are able to play until their class are called for hot dinners, and these are offered in year group 'sittings', with the order being rotated each day. Children are not allowed to leave the school premises at lunchtime without written permission. In the event of any special emergency situation, children who have to leave the premises at lunchtime must report to the school office to have their details recorded.

The children have library access both at lunchtime and break, and can also use the fitness trail, shed toys and football fields at lunchtime when the weather is fine. Staff are on the playground every break and lunch, with all of the senior team on duty throughout lunchtime.



What is the uniform policy?

All pupils are expected to wear school uniform whilst on the school premises or when representing the school during visits or in inter-school competitions. Our uniform has been planned to be functional, look smart and be cost-effective. All uniform and any valuable items must be marked with your child's name.

We consider that wearing the correct school uniform is a way of pupils showing that they wish to belong to our school. Pupils not wearing the correct uniform will receive one polite reminder before they are expected to return home and change into the correct uniform. Please contact us regarding any genuine circumstances which mean that the correct uniform is unavailable to your child.

Uniform

White formal shirt (short or long sleeved) with tie
White polo shirt in Summer (optional)

Burgundy tie (clip-on)

Burgundy V-neck sweatshirt or cardigan with school badge

Plain black formal trousers or plain black knee-length formal skirt

Red/white gingham dress in Summer (optional)

Black formal shorts in Summer (optional)

Plain black socks or black tights
White socks with summer dresses

Plain black shoes (*not trainers or boots*)

Accessories e.g. belts and hair adornments etc., must be discreet and of uniform colour

PE Kit

Red/black sports top with school badge

Black shorts

Red football/hockey socks

White ankle socks (summer)

Trainers (not canvas shoes)

Football boots (optional for girls)

Shin pads (FA ruling on safety)

Gum shield (advisable for rugby in Years 5 & 6, but essential for Year 7)

We discourage pupils from bringing valuable items into school such as jewellery. Studs and a signet ring are allowed (these must be removed for P.E.). However, extreme hair styles, make-up and nail varnish are not. Should your child choose not to follow any of these rules, they will be asked to comply, but failure to do so will result in parents and carers being asked to take their child home.



What does my child need to bring to school?

From Year 5 onwards, we encourage the children to take responsibility and become more independent in organising themselves for the school day on the previous evening, so they can be fully prepared. The children are required to have their stationery, PE kit, reading book, water bottle and lunch or lunch money in school every day.

PE Kit

Your child's individual timetable will inform you of when they should bring their PE kit into school.

Pencil Case

Classes run all the more smoothly if the children are prepared by having with them, at all times, a named pencil case containing:-

- At least 2 Blue Berol Handwriting pens (no black pens, biros or gel pens please)
- At least 2 Red pens for editing work
- A pink highlighter (for peer marking)
- At least 2 HB pencils (plus 2B and 4B for artwork)
- A rubber
- A pack of colouring pencils (not felt tips)
- A 30cm ruler (non folding)
- A pencil sharpener
- A dry-wipe marker pen
- A glue stick
- A protractor

It would be helpful if all these items could also be named, wherever possible. Please ensure that your child maintains this equipment throughout the school year. Some stationery items can be purchased in school.





What will my child study?

At Witton Middle School, teaching takes place within a broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon the learning that has already taken place at first school and provides an effective foundation for the high school. Our curriculum:

- actively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, mutual respect, individual liberty and tolerance. This is underpinned by the whole school ethos of providing care and nurture within a warm atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect;
- includes an extensive array of extra-curricular opportunities which further develop pupils' sporting, artistic, theatrical, musical confidence and abilities;
- is supplemented by a range of assemblies which are broadly Christian but encompass all major world faiths and
- provides clear guidance on what is right and wrong through a comprehensive PHSCE programme and the promotion of restorative approaches which enable children to listen to the views of others and understand why their actions might be considered detrimental or helpful to relationships.

Through this extensive provision we enable our pupils to be successful academically and further develop their social, emotional, spiritual and cultural understanding. With a strong focus on values and subject disciplines, we ensure children develop the 'mini-characteristics' of historians, scientists and mathematicians, for example, and make the most of specialist teachers in French and music. English is developed right across the curriculum, and all children are given the opportunity to develop arts, technology and humanities so that they can discover their passions and interests whilst also securing their core academic competencies.

In Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6) your child will have, over two weeks: 10 lessons of mathematics, 10 lessons of English, 3 lessons of PE, 3 lessons of science, 6 humanities lessons (including history, geography and ethics (RE)), 3 lessons of Art/DT, as well as computing, music and French and PSHEC (personal, social, health education and citizenship). In KS3, the children have fewer English and mathematics lessons and more science, French and computing. All children have access to two computer suites and **6 laptop trolleys** across the curriculum. In the two week timetable, each session is 1hr and 10 minutes. This ensures less time is lost to movement between classes and settling down, leading to greater times for direct instruction and prolonged independent work and practice.



What makes learning and teaching effective?

All learning and teaching at Witton Middle School is underpinned by the school's 'PRIDE' values. Effective teaching is that which leads to effective learning and we have established some important principles in order to ensure excellent outcomes for children. Teachers know their pupils well, and ensure that all children are able to move on and extend or deepen their knowledge as soon as they are ready.

The curriculum is everything we offer in school – not just the lessons but the way that we work to build 'the whole child'. It is important to us that we can work with you to build a 'well-rounded' young person. We use a 'seed – sapling – tree' metaphor with the children, because we believe that in order for us to learn successfully, we really need strong roots. Establishing the conditions is critical in every classroom, and the trunk is the core knowledge of the curriculum because it is vital for future success. We know that with that really secure knowledge our children can then branch out and develop skills further to explore, extend, develop and flourish.

The learning process takes place in a climate where achievement, success and learning through mistakes are celebrated. A range of approaches are adopted and blended to ensure variety, engagement, collaborative learning, choice and independence. Teachers deliver effective lessons to ensure that all pupils achieve well. We encourage plenty of teacher-led instruction, so that learning is not left to chance, and ensure plenty of practice and 'quizzing' to secure memory and then providing extended creative and problem solving opportunities.

Learning is regularly monitored by evaluating lessons, discussing progress in books and through talking to pupils. This is undertaken together with all staff so that their teaching and therefore learning continues to improve.

For a full explanation of our policy please see our website.





What makes marking, feedback and homework effective?

Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally hard to ensure that clear feedback is given to your child. Children are provided with a 'success criteria' so that they can take increasing responsibility for checking, redrafting and correcting their work. Teachers will look at their work frequently to identify where pupils are on track or need extra help or challenge. Teachers are asked to give quality feedback on the most important pieces of work, though this may not always be written feedback. Some pieces of work can be marked by the pupil or a peer which helps pupils to be very clear about what success looks like and further develops independence.

Pupils make outstanding progress when they receive support at home, particularly with basic skills in reading, maths facts and grammar exercises. We encourage a strong reading routine throughout the middle years, to ensure children's vocabulary increases in line with curriculum demands.

Pupils will be given homework which:

- enables them to consolidate and reinforce the learning which has been taking place in the classroom;
- helps them to establish habits of successful learners and further develops our school's overall values;
- encourages experiences which may not be possible in the classroom.

We appreciate the help you can give your child but also provide homework clubs where they can seek expert teacher support.

Please contact us if you have any concerns regarding marking, feedback or homework.



What are our school's rules for good behaviour?

The importance of high standards of behaviour cannot be overstated. It is essential to both learning and teaching. We want our children to regulate their own behaviour, based upon a genuine understanding of the rewards of doing so. Through restorative approaches, rewards, sanctions and genuine reflection, we aim to see a change in pupils future behaviour.

Some expectations all children should follow:

- Are gentle (do not hurt anybody)
- Are kind and helpful (do not hurt people's feelings)
- Look after property (do not waste or damage things)
- Keep their organiser with them and get it signed
- Come equipped to lessons
- Listen to people (do not interrupt or ignore people)
- Are honest (do not cover up the truth)
- Wear correct uniform
- Are respectful
- Use polite language
- Move around school sensibly
- Respect quiet times, such as in class and assembly.

Where (albeit rarely) behaviour impacts negatively upon others, we seek to prioritise the safeguarding of individuals who are harmed by any negative behaviour. We invite parents and carers into school and work very closely with you to understand the causes of poor behaviour and how to minimise the impact on others.

Please see our schools website for a detailed overview of our policy and practice.

What are restorative approaches?

Restorative approaches help to ensure that every child is happy so that they can learn in school. Restorative talks are a way of re-building relationships for children who have had a friendship upset or 'fall out'. The approach helps children to feel that they have had help with a problem and that they have been treated fairly. Even smaller things sometimes matter hugely to our children and can resurface later. All our staff take time to support children with this.

When children are ready, we find a quiet space to have a meeting. We explain our ground rules of good body language, listening to everyone in turn and being honest, then we answer the following questions:

- **What has been happening?**
- **How did it make you feel at the time?**
- **How do you feel now?**
- **What are you going to do to put this right?**
- **How will things be different in the future?**

This helps children to listen and reflect and use their empathy skills to understand any upset that they may have caused to others, and also to put things right or forgive. It teaches them how to find solutions to problems and learn from their mistakes, and helps to avoid worry or resentment. Building relationships is a vital skill for life. In this way pupils take responsibility for their actions and they develop understanding of how others feel.

Restorative meetings can take a little time to answer all of the above questions, but we know that they are worth it because they build confidence, assertiveness and emotional literacy for all children.

Please see our school's website for a detailed overview of our policy and practice.





How can I support my child with social media?

Age restrictions for social media platforms

Age restrictions are placed on social media sites to protect children from using social media before they are emotionally ready. You can help your child by firstly adhering to the age restrictions. Use of social media, particularly if choosing to ignore the age restrictions, should be carefully monitored. Many parents and carers insist that their children share their login information so that they can monitor activity and messages.

Simple communications on social media can often be misinterpreted by children. Unkind comments or messages, which would quickly be forgotten on the playground, can escalate and lead to difficulties for all concerned. In turn, this can affect your child's learning. Therefore, if you choose to allow your child access to social media, we ask that you carefully monitor this and to discontinue access to sites where you know the messages to be harmful.

Witton Middle School takes e-safety seriously and we educate our children regarding the correct use of media sites. However, we ask parents and carers to take responsibility for their overall conduct on social media.

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

(Ages specified in terms as of 2014)

Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Pinterest
Google+
Tumblr
Reddit
Snapchat
Secret



LinkedIn



WhatsApp



Vine
Tinder



Path



YouTube
Keek
Foursquare
WeChat
Kik
Flickr







What can I do about lost or damaged property?

Lost property

Looking after their property is something which we expect to further develop in our pupils as they mature. However, from time to time items are lost.

Please report lost items without delay. We generally locate named items with ease and they are quickly returned to their owners. Due to the volume of lost property it is only kept for two weeks, after which time it is disposed of in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Parents, carers and pupils can check lost property at the school office.

Sometimes items are inadvertently taken home and we can request support from other parents to locate items via the Witton Warbler. We appreciate that any lost items represent additional cost for parents and carers. We strongly advise you not to allow your child to bring expensive items such as designer coats, trainers and electronic devices into school as we simply cannot replace or refund the cost should they go missing or be damaged in any way.

School Property

Pupils are expected to look after our wonderful school environment. Pupils must not interfere with any aspect of school such as lighting, fire protection and heating facilities. Any damage, which could have been avoided, will need to be paid for. Chewing gum is not allowed in school because it can lead to damaged property.



Protection of personal data, photographic images and mobile phones

Data security

Witton Middle School holds information on pupils in order to support their learning, to monitor and report on their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the school as a whole is doing. No personal information provided to Worcestershire County Council will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes. Information however, will be shared within the Council and with other agencies where the legal framework allows and requires it. This will help the Council to improve and develop services.

Use of photographs and videos

The Headteacher and Governors ensure that they send out a form to parents and carers which states that such photography, and associated use of the pupil's name, will be permitted by the school, unless the parents and carers explicitly and specifically object, by returning the form with a negative response.

Mobile phones

If a child decides to bring a mobile 'phone to school, it must be handed in to their class teacher at morning registration and will be kept in the class safe during the school day. We try at all times to keep children's belongings secure, but no system is 100% safe and children bring their 'phones to school at their own risk.

Pupils who use mobile 'phones in school will have them confiscated and left in the school office for collection at the end of the day. For repeated violations, the 'phone will be retained for a longer period of time and the parents and carers will be asked to collect their child's 'phone from the school office.



Where do I find school policies?

General policies

Policies relating to bullying, safeguarding, child protection, health and safety and the promotion of good conduct and relationships are available from the Witton Middle School website. If you prefer a printed copy please request this from the school office.

Behaviour policy

The core business of our school is learning. We seek to dedicate our resources to ensuring that all of our pupils achieve. Our behaviour policy is designed to ensure that we remove any disruptions to our core purpose of learning.

Compliments and complaints policy

We do listen carefully to the views of pupils, parents and carers. Whilst complaints are very rare, details of our complaints policy are also available from the school office and the school website.

Admissions policy

When applying for a place at our school please follow the Local Authority admissions policy and procedures. This can be found at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions. The closing date is 15th January 2020. Decisions are made by 16th April 2020. If you would like assistance with your application please contact our school office team.



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