



50 Years of West Winds PS

We are celebrating a big birthday in 2022! West Winds Primary School will be 50 years old and, as part of our celebrations, we want to take on a project that we can all work on together. As the school has grown over the years and as we have added extra educational provisions here, we have had to repurpose some of our existing classrooms, such that, we no longer have a dedicated room for our school library. We'd like to change that.

Having explored different options for getting more space around the school, without success, we have come up with an idea that we think will work and an idea that we think the children will love!

We're going to buy and convert an old double decker bus and use this as a library and learning space.

As far as we can tell, we would be the first school in Northern Ireland to do this, though there are a number of schools across Britain that have done it. I've added some photos of what other schools have done.

We've been able to access some initial funding that would allow us to purchase a bus and start to kit it out and we hope that through fundraising and grant applications to be able to raise enough to complete the job by the summer holidays.

We would plan that the library and learning space would be available for community use and that our children and the wider West Winds community would benefit from it. We are sure that children would be excited by it and we hope it would provide a real boost to their reading as they are encouraged to read for pleasure in an interesting, engaging environment. The bus would be parked in one of our playgrounds and would be connected to power to run computers, lighting and heating. It would be redesigned and fitted out with shelves for books and seating for learning; the outside would be redecorated so that it was attractive and exciting for the children.

The Board of Governors are very supportive of this project and we've already gathered a few parents together to help with specific skills in converting the bus. But we need more help!

We really want this project to be something that is produced by all of us together. It would be easier (though more expensive) if we just paid a company to do it for us, but we want the whole school community to have a part to play – children, parents, staff and community.

At this stage, we are looking for parents to volunteer to lend some time to the bus over the coming months. We don't expect you to know how to convert a bus (though, if you do, great!) but if you can spare a few evenings or weekends in the next 6 months, we will need lots of hands to help clean, paint, brush and make the tea.

We think we have found a bus that would be suitable and that is in our price range – but for us to continue and to make the library bus become a reality, we need some willing volunteers to join with us. You don't need any particular skills – just a willingness to give a few hours and get your hands dirty!

Please contact me in the school office, or chat to myself, Ross Hayden (Dad of Jacob, P5 & Mason, P7) or Clifford Ewen (Dad of Caden, P4 & Kimberley, P6) if you can help. We're looking forward to setting West Winds up for the next 50 years with this exciting project that our children will love!

Examples of other double decker school libraries from Great Britain.



A bus that we think fits the bill! This is the bus that we'd like to convert – we'll be fitting the internal spaces out to hold books and to provide a space for reading and learning. The bus will be redecorated externally and will live in our playground.

