



# February 2024

## Newsletter



Welcome to February's newsletter! I hope you all had a lovely half term and found some time to rest and relax. Although this has been a short month, we still have a great deal to share with you.

### Crazy Hair Day

Due to its success last year, we had our second Crazy Hair day on 15<sup>th</sup> February, to raise money for the Friends. The children and staff came to school with some wacky hairstyles, as can be seen below. A pleasing £55.75 was raised which the Friends have agreed can be used to help fund resources for the wellbeing area being created in the shelter. Thank you to everyone who joined in.



### Spring Flowers

Back in the autumn term, as part of our Prayer Space week, the children planted some spring bulbs on the school field near the willow. The flowers are just starting to come through and are a welcome sign that spring is on its way.



### Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February, we celebrated Safer Internet Day to help promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for our children. Throughout the week in their computing lessons, the children all took part in activities exploring ways to keep themselves safe online.

Here is a summary of how Class 1 marked this day from Mr Rackham...

In Class 1, Twiggie the Turtle came for a special visit today to show us his own laptop and to talk with us about what technology we use at home. We discussed about the potential dangers of things popping up that we may not like and how it is important for us to speak to a trusted adult if that happens.

### Children's Mental Health Week

We recently engaged with Children's Mental Health Week, which ran from 5<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> February. This year's theme ***My Voice Matters*** was about empowering young people to use their voices, share what matters to them, and encourage those around them to hear their voices. The week started with a special assembly on Monday led by Louise Ramsey from the Swan Youth Project. The children all engaged in activities throughout the week to help them to develop the knowledge, skills and values to support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing. They also came up with lots of excellent ideas for things to include in the dedicated space for wellbeing we are creating in the outside shelter. Resources have been ordered and we now need to agree on a name, using the children's great suggestions.



### **Class 1 Learning Café by Mr Rackham**

Just before half term, Class 1 enjoyed another Learning Café. Following on from our recent topic learning about China and Chinese New Year, we read a story based on dragons: 'Tell me a Dragon' by Jackie Morris. The class thought about what we would love our own dragon to be and with the help of our parents, we thought about what it would look like and where it would live. Thank you again to all the parents that came to the event and made it a special session for the children.



### **School Pets**

To support the children's wellbeing, and at the request of the School Council members, we now have two new members of our school – two very friendly guinea pigs. Our new friends were introduced to the children this week and are settling in well. They are yet to be named and this is a task for the children. A huge thank you to Onur in Class 3's dad, who runs Ozzy's Kebabs in Downham Market, who generously sponsored the purchase of the guinea pigs and related equipment. Thank you also to Amelia in Class 4 who donated bedding, bowls, drinks bottles and play equipment, as well as Seren in Class 4 who donated the lovely hutch. Another hutch has also been generously donated by Charlotte in Class 4. A huge thank you to you all for your tremendous support. We still need some willing volunteers to help look after our new school members during weekends and holiday periods. If you are able to support us, please get in touch. Thank you for your support.

### **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun**

The **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun** holiday activity scheme is back again for the Easter holidays. Free places are available for children who are eligible for means-tested free school meals. For more information, please visit [Big Norfolk Holiday Fun - Active Norfolk](#)



### **Eco-Committee Update**

The Eco-Committee are planning to start up waste-free Wednesdays again to cut back on the amount of waste and single-use plastic we use in school. We did this last year and it was very successful. They would like the children to bring in packed lunches which do not contain any single-use packaging. We will also ensure that school lunches are packaging-free. More details to follow soon.

### **Bishop Dagmar's Lent Challenge**

This term, we will be participating in Bishop Dagmar's Lent Challenge, the theme of which is 'This is the Time – 'For I know plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29,11). The children will be exploring how we can take action to care for creation in a time of climate crisis, remembering that we have hope in God and God's plans for our good future. **This is the Time** to care for our beautiful world.

### **Staff News**

We are pleased to welcome Mrs Karen Meloy, who has recently joined our staff team as a Teaching Assistant, supporting a child in KS2.

### **Mothering Sunday Posies**

Each year, the children make posies in school to present to their mums on Mothering Sunday. The ladies from St Mary's Church have once again kindly offered to help prepare the items needed and the School Council will purchase the flowers. I know the children always enjoy making the posies, and I'm sure our mums enjoy receiving them.

### **Christian Value**

Our new Christian value for this half term is compassion and we will be exploring how we can show compassion through our actions in Collective Worship.

### **Outdoor Classroom**

We are very excited to inform you that work on our new outdoor classroom will be starting very soon. The work will be completed by Artisan Structures, who have provided us with a wonderful design. We look forward to share with you progress updates.

### **Outdoor Learning Club Updates by Mr Cawley**

#### **31<sup>st</sup> January**

What better way to swing into the new month of February than on a rope swing, using the knot tying skills that the children have been learning in club. First, we split the children into groups and started with the fun challenge of tying hands together; all reach in and hold a right

hand, all reach in and hold a left hand, and without letting go, untangle to give a circle of children all holding hands. This proved harder than it sounds! Next, Mr Cawley used a ladder to tie rope to the bow of an oak tree before descending and showing the children how to make a seat from a smaller log. Luckily his knots held fast, and much fun was had swinging on our home-made swing. The children then disappeared off to the corner of the field with wool and carefully selected 'twigs' to create their own smaller 'fairy' versions. Lots of learning without the label of learning...just what was needed on a Wednesday afternoon!



### 7<sup>th</sup> February

We decided to pay homage to a traditional playground game this week by creating our own versions of hopscotch. The children learned first how to play, then thought about the playing court and how they could represent the numbers. It was great to see them working together to come up with ideas to represent such an iconic game; and the best bit was the amount of learning that the children exercised, from measuring the sticks, to thinking about the shapes they needed to lay out, representing the numbers, to actually having a go and getting physical. The second activity was the rope bridge, which proved really popular! The lashings help up well, even with the multitude of enthusiastic adventurers who decided to use the obstacle!



### 14<sup>th</sup> February

“Let's go fly a kite, up to the highest height, let's go fly a kite and keep it soaring...” Well, the last of our outdoor learning sessions for last half term was never going to be a really windy one, so I'm not sure soaring never really happened. However, the children enthusiastically ran to launch their kites, and did a sterling job! Having created them from simple materials the children worked together to follow instructions and create these simple kites. We will repeat this on a windy day!



### 28th February

The first outdoor learning club of this half term was more of an indoor learning club as it was our chance to introduce the children to the guinea pigs. Lots of excited faces got to meet our two new resident guinea pigs for the very first time, before learning how to look after them and how to handle them safely. With hands washed, we ventured outside to see if we could create some toys for our new furry friends out of woven willow. We were also on the hunt for interesting natural things to give them a stimulating environment (not that being in a primary school isn't stimulating enough!) Now the only thing left to do is to name our two boys; this job lies with the children... who knows what they might end up being called!





I would just like to thank all of the people who helped so far this term; without you we would have to limit numbers. Outdoor learning has been a really popular choice for the children and serves as a diverse alternative to the other clubs we have on offer.

**Denver Supertots Playgroup – 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March**

Just a reminder about our Denver Supertots Playgroup which takes place on alternate Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.30-10.45am. All pre-school age children and their parents are welcome to attend for a small cost of £1.00 each child, with children under 1 being free. A variety of games and activities are planned, with refreshments provided for the adults. The playgroup is jointly run by the school and students from Downham Market Academy.

**Attendance Focus**

We are continually working hard to improve school attendance due to the impact that absence from school can have on learning. As part of this work, each newsletter throughout the year has had an attendance focus.

Please remember that, in line with the expectations set out in '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)', fixed penalty notices will be issued if the criteria set out in that letter is met.

To promote good attendance, we celebrate the class with the highest attendance each month. February's attendance figures were as follows:

Class 1	97.9%
Class 2	95.7%
Class 3	93.3%
Class 4	85.7%

Well done again to Class 1 for having the highest attendance for the month of February, especially as we had so many children affected by illness towards the end of the half term.

Our overall school attendance so far this year is **96.0%**. Thank you for continuing to support our drive to improve school attendance to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

### Jewellery

Please can we remind you that jewellery, apart from a watch and stud earrings, should not be worn to school. Necklaces, rings and bracelets should not be worn. Thank you for your support with this.

### Trainers

Please remember that trainers should only be worn to school on PE days. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Out of Hours Communication

Out of school hours you can contact the school urgently, for example with a safeguarding concern, by using the dedicated email address [worried@denver.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:worried@denver.norfolk.sch.uk). If you are worried about something, please do contact the school via this method and a member of staff will get back to you as soon as possible.

### Safeguarding Policy

Our safeguarding and child protection policy can be found on the school website under the policies or safeguarding pages.

### Parent Carer Support Group

A new group to support parent carers of children with SEND is being launched next Monday. It will run on the first Monday of the month starting 4<sup>th</sup> March and in term time only – from 10am – 11:30am at ECFS, Paradise Road, Downham Market, PE38 9HS. If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### Office News

#### **Absence**

If your child will not be in school for any reason, it is really important that you let us know as soon as you can, preferably before our attendance register is taken at 9am. Even if you have passed on a verbal message at morning drop off, please also let the school office know so that they can mark the register accordingly and pass the information on to the relevant class. You can do this by emailing [absence@denver.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:absence@denver.norfolk.sch.uk) (preferably) or ringing us on 01366 383272. Please leave a message on our voicemail if it is before the school office opens. If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they should be absent from school for 48 hours from the last bout of sickness.

#### **Holidays**

Please remember that holidays during term time **will not be authorised** and may be considered for a Fixed Penalty Notice should the criteria be met (**9 sessions or 4.5 school days of unauthorised absence within a 6 school week period**). An absence request should be completed **before** any holidays are taken and can be accessed by requesting a link from the school office. It is important that we are made aware of children taking holidays before they are taken, rather than once children are on holiday as is sometimes the case. Our Attendance Policy is available on our school website.

### **School Lunch Price Increase**

We have been informed by our catering provider that for families who pay for school lunches, the price of a school lunch will increase to £2.60 per meal from 1<sup>st</sup> April. If you have already paid a lump sum in advance based on the current charge, we will deduct the new amount for lunches taken and let you know when your credit has been depleted.

As recently requested, if your child has lunch in school (but is not eligible for free school meals) could we **please ask that you keep a note of how many lunches have been taken in a week and pay promptly for these**. If your child would like school lunches but you are struggling to pay for them, you may be eligible for free school meals – there is a link on our website if you wish to apply: [Denver VC Primary School - School Lunches](#)

There will also be a new summer menu when we return from the Easter break. Once we have the details, we will forward these on to you and also post on our website.

### **Sandwich Option**

Just a reminder that this half term we are trialling a new system to encourage children to try our delicious hot school lunches. Every day we will be offering a main hot meal or a jacket potato option, but the sandwich option will now **only be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays**. The menu will remain the same.

### **Update from The Friends**

The Friends have some fantastic events coming up for all the children to enjoy this term - some that even the parents / carers can get involved in if they would like!

**Pupil disco:** The Friends are in the process of organising the next school disco in Denver Village Hall and will send an email shortly with more details. It is always an event that the children enjoy and they have the opportunity to have a dance and natter with their friends outside of school.

**Friends Logo Design:** The Friends are hoping that the children will design a bright, colourful logo for them that can be used at events and on their fundraising letters. Please let their imaginations run wild and design something that captures all that The Friends do. Templates will be sent out shortly.

**Movie Night:** We are currently looking to organise a KS1 movie evening and a KS2 movie evening this term. If you have any suggestions of films that your child would love to see, please drop us an email ([friends@denver.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:friends@denver.norfolk.sch.uk))

**Name the Easter Bunny:** Following on from the success of last year's name the Easter Bunny competition, we are giving pupils the opportunity to name another cuddly bunny friend this Easter. Suggested donations of £1 would be gratefully received. This will run from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March and the draw will be made on the last day of term at the Easter Egg Hunt event.

**Easter Egg Hunt and Afternoon Tea:** On the last afternoon of term The Friends will be having an afternoon tea in the School Hall alongside an Easter raffle. The Easter Bunny has also promised that s/he will arrange an Easter Egg Hunt in and around school for the

parents/carers and pupils to enjoy. We really hope that you can join us. If you have any prizes that we can use for the raffle then please bring them in to school week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> March. Thank you!

**Yard Sale:** Whilst this is just into next term, Denver Yard Sale will be taking place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April. More details to follow on how to book your stall etc.

The Friends are always looking for volunteers or new ideas of events that they can organise for the children and their families. If you would like to help or have an idea, please email [friends@denver.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:friends@denver.norfolk.sch.uk) . Thank you!

## **Sports News**

### **Tag Rugby**

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2 teams of 8 children from Class 4 took part in a tag rugby development festival at West Norfolk Rugby Club. This was a non-competitive round robin tournament where coaches and young leaders from local secondary schools supported the children in becoming more confident and skilled rugby players. The event was a great success.



### **Speed Stacking**

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February, a group of children from Class 2 & 3 travelled to Lynnsport to take part in the speed stacking section of the Omnes games. Speed stacking is a great way to help with hand eye co-ordination and encourage team spirit. The children are organised into key stages and all year groups are represented. Everyone enjoyed the event and, as usual, our children were very well behaved in this noisy and busy environment.

### **Get Set for PE Curriculum**

This half term, the new Get Set for PE curriculum is introducing new areas of PE such as yoga to make lessons more interesting for the children and so far, has been very well received.

### **Swimming**

Until Easter, swimming continues for Class 4. More able swimmers are now developing their stamina and stroke techniques. They will be learning lifesaving and safe rescue skills. The beginners group continue to develop their confidence in the water and to be able to swim widths – and hopefully even lengths – by the time the sessions come to an end.

## **Bikeability**

Next week, children from Year 5 will be taking Bikeability Level 2 cycling proficiency training. This can soon be put to good use because the following week the whole school begins to take part in the national Sustrans Walk and Wheel initiative. For ten days, children will be encouraged to walk, cycle and scoot to school. Further information about this will follow in a separate letter by email coming out in the coming days.

We continue to be very grateful to the parents and governors who support our sports events so that the children can have the best possible opportunities.

## **Sporting Stars**

### **Football Stars**

James and Eric from Class 4, who both play for Downham Town, were both awarded special trophies in their recent game against Holly Meadows. Here is a lovely write up about them from their football coaches.

*On the right is James. He quite rightly earned the Parents' Player of the Match trophy. A wonderfully executed defensive display, coupled with some excellent passing meant that he was very deserving of his weekly accolade. James is one of those annoyingly talented young footballers who can literally do everything. His reading of the game is most probably his best asset, one to which he expertly utilised during his every minute on the pitch.*

*On the left we have Eric - as a squad we call him Jeff - but as coaches we know him to be the coolest of operators. Our Jeff usually plays in defence but had the central midfield role for his first stint. He was his usual silky self in a packed midfield. Carried the ball when he could, passed when he couldn't and just generally glided about making an intense game look like a stroll on the beach. As I announced Coaches Player of the Match, I said "this player is probably the most consistent player in the squad and he doesn't get even nearly the amount of recognition that he deserves...." whilst that was happening, he was looking at a teammate and clapping him blissfully unaware that he was actually applauding himself. A fine young man who is a credit to us all.*



## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Bikeability – 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> March**

Bikeability Level 2 will be offered to children in Class 4 during this week.

### **Dance Festival – 6<sup>th</sup> March**

The Dance Club are looking forward to performing at King's Lynn's Corn Exchange next Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March. I have had a sneak peek at their rehearsals, and it is looking very good so far! A huge thank you to Miss de Vanche for running this club to prepare the children.

### **World Book Day – 7<sup>th</sup> March**

We are looking forward to celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March and seeing the children dressed up as their favourite book characters. We would like to invite parents into school from 3pm until the end of the school day to read with your child/ren. Please come to the field gate. We have organised a special World Book Day lunch and we will also be selling book themed biscuits for 50p each. Please look out for the World Book Day vouchers the children will bring home on the day.

### **Parent Consultations – 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March**

Parent consultations are happening next Monday and Wednesday. If you have not yet booked an appointment, the lists will be out in the shelter tomorrow. Alternatively, you can book by calling the school office after 9.30am. Please do take up this opportunity to speak to your child's class teacher(s).

### **Big Walk and Wheel Week – 11<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> March**

During this week, we will be encouraging the children to walk, scoot or cycle to school. We hope to see our cycle shelter full!

### **British Science Week – 11<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> March**

It is also British Science Week this week and Mrs Henden, our science lead, is busy organising a range of fun challenges for the children to take part in.

### **Cluster Netball Tournament – 19<sup>th</sup> March**

The cluster netball tournament for children in Y5/6 takes place in March. Go netballers!

### **Cluster Football Tournament – 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, we will be sending 2 teams of Y5/6 children to the cluster football tournament at Hillcrest. The teams performed really well at the last tournament and I'm sure they will strive to do equally as well this time.

### **OMNES Games – 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

Also on this day is another OMNES games, this time New Age Kurling. This is great opportunity for some children in Class 2 and Class 3 to try out a different event.

### **Easter Service – 27<sup>th</sup> March**

We are planning to have an Easter service in St Mary's Church on the last day of the spring term, starting at 9.30am.

### And finally...

This is an incredibly short half term with Easter being early this year, although we still have much to fit in. We look forward to seeing you at Parents Consultations next week, and at our Easter service later in the term.

### Dates for your diary- please keep for future reference:

#### 2023/2024

#### Spring Term

March 2024	4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup>		Bikeability Level 2 Class 4
	4 <sup>th</sup>	Mon	Parent Consultation Evening
	6 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	Dance Festival
	6 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	Parent Consultation Evening
	7 <sup>th</sup>	Thu	World Book Day
	11 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>		British Science Week
	11 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>		Big Walk and Wheel Week
	19 <sup>th</sup>	Tue	Cluster Netball Tournament Y5/6
	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fri	OMNES Games New Age Kurling
	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fri	Cluster Football Tournament
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	YR Vision and Hearing Checks
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	Easter Service at St Mary's Church
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	Last day of spring term
April 2024	28 <sup>th</sup>	Thu	Professional Development Day
	15 <sup>th</sup>	Mon	Children return to school

#### Summer Term

May 2024	6 <sup>th</sup>	Mon	School closed for Bank Holiday
	13 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup>		KS2 SATs Tests
	27 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup>		School closed for half term
June 2023	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mon	Children return to school
July 2023	19 <sup>th</sup>	Fri	Last day of summer term