



# Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Weekly Newsletter from the Head Teacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Well, we've finally made it through to the Christmas holidays. I hope you are all as well as can be, and if you are feeling under-the-weather, we hope that you soon feel well again and are able to enjoy the Christmas period.

I know I have said this on more than one occasion this term, but we've had an interesting week to say the least. Despite it all, the children have been enjoying an array of different activities; festive and otherwise.

For instance, it's been lovely to see many upper school classes in the hall 'enjoying' salsa lessons in, what we like to call, our Covid friendly, 'Strictly No-Contact Dancing'. Unlike tomorrow evening's final (for those who watch it), there were no glitter ball winners but they all seemed to be enjoying it and probably more so because of the no-contact rule!

Lower school parents may be aware that there has been a discovery of a live woolly mammoth, that was dug out of a mud pit, just outside of Denmead. He was feeling a little worse for wear and was in need of a clean after his mammoth ordeal! St Peter's Veterinary Practice in Horndean, reached out to us as a school, to see if we had any ideas about how they might go about washing said mammoth and they were blown away by our children's detailed and well written responses. What a great way to inspire children to want to write! Please keep an eye on their Facebook Page for their write up.



Lower school have also enjoyed their Christmas Carol workshops this week, where they fully but virtually, immersed themselves in the classic Dickens tale of what Christmas should really mean. A team of actors guided them through the tale through a series of interactive scenes, which was a novel way to have visitors in our school to inspire our children but in a wholly safe way.

We also shared with the children, in their final Christmas 'virtual' assembly, a picture story entitled, 'A Small Miracle' which wordlessly tells of an impoverished old woman who restores the local church's vandalized nativity scene; when she falls in the snow from exhaustion and hunger, the nativity figures come to life and rescue her. It's a lovely story that encapsulates the true meaning of Christmas as a time of giving, thinking of others and of love for each other, especially those less fortunate than ourselves.

Speaking of self-less acts of kindness, Albie in Year 4, has been busy putting together gift-filled shoeboxes for children who might otherwise, not receive a gift this Christmas. He collected more than £300 and has made more than 50 shoeboxes, which have been donated to Helping Hands in Portsmouth to distribute over Christmas. What a wonderful gesture and one that really says a lot about Albie but also, I think, is reflective of our children here at Denmead Juniors. Please follow the link to the story in the Portsmouth News ... <https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/people/waterlooville-boy-8-makes-more-50-shoeboxes-full-christmas-gifts-homeless-people-portsmouth-3067468>

The idea of gifts of kindness continued in the form of our PTA delivering chocolate selection boxes for every child. Needless to say they were well received by the children. For those currently not in school, we will keep them safe, so that we can share with them as a welcome back to school gift in January. The children also enjoyed a Christmas cracker with their packed lunch yesterday. It was obviously disappointing that they couldn't enjoy a Christmas roast but we are living in



strange times and if the above tells us anything, is that Christmas is captured in a spirit not a tradition. That said, they did enjoy sharing the Christmas cracker jokes, many of which I believe I may have written!

It was also great to see so many children wear their Christmas jumpers yesterday, which really livened the day up and put a smile on everyone's faces. My staff felt that I should be more becoming of a head teacher in my Christmas attire, given my previous track record of dressing up and suggested that I wear a Christmas cape. So I duly responded; I hope you all enjoyed me with my capon! You can read this joke again in a Christmas cracker near you!



Thank you again for all your kind responses in the recent parental survey, many of which I have shared with our prospective Year 2 parents. We will be considering all your suggestions for future improvement and I will update you throughout next year. I am determined, as are all my staff, to make sure Denmead Juniors is the best that it can be. One parent talked about the possibility of achieving Outstanding status from Ofsted. Whilst that would be lovely and not without merit, I am more focussed on Denmead Juniors being outstanding for your child and for you to feel that way too. Your regular feedback is one important way that we can strive to achieve that.

Well done to Barn Green – our latest half-termly House point winners, who have enjoyed being in school in non-school uniform!



And well done also, to the PTA Christmas Tree Decoration winners:  
Year 3 winner – Jennifer in Malta class  
Year 4 winner – Kyan in Andorra class  
Year 5 winner – Zach in Mexico class  
Year 6 winner – Holly in Congo class

With special mentions to Georgiana in Estonia class, Joseph in Ireland class, Harry in Congo class and Katherine in Congo class also. Thank you all for taking part and to the PTA for providing all the resources.

And finally, a massive well done to you. Without your help and support both for your child and for us a school, we could not possibly achieve all that we have and all that we will – you are all amazing!

Please try and have a safe, relaxing, healthy and joy-filled Christmas break.

We will see you all next year (Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January – Monday is an INSET day!)

Kind regards,

*A. Clarke.*

**Mr Andy Clarke**  
Head Teacher

