



Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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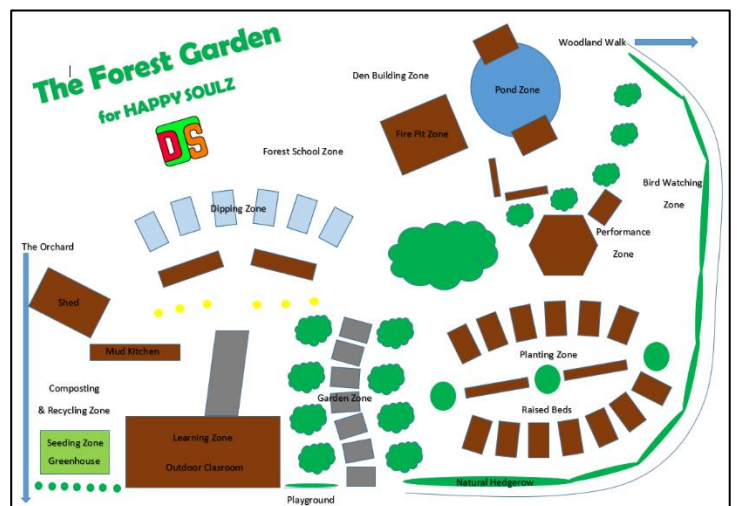
Dear Parents and Carers,

I'm sure I was not alone in punching the air for joy at the recent announcement by the Prime Minister, of all children being able to return to school on the 8th March. Despite the fact that you have all done a monumentally, incredible job in supporting your children, no matter what your personal circumstance, we all know that the best place for children to learn and develop is in school.

They have missed their friends, they have missed the structure of school and they have missed being in the school environment to help them focus and achieve. I would also hope that they have missed the adult relationships around school too, not least, their class teacher.

I am sure there are some of you with some reservations about the return. Whether this is around transitioning back, being safe from Covid or making up for possible lost learning. Please be reassured, that we are fully focussed and committed to making sure that your child/ren transition back successfully, continue to be as safe as possible in school, are happy and are able to make the most progress possible in their learning.

For ALL children, there are many things that they can look forward to, aside from the obvious ones of being back with their friends and teachers. Our outdoor learning area continues to literally grow from strength to strength. Only yesterday, we were able to finish planting our new Orchard. A massive thank you again to those of you who were kind enough to sponsor a fruit tree. For those who missed out on this opportunity, there will be further tree planting plans in the very near future, so watch this space.



I have had a go at producing a simple pictorial plan of the wider outdoor learning area above. Please forgive my ICT skills; when I showed Mr Goodens, he just shook his head and walked away. I'm rather fond of my pre-key stage 1 effort as I think it has a certain charm. Either way, I think it successfully illustrates our vision for this area, which is quickly becoming a reality.



For those whose children are in Year 6, we are desperate to get the area up and running in some form during the Summer term, so that they too can enjoy this wonderful resource. But our longer term plans will run from September, with a comprehensive 4 year programme involving ALL children on a regular basis.

Despite my ICT, we haven't finalised a name for the area but the Happy SOULZ element was borne out of the fact that we are 'an outstandingly happy school' – I've seen the poster! And that happiness should be at the heart of any or all of our aspirations for our children. SOULZ is our acronym for **S**chool **O**utdoor **U**nique **L**earning **Z**one – did you see what I did there? The Forest Garden part hints at both the natural beauty of nature and how we, as humans, can positively interact with and impact on, the nature around us.

Another thing to look forward to is World Book Day. We have decided to push this back to Friday 12th March, to coincide with the return of all the children, so that we can use this day as a celebration of the return to school. Please do not feel you need to go to any extreme efforts of providing a shop-bought costume. As a staff, we quite like the idea that children could wear a clue of a book character that they are fond of (rather than a whole costume), so that others can guess throughout the day: perhaps a colour, a specific item or a self-made mask etc. If they could bring their favourite book in, that would be even better. The children will engage with a range of different, book based activities throughout the day and the hope is that everyone will enjoy themselves.

The following week, we have Comic Relief to look forward to as well – further details to follow in due course.

We also have some future plans in the pipeline that we will share with you soon but I don't want to reveal too much, despite my own excitement!

For now, please feel reassured about your child's return, please continue to be supportive to your children as they transition back and please feel positive about the future – it is bright and it is exciting.

Best wishes from all of us,

A. Clarke.

Mr Andy Clarke

Head Teacher

