



# Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The 'Big Return' has gone rather smoothly, with your children settling back into routines in a happy manner, albeit with many of them feeling quite tired. I hope that the return has gone well for you and your family. We will be sending out a questionnaire next week that will ask about how you feel about the school's response to lockdown and the return this week. I am always keen to know what has gone well and what we could do in future to further improve. You will find that this is a part of my approach, to canvas your views on a regular basis to help us fine-tune our offer. I will always carefully consider your points-of-view, even though I know I won't be able to please all of the people, all of the time.

One thing I hope we can all agree on is the importance of reading, especially relevant on what is our very own, Denmead World Book Day! We are currently having a very enjoyable day immersing ourselves in a range of reading related activities. We hope you all enjoyed last Friday's offering, with teachers reading from their favourite book. It was a lovely way to complete 'online, lockdown learning'.

I found this on the internet and it summarises nicely some of the many benefits of reading:

## **10 Benefits of Reading:**

### **1. Children who read often and widely get better at it.**

After all, practice makes perfect in almost everything humans do, and reading is no different.

### **2. Reading exercises our brain.**

Reading is a much more complex task for the human brain rather than watching TV, for example. Reading strengthens brains connections and builds NEW connections.

### **3. Reading improves concentration.**

Children have to sit still and quietly so that they can focus on the story when they are reading. If they read often, they will develop the skill to do this for longer.

### **4. Reading teaches children about the world around them.**

Through reading a variety of books, children learn about people, places, and events outside of their own experience.

### **5. Reading improves vocabulary and language skills.**

Children learn new words as they read. Subconsciously, they absorb information on how to structure sentences and how to use words and other language features effectively in their writing and speaking.

### **6. Reading develops a child's imagination.**

As we read, our brains translate the descriptions we read of people, places and things into pictures. While we are engaged in a story we are also imagining how a character is feeling. Young children then bring this knowledge into their everyday play.

### **7. Reading helps children to develop empathy.**

As children develop, they begin to imagine how they would feel in that situation.



### **8. Reading is a fun.**

A book or an e-reader doesn't take up much space and is light to carry. You can take it anywhere so you never be bored if you have a book in your bag.

### **9. Reading is a great way to spend time together.**

Reading together on the sofa, bedtimes stories and visiting the library are just some ways of spending time together.

### **10. Children who read achieve better in school.**

Reading promotes achievement in all subjects, not just English. Children who are good readers tend to achieve better across the curriculum.

The promotion of reading is something that we are all passionate about here at Denmead Junior School. We are constantly having discussions about how we can encourage and support children to not only be good and frequent readers but to also develop a love of reading.

Our approach to this needs to be both strategic and bespoke. Strategic, in that we need to plan carefully how we might achieve this from the short term to the long term, so that it is both embedded and responsive to the ever-changing needs and landscape that we find ourselves in. And it needs to be bespoke, in that every child is different; their passions, their experiences, their abilities and their attitudes, all play a major part into why a child may or may not like or love reading. That said, if you find the right book, at the right time and presented in the right way, I defy any child not to be at least hooked into that book, that story, that world.

The quote, 'Reading gives us some place to go, when we have to stay where we are', seems even more apt in these pandemic days. Getting children into good habits around reading is part of the key. But unless we can present reading in a truly inspiring way or in a truly inspiring context, we may well end up short.

In the questionnaire sent out before Christmas, we asked you for ways in which the school could improve and you gave us a few challenges, which we are still working through. One of them was that could we improve the library? Now, our library is a lovely space, kept diligently organised by Mrs Davis. Library time is much loved by many of our children, but wouldn't it be lovely to imagine a new library, an extended library, a library that is wholly child centred, a library that truly encourages and inspires children to want to read. I wonder what that library would look like? Would it look something like this? <https://youtu.be/TpDqdvsFnjw>

Can you imagine this library in our current atrium area as you look through the main reception doors? Can you also imagine the impact this would have upon your child and their response to reading? I believe this has the ability to transform attitudes and behaviours – and imagine the long-term benefit of this on your child's life chances and their enjoyment of school. Much like the new outdoor learning area, what we are proposing is to affect deep, life-long changes in a wholly positive and inclusive way – EVERY CHILD WILL BENEFIT!

If you would like to help us make this a reality, then please consider making a contribution. We are almost there with school funds but a little extra will help and anything raised beyond that can be invested into buying new and exciting books that children will love reading. Please don't feel obliged, we just thought some of you may want to and be in a position to and have therefore created a Library Fund on SCOPAY. Although I recognise this is not the best time to be asking for donations, I do hope this project excites you as much it does me. If nothing else, I would welcome your feedback.

Have a great weekend.

Mr Clarke, aka old Harry Potter!

*A. Clarke.*

**Mr Andy Clarke**

**Head Teacher**



### WHAT'S ON NEXT WEEK:

- **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>** 12noon – Deadline to book your parents evening appointment on SCOPAY.
- **Friday 19<sup>th</sup>** – Comic Relief (suggested donation of £1 via SCOPAY available on the day)  
If your child wishes to join in on the day, please send them into school wearing something red and/or to reflect this year's 'Superhero' theme.

### A FEW REMINDERS FOR NEXT WEEK:

- Please ensure children have coats and warm layers in school each day
- Please check lunch account balances are up to date and in credit
- Please check homes for library books that need to be returned

### SPRING TERM DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>** 4-6.30pm – Parents Evenings via MS Teams
- **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** – **Class group school photos:**  
These are presented in a contemporary format which means children are photographed in small groups of 2 or 3 and then assembled together digitally. As the photo shows full views of children, **please send your child into school that day with bottom half as close to school uniform** as possible (instead of sportswear).
- **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** 5-7.30pm – Parents Evenings via MS Teams
- **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April** – Last day of Spring Term
- **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** – Good Friday (Bank Holiday)

