



Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Dear parents and carers,

After an eventful drive for me to join the year 6s on residential this week - with a burst tyre just past Swindon, a recovery and a long wait at a tyre repair garage in Cirencester - it has, as always, been a pleasure to be with the year 6 children here at this lovely Welsh residential centre. Every child has tried new things, scaled new heights (literally) and overcome their fears. The staff are all really proud of their efforts and it has been wonderful to see them really mature and become more independent. The weather has been warm, with a few odd showers, sunny spells and the food has been fantastic. Thank you once again PGL at Tregoyd and all their staff and our own Denmead staff for looking out for all the children.

– Elaine Viner

Well, where has that week gone! The end of our first week in Lower School has seen some quality learning already. Spanish greetings in class and in assembly, a real discussion about place value and how we can use it to develop our understanding of number, a glimpse of how the Romans spread across Europe before we visit Fishbourne Roman palace early next week, to name but a few gems. Everyone has worked really hard and has settled in really well. Great to see!

– Tom Stapleton

A successful week has been enjoyed by all in Upper School. Year 5 have been developing their skills as writers by creating a hidden chapter linked to Anthony Browne's book, 'The Tunnel'. The 'home birds' have been working collaboratively on a range of animation projects as well as a Forest School experience and activities in the environmental area. We eagerly await the return of the Year 6 pupils from their wonderful week in Tregoyd.

– Jo Marks

Having enjoyed our first celebration assembly this afternoon awarding a number of certificates to recognise the co-operation and friendship shown by our children in school this week, we were delighted to hear from some children regarding an activity outside of school recently, after a parent shared the details with us:

"My 2 sons decided they wanted to do some litter picking around the park in our road and asked some of their friends who also live in the road to help. 2 bags of rubbish later and they all felt extremely proud of how they have helped the environment and are now planning their next litter picking get together!!"

Next week reminders:

- Monday – Year 6 'Bikability' course through the week
- Monday/Tuesday – lower school trip
- Tuesday 2.30pm Welcome to upper school meeting in the hall

Look out for future communications regarding class assembly dates, plus the presentations and additional resources from the 'welcome to' meetings which will be shared. In the meantime, please find attached the review of last year's school priorities and outline of this year's from Mrs Viner. It is always difficult to know how much detail to go into, but if you have any questions, or would like further information please do contact the school. Don't forget that we also have a governor vacancy at the moment, so if you think you have skills that could contribute to supporting the school in its growth and development over the next 4 years do get in touch.

Enjoy the weekend.
Sam Burton – DJS Office

Review of 2018-19

We launched our new strapline: 'Building Success and Inspiring Curiosity' in the Autumn term. This began with teachers delivering some 'rogue' lessons, purely with the intention to Inspire Curiosity! All subject leaders then spent time looking in more detail at the curriculum to ensure progression as children move through the years. We met with the subject leaders at Denmead Infant school to also check coverage and progression, and we are also working with our School Partnership Programme of schools (Purbrook Junior, Padnell Junior, Clanfield Junior and St Alban's Primary) on strengthening our curriculum.

We achieved the Gold Sports Mark awarded for the second year running.

We proudly obtained Outstanding Happy Schools status.

We introduced the learning skills which use Metacognition to all the children. This encourages children to be much more independent as they have prompt questions to get them started on a learning task and to support them with they get stuck or are 'in the pit'!

Outcomes for children: we were delighted with our year 6 SATS results this year:

- Above National and Hampshire for combined reading, writing and maths
- Above National and Hampshire for reading, maths (10% above in Maths) and grammar/spelling (SPAG)
- Above National and one child below with Hampshire for writing (which was moderated by the Local Authority)
- Positive progress scores for children across the junior phase in maths and reading
- Results for our more vulnerable children and those with Special Educational needs also improved

School Development Priorities 2019-20

To continue to embed children's metacognitive learning skills, we will be launching our new improved learning powers (you will recognise some of our old learning skills here): curiosity, concentration, co-operation, resilience and reflectiveness (self-improvement).

Our drivers to continue to improve our curriculum include: does the subject/topic/lesson Inspire curiosity; is it accessible to all learners and does it challenge all children? We will continue with our termly 'vertical grouping session' where all the subject leaders get to meet with the children to review their subject in their classroom. We will refine our curriculum intentions, its implementation and its impact through staff training; working with our partner schools (listed above), and researching success stories at other schools.

To encourage greater wellbeing amongst children, families and staff. One of the areas we discussed at the Inset day is the role of home learning within education. This is probably education's Brexit discussion! Either people feel there is not enough homework, or that there is too much. We certainly know that it can cause a lot of stress at home in the completing of it, and then of course there is the job of marking it, and what difference does it all really make? We will be asking your views on this later this half term.

To do more so that children have a greater understanding of diversity and difference. The world that the children will grow up in is increasingly complex and children need to have the skills to appreciate difference, show tolerance and avoid extremism in order to develop into caring citizens.

School Grounds and Buildings

As the school numbers grow (we are currently 318, and are full in year 3), space inside the school begins to be challenged. Long term we will need a new sports hall, and if we can provide space for wrap around child care for more children at the school that would benefit more local families. Planning for these longer term goals has already begun.

In addition, as the school approaches its 50th anniversary in 2022, we will be fund-raising for three urgent school improvement areas to the building:

- A new reception area and school entrance incorporating double doors
- A larger office with window into the new entrance area with a dedicated sick room which adjoins the office
- Widening the entrance path onto the playground to ease congestion around the exit gate.

If you have expertise in driving through a significant fundraising campaign for these building improvements please do get in contact. We have got as far as drawing up the plans! Schools with building projects can often get distracted with this and we must ensure that DJS remains completely focused on the quality of education for all the children all the time.