

DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 2nd February 2024

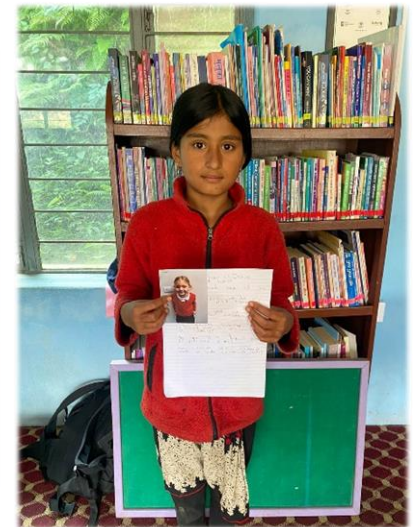
Dear Parents,

The first month of 2024 has already been and gone, and it has been a brilliant start to the year here in school. Below is a digest of some of the highlights from the past couple of weeks, in addition to a look ahead to some other key dates this term.

Trips: There are lots of exciting curriculum enhancement experiences planned this term, some of which have already taken place in the past few weeks.

Both the Frogs class and the Kingfishers class were fortunate enough to visit Saffron Walden museum last Friday. They learnt a great deal about local history in one of Britain's oldest purpose-built museums, and they also viewed exhibits and listened to presentations which supported their current history learning topics (the Egyptians and the Tudors). Kingfishers then went on to a special Holocaust Memorial Service at St. Mary's Church in town which aligned with International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As we would expect, the Kingfishers have treated this important subject with utmost maturity and respect.

The Dragonflies class received a visit from Mrs Catherine Gibson last week, a friend of the school and former governor. She has been to visit Tang Ting in Nepal recently (a village which is twinned with Debden) and the children from both villages have been writing pen pal letters to one another. Mrs Gibson presented some of her incredible pictures to the children, who I know have been absolutely fascinated to hear about her journey. The children were learning all about Nepal in geography last term and were comparing it to our region of the UK, and this wonderful opportunity to learn from Mrs Gibson has significantly augmented their understanding. Thank you Mrs Gibson!



Unfortunately, our 'Fab Science' experience planned for Thursday was cancelled at short notice, due to unforeseen circumstances for the visit team, but not to worry, this will be re-booked for some point in the near future.

Finally, Kingfishers will be visiting Hampton Court Palace next month, which we know will be an amazing experience for them all. Here, they will experience the public dramas and private lives of Henry VIII, his wives the queens, and their children in the world of the Tudor court, which they have been learning all about in their history learning this term.

FODS Update (from Mrs Samson): Thank you for your generosity with fundraising last term to support our school. It is our busiest time of the year. We are thrilled that we raised £3,650 from many events including the Christmas fayre and raffle, movie nights, wreath making evening, Christmas card commission, easyFundraising, Bag2School, cake and uniform sales. This week we have taken delivery of lots more reading band books for Reception and KS1 (look out for some Disney stories), dolls to support Ducklings taking care of yourself topic and 10 more iPads and a new IT trolley. We also continue to subsidise school trips and wow events and regularly buy new fiction and topic books for the library and classrooms. Coming up this term we are organising a school disco on March 6th and a quiz night (tbc March 14th).

Sporting Success: Well done to the children from Years 3 and 4, who participated in the tag rugby competition yesterday. Our team came in second place out of the local schools, and as a result they have qualified for the finals! More details will follow about these finals when we have them.

TT Rockstars: Calling all KS2 parents! Please can you help to ensure that children are regularly accessing 'TT Rockstars' from home. We have bought into this program over the past few years because it has proven success in enabling children to become fluent, accurate and speedy in learning all aspects of multiplication and division up to 12 x 12. This knowledge underpins practically everything that they learn in years 4, 5 and 6 in maths and therefore it is pretty much impossible for a child to fully access the upper KS2 maths curriculum without knowing their times tables by heart. We have drastically improved in this area in the last couple of years, and of all the local primary schools within 25 miles, we are currently placed 7th overall (2nd in Saffron Walden by a hundredth of a second.) However, despite all of our efforts in school, we still do have some children who make it through to year 5 and 6 without full fluency in their times tables – this is something that we would really like to eradicate!

Phonics: We received a lovely letter from Damian Hinds, the Minister for schools, last week. It is regarding our school's excellent phonics results. Well done to everyone (staff, parents and children alike) for helping to make this a school in which children learn to read fluently from an early age. It hugely increases their life chances! Please find a copy of this letter attached.

Dates for your diary

- Wednesday 7th February – Multi-Skills Tournament (Dragonflies)
- Week commencing Monday 12th February – Bikeability (Some Y6 and Y5s)
- Tuesday 13th February – Online Safety Sessions with the 2 Johns
- Wednesday 14th February – Tag Rugby Finals (Y5-6s)
- Friday 16th February – Last Day of Spring Half Term 1
- Monday 26th February – First Day of Spring Half Term 2
- Tuesday 27th and Thursday 29th February – Parent Consultations
- Wednesday 6th March – School Disco
- Thursday 14th March – FODS Quiz Night

Kind Regards

Mr Hawley