



December 2023

Newsletter



Welcome to the December newsletter and the final instalment for 2023! December has been an extremely busy month in school with many different festive events and activities taking place. The children have had lots of fun and it has been lovely to share many of these events with you.

Poppy Appeal

Back in November, we helped to raise money for this year's Poppy Appeal by selling poppies and associated merchandise in school. As a school, we collected a super £155.02. This has contributed to the Downham and District total of £28,075.06 so far. Thank you for your support of the 2023 Poppy Appeal.

Christmas Fayre

A huge thank you to everyone for attending and supporting the Christmas Fayre back on 30th November. It was a great success and raised a staggering £1000.35! A massive thank you to the Friends of Denver School for organising this event and for sourcing such fantastic raffle prizes. We must also congratulate the children in Classes 3 and 4 for organising and running such amazing, creative games; we are very proud of them all!



Decoration Day

On 1st December we had our annual Decoration Day in school. This is always a very popular event in the school calendar as the glitter comes out and the children get to spend the day making Christmas craft activities. Here are some photos of the children's decorations.



Choir Performs at Oakes Court

On 4th December, the school choir entertained the residents of Oakes Court in Downham Market with their lovely singing. They sang a medley of songs, including some festive favourites. The residents thoroughly enjoyed the children's singing, and they were keen to join in too. Thank you to Mr Lawrence for his work with the choir this year. Thank you also to the children and parents for supporting this event.



Messy Church by Heidi Moat

The second Messy Church was held in school on 4th December. The ten children who came were treated to baked potatoes, a chocolate Advent calendar to take home with them and the first ever showing of Rev Nigel's magic trick! Crafts this time included rock painting, making angel decorations and decorating Christmas biscuits (very popular). Our theme was preparing for Christmas and the children had the chance to make advent decorations showing the candles with the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

We have room for more children so please join us at school for **Valentine Messy Church, Monday 12th February 2024, 3.30 - 5pm.**

Christingles

On Thursday 7th December, it was lovely to welcome the ladies from St Mary's Church into school to help the children make Christingles. A huge thank you to Morrisons in Downham Market and to the Coffee Morning group at the church for providing the Christingle items. Thank you also to one of our governors, Jo Walton, for once again organising this. Here are some photos of the children in action.



Christingle Service

The following day, we held our first school Christingle Service in St Mary's Church, Denver. The School Council explained about the significance of the Christingle and in Reverend Nigel's address, he made a rather unique Christingle out of a cabbage. An impressive £159.04 was raised for the Children's Society, £75.80 at the Christingle Service and £83.24 from school candles! A huge thank you to all who contributed.



Class 1 Christmas Learning Café by Mr Rackham

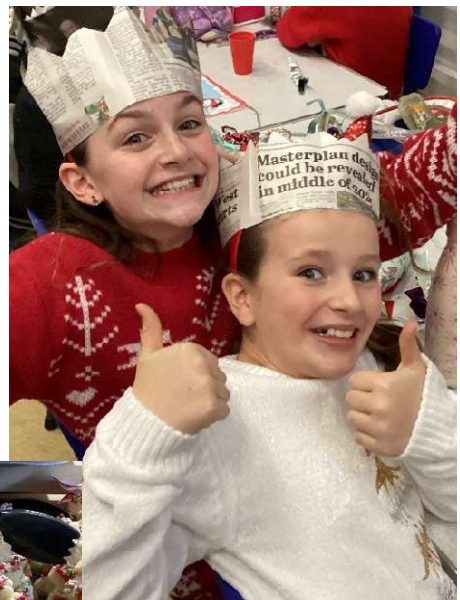
Class 1 recently enjoyed their second Learning Café of the year, welcoming almost all our parents to the class for the morning. We shared the story 'The Jolly Christmas Postman' that we had been recently reading in class and then received a special letter ourselves from Father Christmas! As requested by Santa, the children then spent time with their parents replying to Father Christmas, writing a letter about 3 things they are hoping for at Christmas. Envelopes were decorated and popped in a special sack for the school elves to deliver back to the North Pole. Thank you to all the parents that could attend the morning, it was lovely to spend time sharing our learning with you all!





Christmas Lunch

The children enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch on 13th December. A huge thank you to Mrs Fenn and Mrs Metcalfe for their hard work – they cooked nearly 100 Christmas lunches which is quite an achievement! Thanks also go out to Michelle Maynard and Lisa Cross for donating the serviettes. The children all had a cracker to pull which they made with the help of the Friends and other parent volunteers. Thank you to all involved in making Christmas lunch a special occasion for the children.





Classes 1 and 2's Christmas Play

Last week, Classes 1 and 2 performed a brand new, original play called Six Birds at Christmas. The children worked really hard to sing original songs and acted brilliantly to bring to life the story of Mr and Mrs Robin, Mr and Mrs Sparrow, Wise Owl and Dove, who watch a school nativity through a church window and a hole in the roof. The children all looked wonderful in their costumes and we are extremely grateful to parents for providing these. A huge thank you to Mr Lawrence for writing another original play for the children to perform, to the staff for their hard work in rehearsals, and to the children for making it a memorable performance.



Class 1 Christmas Party by Mr Rackham

Whilst the other classes headed off to enjoy the pantomime, Class 1's Reception children enjoyed their Christmas party. Plenty of fun was had through games involving musical statues and bumps and pass the parcel. The children also created their own snowmen in a snowman competition. The competition was so fierce that it was impossible to pick a winner! The children finished off their party with a special party meal prepared by Mrs Fenn. Thank you to Mrs Fenn for the meal and to the parent helpers that made the party such a special event.



Class 2's Christmas Party by Mr Cawley

A huge thank you to the friends of Denver for providing the biggest bar of chocolate that children had ever seen, and copious amounts of toilet paper (not linked in any way!) for our annual class Christmas party. The afternoon of Thursday the 14th saw the children embark on three games which lasted the entirety of the afternoon and generated more mess than you could shake a stick at. The first game was the chocolate game. This entailed the children taking turns to spin a dice and hopefully land on the six; once a six was landed on they had to put on a hat, gloves and the scarf and start to munch away a big bar of chocolate using a knife and fork - their eating session only ended once somebody else spun a six. The second game required the children to get into groups of three. Once grouped they had to decide who was going to be the snowman and who was going to make the snowman (this is what the toilet paper was for!) they then had to work together to make their snowman, complete with buttons, a carrot and a hat. This was judged by Mrs Jones and the winning team won prizes. The final game was musical chairs.



Class 3's Space Themed Christmas Party by Mr Bonham

Class 3 had their Christmas Party on Friday 8th December. They had a tournament of Rockets and Meteorites (Snakes and Ladders) and the winners were Katherine, Drew and Katie who all won a prize. Everyone then created their own alien which they then took home. The children took their aliens around the school to show that we had been invaded. We coloured in more aliens as friends for our new creations and played 'Hello, I am not an Alien!'. The children had a great time.



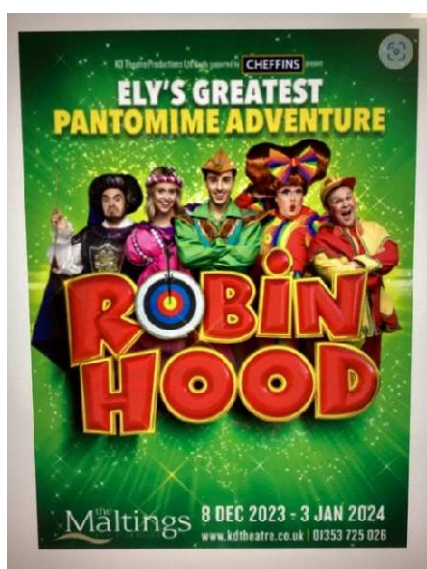
Class 4's Christmas Party by Mrs Henden

The penultimate afternoon of the term was spent partying in the hall. First, we demolished a giant bar of chocolate. Some thought they were lucky when they kept rolling sixes and getting to tuck in, until they had had too much!!! Next, we split up into teams to play the 'Ultimate Christmas Quiz'. Our knowledge of Christmas is so good that we had 3 winning teams scoring 19/20. Then it was time for the traditional games 'Musical Statues' and 'Musical Chairs' before finishing off with three rounds of the corners game. We are very thankful to the Friends for providing the prizes and helping us to round off the term with some fun.



Pantomime Visit

Friday the 15th December meant only one thing, PANTO! "Oh no it didn't, oh yes it did!" The children in Y1-Y6 travelled to the Maltings in Ely to watch a fantastic performance of Robin Hood. They all enjoyed themselves, as did the staff. Mr Cawley ended up being picked on as he was on the front row, something the children found extremely amusing! The children were really well behaved, which was more than we can say for the Dame! A huge thank you to the Friends of Denver School for funding such a wonderful opportunity for the children through their amazing fundraising throughout the year.



KS2 Carol Service

Our annual Carol Service took place at St Mary's Church on Monday 18th December. Classes 3 and 4 both performed songs they have been working on in their music lessons and the choir entertained us with some seasonal songs. A number of children played musical instruments and we had some very good soloist performances. Thank you to Chris Young for kindly playing the organ and to Mr Lawrence for his continued dedication to music in the school. It was lovely to see the church full of parents, carers and grandparents – we really appreciate you coming along to support the children and the school.

Holiday Communication

Over the Christmas break you can contact the school urgently, for example with a safeguarding concern, by using the dedicated email address worried@denver.norfolk.sch.uk. If you are worried about something, please do contact the school via this method and a member of staff will get back to you as soon as possible.

First Admission to School

Just a reminder that applications for children starting school in Reception next September need to be made by 15th January 2024. Parents need to apply at www.admissionsonline.norfolk.gov.uk. If anyone is interested in their child starting here at Denver next September, or knows of anyone else who is interested, please contact the office to arrange a visit.

Clubs

The after-school sports clubs and the outdoor learning club will start again the week commencing 15th January. Booster sessions for Y5 and Y6 will also resume this week. The Before School Club and 3.15 clubs will start again on 4th January.

Attendance Focus

We are continually working hard to improve school attendance due to the impact that absence from school can have on learning. As part of this work, each newsletter throughout the year has had an attendance focus.

Please remember that, in line with the expectations set out in '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)', fixed penalty notices will be issued if the criteria set out in that letter is met.

To promote good attendance, we celebrate the class with the highest attendance each month. December's attendance figures were as follows:

Class 1	100%
Class 2	97.9%
Class 3	96.7%
Class 4	94.1%

Well done again to Class 1 for having the highest attendance for the month of December – 100% is not easy to achieve at this time of year!

Our overall school attendance so far this year is **96.5%**. Thank you for continuing to support our drive to improve school attendance to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

Denver Youth Group

Denver Youth Group meet at Denver Village Hall from 6.30 – 8.30pm every other Monday. Children in KS2 are welcome to attend. Here is a list of forthcoming events for Denver Youth Group:

- 8th January – Welcome Back and Indoor Tournament
- 22nd January – Zumba Dance Fit
- 5th February – Valentine Cooking and Craft
- 13th March – Walpole Skaters (6.30-8.30pm)
- 25th March – Indoor Tournaments
- 15th April – Norfolk Owls
- 29th April – Indoor/Outdoor Games
- 13th May – Treasure Hunt
- 20th May – Rock Climbing Wall
- 8th July – AGM

They are also organising a fundraising disco in March and a summer adventure trip in June.

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun

Just a reminder that the **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun** festive holiday activity scheme is running from 21st to 22nd December and from 2nd to 3rd January. Free places are available for children

who are eligible for means-tested free school meals. Parents can book activities at [Big Norfolk Holiday Fun - Active Norfolk](#)

Update from The Friends

The Friends would like to say a huge thank you once again for all the support that they've received from parents, relatives and the wider school community with their fundraising efforts this term. It has been wonderful to be able to fully fund the pantomime trip again this year, provide prizes and resources for the children's class parties and send some money to Father Christmas so that he was able to bring a small gift for every child when he visited the school with his elf.

There are lots of fabulous fundraising activities planned for 2024 and we are always looking out for new ideas and parents to join The Friends to ensure that the children are provided with lots of amazing opportunities that they may not ordinarily receive. If you have an idea or are able to help out with any of our upcoming events (more information to follow after Christmas) then please email friends@denver.norfolk.sch.uk

The Friends wish all the pupils, staff, parents and the wider Denver School community a very Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing what 2024 brings.

Thank You to The Friends

I would also like to say a huge thank you to all members of The Friends of Denver School for their tremendous fundraising efforts this year. Thank you also to everyone who has supported these events. The school and children are really grateful for the resources and exciting opportunities like the pantomime and Christmas parties this fundraising supports. We look forward to seeing what is planned for 2024.

Forthcoming Events

Active Kids – 18th January

The children in Y1 will attend the second Active Kids tournament on 18th January.

Rotary Technology Tournament – 23rd January

Class 4 will be taking part in a technology tournament organised by the Rotary Club on 23rd January.

And finally...

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of the school this year. I would like to particularly thank all the staff for their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to the school, and to our amazing children who let their lights shine every day.

On behalf of all the staff, children and governors, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy new year. We look forward to welcoming you all back in 2024!



Dates for your diary- please keep for future reference:

2023/2024

Spring Term

January 2024	4 th	Thu	Children return to school
	18 th	Thu	Active Kids – Y1
	23 rd	Tue	Rotary Club Technology Day
February 2024	19 th -23 rd		School closed for half term
	26 th	Mon	Children return to school
March 2024	27 th	Wed	Last day of spring term
April 2024	15 th	Mon	Children return to school

Summer Term

May 2024	6 th	Mon	School closed for Bank Holiday
	27 th – 31 st		School closed for half term
June 2023	3 rd	Mon	Children return to school
July 2023	19 th	Fri	Last day of summer term