



December 2024 Newsletter



Welcome to the December newsletter; I cannot believe this will be the last for 2024. Christmas is always a very busy time in school and this year has certainly been no exception. We hope you enjoy reading about the many festive events and activities the children have enjoyed throughout the month.

A Fond Farewell

This week we said a fond farewell to Miss de Vanche, who retired after 17 years working at the school. To celebrate Annette's time at Denver Primary, yesterday we had an afternoon tea in the school hall. Nanci Lima-Abraham made a wonderful cake, and refreshments were provided by staff, parents, Miss Cronin and members of The Friends. Annette was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers, a Pandora bracelet and some theatre vouchers. We wish Annette all the very best for the future. We will really miss her at Denver.

Staff News

After the Christmas break, Mrs Nikita Smith will be joining our staff team as our new secretary. Nikita has spent some time in school this week getting to know the staff and she is really looking forward to meeting all the children and parents in January. We look forward to welcoming her to the Denver team.

Poppy Appeal

To support the Poppy Appeal this year, we sold poppies and associated merchandise in school. As a school, we collected £177.74 – amazing! This has contributed to the Downham and District total of £33,426.05 so far. Thank you for your support of the 2024 Poppy Appeal.

Nativity Scene

We now have a wonderful new nativity scene in school which has been very kindly crafted and gifted to us by Marion Jones. A huge thank you to Marion for her very kind donation to the school which I know will be used to for many Christmases to come.



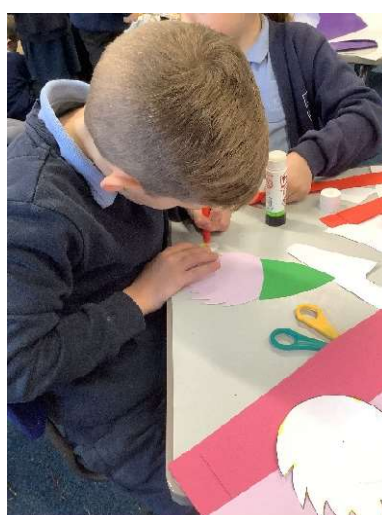
Christmas Fayre

A huge thank you to everyone for attending and supporting the Christmas Fayre back on 30th November. It was a great success and raised an impressive £815.51! A further £52.90 was raised through the 'Name the Husky' competition. A huge thank you to The Friends of Denver School for organising this event and to everyone who donated a raffle prize. The children in Classes 3 and 4 need a special mention for organising and running their wonderful games – we were so impressed with you all!



Decoration Day

On 1st December we had our annual Decoration Day where the glitter came out and the children spent the day making cards and Christmas decorations. Here are some photos of the children's festive creations.



Christingles

On Monday 2nd December, we welcomed 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 Jo Walton, one of our Foundation Governors, for organising this. In the afternoon the whole school walked down to St Mary's Church, Denver to take part in our Christingle Service. The School Council explained about the significance of the Christingle and Reverend Nigel gave his address dressed as a pumpkin! Thank you to all of you who joined us for this special service.



Choir Perform at Oakes Court

Members of our school choir visited Oakes Court Retirement and Nursing Home in Downham Market on Monday 9th December. The choir entertained the residents with an array of Christmas songs and choir favourites which were well received by the audience. There were some excellent solo performances too. We were very proud of them. A huge thank you to Mr Lawrence who put the performance together.



Class 1's Christmas Learning Café by Mr Rackham

Class 1 were joined by our parents for our second Learning Café of the year. The children shared 'The Jolly Christmas Postman' story that we had been reading in class that week and then we got a special letter from Father Christmas! The class worked on creating lists of their Christmas wishes for Santa before putting them in envelopes and sending them off in the class post box. Thank you to all parents who attended - we hope you all have a Merry Christmas!



Yoga and Mindfulness

Joanne Turner from the Schools and Community Team has been leading some Yoga and Mindfulness sessions to a group of children and their parents on Thursdays after school this half term. These sessions were part of a trial with the Schools and Community Team, and they have been so well received that we are hoping to offer similar sessions in the future. Thank you to Joanne, Mrs Wright and Miss Waters for leading the sessions, and to all those who engaged.

Christmas Lunch

The children enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch on 11th December. A huge thank you to Mrs Fenn and Mrs Metcalfe for their hard work in preparing the food – I am sure we can all agree that cooking over 100 Christmas lunches is no mean feat! The children enjoyed a lovely atmosphere and had fun pulling the crackers they made with the help of Michelle, Lisa, Rosemary and Nicola from the Friends. Thank you to all involved in making Christmas lunch a special occasion for the children.



Class 1 Party by Mr Rackham

Whilst the rest of the school enjoyed the panto, Reception had the run of the school for their Christmas party! The children all had an amazing time playing a variety of games like musical statues and bumps, making their own party hats and dressing up as snowmen. Thank you to The Friends for the pass the parcel we all enjoyed and to staff in the kitchen for a tasty party lunch!



Class 2 Party by Mr Cawley

24 rolls of Lidl's finest toilet rolls added a fun and hectic climax to the Class 2 Christmas party; the children enjoyed creating 'snowmen' by using their friend as a model. Just one of the many party games that we enjoyed last Thursday. Music and lights added to the excitement of the children as they took part in musical chairs, pass the balloon, create a snowman, musical statues, and of course the pass the parcel (that was kindly organised by the Friends). Fuelled on Haribo, the children certainly made the most of the event! Thanks very much to the parents who gave up their afternoons for the madness that was. The children wished that Christmas could happen every week, for the rest of us, once a year is plenty! Here's looking forward to the Christmas party of 2025!



Class 3 Party by Mr Bonham

On Wednesday 11th of December, Denver School had our Christmas School Lunch. What made the day even more special for Class 3 was that we had our had Christmas Party in the afternoon. We had a great game of Pass the Parcel. Ottilie was the last to open the last layer of wrapping paper so won the final prize. We then went back to class for some creativity. The children made different Christmas trees using various coloured pipe cleaners and then decorated them. Thank you to the Friends of Denver for providing the prizes.

Ottilie: *"I felt really happy and proud to have won Pass the Parcel and I got a Grinch Game!"*



Class 4 Party by Mrs Henden

Class 4 had their class party this afternoon. They took part in a range of traditional games, including musical statues and musical chairs and of course pass the parcel, which was very kindly donated by The Friends. They also played a game which involved them having to eat a chocolate bar with a knife and fork whilst wearing a pair of gloves. A good time was had by us all.



Carol Service

This week started with our annual Carol Service at St Mary's Church, Denver. Each class performed a song and Class 4 also entertained us with a sketch about Santa being pulled over by the police. There were readings from the Bible, a performance by the school choir and we also had some group and solo pieces. Thank you to former pupil, Thomas Burt, for playing the organ, to Heidi Moat and Jonathan Webster for giving an address and of course to Mr Lawrence for the wonderful musical items.



Nativity

On Wednesday this week, the children in Class 1 and Class 2 performed a wonderful nativity, 'Charlie's Caring Christmas' to a hall packed full of parents, carers and grandparents. Mr Lawrence once again wrote the story and linked it to the work we as a school are doing to support young carers, helping to give the nativity an extra special meaning. The acting and singing were fantastic, and the children should really feel proud of themselves. Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate one of the highlights of the school year, and to Mr Lawrence for another amazing production.



Pantomime Visit

Yesterday, the children in Y1-Y6 travelled to the Maltings in Ely to watch a fantastic performance of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They all enjoyed themselves, as did the staff. 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.



Father Christmas

This afternoon we had a very special visitor come to school, none other than Father Christmas himself, who kindly gave a present to all the children. A perfect end to a festive week.

Maths Sessions for Y2 Parents/Carers

Following the recent successful maths sessions provided by the Norfolk County Council, we are pleased to announce that we have been offered a further maths course for parents/carers who have a child currently in Year 2. The scheme is fully funded by the government and comprises of six 1-hour sessions that will be held in school and run by a professional external tutor, like the previous session offered. The sessions will include, but not limited to: number bonds, acute angles and bilateral symmetry, focusing upon modern language and methods used. To register your interest, or for more information, please email Mr Rackham on crackham@denver.norfolk.sch.uk.

First Admission to School

Just a reminder that applications for children starting school in Reception next September need to be made by 15th January 2025. The easiest way for parents to apply is online 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.

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.

We recently sent out a letter from the Local Authority regarding school attendance. 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. The letter can be found on our school website. Please remember that significant changes have been made to the criteria for issuing fixed penalty notices.

Our Attendance policy has recently been updated and can be found on our website under About Us, Attendance.

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

Class 1	74.8%
Class 2	87.4%
Class 3	85.9%
Class 4	92.9%

Well done to Class 4 for having the highest attendance for the month of December!

Our overall school attendance so far this year is **95.2%**, which is below our school target of 97%. Please continue to support us to improve school attendance to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun

The **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun** festive holiday activity scheme is running from 30th December 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](#)

Out of School Hours Communication

Just a reminder that you can contact the school urgently over the Christmas break, 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.

Update from The Friends

And here it is, the end of 2024! This first half of the school year has flown by. It has been a relatively quiet December for us at The Friends, but I would just like to say a massive thank you to all those who helped organise and run Annette's afternoon tea get together. She will be sorely missed at the school, and The Friends wish her the best for the future.

We also supplied the pass the parcels for the class parties in the run up to the end of term, and a few sweet treats for the children to enjoy whilst the games were afoot. Congratulations to all those who won prizes.

All that is left for me to say is, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at The Friends. Enjoy the winter break and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Ben G - Chair of the Friends of Denver

Thank You to The Friends

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved with The Friends of Denver School for their amazing fundraising this year. We are so grateful for all the resources and wonderful opportunities they have funded for the children throughout the year. They truly are an amazing bunch of people!

Forthcoming Events

Class 4 Swimming – starting on 10th January

Class 4 will start their swimming lessons on Friday 10th January. They will be swimming throughout the spring term. Please ensure they have their swimming kits each Friday.

SEND Coffee Morning – 17th January

We would like to invite all parents/carers of children with SEND to a SEND Coffee Morning at 9am on 17th January. We have some guest speakers attending, including Rosie Smith from the Benjamin Foundation and the Sarah Downes from the Family Hub. We hope to see many of you there.

Guild Hall Visit – Class 3 – 24th January

Class 3 will be visiting the Guild Hall in King's Lynn at the end of January for a Shakespeare themed day which will end in a performance on the stage.

Sports News

Game Changers

Harry from Alive Leisure visited Class 4 over the last three consecutive Friday afternoons to deliver Game Changers sessions to explore the link between physical activity and positive mental health. Each session began with class-based activities and then progressed to physical activities using the skills the children had identified in class.



And finally...

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support for the school throughout 2024. Thank you to all the staff for their hard work and dedication to the school, and to the children for being such enthusiastic learners.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and happy and healthy New Year on behalf of us all at Denver Primary. We look forward to welcoming you back on 7th January 2025.

Dates for your diary- please keep for future reference:

2024/2025

Spring Term

January 2025	6 th	Mon	Professional Development Day
	7 th	Tue	Children return to school
	10 th	Fri	Swimming starts for Class 4
	16 th	Thu	SEND Coffee Morning
	24 th	Fri	Class 3 Visit to the Guild Hall
February 2025	17 th -21 st		School closed for half term
	24 th	Mon	Children return to school
April 2025	4 th	Fri	Last day of spring term

Summer Term

April 2025	23 rd	Wed	Children return to school
May 2025	5 th	Mon	School closed for Bank Holiday
	26 th – 30 th		School closed for half term
June 2025	2 nd	Mon	Children return to school
July 2025	22 nd	Tue	Last day of summer term