



January 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the January newsletter, and the first instalment of 2026. This month seems to have flown by and we are slowly but surely moving towards lighter mornings and evenings. We hope you enjoy reading about what we have been focussing on in school so far this year.

Staff Welcome

This term we have welcomed two new members of staff to our team. Mrs Rhian Writer has joined us a Teaching Assistant and Mrs Michelle Caul-Byrne as a new MSA. Both have received a warm welcome by our school community and are settling in well to their new roles.

Oral Hygiene Visit

On Thursday 22nd January, Classes 1, 2 and 3 had a special visit from a lady called Sarah who came round the school promoting the importance of oral hygiene. The children had a fantastic time discussing what they knew about teeth and how we look after them.

Sarah informed the children about how they should brush their teeth for two minutes and described brushing teeth as like a car going through a car wash! The children learned the importance of brushing their tongue and about not rinsing their mouth with water after they brushed so that the fluorides stays where it should be. They also learned that their milk teeth with their practise teeth helping them to talk and helping their adult teeth to coming through in the right place. She talked about sugars and about how anything ending in OSC such as glucose lactose fruit fructose all have natural sugars in. She also talked of how to drink fizzy drinks through a straw so the sugars don't touch your teeth.

The children found it really interesting and gained a lot from the visit. They had lots of questions to ask, and were all given a toothbrush and toothpaste so they can practise what they have learned at home.





Healthy Snacks

We would like to remind our families that children should only bring healthy snacks for break times. To support our whole-school approach to promoting healthy eating, we kindly ask that crisps, chocolate, sweets, and other sugary snacks are not brought into school. Suitable options include fruit, vegetables, cheese, cereal bars, yoghurt tubes, rice cakes, or other simple, nutritious snacks. Thank you for your support in helping us encourage healthy habits and ensure all children have the energy they need for learning throughout the day. If you have any questions, please contact the school office

Children's Mental Health Week

From 9th-15th February we will be engaging in Children's Mental Health Week. The theme this year is 'This is my Place'. The week aims to support systems around children to help them to feel they belong, emphasising the importance of belonging in their friendships, schools and communities. We will be engaging in a number of activities throughout the week to enable children to develop the knowledge, skills and values to support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing.

SEND Coffee Morning

On 29th January, we held a Parent Café in school. We were joined by a number of guest speakers, including Sarah Downes from the Family Hub, Allison Burt from the Schools and Community Team, Sally Bailey from Norfolk SENDIASS, Louise Ramsey from the Swan Youth Project and Rosie Smith from the Benjamin Foundation. It was a really good session, packed with advice and signposting of support for families on a range of issues, including SEND. Thank you to those who attended.

Weather

Although we seem to have avoided the worst of the winter weather, February can sometimes be an unpredictable month, so we wanted to remind you of our procedures for extreme weather. We always do our utmost to keep the school open, however, it may occasionally be necessary to close the school in really bad weather as several members of staff travel long distances across Norfolk. If this is the case, regular announcements will be made on Radio Norfolk and Greatest Hits Radio (West Norfolk) soon after 7am. Details will also be posted on the Norfolk County Council school closure list at: www.schoolclosures.norfolk.gov.uk

World Book Day

Linked in with the work we are doing on courageous advocacy, the children on the School Council had an excellent idea to ask for old World Book Day costumes to be donated to help families who might find it difficult to afford buying a new costume this year. They also thought this would help the environment by recycling and reusing.

Katherine and Evie from Class wrote the following communication themselves which has been sent out this week:

For World Book Day this year, which takes place on the 5th of March, we would like to ask children to donate any old World Book Day costumes which they no longer need or have outgrown so these can be recycled and reused by other children. We would like to do this because some costumes can be hard to afford and we also want to help the environment.

If you have any costumes to donate you can put them in the blue donation bin on the school field. Please may all donations be in school by Monday the 23rd of February. On Thursday the 26th of February all of the donated costumes will be displayed in the outdoor classroom for anyone who would like a costume for this World Book Day. These costumes will be free of charge.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine and Evie on behalf of the School Council

Spirituality

As a school, we are on a journey to develop a shared understanding of spirituality. We have created a spiritual space in school (as can be seen in the photo below) and we are developing a shared language across the school. In our worship this term, we have talked about spiritual spaces and the School Council suggested that they would like the children to share photos of their spiritual spaces outside school to be added to our spiritual space display. This could be somewhere where the children feel awe and wonder at life, perhaps where they feel connected to nature, or somewhere where they feel happy or calm. We look forward to the children, and staff in school, sharing photos of their spiritual spaces with us so we can add to our display. A poster summarising our approach to spirituality will be sent out with this newsletter and can also be found on our website.



Class 4 RE by Mrs Henden

In Class 4 our key question in RE for this half term is 'How does Tawhid create a sense of belonging to the Muslim community.' We have studied how their declaration of faith affects their lives, including the obligation to pray. The children were set a project task of finding out about the Five Pillars of Islam which are the foundations of Muslim faith. The outcomes are very impressive. Thank you to all of the children and their families for their hard work.



Class 1 RE by Mr Rackham

Last week, Reverend Nigel came into Class 1 to carry out an animal service with the class in relation to our 'How do we Look After our Wonderful World?' topic in RE. He brought in his own cat Ryston to the class who had all drawn their own pets too. We were even fortunate enough to say hello and stroke him if wanted.





Courageous Advocacy

As we start a new year, we would like to empower more of our children to become courageous advocates and speak out against injustice either locally or with global issues. Our courageous advocacy award, which is normally awarded at the end of the academic year, will be awarded more regularly in celebration worship to celebrate courageous advocates in our school community. We look forward to the children sharing the creative ways in which they are speaking out against injustice and celebrating this.

Christian Value

Our Christian value for this half term is love and after half term we will focus on compassion.

Guinea Pigs

We would like to say a huge thank you to all our families who offer to look after the guinea pigs during weekends and holiday periods. At our recent School Council meeting, it was suggested that photos of the guinea pigs on their holidays could be shared with us so we create a display around their cage in school. This links in with our work on spirituality and looking after others and our wonderful world. Any photos can be sent to the class teachers or the office. Many thanks for your support with this.

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.

At the beginning of the school year, we 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. Our Attendance policy can also be found on our website under About Us, Attendance.

To promote good attendance, we celebrate the class with the highest attendance each week in our celebration assembly and each month in our newsletters. January's attendance figures were as follows:

Class 1	85.4%
Class 2	95.1%
Class 3	95.4%
Class 4	94.3%

Well done to Class 3 for having the highest attendance for the month of January!

Our overall school attendance so far this year is **94.6%**, which is below our school target. We recognise that this is as a result of seasonal illnesses and many cases of chicken pox, however we ask that you continue to support us in improving school attendance to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

Out of School Hours Communication

Just a reminder that 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.

Denver Supertots

Our Denver Supertots playgroup continues to run every Wednesday morning from 09:30-10:30. Please spread the word as we are keen to welcome new families.

Denver Youth Group

Denver Youth Group is now welcoming children from Year 3 upwards and they are keen for more local children to join them.

Scaffolding

We are due to have scaffolding in place on the school site from Wednesday 11th February until Monday 23rd February. This is to allow essential maintenance work on the school boiler system to be carried out over the half term break.

Please be assured that the safety of our children and staff remains our highest priority. The scaffolding will be professionally installed and meet all required health and safety standards.

The area will be clearly signposted, and access will be restricted to authorised contractors only. Children will not be permitted near the area at any time, and staff will ensure the area is closely supervised throughout the school day.

We would appreciate your support in reminding your child/ren about the importance of following staff instructions and staying away from restricted areas while the scaffolding is in place.

Young Carers by Mrs Wright

Our next Young Carers session is happening on 12th February and we are looking forward to welcoming some Young Carers from West Winch Primary School to this. Mrs Wright is busy planning a really exciting session which I am sure all the children will enjoy. If you think that your child might be a Young Carer, please contact Mrs Wright to find out more information about what support we can offer.

RSHE Update from Mrs Henden

Class 1

Class 1 has been focussing a lot on our current Christian value: Love. The class have discussed what and who we love and about the ways which we may demonstrate love.

Class 3

This month we have been sharing our worries and concerns and seeing if we can help each other with solutions. This has been a valuable way of making the children they are not alone with their concerns and that many share the same worries. It has also helped them articulate how they have solved problems and confronted issues to each other. The children have been keen to share solutions with others. We can all find ways of helping each other.

Class 4

Since returning from the Christmas holidays, we have been concluding our learning about drugs and alcohol. We have learnt that the definition of a drug is substance (other than food) that affects how the brain and the rest of the body works and causes changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings, or behaviour. We discussed how drugs can be a positive thing when prescribed by a doctor because they can help with illnesses and pain.

We discussed the difference between legal and illegal drugs. Through reading scenarios, we learnt about the impacts that drugs can have on the body and mind. We looked at case studies to categorise whether the people involved were high, medium or low risk and came up with advice for those people to reduce their risks.

On Monday we looked at the river of life and obstacles that could crop up for children aged 9-11. We took the boulders out of the river and discussed people and strategies that could help resolve those problems.

Outdoor Learning Update from Mr Cawley

14.1.26

The first of our outdoor learning sessions was held on a chilly but clear evening. We started off with a scavenger looking around for the things that we find this time of year. These ranged from sticks and stones, to feathers and squirrels(!) all chosen by the children of course! They set their findings out on scrap paper so they could see them clearly but also found lots of other things in our outdoor area; one of these were the snowdrops; a sure sign of spring. We then played a game of sardines, which is a different take on hide and seek. And as the children got used to the rules, the light faded, and it all came together.



Bird Feeders 21.01.26

On one of the coldest days of the year so far it seemed only apt that we thought of the birds. Having thought about their needs, we happened across the good deed of feeding animals that can't look after themselves. We set about creating bird feeders from toilet rolls, cones, lard, seed and acorns. The children had loads of fun and learned lots about the wildlife and birds in our gardens, and our school habitat. We hung many feeders around the school so hopefully we'll see an influx of our feathered friends in the days to come.



28.01.26

After a few moments in the classroom explaining the engineering wonder of free standing dens, the children made their way out to find two 'Y' shaped sticks and one long stick, as the backbone for their shelters. On the way to doing this they were also hunting for bugs and insects that are now starting to appear again. Another sure sign that Spring is on its way was just how light it was 4:15 when the children were due to go home; something that caught me out as I thought we had a lot more time to finish! We're going to create gardens next week as a compliment to the dens that the children have made today.



"Alright Gov'nor?" by Carole Reich (Chair of Governors)

"Many hands make lighter work"

I enjoy being a governor for this lovely school. We are blessed with a conscientious staff team who regularly go above and beyond; we have an exceptional head teacher who juggles the huge range of demands upon her in a calm and balanced manner; and we have children who

work hard, and surprise and delight us as they navigate growing up in this ever more complicated world.

Our role as governors is to work as a team to provide strategic leadership and accountability, acting as a "critical friend" to the headteacher. We do not run the school day-to-day; instead, we focus on long-term improvement, high educational standards, and financial health.

We have a supportive team of governors who work hard to provide the guidance and challenge expected of us. However, we are finding the role hard now because we are spread too thinly. The governing body should comprise of:

- 1 Head Teacher
- 1 Staff Member
- 3 Parent members
- 3 Foundation members
- 1 Local Authority member
- 5 Co-opted members
 - Total 14 members

Currently we have:

- 1 Head Teacher
- 1 Staff Member
- 1 Parent member
- 3 Foundation members
- 1 Local Authority members
- 0 Co-opted members
 - Total 7 members

As you can imagine having half the number of people recommended means that our ability to cover all expectations is proving a challenge.

I am sharing this with you because we need at least two parents from our families in school to put themselves forward to work with us to support the school. The phrase "Many hands make lighter work" is such a truism. Please search your hearts and reach out to me, Carole Reich (chairofgovs@denver.norfolk.sch.uk) or Mrs Jones.

Update from The Friends

First of all, welcome back everyone, we hope you had a fantastic Christmas and New Year's break.

It is all systems go for the Friends this month. We have had our first major planning meeting for the year; we have some amazing events in the pipeline. Keep an eye out for emails and Dojo posts about what's coming up.

We are happy to announce that we will be holding a Valentine's disco on Thursday 12th February, in the School Hall. Please keep an eye out for further information coming out via email & Dojo in the coming days!

We have our next meeting lined up for Friday 6th Feb, in the school staff room and we are always looking for new volunteers and members. Please feel free to come along and join our wonderful group.

Ben. G - Chair of the Friends of Denver

Sports News

Active Kids

On 19th January, the children in Y1 visited Lynnsport for the second of the Active Kids festivals. They took part in a number of different fun activities and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Class 3 Speedstacking

On Tuesday 20th January, Class 3 had PE session trying out Speedstacking. There will be further activities in the following months as part of 'Omnes Games' (which means 'For All'). The games are designed to give those children who do not usually represent the school an opportunity to do so. The events are run as festivals, so no scores and results are recorded. Just an opportunity to come and play, have fun, meet new friends and fall in love with a new sport. Comments from the children included:

Speedstacking was amazing, I would like to do it again with more relay races. The teacher who came to show us how to do it explained it perfectly. There were no down sides, it was just full fun! Robyn

The experience was very good. I now know how to Speedstack, it was fun.
Ivy W

I liked the speedstacking because it was fun, energetic and fast.
William

I think it was amazing how fast I and everyone was. I think it was absolutely brilliant!
Lily T



Swimming

Each Friday since returning from the Christmas break, the children from Class 4 have been visiting the swimming pool at Downham Market. The children are in two groups with those already able to swim or are experienced swimmers with Alison in the deep end and the other group of beginners and improvers with Carla in the shallow end. Later in the term, the children will learn safe rescue techniques. Lessons will continue until Easter.

Football Opportunity

Downham Town Under 7 Blues are looking for new players – more information can be found below:



DOWNHAM TOWN UNDER 7 BLUES

We Are Growing Our Team

- Current School Year 1 or 2
- Qualified Coaches
- League Matches
- Boys and Girls Welcome

Training
Thursdays
6-7pm
Rouses Lane
Downham
Market

DOWNHAM TOWN F.C.
Est. 1991

If You Would Like More Information
Contact Anthony on 07342044582
Contact Kenny on 07300508482

Sporting Stars

Congratulations to Max in Class 2 who was awarded 'Man of the Match' for his great performance in his match last Saturday. He scored two goals, with his first goal from the halfway line going into the top corner! Well done, Max!



Forthcoming Events

Friends' Meeting – 6th February

The next Friends' meeting will be held in school on 6th February at 3.30pm.

Cambridge Central Mosque Visit – 9th February

As part of the RE learning, Class 3 will be visiting Cambridge Central Mosque on Monday 9th February.

OMNES Games – Speed Stacking – 9th February

The next OMNES games, Speed Stacking, is being held on 9th February. A group of children from Class 2 will be visiting Lynnsport for this event.

Children's Mental Health Week – 9th-15th February

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, 9th-15th February is Children's Mental Health Week. We will be joined by Louise Ramsey from the Swan Youth Project for a special worship on Thursday 12th.

DT Day – 10th February

Class 4 will be joined by members of the Rotary Club on 10th February for a DT Day.

Safer Internet Day – 10th February

We will be celebrating Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 10th February. On this day, we will join many schools and other organisations across the country to help promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people. The children will discuss ways to keep themselves safe, at an age-appropriate level throughout the day.

Valentine's Disco – 12th February

The Friends are organising a Valentine's Disco at school on Thursday 12th February from 5pm -7pm. More details will follow soon from the Friends.

Young Carers Session – 12th February

The next Young Carers session is being held on Thursday 12th February and we are excited to welcome some Young Carers from West Winch Primary School to this session.

World Book Day – 5th March

We will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 5th March. We have a number of exciting activities planned and will once again be asking that the children come to school dressed as a favourite book character. We are also inviting parents into school from 3pm to read with your child/ren. More details will follow nearer the event.

British Science Week – 6th – 15th March

It is also British Science Week this week and Mrs Henden, our science lead, is busy organising a range of fun challenges for the children to take part in.

Parent Consultations – 9th and 11th March

We will be offering face-to-face parent consultations on the 9th and 11th March. More details about how to book appointments will be sent out after half term. Sarah Downes from the

Family Hub and Allison Burt from the Schools and Community Team will be offering bookable appointments on the 11th.

Mother's Day Posies – 13th March

The ladies from St Mary's Church will once again be coming into school on 13th March to help the children make posies for Mothering Sunday.

Bee Netball Tournament – 16th March

A Bee netball tournament for children in Class 3 is taking place on 16th March.

OMNES Games – 23rd March

Some children in Class 2 and Class 3 will get the opportunity to try out a different sport, New Age Kurling, on 23rd March.

Cluster Netball Tournament – 24th March

The cluster netball tournament for children in Y5/6 is due to take place on 24th March at DMA. Good luck to the team!

Cluster Football Tournament – 27th March

On the last day of term, we will be sending 2 teams of Y5/6 children to the cluster football tournament at Hillcrest. Good luck to our footballers!

Easter Service – 27th March

We are planning to have our Easter service in St Mary's Church on the last day of term at 2pm.

And finally...

As a school, we are always looking for ways in which we can improve and we value your feedback. Please approach us at the gate, or send a Dojo or email, with any ideas you may have. I hope you all enjoy February half term when it arrives.

Dates for your diary- please keep for future reference:

2025/2026

Spring Term

February 2026	3 rd	Tue	DT Day – Class 4
	6 th	Fri	Friend's Meeting
	9 th	Mon	Cambridge Central Mosque Visit – Class 3
	9 th	Mon	OMNES Speedstacking
	9 th -15 th		Children's Mental Health Week
	10 th	Tue	Safer Internet Day
	12 th	Thu	Valentine's Disco
	12 th	Thu	Young Carers Session
	16 th -20 th		School closed for half term
	23 rd	Mon	Children return to school
	5 th	Thu	World Book Day
	6 th -15 th		British Science Week

March 2026	9 th	Mon	Parent Consultations
	11 th	Wed	Parent Consultations
	13 th	Fri	Mothers' Day Posies
	16 th	Mon	Bee Netball Festival
	23 rd	Mon	OMNES Games – New Age Kurling
	24 th	Tue	Cluster Netball Tournament
	27 th	Fri	Cluster Football Tournament
	27 th	Fri	Easter Service – St Mary's Church
	27 th	Fri	Last day of spring term

Summer Term

April 2026	14 th	Tue	Children return to school
May 2026	4 th	Mon	School closed for Bank Holiday
	25 th – 29 th		School closed for half term
June 2026	1 st	Mon	Children return to school
July 2026	17 th	Fri	Last day of summer term