



This half term's value has been: Creativity. Next half term's value will be: Diversity.

Head Teacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers,

It may have been a largely grey and wet January, but the sun has still shone inside Downs Infants, with lots of fun learning going on!



Just this week, the children were delighted to have 'Jump Start Jonny' join us for a whole school assembly and workshops with every class. We subscribe to 'Jump Start Jonny' for dance, exercise, and mindfulness activities for the children - often used for 'brain breaks' to help children feel calm, focused, and happy - so to meet Jonny in real life was very exciting! Thank you to FODIS for financially supporting this visit.

The whole school enjoyed an incredible assembly from Rocksteady, featuring James and his collection of rock instruments! Rocksteady provides an inclusive approach that helps children develop a sense of belonging through new friendships and a shared love of music, while boosting social skills, wellbeing and confidence. The children were spellbound and then went on to take part in bespoke workshops. We have had a fantastic response to the sign up for the band lessons and are looking forward to being treated to lots more rock music in the future.



And as if that wasn't enough, we also had world scooter champion, Terry Price, who also joined us this term! Terry inspired the children with his motivational story of overcoming challenges, developing a growth mindset and building resilience along the way to ultimately mastering the world record breaking triple backflip on his scooter! Our Year 2 children were then able to participate in scooter workshops designed to challenge themselves and build confidence, balance and coordination. Again, thanks are owed to FODIS for funding the whole-school aspect of Terry's visit.



Our new Administrative Assistants, Mrs Ruth Pope and Ms Karen Tucker, have settled into the demands of their new jobs and already feel very much a part of the team here at Downs Infants. If visiting the office, you will see Ruth on Mondays to Wednesdays and Karen on Wednesdays to Fridays, in addition to our Office Manager, Mrs Catherine Moore, and School Business Manager, Mrs Ann Mitchell. **Please note that the school office closes at 4pm daily but 3.15pm on Wednesdays.**



Mrs Ruth Pope



Ms Karen Tucker



Mrs Catherine Moore



Mrs Ann Mitchell

I am delighted to share with you Miss Emily London's exciting news that she is expecting a baby! Miss London's due date is at the beginning of June, and she is hoping to work up until the half term break in May. We will begin the recruitment process for Miss London's maternity cover over the second half of the spring term and we will ensure a thorough handover to ensure a smooth transition for the children in Starfish Class.



Thank you to all those KS1 parents and carers who were able to attend our Maths Mastery workshops run by our maths lead, Neil Cowley.

You are likely to have heard of 'Smartphone Free Childhood' which is a movement of families standing together to delay children's access to smartphones and social media. Please can I urge you to complete the following survey to share your views on smartphone policies in Brighton & Hove schools. [CLICK HERE TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE SURVEY.](https://sfcbrighton.co.uk/survey)



Please complete this survey to **share your views on smartphone policies** in Brighton & Hove schools.

- It only takes 2-3 minutes, is completely anonymous and no personal data will be stored
- All schools in Brighton & Hove will be asked to share this survey with their parents / carers
- The survey will close on 28th Feb 2026
- Please share with friends and families in Brighton & Hove



<https://sfcbrighton.co.uk/survey>



Brighton & Hove

sfcbrighton.co.uk

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Walker".

Mrs Lisa Walker

Learning in Reception

A bear was spotted in school by Mr Standing and it left paw prints all around the place, which inspired our Reception children to create posters to help find the lost bear! They have also learned a journey story all about bears, innovated the story, and plotted their own versions using a story mountain.

In PE, the children have been using the apparatus, including the wall bars, for the first time. They have shown great skill and care while doing so.



For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account

Learning in Year 1

The new *Frozen* topic has captivated our Year One children. They have written beautiful poetry, explored the differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic, and learned about their senses. Ice proved to be a great way to explore the sense of touch!

The children have learned *The Kind-hearted Husky*, a losing tale set in the Arctic, and are now innovating the story to make it their own.



For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account

Learning in Year 2

In Year Two, it has all been about dragons! A school trip (rather soggy for some!) to the Royal Pavilion enabled the children to learn about the history of the building and go dragon spotting. This inspired dragon-themed writing and the creation of beautiful, clay, dragon eyes.

The children have also imagined, drawn and labelled maps of dragon worlds using keys.



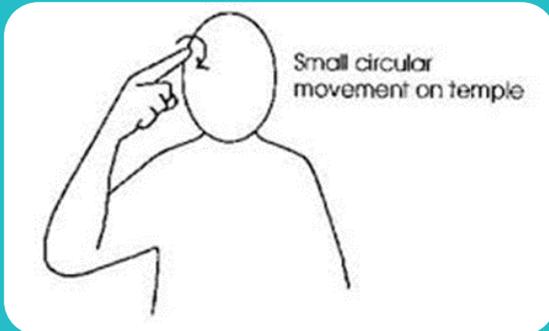
For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account

This half term's Makaton signs were:

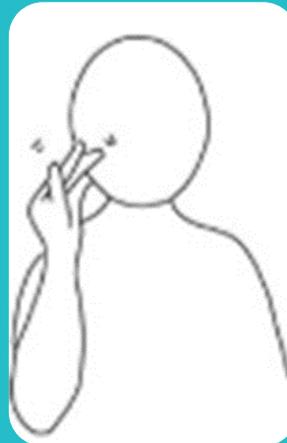


Did you know that over 100,000 children and adults use Makaton symbols and signs, either as their main method of communication or as a way to support speech?!

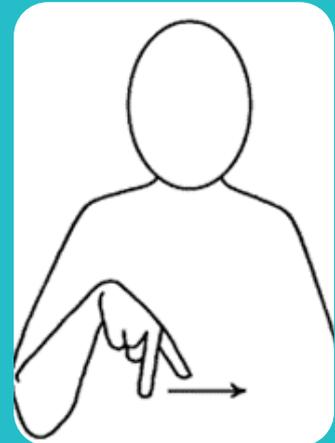
Think



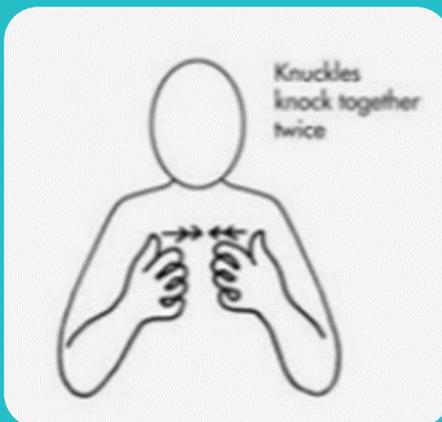
When



Walk



How



Happy New Year



Safeguarding

If you would like to speak to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Lisa Walker, or a member of our safeguarding team in confidence, please email:

DSL@downsinf.brighton-hove.sch.uk

If you have any compliments, comments, concerns or complaints to feedback to school please email: **CCCC@downsinf.brighton-hove.sch.uk**

Governors' News

As we finish our first half term for this calendar year, I am pleased to introduce myself as the new Chair of Governors. My name is Susan Campbell, and I am delighted to take on this role, working alongside a dedicated team of governors, staff, and our wonderful school community.



This term, we held our Resources Committee meeting where we discussed financial planning and priorities for the year ahead. As with many schools nationally, budgets remain a challenge, but we continue to work carefully to ensure that every pound is used effectively to support the best outcomes for all our pupils.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our teachers, support staff, and school leaders for their continued hard work and commitment. Their passion and dedication make a real difference every day, and we are grateful for all they do.

We look forward to a productive term ahead, filled with learning, creativity, and growth. Thank you for your ongoing support of our school community.

School Council



This term, our classes have all elected new School Council representatives (one per class) and it's been wonderful to see Reception join us. As always, the School Council reps have been responsible for teaching the Makaton sign of the week to KS1 in assembly. They have also been busy gathering ideas about how to improve the activities on offer in one of our outdoor areas at lunchtime.

Resources Shout Out



Do you have any outgrown but good quality children's Christmas jumpers? Mrs Walker would like to have a few spares for future festive seasons. Please drop them to the school office. Thank you!

Reception would love some buttons please if you have any spares?

As always, all year groups need lots of packaging for junk modelling. Please note that we're unable to accept packaging from products containing nuts or seeds. We also can't accept packaging from medicines or toilet roll tubes. If you could bring in your recycling on a Monday morning that would be great!



Please can we have some spare clothes for older children spare clothes for our tallest/biggest children in Year 2. A few items aged 7-10 would be great, especially bottom half items! Thanks in advance.

If your child has recently borrowed items from our emergency clothing supplies please wash them and return them to the school office or your classroom teacher.

Rainbow Club News

Thanks to all who continue to make Rainbow Club a great success and special gratitude to those parents who have generously donated toys and craft materials to the club.



Please can we remind parents/carers to keep the main gate closed and not buzz in other adults - all parents/carers collecting children must use the Rainbow Club buzzer on the gate. Thanks for your co-operation which is necessary for safeguarding.

FODIS News



We hope that 2026 has been kind to you all. It was wonderful to see so many of you at our FODIS (Friends of Downs Infant School) PTA AGM at the end of January.

Since September, we have raised an incredible £7,741 – an amazing achievement made possible by your generosity and support. Here's the full breakdown:

- Christmas Fayre: £2,411
- Christmas Activity (Merchandise, Tea Towels & Tree Collections): £1,623
- Co-op Community Fundraising (Fiveways Co-op): £1,645
- OO's Quiz: £827
- Monthly Winter Warmers Sales: £486
- Donations: £372
- Funds Raised for Children in Need: £239
- EasyFundraising: £138

Warmest thanks to every single one of you – we truly couldn't do this without you. A special mention to Phil, Mark, Murray and Mark for the Christmas tree collections – your efforts helped raise a huge amount!

FROZEN FRIDAYS

Move over Winter Warmers... thank you for braving the rain at our first Frozen Friday of the year – we still managed to raise £100, which is fantastic for such a soggy afternoon! If you missed us, we are now located in the Beach area (by the shed outside Starfish), which gives us much-needed shelter from the elements. A special shout out to our wonderful volunteers Catherine and Sam, led by Worth. Frozen Fridays will take place on the first Friday of every month after school, serving ice creams and instant hot drinks.

WHAT WE HAVE FUNDED

So far, FODIS has provided funding for these initiatives, with more to be announced:

- All School Scooter Assembly
- Jump Start Jonny Assembly and workshops
- New Hedge initiative
- Gardening maintenance

We'd also like to extend a huge thank you to Sue and Gabriella for all their hard work keeping the garden areas looking beautiful – donating their time and many plants for free. We're delighted to provide them with a budget to continue their amazing work.

WONKA BARS - WORLD BOOK DAY

Wonka Bars are now on sale to celebrate World Book Day on 5th March. Sincerest thanks to our army of chocolate shoppers and wrappers. Bars can be purchased via our website: fodisbrighton.square.site.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - TREASURER & CHAIR ROLES

As we approach the end of the academic year, we are looking for parents/carers who may be willing to step into the Treasurer and Chair roles. Each role can be shared between two people to make them more manageable. These roles are extremely rewarding and absolutely vital in helping the school receive the extra funding it so desperately needs. If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch: fodisgeneral@gmail.com

DONATIONS & EASY FUNDRAISING

We are aware that some people would like to give a financial contribution to the school, which we are incredibly grateful for. You can donate via our website: fodisbrighton.square.site. You can also find details there on [easyfundraising.com](https://www.easypundraising.com), where thousands of retailers donate a percentage of your everyday online spending to FODIS – at no extra cost to you. It's super easy to set up and makes a big difference. If you would prefer to make a donation directly to the school our bank details are:

Thank you so much everyone. Hope you have a fabulous Half Term.

Tracy

FODIS Chair

Account Name: Downs Infant School
Bank Name: Lloyds Bank Plc
Account Number: 10759668
Sort Code: 30-80-12

Key Dates (red = dates added since last newsletter)

Monday 23rd Feb	FIRST DAY OF SPRING TERM 2
Monday 9th Mar	Spring Parents' Eve 3.30-6.30pm
Thursday 12th Mar	Spring Parents' Eve 3.30-6.00pm
Monday 16th Mar	Year 2 Let's Dance At The Dome
Sunday 22nd Mar	Downs Infant School Park Run Takeover
Friday 27th Mar	LAST DAY OF SPRING TERM 2
30th Mar - 10th Apr	EASTER HOLIDAYS
Monday 13th Apr	FIRST DAY OF SUMMER TERM 1
Tuesday 28th Apr	Class Photographs
Saturday 2nd May	Children's Parade
Friday 8th May	Reception Trip to Washbrooks Farm
Monday 11th May	Year 2 Trip to The Railway Land Wildlife Trust (2 classes TBC)
Tuesday 12th May	Year 2 Trip to The Railway Land Wildlife Trust (2 classes TBC)
Wednesday 12th May	Year 1 Trip to Amberley Museum
Friday 22nd May	LAST DAY OF SUMMER TERM 1
25th -29th May	HALF TERM
Monday 1st Jun	INSET DAY
Tuesday 2nd Jun	FIRST DAY OF SUMMER TERM 2
Wednesday 15th July	Year 2 Leavers' Show 9.20am
Thursday 16th July	Year 2 Leavers' Show 9.20am
Friday 17th July	Reports to Parents/Carers
Tuesday 22nd July	LAST DAY OF SUMMER TERM 2