

Head Teacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers,

Here we are, at the end of another fun-filled and successful year of learning. I have felt incredibly proud of all the children for their 'can do' attitudes in taking on Sports Days and Splash Day, not to mention Year 2's amazing production of 'Eddie and the Penguins Save the World'!



We're all sad to be saying goodbye to our wonderful Year 2 children, but they are ready to fly the Downs Infant nest, and we wish them all every success as they journey into the next exciting stage of their education. Good luck, Year 2; you're all superstars!

We're also saying farewell to a small number of staff:

Mr Adam Golding (Squirrel Class Teacher) will be joining Northolmes Junior School in Horsham, where he'll be venturing into Key Stage 2 and teaching a Year 5 class; lucky them!

Mrs Mary Ward (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) will be retiring after being a part of Downs Infants for 25 years! Mary has assured us this isn't goodbye and that she'll be back to support with reading and pond dipping. We'll hold her to that!

Mrs Lisa Baker (SEND Teaching Assistant) has been supporting the children of Downs Infant School for 21 years and is looking to kick start her early retirement with an exciting trip overseas.

Mrs Emma Coleman, who has been part of our SEND and Midday Support Assistant teams, is heading off to pastures new.

Mrs Caroline Andrieu has ably led the kitchen team on behalf of Caterlink, but has been very much a part of the Downs Infants' team. After 19 years, Caroline is looking forward to a well-earned rest!



On behalf of us all, I would like to say an enormous thank you and goodbye. They will all be greatly missed and we wish them all every happiness in their new chapters.

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Summer Term 2 2025



This half term's value has been: Flexibility Next half term's value will be: Aspiration

Hopefully, you will have seen our fabulous new mural on Treetops playground, created by Amber Elise (mum of Margo in Fox Class), Visual Artist, Illustrator & Muralist. Initially, our School Council gathered ideas from each class and these were shared with Amber who incorporated them into the design. The design process was explained to the children through an assembly, and then the children were able to watch the mural take shape before their very eyes as Amber and a small team of volunteers became our artists in residence. Many thanks to Amber and the team for this beautiful piece of artwork.



Having mentioned our School Council, have you seen our mascot, Marmite? Marmite is a childhood toy of mine who enjoyed sitting with the children during our important meetings, but he seems to have disappeared!

Our 50th birthday brought much jubilation through our street party style lunch outside in the sunshine, as well as the fabulous summer fair that not only raised a whopping £3500, but had a community vibe to feel proud of. It has been lovely to hear of the many different approaches to the 50-in-50 sponsored challenge, from 50 kind deeds to 50 days of doing press ups. The combined effort raised a total of nearly £2500 for the school. Huge thanks to FODIS for all their support throughout. What an amazing result!



Thank you to the Skipper family (Ruth, Jim, Betty, Ruby, and Sid) and Kassia (mum of Bing in Turtle Class) for providing an incredibly creative and talented assembly comprising singing, keyboard, cello, and human beat-box, to celebrate 'Make Music Day' in June.

THE BOOK NOOK

Thank you to those who were able to support our recent book fair. Over the two days, all the children were able to enjoy an inspiring story reading session with a selection of brand-new titles. The sale of books has raised another £240 towards new books for the school.

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Every year, the Reading Agency hosts 'The Summer Reading Challenge' and your child has been introduced to it through whole school assembly. This year's theme is "Story Garden". It's **totally free** and is important because it encourages children to read for fun during the summer break, preventing the infamous "summer slide" in reading skills. It also helps to foster a love of reading. This free, annual program helps children discover new books, build confidence, and engage with their local library, while also supporting the library system. Please check it out at <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk>.



For the children, the new school year begins on **Friday 5th September**. As always, the school gates will open at 8.40am ready for the school day to begin at 8.45am. We aim to have the children in and settled by the time the gates close at 8.55am, so that learning can begin. As this year has gone by, we've had an increasing number of late arrivals. As the new school year begins, please can I urge everyone to arrive promptly for the benefit of all our learners.

From September, all new children to the school have been asked to bring a book bag only, rather than a back pack (unless there are exceptional circumstances). Sizeable back packs, that often end up sneaking toys and key rings into school, are cumbersome and soon overload the hooks in the cloakrooms. This can make it very difficult for children to access their belongings, and items often end up on the floor. From a sensory perspective, it can also be overwhelming for some children. We are conscious that many of our current children already have back packs and therefore we are looking to simply phase them out starting with our new intake. However, if your child is entering into Year 1 or 2 and you would like to support us in this move, we would be very grateful!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your cooperation and continued support of the school over the year.

Wishing you all a happy summer break.

Best wishes,



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Learning in Reception

Reception have had several visits to the pond. They have enjoyed the area and listened to stories whilst there as well as exploring the pond and finding inspiration for their own innovated minibeasts such as a 'flug' (this is a cross between a fly and a slug)!



For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account



Learning in Year 1

Year one have been visiting the pond and learning to identify and name a variety of common animals including fish and amphibians. The children have also used an artist called Andy Goldsworthy to inspire all sorts of outdoor learning such as leaf and bark rubbings, observational drawings and some transient art projects. The children are loving more learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account

Learning in Year 2

Year two have been learning where Australia is on a map of the world and they have been researching physical and human landmarks. The children learnt lots of information about the country and wrote these facts together. They then innovated their own persuasive text about what makes our school brilliant and why children should come here!



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Resources Shout Out

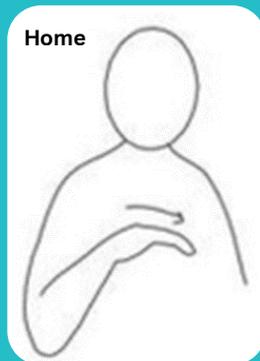


- We're in need of new carpet in some areas of the school. If you'd like to support us by buying a carpet tile, please do via the school shop area of the MCAS app!
- Plastic milk bottle tops
- Packaging for junk modelling – please note, we're unable to accept packaging from products containing nuts or seeds. We also can't accept packaging from medicines or toilet roll tubes.
- Ikea "Kallax" units - if you have any of the smaller units (2X2, 3X2, 4X2) going spare, they would be very gratefully received!

This half term's Makaton signs were:

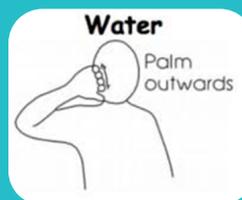


Food



Home

Fifty (50)



Water

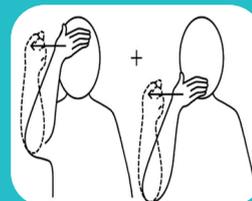
Palm outwards

Water (drink water)



Tilt head slightly backwards

Summer



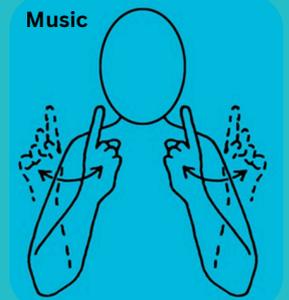
Change is okay (flexibility)

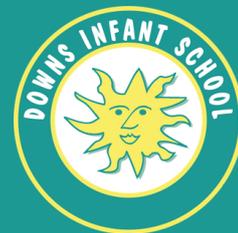
Fists circle backwards around each other



Very small circular movement of the whole hand

Music





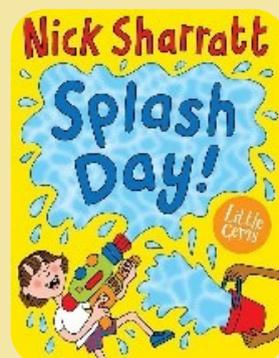
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Our City, Our World

Throughout the year, we have seen many wonderful responses to the weekly 'Our City Our World' challenges that have been set on Tapestry. We have also seen an increase in engagement with the natural environment since the children have been introduced to our new pond, worm hotel, and bug hotel, as well as the gardening opportunities that have arisen thanks to our trusty volunteers, Sue and Gabriella.

Please visit the 'Greening Downs Infants' Instagram page to see the latest developments! https://www.instagram.com/greeningdownsinfantschool?igsh=MW4wenR4ajJ5MmR1dA%3D%3D&utm_source=qr



It is with very mixed emotion that Mrs Walker made the decision to make this year's Splash Day the last one. This tradition started at Downs Infants back in 2006 and was such a hit on the day Nick Sharratt came for an author visit that he wrote a book about it that was published in 2018.

Originally, this event was held for Reception children, but it gradually spread to include all year groups at the infant school and then – at the request of the School Council – found its way into the juniors as well. Given that we are rightly committed to learning about sustainability, climate change, and the environment through the 'Our City Our World' programme, coupled with the expectation from the Department for Education to have a 'School Climate Action Plan' in place from July 2025, it feels incredibly difficult to justify Splash Day moving forward. However, we are certainly not against having fun and Mrs Walker would welcome ideas for an equally exciting but environmentally sensitive activity to celebrate the end of the school year. Please get your thinking caps on and let her know...





This half term's value has been: Empathy Next half term's value will be: Flexibility

Governors' News

This half term has been all about celebrating the school's 50th anniversary and Governors have been very impressed by the way the whole school community has come together and made this a special event. We would like to thank all the children and their parents/carers who took part in the "50 in 50" challenge and worked so hard to raise money for the school. We also want to thank all the FODIS team and others who worked tirelessly to set up and run the Summer Fair and we shouldn't forget all those who attended on July 5th and helped to make the event a success despite the uninspiring weather.

As ever, Governors have been preoccupied with school funding and helping to point out to the Local Authority that the current school funding structure puts Infant Schools at a disadvantage and asking that this disparity could be looked at and, hopefully, addressed.

We also look forward to welcoming the new Reception intake in September with this cohort containing many siblings of previous pupils. Although our quota of 90 was oversubscribed the reduced numbers (now that we are a 3-form entry) gives us a chance of utilising the newfound space in school to the advantage of all.

Finally, Governors would like to wish you all, including of course, Mrs. Walker and her hard-working staff, a happy and restful summer break.

Tony Fallowfield, Chair of Governors

School Council



The School Council have continued to meet with Mrs Walker every Friday. This half term, they have: helped to suggest ideas for ways in which we could celebrate our 50th birthday; established a set of rules for the safe use of skipping ropes on the playground; and gathered names for a new shared learning area in Year 1. This area is currently Badger Class, but it will be adapted over the summer to create an open learning environment similar to 'The Ocean' in Reception, and it will be called 'The Burrow'.

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Rainbow Club News



We are absolutely delighted at the success of Rainbow during its opening year. From September, the number of places on offer has increased, and we look forward to welcoming some new staff members to the team as a result.

Gauging the capacity to expand has been tricky, as we are acutely aware of the level of current demand but this has to be balanced with our reduction in Published Admission Numbers (PAN) that we are adapting to (this process will be completed by September 2026). It appears that places at Rainbow Club are as desirable as Glastonbury tickets, with many sessions getting booked out within four minutes of the booking system opening! If you have made a booking that you no longer require, please do cancel it as soon as possible in order to make it available for others. Thank you.

Well done to Luke and the team for the 5-star scoring in the recent Food Hygiene inspection!



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FODIS News



We'll be sad to say farewell to our wonderful Year 2s, but having seen them come back from their visit to Downs Juniors, there's no doubt that they will thrive there. It was also lovely to meet so many of the new Reception parents at the induction meeting. A very warm welcome from FODIS - our lovely school's PTA run by parent and carer volunteers. We're here to listen and be the link between parents and the school, but we would love it if each class has a parent class rep to pass on information. It's not a big job, but it's an important one. Communicating, bringing people together, and strengthening our school community.

And talking of community - my goodness, our Summer Fayre was just incredible! Thank you to every single one of you for braving the rather iffy weather to join in the fun, for your generous donations, and for those who gave us their valuable time to volunteer on the day. We are blown away by your kindness and with your help we have raised an amazing £3500!

It has been so wonderful to read all the messages from the 50 in 50 challenge and know that our amazing pupils have raised almost £2500 for the school in sponsorship. You are simply amazing and should all be so proud of yourselves.

Your fundraising has enabled us to get plants for our lovely new pond area. We've been able to buy the materials for Amber Elise's incredible mural in Treetops, as well as marking the school's 50th by gifting each child a 50th iron-on badge, along with funding some of the extras for the 50th birthday day celebrations.

We have to give a special mention to Edie for all her amazing design help, Bistra for the beautiful reception bookmarks, Lindsay for being our print shop and overall brilliant organiser, and Chantelle for her hustling for the fabulous raffle prizes. And last but not least, Lisa, Kirsty, Dave, Cath, Julie & Kelly for all your continued support and help.

We hope you'll join us for our Frozen Farewell on Tuesday 22nd July where we'll have ice creams and lollies before you depart for your 6 week holiday.

And if you want to be part of what we do at FODIS, please drop us a line at : fodisgeneral@gmail.com. We can't do what we do without you.

Have a wonderful summer.
Tracy Murray-Bate
FODIS Chair

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Key Dates (red = dates added since last newsletter)

Tues 22nd July	FODIS Frozen Farewell
Weds 3rd Sept	INSET DAY
Thurs 4th Sept	INSET DAY
Fri 5th Sept	First Day of Autumn Term

Fri 24th Oct INSET DAY

Mon 5th Jan INSET DAY

Mon 1st June INSET DAY

2025-2026 TERM DATES

AUTUMN 1	Friday 5th September - Thursday 23rd October
AUTUMN 2	Monday 3rd November - Friday 19th December
SPRING 1	Tuesday 6th January - Friday 13th February
SPRING 2	Monday 23rd February - Friday 27th March
SUMMER 1	Monday 13th April - Friday 22nd May
SUMMER 2	Tuesday 2nd June - Wednesday 22nd July

Safeguarding

If you would like to speak to 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