

Downs Infant School Newsletter

Summer Term 1 2025



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

Head Teacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a short, but fun-filled term with lots of different learning activities going on across the school.



Reception closed the spring term with a busking session, singing songs about their topic on space. The sun shone and parents and carers attended in abundance, giving generously to raise money for a new sandpit that our Premises Manager, David Standing, created over the spring break. It's deliberately large to enable the children to move and dig freely in order to develop their gross motor skills and build core strength – all essential prerequisites for the fine motor skills needed for precise hand/finger/wrist movement as they journey through education and beyond!



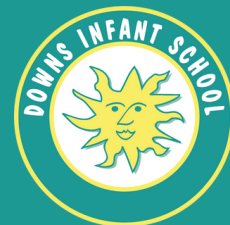
The summer term started with a 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' assembly to the whole school as part of the NSPCC's safeguarding programme offered to schools. This was then followed up with workshops delivered by NSPCC volunteers to each of our Year 2 classes.



We had another very successful Children's Parade, with our participation ably led by Year 2 Lead, Hannah Gates. Hannah, along with a team of staff and parent volunteers, produced a giant mackerel and the children created placards and chants to reduce pollution in our seas - all based on the theme of 'How do we change the world and create a new dawn? A parade of ideas for a better day.' Kirsty Cargill (Assistant Headteacher) and Alison Harrex (Year 1 Lead) trained up a samba band to add to the occasion. Thank you to those who were able to come and support us on the day!

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I am sure you will have heard lots about our 'Wheelchair Experience' and visit from the 'Skipping Ninja'. Both events were highly energetic, a great deal of fun, and have inspired lots of exercise! Thank you to Emily London (PE Lead) for organising the visits.



Please can I ask you to support us by not allowing your children to climb on the walls in school during drop off and pick up – especially during Frozen Fridays. This is not allowed for safety reasons.

Can I also ask you to refrain from parking in the car parks by Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support of the school.

Wishing you all a restful half term break.

Best wishes,

Lisa Walker

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Learning in Reception

91 Reception children went on their first ever school trip last Friday. We were so proud of all of them. They walked to Preston Park and back, they made potions in the woods, they created 'blobster' creatures and they played loads of games. The learning and joy that came from this experience was a pleasure to see. We hope the activities will inspire lots of play, talk and enjoyment in parks and gardens for years to come.



For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account



Learning in Year 1

Year One have been developing the play and learning opportunities on the Woodland. The water play is inspiring scientific discovery, collaboration, imagination, gross and fine motor skill development and all with a whole heap of fun! The basketball hoops are encouraging more accuracy with ball skills learnt in P.E lessons and the building is inspiring collaboration, mathematical skills, creativity and perseverance (to name but a few!).

For more detail and photos, please check your Tapestry account

Learning in Year 2

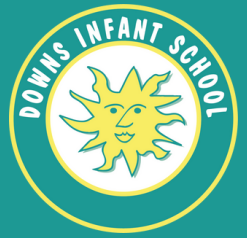
Our Year Two children visited Truleigh Hill earlier in the term which gave them an opportunity to explore part of the beautiful South Downs. They were able to pond dip, bird spot, create with clay, weave and many other things. Aren't we lucky to have this on our doorstep?!



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School Trips

All year groups have now been on a school trip this year. We want to thank everyone involved in making these happen including all our volunteers from our school community. School trips bring a huge amount of work to research, pre-visit, risk assess, and organise, but we feel they are absolutely worth every minute and provide children with heaps of learning as well as memories that they will take with them for life.

Rainbow Club News



With the end of the school year approaching, a number of you have made enquiries about Rainbow Club bookings for the next academic year. As per last year, we will open the booking system at the same time for all year groups, once our incoming Reception families have been able to attend the new to Reception information evening and the new children have all been entered into our system. **This year, bookings will open on TUESDAY 8TH JULY AT 6PM.**

Please note that Downs Junior School will open their bookings for Downs Play at the same time for children going into KS2, and they will open places to Downs Infant children going into Year 1 and 2 only at 6pm on Thursday 10th July.

Thank you to all those who completed our Rainbow Club questionnaire at the parent/carer evenings back in March. This information has been helpful in gauging demand for wraparound childcare places. We are keen to expand the club but we have to manage the situation carefully as the school is also going through a transitional period of reducing our Published Admission Numbers (PAN). However, please be assured that we will be increasing the number of places for breakfast and after school club in September with the aim of meeting our current demand.

With the continued success of Rainbow Club, our numbers are currently at capacity on most days. Please ensure you have secured a booking before dropping your child at breakfast club in order to avoid the inconvenience of potentially being turned away. Equally, if you have made a booking that you no longer require, please do cancel it in order to make it available for others. Thank you.

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Resources Shout Out

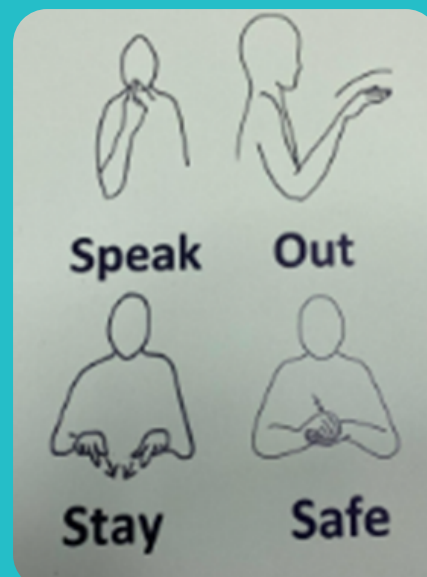
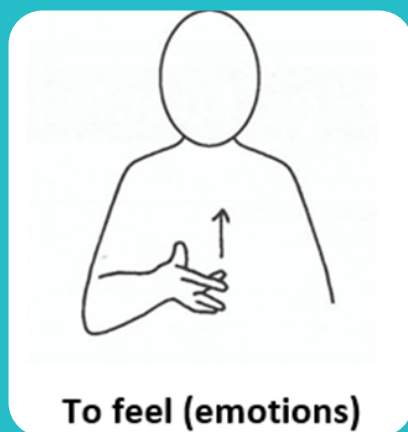


- We're in need of new carpet in some areas of the school. If you'd like to support us by buying a carpet tile, please do via the school shop area of the MCAS app!
- Age 4 to 7+ wellies and waterproof coats & trousers for outdoor learning.
- Scallop shells.
- Packaging for junk modelling – please note, we're unable to accept packaging from products containing nuts or seeds. We also can't accept packaging from medicines or toilet roll tubes.
- At the end of term, we will have a number of classroom tables looking for a new home. If you know of anyone (including organisations) that could make good use of them, please contact the school office.

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?!



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Our City, Our World

Following the announcement from the DfE and Royal Horticultural Society that Downs Infant School was eligible for a National Education Nature Park grant of up to £10,000, we managed to secure funding for the full amount! After discussions with the School Council and mapping of the school grounds with a number of children, we decided to focus on significantly improving our pond for wildlife and learning. Over the spring break, Pete the Pond and his team came in and the mission has been accomplished!



Our gardening gurus, Sue and Gabriella, have been busy planting with the children, inspiring green fingers of the future. Please visit the 'Greening Downs Infants' Instagram page to see what they've been up to!



Instagram
(@greeningdownsinfantschool)

Instagram photos and videos

 [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com/greeningdownsinfantschool)

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Governors News

As ever, Governors would again like to thank Mrs. Walker and all the staff for their brilliant work under challenging circumstances.

Recently, the school took part in the Children's Parade and a team led by Mrs. Gates did a great job preparing the children and the giant Mackerel plus music thanks to Ms. Cargill and Ms. Harrex. Well done to all the children and volunteers who took part.

A mention also for our PE Lead, Ms. London, who organised a thought – provoking “Wheelchair Experience” PE session for all classes over a 3-day period.

Governors would also like to say a big thank you to all the FODIS team under their new Chair, Tracy Murray, for some fantastic fundraising recently, the FODISCO and Quiz Night were both really successful. There was great support for these events and we hope that this will be maintained leading up to the Summer Fair on Saturday July 5th which will be the official celebration of the school's 50th birthday so we hope to see many of you there.

Our pupils are already playing their part doing the “50 in 50” challenge and Governors want to thank them and their parents / carers for supporting the school in this way. Look out for other ways to support the “Fabulous at 50!” theme.

Finally, the work around the pond area is nearing completion and various new planting will add to the increase in biodiversity within the school grounds and help create a great outdoor learning space.

School Council



It's been wonderful to see the expansion of our School Council to include Reception for the summer term. Our new representatives have all been democratically elected by their classmates and meet with Mrs Walker every Friday. They have been busy teaching the whole school the Makaton sign of the week in assembly each Monday, as well as gathering ideas from their classes about ways in which we can celebrate the forthcoming 50th birthday of the school. What a responsibility!

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FODIS News



Thank you to everyone who's been so warm and welcoming to me stepping into Tessa's shoes as the new FODIS Chair.

It's been a great couple of months, which has seen us sell out at our last two Frozen Fridays, making over £200 for the school. Ruth and Jim's incredible FODISCO at the Rose Hill Tavern raised a whopping £600. Special thanks to Jim for sporting the horse's head for his entire Horse DJ set.

Our recent 90s' Quiz, masterminded by Lindsay and assisted by the brilliant Chantelle and Gabby for her tech support, brought in an incredible £850! It was so much fun seeing the rivalry and sing-offs with the parents and teachers. So a big well-done to "50% AI" for being our winners. We plan to replay both events towards the end of the year – so watch this space!

90s' QUIZ WINNERS: 50% AI



We're also very excited to be involved in the 50th birthday celebrations. We'll have some lovely limited-edition merchandise at the Summer Fayre to mark such a brilliant occasion. And talking of the 50th – how are the 50 in 50 challenges going? My Betty's loving her draw a historical picture a day! We have the QR code above for any donations (also on the sponsor form) – or get in touch if you need more details. We're just so excited that the children are embracing the challenge, so it's definitely the taking part that counts.

We can't wait to share with you our plans for the Summer Fayre which will take place on Saturday 5th July. It'll be from 12-3pm, so hopefully the sun will be shining. Watch out for more information on how you can get involved and really make a difference.

As always, we couldn't do what we do without you. If you have any time and would like to help with our Frozen Fridays (first Friday of the month), get involved helping with the planning of the fayre or have any ideas on how we can raise money for the school – please get in touch - fodisgeneral@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Tracy Murray

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Key Dates (red = dates added since last newsletter)

Fri 23rd May	SCHOOL CLOSED - Inset Day
26th-30th May	SCHOOL CLOSED - Half Term Holiday

Whole of June	Downs '50 in 50' Sponsorship Challenge
Fri 6th June	FODIS Frozen Friday
Thurs 26th June	Reception 2025 Parents Meeting 6.30pm
Mon 30th June	Downs Infant School 50 th Birthday - community picnic after school

Thurs 3rd July	Year 2 Sports Day (am)
Fri 4th July	FODIS Frozen Friday
Sat 5th July	Downs Infants 50 th Birthday Party Summer Fayre
Tues 8th July	Year 1 Sports Day (am)
Tues 8th July	RAINBOW CLUB BOOKING OPENS 6PM
Tues 8th July	Downs Play Booking Opens 6pm (only for children going into Y3-Y6)
Thurs 10th July	Reception Sports Day (am)
Thurs 10th July	Downs Play Booking Opens 6pm (only for children going into Y1-Y2)
Friday 11th July	Book Fair (in collaboration with The Book Nook)
Mon 14th July	Year 2 Performance Dress Rehearsal
Tues 15th July	Splash Day (weather permitting)
Weds 16th July	Year 2 Performance 9.15-10am (2 classes)
Thurs 17th July	Year 2 Performance 9.15-10am (2 classes)
Thurs 17th July	Reserve Sports Day (if bad weather affected scheduled one)
Fri 18th July	Pupil reports to be sent home
Tues 22nd July	Last day of Summer Term

Weds 3rd Sept	INSET DAY
Thurs 4th Sept	INSET DAY
Friday 5th Sept	First Day of Autumn Term

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