



DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 15th January 2021

Dear Parents,

Whilst it has not been the start to the new year that any of us had wanted or planned for, it has been a pleasure to witness how everyone in our school community – children, parents and staff alike – have risen to this latest challenge.

I spoke to parents from across Ducklings and Kingfishers classes on Wednesday, and am looking to have completed my calls to the remainder of our families by the end of today. Thank you to all parents for your efforts with supporting the children's home learning, and for your kind words and feedback regarding our remote learning provision. Home schooling can be exceptionally tough in the best of circumstances. Add to this the fact that many of you are trying to also juggle work, childcare for pre-schoolers, and/or multiple siblings with different timetables, and it has all of the ingredients to be extremely stressful indeed! If you are feeling this way, you are certainly not alone – this is a difficult time for many. Also, please rest assured that we remain here to support you in any way we can.

Below, we have put together a '5 top tips' list, compiled through conversations with parents and other teachers about what seems to work best when home schooling. We hope that it helps!

1. Have a routine: Wherever possible, try to ensure that your child is still getting up, dressed and having their breakfast nice and early, and that their 'school' day is starting at or before 9am. There is a lot of research to suggest that children learn best in the morning. 9am-12pm (with at least one break) is prime learning time.

2. Prioritise basic skills: If you are struggling to fit everything in, remember that core subjects, e.g. English (inc. reading, spelling, and writing) and maths, underpin learning in all other areas. Learning in these subjects will benefit your child across the curriculum spectrum, so on trickier days try to ensure that at least this learning is completed.

3. Expectations: It helps to set clear learning expectations before tasks are completed. Think quality over quantity. Drawing up success criteria before children complete extended tasks can be really beneficial in enabling them to work independently to a high standard. For a setting description, for example, the success criteria may include: '1. Use a range of adjectives and adverbs. 2. Make sure that all sentences are correctly punctuated. 3. Consider the five senses; what you can see, hear, smell, etc.' and so on. Setting this out at the beginning prevents you from having to intervene continuously.

4. Teacher interaction: Really make the most of the more interactive elements within our provision, e.g. the zoom calls and posts to SeeSaw/ Tapestry. This can help to take the burden away from yourself, as it is their teachers asking them to do things rather than you. It also provides the teachers with the best opportunities to ensure that children have 'got it', rather than allowing misconceptions to be embedded. Children in Ducklings should aim to post to Tapestry at least twice per week. Minnows should post to SeeSaw 3 times per week, Frogs 4 times per week and Kingfishers 5 times per week.

5. Stay in touch and look after yourself! We are still here to support you in any way that we can. Communicate any queries, difficulties or comments that you have to our admin address:

admin@debden.essex.sch.uk and we will always aim to get back to you within 24 hours on weekdays. Finally, do make sure that your school day ends at a reasonable time each day, and certainly no later than school would usually (3pm). Learning is vital, but so too are family relationships and wellbeing.

In the midst of the lockdown, we have some new starters amongst the staff team. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest team members:

-Mrs Alison Hutley is joining us on a long-term supply basis (for at least the coming term) as the Monday teacher in Minnows class. It must be awfully strange starting a new teaching role communicating with children through Zoom and SeeSaw, but Alison has already risen to the challenge superbly. A reminder that Ms Weetch will be teaching Minnows class from Tuesday to Friday.

-Mrs Allyson Harrison (why is everyone called Allyson or Sarah around here?!) is joining us as a catering assistant alongside Mrs Andrew. Whilst the kitchen is not open at present, Mrs Harrison is getting prepared in ensuring that all of her relevant qualifications and induction processes are complete.

-Miss Sarah Douglas will be joining the staff team in the near future as a teaching assistant. Miss Douglas has a strong academic background, and will largely be helping our children from Years 3-6 achieve the challenging KS2 curriculum expectations.

We hope to see many of the children on our Zoom achievement assembly this afternoon at 2.30pm. Here is the link: <https://zoom.us/j/97569454304?pwd=U3dsZlppU3RGaVhuRlVrcS9WZWRHUT09>

It is our opportunity to come together and to celebrate some of the learning highlights from across the week. Please do bear with us with this – it is our first time hosting a call with so many, so there are bound to be some hiccups along the way. We will try to ‘mute all’ upon entry, but we are wary that this does not always work, so please do ensure that ‘mute’ is activated in the bottom left corner of your screen.

Kind Regards

Mr Hawley

FODS News

Thank you to everyone who supported our “Spuds for Debden” sale before Christmas. Dickie Belchambers, who is Ted and Oliver’s Dad, kindly sold and delivered sacks of locally grown spuds donated by Victor Hall Farms and raised a ‘smashing’ total of £277!

We have organised a clothing & shoe collection with Bag2School which is on Tuesday 23rd February. Bag2School collect good quality textile items for reuse and then give a payment to FODS based on the weight. Bags need to be at school by 9am on the 23rd. Please leave your bags under the red gazebo that we will put up at the front of the school. Please do not bring bags any earlier than Monday 22nd.

Items that Bag2School accept are shoes (tied together please), clothing, belts, handbags, jewellery, household linen, curtains, bed linen, towels and soft toys. They don't accept duvets and pillows and school uniform. School uniform can be donated to FODS for their second hand uniform bank at any time. There is a full list here <https://bag2school.com/what-we-collect>

We appreciate everyone’s support with our fundraising efforts and hope you have had a good sort out and have lots to donate especially while charity shops are limiting donations. Do tell friends and family about the collection too.