

DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Thursday 15th February 2024

Dear Parents,

It is difficult to believe that we have now reached the halfway point of this academic year! It has been another fantastic half term for our school, and it fills me with pride to see how much progress the children have made since September. Here's to an even better second half of the year!

Please see below for information about the recent and upcoming news here at Debden:

Ms Weetch: A bit of a sad announcement to begin with. Our wonderful Ms Weetch, teacher of the Minnows Class, PSHE and Music lead, and Wellbeing Week extraordinaire, will be leaving the school from the 14th March. She is following her long-held dream to reside in New Zealand – I would have given anything for her to stay, but the commute is something of an obstacle!

Ms Weetch joined the school in September 2019, when the school was not the place that it is today. She has been a pillar of all that is good at Debden ever since and has contributed significantly to the school's improvement. We will really miss her, as I'm sure the children will.

In true Ms Weetch-style, she has helped the school by waiting until Mrs Hatch returns from her maternity leave, so that the Minnows class will be in her capable hands alongside the equally exceptional Mrs Elliott. The class are doing really well and will continue to thrive with these two expert teachers who they know and work well with.

There is still a chance that Ms Weetch may be back with us in September for the new academic year, but we will see what happens.

New Technology/ FODs Thank you: We have benefitted from a massive technology upgrade over the last few weeks, largely courtesy of the hard work and generosity of the FODs team. The FODs have purchased ten new iPads for the school, and a new pin code trolley to keep all of our iPads safe. We now have enough iPads for one or two whole classes to use them at the same time, which is something that we could have only dreamed of a few years ago. The FODs also significantly contributed to our new screen in the hall. It will be lovely to be able to do assemblies where we can actually see the children's work and the slides, and we won't all have to sit in pitch blackness!

These items represent a significant outlay that we do not have the budget to afford alone, and children across the school will benefit from them for many years. A huge thank you to the FODs for all of your hard work generating these funds and agreeing to fund these projects – we really appreciate it!

Fab Science: Last Friday, the children really enjoyed their visit from the 'Fab Science' team. The workshops were really engaging and well-constructed, with the aim of helping children to appreciate the wonders of science from an early age. This was an incredible hands-on experience for the children, and the feedback that the children gave was universally positive. What is more, the Fab Science tutors commented that it was really refreshing to visit a school where the children are so well-behaved, and the science knowledge is so strong. Nothing that we didn't already know, but we are very proud nonetheless!

Sporting Success: Well done to the children from Year 6, who participated in the tag rugby Uttlesford finals yesterday. Against much bigger schools, they performed admirably, and won several matches.

Rumour has it that we may have progressed to the regional finals, which would be an unbelievable achievement for a school of our size – watch this space for further updates!

Clubs: Please note that our internal clubs (the clubs led by the teachers) rota will be changing from after half term – please don't assume that your child's club will continue to run until this is confirmed in the new rota - more information will follow soon.

Online Safety: This Tuesday, we were once again fortunate to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the '2 Johns', who delivered their Online Safety tutorials to the children throughout the day. It is always incredibly eye-opening and (at times) shocking to learn of the things that children of primary school age (even those in KS1) are being exposed to online. Exploitation of young people online is becoming drastically more frequent, more elaborate and carried out in ever-changing ways. What is more, most parents and educators are painfully unaware of many of the dangers of websites, games and apps that their children are using. The staff training session that the 2 Johns held for the teachers was incredibly helpful and will feed into our ongoing Online Safety policy review. We have also had some excellent feedback from members of our community about the evening parents' session – thank you for this. If you did not get a chance to join the webinar, it has been recorded https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/nlx9uxFlKg5kerzrkzCEa6FE9yVUI1N8l6bxyCJpBsbQWKlBwEUF54xKP NHEkn1H.Ocl_uKr4O-n18zN-

We really would recommend that you give this a watch. The 2 Johns only ask that the material is not stored, downloaded or used beyond 28 days from the day of the recording.

Dates for your diary

- Friday 16th February – Last Day of Spring Half Term 1
- Monday 26th February – First Day of Spring Half Term 2
- Tuesday 27th and Thursday 29th February – Parent Consultations
- Wednesday 6th March – School Disco
- Thursday 7th March – World Book Day – more information to follow.
- Thursday 14th March – FODS Quiz Night
- Tuesday 26th March – Bag2School collection

I hope that you all have a lovely half term.

Kind Regards

Mr Hawley