



Key Stage One Newsletter – Spring Term 2026.

Welcome to Key Stage One at Downlands School. Key Stage One consists of two mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes: Oak and Fir. The teachers in Key Stage One are Mrs Le May (Key stage one lead and Oak class teacher) and Mrs Legg and Miss Bryant (Fir class teachers). The teachers are supported by Teaching Assistants Mrs Montgomery, Mrs Hampson and Miss Harris. We would like to share with you, in this newsletter, the wonderful learning opportunities we have planned for your children this term.

Topic

Our topics this term are: 'A toy story' and 'Why don't penguins need to fly'. The first half of Spring term will be based on the history topic of 'A toy story' - exploring the history of toys, how they have changed over time and things that have influenced these changes. After half term, the children will be focussing on the geography of the polar regions.

English

The reading and spelling of words is taught using the Sounds Write phonics programme. In Key Stage 1, the children will continue to build on their previous phonics knowledge. In Year 1, this term, the children will expand their growing knowledge of the 'extended code', recognising and accurately using sounds that are represented by more than one spelling, and spellings that represent more than one sound. In Year 2, the children will broaden their knowledge of further spellings of familiar sounds, as well as building on their fluency when reading more complex polysyllabic words.

Guided reading will continue to develop the children's fluency, prosody and comprehension skills.

During guided reading in Year 1, the children read their Sounds Write reading book, in groups with an adult. They will share the book 3 times during the week, starting with decoding, then building up fluency and comprehension, before taking it home on a Friday to read and further practise these skills. In Year 2, guided reading continues to be taught through the three read model where the children share a short text each week focussing on: word reading and vocabulary, reading with fluency and prosody, then reading for fluency and comprehension. At Downlands, we want children to develop a love of reading and hope you share this with us. As well as reading at home to practise the skills taught in school, we encourage and hope the children will have opportunities to read for pleasure. In school, we have access to our library, where the children can take home a book of their choice to share with you, as well as the opportunity for you to accompany your child to the library in the mornings before the start of the school day.

The children's writing this term will be based around the books 'I love you, Blue Kangaroo' and 'Tatty Ratty' in the first half term. The children will build on their previous learning around features of narrative writing and will produce their own short comic strip. During the second half term, the children will be taught the features of non-fiction writing and will create factual information posters all about the polar regions. The genre specific grammar and punctuation skills which the children need to use is taught as part of the sequence of lessons throughout the term, and the children will continue to apply their growing phonic knowledge to their writing, through word building and focussing on simple sentence structure and letter formation.

Maths

At Downlands, we teach maths using the *mastery approach*, where children are taught through whole class interactive teaching, using a range of practical apparatus. The approach aims to enable all children to become masters of the basic principles needed in maths, to develop fluency and understanding of the more complex concepts. During a typical maths lesson, the teacher leads back and forth interaction, including: questioning, short tasks, explanation, demonstration and discussion, allowing children to think, reason and apply their knowledge to solve problems. Each maths lesson begins with a fifteen minute 'mastering number' session which focuses on embedding and practising key knowledge. The sessions are aimed at strengthening the understanding of number and fluency for children in the first three years of school. Alongside mastering number, the children are taught through the White Rose maths scheme. In the Spring Term, the units of work for the children in Year 1 are: addition and subtraction within 20, place value within 50, and measurement: length/height & weight/volume. In Year 2 the units of work are: money, multiplication and division, measurement - length/height & mass/capacity and temperature.

Foundation Subjects

Science

Our science topic this term is 'Looking after plants'. The children will identify and name a variety of common wild and green plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees. They will learn how plants need water, light, and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy, and observe changes across the four seasons. The children will also observe and describe the weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.

Humanities

Our history this term is linked to our topic of 'A toy story'. We will look at how history has been divided into sections, before focussing on the 1960s. The children will consider how toys have changed since then, and how to play with toys safely now. They will also talk to adults about their experiences of the 1960s. Children will consider the question - how do our favourite toys and games compare with those of children in the 1960s?

In geography, the topic of 'Why don't penguins need to fly?' will allow the children to explore the concept of biomes and natural regions. They will begin to consider how a country's proximity to the equator affects its weather and climate. They will begin to make comparisons about different places and look at different adaptations living things make in these contexts.

Art/DT

In DT this term, the children will explore a range of pre-existing toys and consider what makes them enjoyable. They will focus on how to safely use scissors and practise cutting in a variety of ways. The children will look at a selection of paper toys and discuss how these can be made before exploring what an optical illusion is and create a toy inspired by this.

We will also have a whole school arts week with the theme '*Art as a tool for a healthy mind.*' Children will create their own dreamcatchers as well as expressing themselves by decorating a 'paper doll' which will form part of the whole school collaboration project

Music

In Music, the children are following the "Sing Up!" programme. During the first half of spring term, the children will learn echo singing, composing word patterns, improvising with mi-re-do, and playing a percussion ostinato, understanding the difference between pitched patterns and rhythm patterns. After half term, children will learn a simple clapping game, creating body percussion patterns and composing new lyrics.

Computing

This term, children will develop their understanding of instructions in sequences and the use of logical reasoning to predict outcomes. They will use given commands in different orders to investigate how the order affects the outcome. They will also learn about design in programming. They will develop artwork and test it for use in a program. They will design algorithms and then test those algorithms as programs and debug them.

PE

Each week, we will have 2 PE lessons – Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning. During the first half of Spring term, we will be focussing on developing fundamental skills like balancing, running, jumping, hopping, and skipping, observing and recognizing improvements, and fostering collaboration and sharing ideas among pupils. In our dance unit, the children will learn travelling actions, movement skills, and balancing, while understanding music's importance. They will copy and repeat actions, create ideas, and perform with partners, using dance terminology for feedback. After half term, we will move on to a team-building unit, focusing on developing teamwork skills, communication, and problem-solving skills. In our gymnastics unit, the children will explore and develop basic gymnastic actions on the floor and using apparatus. They will develop the skills of rolling, jumping, balancing and travelling individually and in combination to create short sequences and movement phrases.

We ask, for health and safety reasons, that earrings are removed before school on PE days. If your child's earrings cannot be removed then please tape their earrings before coming to school on a Wednesday and Thursday.

RE/PHSE

The RE theme this term is Judaism following the Jigsaw RE scheme. We will be focussing on the key question for this enquiry: Who is God to the Jews? Children will look at how Jewish beliefs began. They will look at the Ten Commandments and explain the rules that Jews believe God wants us to live by. They will learn the story of Abraham and Moses and say why these men are important to Jewish people today.

In PHSE, we follow the Jigsaw programme and will be looking at the topics: 'Dreams and Goals' for the first half term and 'Healthy Me' in the second half.

Areas of provision and outdoor learning

The children will have continuous access, both inside and outside, to opportunities for child-led learning, alongside direct teacher-led learning. This provision is progressive throughout the year and is carefully planned to enhance and embed the skills the children are taught, across all national curriculum subjects, whilst allowing the children to continue to develop their independence. Enhancements are set up for the children to access both independently, and with adult support and guidance, thus allowing the children to explore and deepen their learning through revisiting concepts, applying their knowledge and extending their thinking.

Forest School

Children in KS1 will continue to have at least one Forest School session a fortnight. Forest School is an opportunity for children to explore the natural world whilst building on their skills of resilience, confidence, risk-taking and adventure. Children will be expected to wear the correct Forest School clothes for sessions and more details have been shared on Seesaw. Our Forest School area is on the school site.

Seesaw

We use this platform to share milestone moments with you, along with photographs of some of your children's learning. We also use the platform to share relevant information with you, including reminders and accident notes. Please let us know if you have any problems accessing Seesaw.

Homework

Reading - please continue to read regularly with your child at home and record this in the reading record.

One piece of either maths or English - where needed, this will often be a practical task to support and consolidate the learning that is taking place in school.

Other Information

Please remember that children in KS1 need:

- a water bottle with plain water only - please talk to us if your child needs to bring in anything other than water
- bookbag (please keep any keyrings on bookbags limited to one small keyring)
- PE kit in a drawstring bag (see uniform policy)
- a lunch box (if they are not having hot school meals)

Please note children in KS1 should not bring in backpacks.

Any messages such as absences, holidays, illness etc. should be communicated via the school office (01258453348).

Other events to watch out for this term:

* Arts Week * Safer Internet Day * Children's mental health week
* Science Week * End of term Easter Service

Please speak to any member of the team if you have any queries.

KS1 Team