



Key Stage One Newsletter – Autumn 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 Miss Bryant (Fir class teacher). The teachers are supported by Teaching Assistants: Mrs Montgomery and Mrs Luke. 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: 'The Great Animals' and 'Happily Everest After'. The first half of Autumn term will be based on the history topic of 'The Great Animals' - exploring how animals helped during World War I - particularly horses and messenger pigeons. After half term, the children will be looking at the country of Nepal, learning about and identifying similarities and differences between Nepal and England.

English

The reading and spelling of words is taught using the Sounds Write phonics programme. In Key Stage 1, the children continue to build on their previous phonics knowledge. In Year 1, the children are introduced to the 'extended code' where they further develop their knowledge that sounds can be represented by more than one spelling, and also that one spelling can represent more than one sound. This is built on in Year 2 and the children are introduced to further spellings of familiar sounds, as well as learning to read more complex polysyllabic words, fluently. During guided reading in Year 1, the children will focus on their Sounds Write reading book, in groups with an adult. They will read the book 3 times, 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 will be taught through the 'Three Read' model where the children share a text a 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 we hope that you share this ambition with us. Although the teaching of reading skills is taught through the Sounds Write phonics program, for children to make good progress it is essential to practise the skills taught in school, at home, by reading to an adult regularly. A record of this should be made in your child's reading record book. As well as reading at home to practise the skills taught in school, we encourage that the children have opportunities to read for pleasure. In school, we have regular 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 mainly be based on traditional tales. The first half term will focus on 'The three little pigs' and 'Goldilocks and the three bears', and during the second half term the children will look at traditional tales with a twist! The children will continue to apply their growing phonic knowledge to their writing and 'Colourful Semantics' is used to support the teaching of sentence structure and grammar. Colourful semantics is an approach aimed at helping children to develop their grammar but it is rooted in the meaning of words (semantics). Punctuation will be taught alongside sentence structure.

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, enabling 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; enabling children to think, reason and apply their knowledge to solve problems. Each key stage one maths lesson begins with a ten minute 'mastering number' session which focuses on embedding and practising underpinning 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. Following the whole class teacher led input, children will work in small groups with an adult to apply and embed the learning. In the Autumn Term, the units of work for the children in Year 1 are: place value, addition, subtraction and shape; and in Year 2: place value, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, and money.

Foundation Subjects

Science

Our science topic this term is 'changing materials'. The children will explore a variety of materials and their properties, through building their own house for the three little pigs and designing and building a boat for the gingerbread man.

Humanities

Our history this term is linked to our topic of 'The great animals'. We will be exploring how animals helped during World War I - particularly horses and messenger pigeons. We will be comparing methods of communication during the time of World War I and now: we are hoping to have a visit from a present day communications expert! The children will also look at how life was different for children during the war, compared with life now. In geography, the children will learn about and identify similarities and differences between Nepal and England, as well as looking at and comparing the climate and learning key geographical features of the two countries.

Art/DT

In DT this term, the children will be exploring and creating their own puppets linked to traditional tales. During the second half of the Autumn term, the children will explore artists and their techniques, to produce poppy paintings and nativity scenes.

Music

In Music, the children are following the "Sing Up!" programme. During the first half term the children will learn a song called 'Tony Chestnut'. They will learn some musical notes and develop their knowledge skills in order to perform a 'cuckoo call'. After half term the children will sing and play instruments as part of a group and begin to learn songs in preparation for their Christmas performance!

Computing

In computing this term, the children will learn about computing systems and technology before moving on to digital painting. In our 'systems and technology' unit, the children will identify the parts of a computer and develop an understanding of what information technology (IT) is. In our 'digital painting' unit, pupils will develop their understanding of the various aspects of using a computer to create and manipulate text. They will also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using computers compared to writing.

PE

Each week we will have 2 PE lessons – **Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning**. During the first half term, children will learn defending and attacking principles, throwing, catching, and striking skills, and develop respect and communication skills for small-sided games, including cricket and rounders. They will also learn the principles of defending and attacking in target games, using underarm and overarm actions. They learn to self-manage activities, follow rules, score points, and use simple tactics. After half term, we will be moving onto dance and fitness units. 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/PSHE

The RE theme this term is Christianity following the Jigsaw RE scheme. We will be learning about Jesus's example as the son of God and considering the question, 'Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?' After half term we will reflect on the Christmas story and think about why Christians believe God gave Jesus to the world.

In PSHE, we follow the Jigsaw programme and will be looking at the topics: 'Being me in my World' for the first half term and 'Celebrating Difference' in the second half.

Areas of provision and outdoor learning

The children will have continuous access to opportunities for child-led learning, both inside and outside, alongside direct teacher-led learning. This provision 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. Enhanced provision challenges will be set up for the children to access both independently, and with adult support and guidance, 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 have Forest School sessions weekly. Our Forest School area is on the school site and provides the children with opportunities to improve their physical health, developing motor skills, boosting confidence and self-esteem, and fostering emotional well-being through supervised, child-led exploration and risk-taking in a safe natural environment. The sessions also enhance social skills, environmental awareness and problem-solving skills. Children will be expected to wear the correct Forest School clothes for sessions and more details will be shared on Seesaw.

Seesaw

We use Seesaw to share milestone moments with you, along with photographs of some of your children's learning. We will 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 their reading record.

One piece of either maths or English - 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:

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| * Garrison Bonfire Night | * Harvest Festival |
| * KS1 Christmas Nativity | * End of term Christmas Service |

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

KS1 Team