



The Downley School

“Learning, Growing and Succeeding Together”

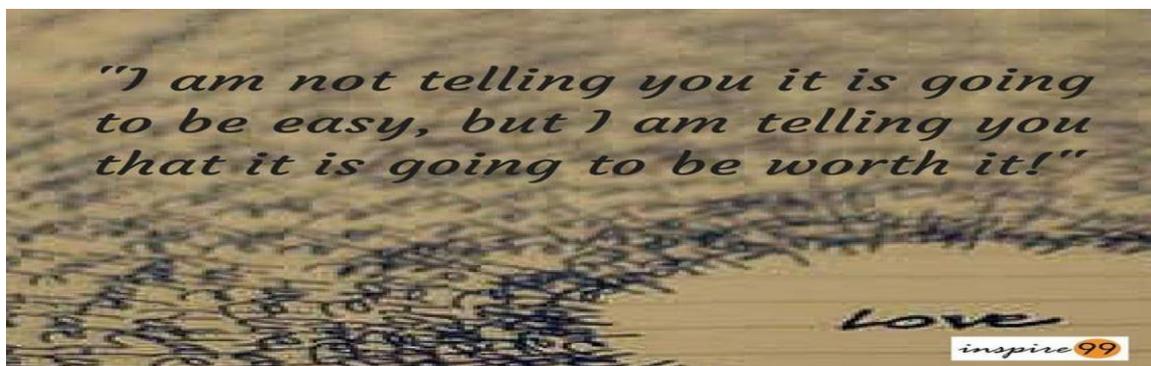
## 8<sup>th</sup> February Newsletter: Issue 018



### Head Teacher's Comment

I begin this newsletter overwhelmed by the messages of support generated by our last communication. Our staff have also appreciated these messages and recognition of how hard they are working and how happy our children are. We received cakes, chocolates and visits from parents/carers who took the time to see us in person to show their support and recognition of the improvements that have been made within our school. What a great link from positivity to love. Please see the letter from parents attached.

Mr Banks has been repairing the Dell for us in his own time and at his own cost. Many thanks for this from all of us, we all use this area and we can now improve other subjects due to your generosity. We also have our dedicated group of volunteers that have such a positive impact on the daily running of school. Again, your efforts and generosity do not go unnoticed.



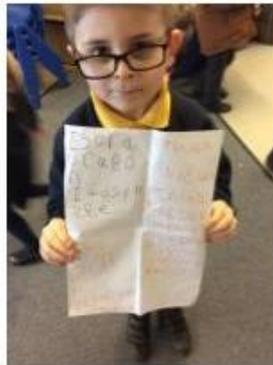
I found this quote for love and wanted to share it with you all as it sums up our journey.

# Reception

We have enjoyed another Dragon filled week! The dragons have made themselves at home by creating their own Dragon Safari, as they now live in our Role Play Corner and hide out amongst the plants and wildlife, ready to be spotted in their natural habitat. We have been inspired by the many dragon filled stories we have been reading over the past couple of weeks and started to create our own Dragon Books. They have wonderful illustrations of mystical, colourful and sometimes very scary looking dragons. We have even begun to write sentences about the dragons, becoming the author of our own stories. There have been some very detailed drawings of dragons that the children have created and labelled using their phonics knowledge to sound out the various body parts.

Our Maths focus this week has been counting dragons and being able to identify the numeral to represent the quantity or even write the numerals ourselves, which we are becoming very independent in! The mud kitchen have been making lots of tacos for our dragons, as after reading the story 'Dragons love Tacos' we found out it's one of their favourite foods! We have made our tacos using only the finest ingredients like mud, leaves, pinecones, strands of grass and some very special stones.

The children have been fabulous at using their imagination in the Dragon Safari to pretend they are Park Rangers or Dragon Scientists and have had great fun using the binoculars to locate the 8 dragons hidden around the safari. After all this busy work, we have even found time to make ourselves a tasty snack of 'Magic Hats', which looked absolutely magical and tasted wonderful! On the Bike Track we have had a very tricky obstacle course set up that we have had to navigate our way around. To make it more challenging there was a King trying to steal our dragon and we had to escape quickly before he caught up with us and tried to take them, so we had to navigate our dragon back to safety promptly.



# Year 1

Year 1 are thoroughly enjoying the Turrets and Tiaras topic. This week, we visited the Imagination Studio and pretended that we were flying on the back of a real dragon! We thought of words to describe our experience and used these words to write some sentences about what we could see and how we felt. We have also visited The Dell this week to explore what it feels like to be in a forest setting and we thought of some fantastic sentences such as 'The sun was shimmering through the trees.'

Our Maths focus this week has been money. We have been working hard to recognise the value of the different coins and have been having a go at adding coins to find the total amount. On Friday, we had our own pop up café so that we could apply our learning in a real life situation. We had to work out how much money we needed to buy each item and select the coins needed to make the right amount. Some of us even had a go at being 'cashiers' and checking that the amounts given were correct.

In Science we have been continuing to explore materials and their properties and this week we focussed on testing materials. We have been learning new words, such as 'absorbent' and 'transparent' and helping Sir Percival to choose the best material to mop up a spillage in the castle.

In Design and Technology, we have been continuing to develop our skills to enable us to join and combine materials. This week, we focussed on how to create a drawbridge for our castle. We practised making our own drawbridges using paper and string so that they would open and close. This was a challenging task and we had to practise the values of Determination, Patience and Positivity, as well as working as part of a team.

Well done to all of the children for working hard this week!



## Year 2

What a beautiful couple of weeks we have had with all the snow! The children have certainly enjoyed seeing the school turn into a wintery scene.

After looking closely at the plot and characters of *The Egg*, we have begun to write our own adventure stories based around the 'Turrets and Tiaras' topic. The children have created fantastic characters in various settings for their stories. We have been very impressed to see how much thought they have put into their character's appearance and personalities. An exciting event for the children this week was discovering yet another mysterious egg that has, this time, appeared in our school chicken coop! This has inspired creative ideas that the children can include in their story writing.

To complement our story writing week, we have introduced BBC Radio 2's '500 word' challenge, a competition that celebrates children's imaginations and creativity. The children may write a short story on any topic they want to get the chance to have their story read at Windsor Castle in the presence of The Duchess of Cornwall! The closing date for submitting a story is Friday 8th March, a great opportunity to do some writing over the half term.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/50pnqLfDywb9CFxjNvth5l0/about-500-words>

Despite the cold weather, we ventured outside to investigate capacity, looking at various sizes of containers and measuring amounts of water in ml and l. The children were brilliant in getting involved and using mathematical terminology in their discussions. We have also focused on improving our reasoning skills in Maths, which involves looking at different methods to solve problems and understanding why and answer may be right or wrong. This has led to many interesting discussions!



As we have entered February, our value of the month is 'love'. The children had a wonderful assembly that encouraged them to think about what the word 'love' means and how we can show love to others. Most children interpreted 'love' as sharing, looking after family or friends and being kind. We also talked about National Random Acts of Kindness day, which is celebrated worldwide on February 17th, where everyone can enjoy doing acts of kindness. These could be big or small gestures, such as giving someone a compliment or donating to a good cause. Love is such a meaningful value and it follows on nicely from positivity.

## Year 3

Year 3 have been busy exploring different dragon eggs and designing their own based on the texture and colours that have impressed them the most! Some have decided to create eggs with a flat surface, some have created eggs with a scaly surface and others have chosen to design a lumpy surface. We will be using balloons to paper mache and create 3D models of our eggs in the coming weeks. Please could you send some newspaper with your child to school to enable us to add layers to our eggs. Thank you.

In P.E, Year 3 have been exploring dance with Mr. Rushant. Where they have discovered a new dance called Gumboot. This is an African dance and it is a dance where we have to use our bodies and the floor to create a rhythm and a beat.

We have also learnt about the Chinese New Year and why it is celebrated... Ask your children to tell you about what they have learnt.

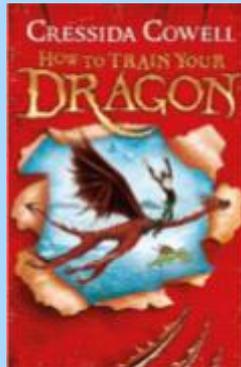
Love is the new value this month and we are going to be focusing on different kinds of love and how it can be shown. Ms. Rana did this in an exciting assembly this week.

# Year 4

## Irresistible Curriculum & Learning

We have written some fantastic setting descriptions about the Dragon Nursery. Keep your eyes out for some pieces of writing around the school.

We will be reading Chapters 3-4 as part of our Irresistible Curriculum text 'How to Tame Your Dragon'. The children enjoyed their reading experience in the Imagination Studio this week – it felt like we were in the story! The new film is out at the cinemas now, so we hope to see a number of you at the local cinema when your teachers also go in half-term!



## The Romans

Our Roman trip to the Verulanium Museum takes place on Monday next week. We will tweet a few pictures if you care to follow us during the day. Our visit will look at local artefacts found in St Albans as part of the museum tour and a dedicated workshop for each class.

If your child requires any form of medication for travel, we must have received communication in advance and be provided with the medicine promptly on Monday, otherwise this can impact our travel arrangements.

We also used the imagination suite to explore and carry out role play this week when learning about the famous 'Boudicca'.

Additionally, we have carried out assessments this week and your child will make a note of any relevant scores from assessments in their reading journal next week.

Finally, we have also been practising debating in class to develop our thoughts to inform the homework debate.

## Y4 Blog Link

Please note the link below takes you to curriculum objectives and any recent letters relating to Year 4 activities if you need to re-refer to anything eg swimming dates and school trips to Verulanium Museum and Echoes Concert.

<https://www.downley.bucks.sch.uk/page/?title=Welcome+to+Year+4&pid=326>

## Year 5

Year 5 have been very busy as ever! We are nearing the end of our Properties of Materials Science Unit. The children have explored different types of plastic and their uses and thought about alternatives, which could be used to help reduce single-use plastics in our lives. Last week the children worked in small groups to separate a selection of solids. They had to use a variety of scientific processes and then, using the appropriate terms, describe how the group achieved the separation tasks. These photographs show us working on our sieving, filtering and using magnets skills. The children also had to apply their knowledge of dissolving soluble solids and the use of evaporation over time!



As part of RE and PSHCE the Upper Key Stage 2 phase received some visitors from The Council for Muslim Relations. The children listened most attentively and then formulated some group questions for the Sheik Ramzy and the Revd. Macauley. The message of peace and belief in one divinity was explored within the three religions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.



The children have been working very hard in Maths. Below are some pictures of some pupils exploring division in a concrete manner using the Dene Blocks. Well done to those children who used the link with multiplication to display the blocks in an array using the incomplete rectangle of the short division method!



Our work with Beowulf continues... The children have designed job advertisements using persuasive language for a Beast Slayer! The rewards, of gold and land for the successful candidate were most tempting. Thank you to those pupils who have brought into school amazing sketches of Viking Warriors – we hope to be displaying some of this work in the hall very shortly. Year 5 pupils also rose to the challenge of writing in a modern register after studying the text of a Viking warrior. Their task was to translate the speech register into that of a modern soldier! It made the children think about their word choices very carefully.

Finally, thank you to those pupils who remembered to bring some foil and newspaper into school. We have begun to make our Viking helmets by shaping the foil over our heads and taping it into position. Our 'papier mâché' skills are now much improved. Painting to follow!

## Year 6

On Monday, the new Value of the month was introduced in whole school assembly: Love. We are encouraging the children to demonstrate “random acts of kindness” whenever possible as a way to show their love and consideration for others. We hope you might notice this at home!

For parents who did not attend the Frontier Trip meeting previously, please be aware that we sent home a suggested ‘Kit List’ so that you can start putting aside old clothing and footwear. There is also a behaviour policy and consent form – both must be signed and returned as soon as possible please. If you have not seen them yet then please let us know. The trip may seem a long way off, but we need to notify the Centre in the next few days with regard to dietary requirements.

Last week, Year 5 and 6 each had a visit from ‘The Council of Christian/Muslim Relations’. Please see the separate report written by Harrison. The three religious leaders were: Dr. Sheikh Ramzy (Imam), Lawrence Smy (Lay Minister) and Mark Macaulay (Baptist Minister). This visit gave both the children and adults the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about how Christianity and Islam compare. It was apparent throughout that they share many common beliefs and practices. Both Year 5 and 6 behaved exceptionally well and showed our visitors that they are mature, respectful and well-behaved as they were intrigued to learn more. Dr Ramzy emailed afterwards and praised us for being an “excellent school”.

Due to the snowy and icy conditions, we have not been able to stick to the usual daily routines. However, Year 6 children have coped very well with the changes and disruptions. This was exceptional during Assessment week this week where the whole year group has tried their utmost throughout. We used SATS papers in Reading Comprehension, SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar), Arithmetic and Mathematical Reasoning. The outcomes will give us latest scaled scores to help measure progress. In general, the children tackled the questions well, but carelessness crept in at times and so results could be even better with greater care and attention to detail. This is certainly true with regard to spelling homework also. Some children are misspelling the key words in their sentences and are therefore being asked to re-write them.

In our Maths focus groups, we have continued to work with fractions, decimals and percentages and how they are linked. We have spent a long time mastering these concepts and allowing children to work through increasingly challenging word problems: “Chilli Challenges”. Some children have had their “wow” moment when suddenly everything clicks and make sense which is wonderful to see. Support they receive at home has contributed to this. The school has historically had issues with mathematics, and we are seeing a real improvement across the school in this area thanks to the hard work of everyone working together. Mathematics tasks also. With the snow day last Friday, we have a backlog with responding to Learning Logs, but we will make up for this and share all the fantastic examples when we can.

In writing tasks, the children are becoming far more aware of the grammatical skills and content required, so they can include and apply adverbial phrases, noun phrases, conjunctions, multi-clause sentences etc. in their work. We can guide them towards using these, but they also need to develop narrative writing skills whilst describing characters, settings and story writing. The children have been looking at the writing assessment checklist and trying their best to include many of these necessary features in their work. In homework tasks, please can parents encourage children to use higher level punctuation routinely such as: colons, semi-colons, hyphens, dashes, brackets etc. We are giving the children opportunities to exercise their writing skills across all curriculum areas and at every opportunity. Recently, they have really enjoyed working in groups to design and write instructions for a P.E. game which they will teach to younger children in school.

In Outdoor Learning/Science, checking pulse rates before and after exercise has been difficult in this recent weather, but the children have somehow managed to do so. Surprisingly, they all loved it! To complete our “Animals and Other Humans topic”, we will now focus on the human digestive system, linked with healthy eating.

Current artwork has a Beowulf theme. After researching various designs, we plan to use clay to represent Anglo-Saxon jewellery and other items. Once completed, we will put photos on the website for you to see.

Thank you for your valuable support at home, particularly with regard to completing and returning homework tasks and reading regularly one to one.

## A Visit to Year 5 and 6 from The Council of Christian and Muslim Relations by Harrison, Year 6

On the 29th January, we had three visitors from local religious centres telling us things about their different religions and how they work together on the CCMR. This organisation started 15 years ago and they visit lots of schools around the country. We were lucky that they came to visit and present to Years 5 and 6.

Dr Sheik Ramzy - Dr Ramzy is a religious leader and Imam based in the Oxford Islamic Information Centre.

Lawrence Smy - Lay Minister at All Saints Church, Wycombe.

Mark Macaulay – Minister at Oakridge Baptist Church, Wycombe.

All of these men represent different religions, but they believe that everybody is equal and no matter what religion you follow, you should all be treated well. They also believe Christians and Muslims are like brothers and sisters to each other, just on a wide range (like a massive family tree).

Each visitor spoke to us about how the religions are equal. Dr Ramzy spoke about what Muslims believe about God and no matter how you say it, like in French (Dieu) and Spanish (Dios), all of these names are the same, meaning God. The Islamic name for God is Allah. God means the creator of the world and universe, while also meaning love and respect to all.

Dr Ramzy also said a really important message: “Islam is a place for peace and non-fighting.”

When all three visitors spoke in turn, we (the children) were asked to write down questions about both religions and they would answer them. Everybody had a chance to give their question and the guest speakers answered them really well! Did you know, for example, that you can just be aged twelve to fast? We talked about the fact that Christians, like Muslims, also fast sometimes to feel closer to God.

I asked why are there 5 Pillars of Islam and not 10?

The answer is you should never question God and if you do what he says, he will fill your pockets up with money. Another question was: what happens if you question God? Well, if you question God, you will have to pray to him, telling him that you are sorry. God is kind and he will forgive you. All of our visitors agreed that God loves us all and knows that as we are people, we will sometimes get things wrong.

### Conclusion

I learnt a lot of things about both religions and I want more people to visit in the future, telling us more about their different religions. There are many religions in the world – not just Christianity and Islam.

Also, I have found out there are many more similarities between the two religions. They are both equal!

When the talk was over, we received a little leaflet about the CCMR and more information to think about at home.





## **Blog by the Deputy Head Boy and Head Girl**

Hello. Welcome back to our second blog. This blog is about updates on The Great Homework Debate.

We now have the dates for The Great Homework Debate - 14th February. This date has been confirmed with Ms Taylor and the Governors. We have also made posters to go up around the School to tell the children and adults what is happening. We are also hoping to invite Steve Baker, our local MP, to attend this upcoming event. We have made two surveys - one for the parents and one for the teachers. We hope to post this by Friday 8th February, as this gives you time to answer these questions. Please try to complete this survey as soon as you can.

As you may know, High Wycombe has been hit with a lot of snow. Therefore, to keep your children safe, we have had to send pupils home early, to send them in late, and we have even had two snow days. We hope this won't happen again!

It has been 5 months since our new computing scheme has been launched and the pupils have really been enjoying our new laptops and using them in classrooms. The Digital Leaders have helped Mrs Richardson with the new Interactive Studio. Here is one of the Digital Leaders:

"Hi! My name is Stephen! With Mrs Richardson, the Digital Leaders' team have been learning how to use the Interactive Studio! It is a great place to learn; a way of learning and having fun at the same time and an amazing place for generating ideas for English. We have also obtained 31 laptops for Computing lessons. We have really enjoyed working with Miss Morrissey and Mrs Richardson and have loved our Computing lessons. If you want to know what Year 6 have been doing in our Computing lessons, look at the Maths display in the front entrance showing our use of Excel spreadsheets.

Bye for now!"

Thank You,

Daniel and Zara

(The Deputy Head Boy and Girl) and helped by Stephen

# Family Worker

## Information for Parents/Carers

An ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) is a member of staff who is trained to support children in the development of their emotional literacy.

### **What is emotional literacy?**

- Understanding and coping with the feelings about ourselves and others.
- Developing high self-esteem and positive interactions with others.
- Being emotionally literate helps children focus better on their learning.

### **Some of the areas the ELSA may work on:**

- Recognising emotions.
- Self-Esteem.
- Social skills.
- Friendship skills.
- Emotion regulation.

### **How does the ELSA work?**

- A regular slot during the school week for 30-45 minutes.
- Sessions can be individual or in small groups and tailored to the child's individual needs.
- Sessions are fun and might include role-play, puppets, board games, art and craft and stories.
- Sessions include talk time.
- A pupil's progress will be reviewed on a half-termly basis. As a parent/carer, how can you help?
- By informing the class teacher if there are any issues that may be affecting your child.
- Please feel welcome to contact your child's teacher or ELSA if you have any questions.

The ELSA at The Downley School is Mrs Carr



Ever thought of giving something back to your community? Would you like to make a positive impact for the children and staff at The Downley School by contributing your skills and expertise to support realising our school community's vision 'to equip every child with the knowledge and self-belief to be happy?'

The Downley School Governing Board is currently recruiting Co-opted Governors and we are particularly looking for volunteers to join us with skill sets and experience in:

- Education
- Finance
- Health and Safety

**Here's what's involved...**

Becoming a school Governor is hugely rewarding and provides a great opportunity for personal development, learning many transferable skills. Professional training and mentoring are all provided. You will be required to attend Full Governing Board meetings, make visits to school, take responsibility for monitoring a specific area within school, as well as working in partnership with our senior leadership team to drive school improvement.

Interested? Here's where you can find out more...[TDS Governing Board](#)

If you have the passion, enthusiasm, commitment and time to work as a part of a dedicated team to support the school to be successful and make a difference for all of the children in our school, then the Governing Board would like to invite you to contact us by emailing [governors@thedownleyschool.co.uk](mailto:governors@thedownleyschool.co.uk)

**Some important things to know...**

This is a volunteer role.

You do not need to be a parent/carer of a child at our school.

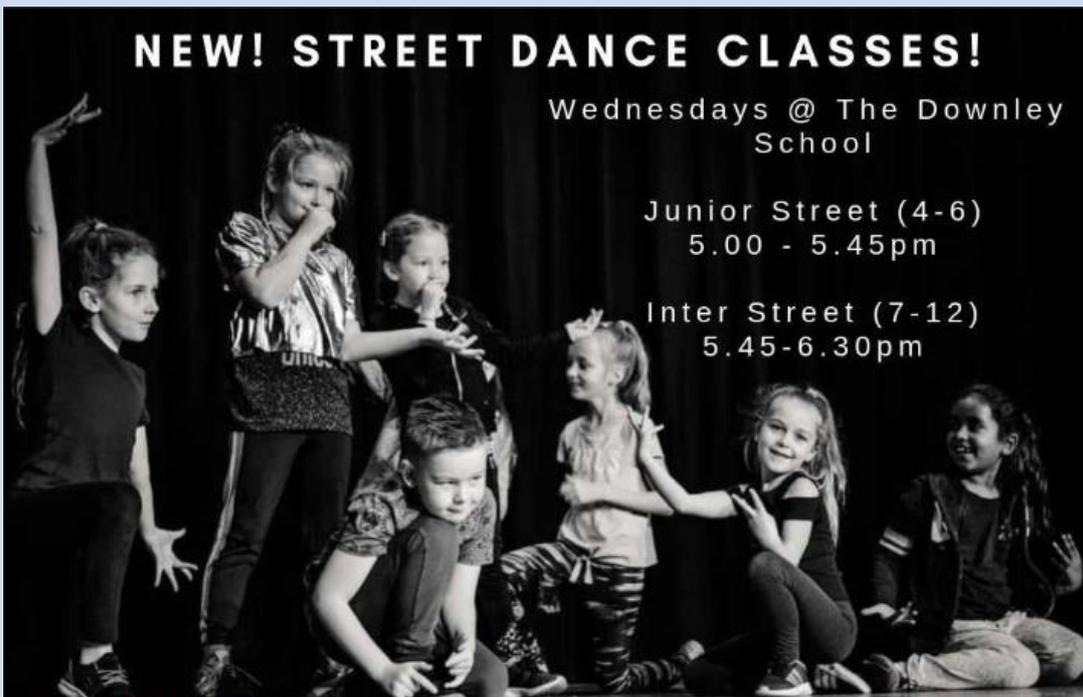
Safeguarding our children and staff is our priority and all Governors will be required to complete an application process, enhanced DBS check and Section 128 check.

## NEW! STREET DANCE CLASSES!

Wednesdays @ The Downley School

Junior Street (4-6)  
5.00 - 5.45pm

Inter Street (7-12)  
5.45-6.30pm



Email [zktdanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto:zktdanceacademy@gmail.com)  
or text 07597140915  
to book on!

# The School Office

## REMINDERS

### ***Adverse Weather Conditions***

During the winter months with the threat of snow and ice, please be advised to check the bucks schools closures website (<https://closures.buckscs.gov.uk/>) for any changes to school times or closures in the event of adverse weather conditions. The decision to make any changes to the school hours is made with the safety of all pupils and staff in mind, safety on the way to school and on the school site is paramount and we will ensure that the school is open as usual if it is safe to do so.

### ***Safeguarding***

In order to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils, we ask that all visitors report to the School Office

### ***Absence Line***

The Office is open between 8.30 and 4.00. If you need to leave a message outside of these hours, please leave your message on the absence line option 1.

### ***Communications via Email***

Having reviewed the email communication in school, we have created for **PARENTS/CARERS ONLY** a dedicated email address. From Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018, please use ***enquiries@thedownleyschool.co.uk***. **You should receive automatic response to your email. We will respond to emails within five days unless it is urgent.**

### ***The Downley After School Club***

Please be advised The Downley After School Club is an independent business. If you receive a message from school to say that clubs are cancelled or postponed this refers to extra-curricular clubs at school run by the teaching staff **not** The Downley After School Club unless otherwise advised.

Please ensure if you make last minute arrangements for end of day childcare that you have confirmed with The Downley After School Club prior to confirming with the school. The After School club is then responsible for ensuring that they collect the relevant children.

### ***Parking***

The driving and parking situation is now so dangerous that we are all concerned that it is just a matter of time before a child is seriously harmed or killed. Children are especially vulnerable at school drop off and pick up times.

Despite numerous requests, there are still some parents/carers that continue to drive and park without any due consideration for the safety of our children.

We urge all parents/cares to be pro-active in reporting the registration number of any dangerous driving or parking to 101 as advised by the police. We will also be reporting any unauthorised vehicles driving onto the school site.

We respectfully ask any drivers to park away from Faulkner Way and walk your child/children safely into school. If you do require entry to the school site, please contact your school.

# Stars of the Week

## KS1 Celebration Assembly 25<sup>th</sup> January – Stars of the Week

4F	Ayaan, Amy
4B	Mia, Isabelle
5JR	Sasha, Ibrahim
5G	Zak, George
6L	Martha, Logan
6S	Mickey, Ella



## Golden Ticket Winners

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January was Ishan

## Attendance

Our attendance target is to reach 96.5% attendance for the year.

Our attendance to date is 96.73%

### Weekly Attendance Report for w/c 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019

Class	% Attendance	Class	% Attendance
RO	92.06%	RBT	96.25%
1H	94.44%	1P	100%
2K	98.33%	2R	95.69%
3KR	92.67%	3R	96.46%
4B	95.83%	4F	97.92%
5G	97.08%	5JR	98.71%
6L	95.42%	6S	91.59%

Well done to 1P for your 100% attendance.

### Weekly Attendance Report for w/c 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Class	% Attendance	Class	% Attendance
RO	90.40%	RBT	98.75%
1H	92.92%	1P	96.67%
2K	98.33%	2R	99.17%
3KR	96.55%	3R	91.63%
4B	98.33%	4F	99.17%
5G	90.42%	5JR	94.41%
6L	97.92%	6S	99.5%

Well done to 6S for your 99.5% attendance.



# The Downley School - Diary

Events that parents may attend are in blue.

PA events are in green

**Note** : Some dates are provisional and subject to change.

\*Please note one other inset date is yet to be confirmed for this academic year.

\*\* Information to follow.

<b>January</b>		
<b>February</b>		
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Half Term	
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Verulamium Museum (Year 4)	
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Back to school	
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> February- Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> March	Book Fair	
<b>March</b>		
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> March	** Viking Day (Year 5) **	
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	World Book Day - Dress up as a character from your favourite book.	
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	Echoes 8 Concert – Royal Albert Hall (Y4)	
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Bingo Night	4.00 – 6.30
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	**Parents Evening**	TBC
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	Second hand uniform sale	TBC
<b>April</b>		
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	**Parents Evening**	TBC
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Break	
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Inset Day	
Wednesday 24 <sup>rd</sup> April	Start of term	
<b>May</b>		
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday	
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> May – Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	Year 6 SATs Week	
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Summer Fayre	4.00-7.00
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> May -Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> May	Half Term	
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Back to school	
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> June – Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 6 Trip – Frontier Centre	
<b>June</b>		
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> June	Class Photos	
<b>July</b>		
Tuesday 2nd July & Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Common Transition Day ( Year 6 visit secondary schools)	
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Camping – Overnight on field	TBC
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	Last day of term	
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> July – Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	Summer Holiday	

Dear Ms Taylor and TDS team,

Having received and digested the recent letter sent out by Ms Taylor and Sonia Workman, dated 24th January 2019, it seems like the right time for a parent to provide some balance and speak out in support of The Downley School. I am sure I am not alone in feeling shocked and embarrassed that actions taken by a minority of parents at our school have resulted in the need for such a letter to be sent out.

I have no doubt that the parents who are unhappy with the way things are at TDS feel very passionate about what they hope to achieve with their continued campaign. I am also sure they feel justified in their behaviour from their own perspective, however difficult that may be for the majority to comprehend. There are Reception parents who weren't even aware of these issues from last year, and I believe the majority of us want you to have every chance to move the school forward and be successful.

The academic year 2017/2018 seems to have been a turbulent year for the staff at TDS. It was apparent that all staff, especially the leadership team, faced many difficulties and made decisions for the long-term development of the school that may have been unpopular with some people in the short-term, including teachers and some parents.

As a parent, I cannot claim to have full knowledge of the events that took place, nor should I think it is right or proper to be privy to such information. Whilst I am very sorry that many staff appeared to finish their time at TDS on a sour note, there is little to be achieved by parents and/or former parents/staff members continuing an ongoing battle with the people that are so dedicated and work so hard to do the best for our children.

For the staff that remain, and the new staff that have joined TDS, the ongoing attack on the school leadership team can only breed negativity and drain energy / morale. This is a great concern to me, when it is an environment in which we want our children to thrive and above all, be happy.

The constant negative communication that is being dealt with by the school, it seems, has become allconsuming for those involved, and serves only to limit the time they have to spend focusing on what's important; our children's wellbeing and education. For the majority of parents who want to see TDS move forward with the current team of staff, it is of increasing concern that so much time and energy seems to be needed to deal with the complaints of the minority.

I understand the impact it has on all our children, and above all the impact this is having on individual people who are only trying to do their jobs to the best of their ability. It is never right, nor do the majority condone, attacking people on such a personal level within their professional environment. With this in mind, please feel free to share this with the wider school community if you think it could be helpful.

On a positive note, I feel very lucky to have children at TDS who have fantastic teachers and support staff, and who are extremely enthusiastic about their learning experience, and I am sure these thoughts are echoed by the majority of parents.

Please keep up the great work and please don't be disheartened by recent events.

Kind Regards  
A TDS Parent