



# Downham Preparatory School and Montessori Nursery

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## Newsletter to Prep School & Nursery Parents – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021

*Dear Parents,*

At the end of every school year we send home a newsletter. Looking back at previous letters, it is hard to believe what a traumatic year we have had this year, due to the pandemic. However, we have managed to celebrate the events the children look forward to, modifying them to comply with Covid regulations.

In October, we held Halloween parties for each bubble.

At Christmas, we recorded our Christmas performances and sent them home for parents to watch via Teams.

After Christmas, schools were instructed to lock down again and we stayed closed until the 8<sup>th</sup> March. During this time our teachers taught their lessons online, using Teams.

For Easter, we held our egg hunt and raffle, each bubble taking part separately. The children all had great fun and really enjoyed the day.

We conducted a survey with the children to find out how the pandemic had affected them. Had they enjoyed home learning? What did they miss about coming to school?

The survey results were very clear – the children had missed their friends, coming to school and having fun. We have tried to ensure that since the school has re-opened, we have organised as many of the activities that they enjoy as we can. Many of the venues that we traditionally visit remain closed, but we have been able to visit those that have re-opened.

Reception class visited the new Sandringham Play Park.

Classes 1 & 2 went to Flag Fen, a Bronze Age site.

Classes 3 & 4 visited the Anglo-Saxon village at West Stow.

Classes 5 & 6/7 took part in an archaeological dig at Sedgeford, where different trenches have uncovered Celtic and Roman artefacts and a mid-Saxon village and cemetery.



In June we held a street party to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We were able to hold our Sports Day in July. Although, unfortunately, we could not invite parents to watch the Sports Day, we filmed it and sent the video home to parents via Teams.

After Sports Day, we were busy rehearsing for our annual school show. This year's production was 'Oliver'. Covid regulations still did not allow us to invite parents, which was a great shame, as we know how much everyone enjoys the show and the children love to perform for their family and friends. We have recorded the show and hope you all enjoy watching it at home.

Our school year finishes with a Prep school street Pizza party on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July.

**(Reminder:** It is a non-uniform day, so Prep school pupils may wear their own clothes, but with suitable footwear for playing outside.)

The latest advice from the Government is that schools will return to normal in September. Hooray!

In September we will return to six lessons a day. ICT, Music, Swimming and Choir will all be back on the timetable. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday morning we will be timetabling 20 minutes of targeted learning at the start of each day, from 8:50 – 9:10am. We have identified areas that the children need to concentrate on – Phonics, Spelling, number bonds, times tables and handwriting. The teachers have recommended which areas each child needs to focus on and where they would benefit from extra tuition. The areas will change regularly and once a child has reached a target in one area, they will move on to another. Children who do not need to work on any of these areas will be in a group for advance readers, where they will read challenging texts to help them develop a wider vocabulary. Little and often really does work. We believe that working for 20 minutes every day, on an area that they find challenging, will be very helpful and we will soon see big improvements.

Now that we have confirmation of our booking for Thursday mornings at Alive Downham swimming pool and permission to start Music again, we will start work on the class timetables for September. These will be sent home before the start of next term.

### **Summer School**

We are pleased that Summer School will go ahead again this year, with 4 weeks of summer fun for the children. If you have not yet returned your booking form, please do so ASAP, as some days are already full.

### **Nursery**

The Nursery pupils will be performing their show on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 9:30am and it will be sent home via Teams for parents to watch. We hope you enjoy it. If your child does not attend Nursery on this day, please bring them to Nursery, wearing their costume, for 9.00am. We ask that you leave them while filming takes place and collect your child at 11.00am, when the show has finished. Thank you.

**Reminders:** (1) Nursery pupils will need to bring in a packed lunch after tomorrow (Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>) as the kitchen will then be closed.

(2) For the last 3 days of term, (19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>) the Nursery will be wearing non-uniform and taking part in fun activities including:

- Painting, art and craft activities
- Cooking and baking
- Water play (please provide your child with a change of clothes).

On behalf of all the school staff, and my family, I would like to wish you a very enjoyable summer break.

We look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Mrs E Laffeaty-Sharpe