



# Downton Church of England VA Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Paula Carlton BA (Hons) QTS NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs A Bates BSC PGCE QTS



Friday 3rd September 2021

Dear Families,

Welcome back to another great year of learning. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our families old and new. I hope that you have all had a lovely summer.

Whether your child is new to school, or they are simply returning to us after the summer, rest assured that they have an exciting year of learning ahead of them. Yesterday, it was most apparent that our children have all arrived excited and enthused for the adventures and learning we have in store. Thank you all for preparing them for the new school term so wonderfully. The start of the school year is always a moment of great anticipation and excitement at the gate and this year was no exception. Everyone was so happy to see one another again and were busy catching up. For us, the sound of laughter at playtime and in the hall at lunchtime has been the most memorable and moving start to the year that I can remember.

Our new Reception children and their parents have all been busy meeting their teachers over the last two days. We are looking forward to welcoming you all into school from Monday.

## Outdoor Learning



Our Year 1 children have been enjoying Science outside the classroom this week, investigating bubbles, as well as having lots of fun.



Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed learning outside as they looked for signs of autumn as well as pond dipping to identify and compare invertebrates.





### Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome our new teaching assistants Miss Sheppard, Miss Gayle and Miss Lanham to our wonderful team here at Downton. Miss Sheppard joins our Year 3 Kestrels, Miss Gayle joins our Year 1 Foxes and Miss Lanham joins our Reception team. Please do say hello to them when you see them!

### School Changes

Over the summer, several improvements have been made to the school environment. The Reception classes have undergone significant renovation and are now extremely smart and with bright with new toilets. Lighting across the whole school has been updated to be more energy efficient – this has also involved installing new ceilings into the older classrooms which has left them all looking extremely smart. We are grateful to the Diocese who have partially funded these improvements, ensuring that our School environment is safe and comfortable for the children of Downton.



### Uniform

It has been lovely to see our children looking so smart as they arrived at School today. It is very important that children are dressed smartly and in the correct uniform, as this positively influences learning behaviour. As always we will continue working hard to ensure that uniform standards across the school remain high and that children have the appropriate clothing for PE sessions. We would like to thank you all for your co-operation in this matter.

### Start of School day

Arriving at School on time gives children the best, most settled start to their session and ensures a prompt start to their learning. Thank you for being so patient and queueing to come in, it does make drop off and pick up safer and more efficient. A reminder that the arrival times for School with the exception of our Reception children are between 8:40 and 8:45 in the morning. After this time the main gates will be closed and secured. If you arrive after this time you will need to come into Reception. Thank you for your co-operation in helping ensure that School can start promptly.

### Homework - Knowledge Organisers

Once again your child will be sent home with a 'Knowledge Organiser' for their topic. At Downton Primary School, we use Knowledge Organisers (KOs) in class and as homework to help children to learn the essential knowledge they need for each topic they study. A Knowledge Organiser sets out in detail what we want children to know by heart by the end of the topic.

In school, we expect the majority of children to be able to recall all of the information on the KO by the end of each term. Please help your child with this by playing games, asking multiple choice questions using the sheet. We will send home each week details of the sections of the knowledge organiser that must be learned each week.

Children will be tested on these in class each week to help them remember what they are learning. It is also useful for children to go back to previous KOs and revise these so that the information from previous learning is not forgotten.

### Seesaw

Moving forward, homework will begin to be set via Seesaw. New log in codes will be coming home with your child over the next few days so please look out for these. If your previous log in is saved, you will need to sign out and sign back in using the new code to see your child in their new class. Please be aware that once you have signed out and back in to their new class, you will no longer be able to see the previous class posts. If there are any photos you wish to save, please do so before logging out.



## Clubs

We are very excited to be able to offer extra-curricular after school clubs after so long of not being able to do so. Some clubs still have availability and can be booked on SchoolGateway and we have even more clubs coming soon so watch this space!

## Music Lessons

Once again our music lessons resume next week with many instrument lessons now being at full capacity, it's great that we have so many children interested in learning music and to play an instrument. As the lessons take place during the school day and during the teaching of our core subjects, we politely request that your child is only signed up to one music lesson per week.

## After School Sports Clubs

If your child is attending an after school sports club on a day which they do not have PE, please can they bring their PE kit to school to change into at the end of the day. Please ensure that they have everything with them when you collect them and that all items are labelled.



### Save the Date!

We have some exciting news from our DPSA - they have organised our next School disco! It feels like such a long time ago we were able to host a disco for the children so we are sure they will be very excited about this! The disco will be taking place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September so pop the date in your diary – more details will follow shortly!

## DPSA AGM

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September, our DPSA will be holding their AGM. They are now looking to fill the position of Chair for the charity and welcome all parents to attend the AGM and anyone interested in this role to come forward. The DPSA help raise funds for the school which is used to help enhance your child's education, with the current fundraising helping to supply a set of iPads and continuing to work towards an outdoor learning space. Please do come along and see how you can help get involved with all the exciting events the DPSA host – any time you can give will make a difference!

## Medicines

If your child needs medicines such as inhalers or epi-pens in school, please ensure we have them with the completed form which can be found via this link: <https://downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk/administration-of-medication>



### Playtime Snacks

As a healthy school - we try to promote healthy eating and so we ask children to bring in fruit or vegetables as a snack at playtime. This is a gentle reminder that crisps, sweets and biscuits are not permitted for snack at playtime.

## TD Days

Schools have 5 Teacher Development days every year. We have already had Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September. The next four dates are: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July. As the Queen celebrates her Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 and an extra Bank Holiday has been given during May half term, all schools have been asked to select another day for school closure in this academic year in lieu of this. School will therefore be closed to all children on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

## Safeguarding Information Update form

Please don't forget to complete our new Safeguarding Information Update form for this year.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=FwplE-82VUChKk9fu3th8tChTTq-ANFlpjRf8CplshUMIJQnk41R1dCUDhQOTA3V05BQUJOSzIHUj4u>



Last year was definitely a year for the history books – with uncertainty and regulations governing our day to day activities. We are extremely proud, that our rich programme of teaching continued, without interruption and your children thrived. Amidst those days, some wonderful examples of innovation, creativity and resilience emerged, including the new ways our teachers found to make learning fun and engaging – who could possibly forget our first remote sports day, virtual worships, Phil and Katy’s worships, as well as Mr Bunn’s Seesaw post from his shed or indeed the wonderful live and recorded performances.

For me, the really extraordinary times are now ahead of us – this year has the potential to be the best ever. Particularly, knowing what we as a school can achieve together, so with freedom and love, we can ensure that all children can have high aspirations, believe in themselves and ultimately achieve their dreams. What an exciting year we are going to have!

Have a wonderful term.

Kind regards

