St Denys Primary School
News Flash

13th November 2026

Dear Families,

Welcome to our latest newsletter. November is always a busy and exciting month in school, with lots of learning, activities and events taking place. As the days get shorter and the weather gets colder, we will continue to make the most of every opportunity for the children to learn, explore and enjoy their time at St Denys.

We have been lucky to have several visitors in assemblies recently. These have included assemblies on Railway Safety, a visit from the School Nursing Team about protecting ourselves from coughs and colds, information from the Society of St James about their work and how our Harvest donations were used and next week we will be learning all about dental hygiene from Bright Bites. These assemblies form an important part of our PSHE curriculum, reminding us about subjects we have covered in class and helping us to keep thinking about how we can keep ourselves safe and healthy.

One of the things we are proudest of is our incredible community and it has been such a privilege to watch everyone come together in so many ways recently. From your very generous donations to our Harvest Festival just before half term, to seeing so many of you sharing your children's learning at our recent Celebrations of Learning, to your support of our non-uniform days for SDSS and Children in Need, to the fabulous dancing at the discos last night, the St Denys' community really is the very best and we are so grateful for all your support.

We would also like to say thank you so much to everyone who took the time to complete our recent Parent/Carer survey; your feedback is extremely useful. We are delighted that so many of you are happy with St Denys and feel your children are doing well, as well as very grateful for your suggestions for how we can continue to improve. A full summary of the responses is available later in the newsletter.

Best wishes
Mr. Davies and Mrs. Andrews

SDSS NEWS

As we shared on Dojo following our AGM, last year we raised a fantastic £3051.75, and this year we are hoping to raise even more!

We have already made a great start to our fundraising this year, raising £483.81 from the Harvest Festival refreshments, non-uniform day and Easyfundraising. We are so grateful for all your support.

We have some exciting fundraising plans for the next few weeks, with special St Denys' tea towels (with all the children's self-portraits on) for sale soon, as well as our famous Christmas raffle. All the money we raise goes directly to supporting the children of St Denys and enriching their experiences at the school.

We are always looking for more volunteers. Can you help? If you would like to get involved, come along to our meeting in the library straight after school today (Friday), email stdenyspta@gmail.com or chat to Tanya in the playground.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

At St Denys, the safety and wellbeing of our children is our highest priority. We want every child to feel safe, happy and listened to.

We would like to introduce our Safeguarding Team, who are here to offer support and guidance if you have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

Our Safeguarding Team members are:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr. Davies
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Mrs. Andrews
- Additional Safeguarding Team Members: Mrs. Smith, Miss Tarling and Mrs. Adams.

If you have any worries or concerns, however big or small, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the team. You can approach us in person, or contact the school office to arrange a confidential conversation.

Remember, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for helping us to keep our school community safe.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

The research is clear that every day at school makes a difference to children's learning and improving attendance continues to be a key priority at St Denys. We are pleased to share that our whole school attendance continues to remain strong – it is currently 95.5% which is the same as it was at this point last year. Thank you for all your efforts in getting your children to school every day and avoiding absence wherever possible, especially term-time holidays. We are getting ever closer to our whole school target of 96% for all pupils.

Please remember that we are unable to authorise any term-time holiday requests and be mindful of this when booking any family holidays, ensuring that they take place within school holiday periods.

If you have any questions about, or would like support with your child's attendance, please talk to us—we are here to help.

RESULTS OF PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2026

Thank you to everyone who completed our Parent/Carer Questionnaire. We were really pleased with the very positive responses and helpful comments. We are particularly proud that 100% of respondents said their children are taught well, feel safe at school and are well looked after, that you feel able to come to us with any concerns and especially that 100% of you would recommend us to other parents.

Here are just some of the positive comments we received:

"Teachers are doing great work. Our children have grown in skills so much. Thank you."

"St Denys Primary School is such a wonderful school. The headteachers and teachers are all amazing, caring and supportive. They go above and beyond to make children and families feel welcomed and valued. The school has such a lovely, family-like atmosphere, and you can really feel how much everyone cares. We feel very lucky to be part of the St Denys family!"

"We have amazing support from school. I will not change anything."

*I have noticed a massive improvement in ***'s learning since starting St Denys. Mr D and Mrs Andrews are always on the playground and happy to discuss any of my concerns when needed….Thank you to everyone who helps *** strive to do their best! The huge improvement hasn't gone unnoticed!"*

*"*** is thriving which to us, as parents, is the most important thing."*

*"I have never seen a better primary school! ***…loves coming to school and has made lots of friends! Thank you so much to all her teachers and TAs. I love that Mr. D and Mrs Andrews are in the playground EVERY morning to speak to if there's any concerns or questions. Fantastic school!"*

RESULTS OF PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2026

We are always looking for how we can improve St Denys further and provide the best support for all our children and families. Your feedback and comments are a key part of helping us to reflect and develop, and we really value them all. Some of your positive comments reflected changes we have put in place based on feedback from previous surveys. For example:

"I really appreciate the new choice of the timing of Celebrations of Learning as it is much easier to attend around work."	We trialled this last year based on previous feedback and are glad that it seems to be a model that works for the majority of families. We do recognise that having the event during the school day remains challenging for working parents: we'll continue to give as much notice as possible of planned events and please do remember that if you can't make the official Celebration of Learning, you are always welcome to arrange a time with the class teacher to see your child's work before / after school.
"I love that there seems to be more emphasis on things like Forest School, Gardening club and generally spending time outdoors"	Requests for more clubs and outdoor activities have come from previous surveys. We are especially proud of our Forest School provision and know this is a real high point of the week for many children. We absolutely agree that outdoor play and learning are incredibly important.

What could we do better?

Concerns about dangerous driving and amount of traffic on Dundee Road, along with several requests for more bike and scooter parking.	Thank you for raising this concern. We recognise the importance of keeping Dundee Road safe for all members of our school community, particularly during busy drop-off and collection times. We have raised the issue with our local PCSOs, who have agreed to carry out patrols and monitoring sweeps when capacity allows. We have also explored the possibility of temporarily restricting vehicle access to Dundee Road at certain points during the school day. However, there are a number of logistical and practical challenges associated with this. We intend to seek further advice from our local councillors about what additional measures may be possible, including improved signage. We continue to work with the council's Active Travel team to promote alternative transport methods for getting to school and recognise the need for additional bike and scooter parking. We have secured some funding from SCC towards this and plan to work with SDSS to source appropriate solutions to work with the funding and space we have available.
Comments suggesting more structured approaches to Celebrations of Learning, as well as requests for Celebration of Learning to also take place in the Den for children who access this provision.	Thank you for this feedback. We recognise that Celebration of Learning sessions are busy which can feel overwhelming, and we will certainly reflect on how we can make them more meaningful and purposeful, including incorporating opportunities to see learning taking place in the classroom. We do offer Phonics and Maths sessions for Reception families and will consider how we could extend these to other year groups. We also recognise that our first Celebration of Learning of the year came a little too early in the development of our new Den provision. We had originally planned something a little different to reflect the Den provision but unfortunately, staff absence at the time meant that we were unable to make this happen. We will offer this opportunity at future events and also plan to offer a dedicated Den Celebration of Learning before Christmas.
Questions about reading including how we assess reading to ensure books given provide appropriate challenge and asking for more dialogue in reading records.	Thank you for this feedback. Mr. Howard, our English Lead, will be looking into both areas, particularly how we can encourage more dialogue through reading records and ensure that our approach to assessing reading and matching pupils to appropriate books is clearly communicated to parents. We will review our current practice and provide an update on progress later in the term.

RESULTS OF PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2026

A request for the option to give feedback anonymously, and also to choose not to have feedback shared with the whole school.	We take great pride in our open-door policy and believe this is something we genuinely demonstrate through our everyday practice. We want to hear from you and understand how we can improve further for every child in our care. Over time, we have also developed and refined our surveys to provide parents and carers with opportunities to share their views and feedback, while ensuring they can see how their contributions are considered and acted upon. Although we ask for your child's name in the survey as we would always prefer to address concerns with the individuals raising them, this is not a required field so there is the opportunity to comment anonymously. We will add a tick box option for comments not to be shared in whole school feedback in the next questionnaire.
A concern about how challenge is provided to more confident learners	We strive to provide the very best education for all our pupils, recognising and celebrating the individual skills, talents and strengths that every child brings, irrespective of their academic attainment. Our 'Diving Deeper' activities are designed to provide meaningful challenge, not simply through giving pupils 'extension' work, but by encouraging them to think more deeply, develop their critical thinking skills, explore different perspectives and confidently articulate and justify their opinions and reasoning, all with the ultimate objective of supporting learners to understand how they can take any learning further, to extend their independent life-long learning skills. We are proud that, through this approach, the percentage of our children achieving greater depth in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2 has been above both Southampton and national averages in recent years. If you have questions or concerns about how this approach is working for your individual child, we are always happy to discuss this further – we would suggest speaking with their class teacher in the first instance.
A request for 'how to' guides about school procedures e.g. ordering lunches, music lessons and similar – somewhere that this information can easily be found.	Much of this information is on our school website and in our school prospectus. We would encourage all parents to make use of this as a first point of reference, and will review these areas of the website to make sure it is as useful and easy to find as possible. You are also always welcome to speak to us or email MrD@stdenyprimary.co.uk – we are always happy to help!
Concerns around information handovers during transition and a suggestion to organise meetings between parents and new teachers at the end of the school year.	We are sorry that some important information may have been missed during the transition process. We provide a number of opportunities for staff to share their knowledge and understanding of individual pupils as they move between classes, but recognise there is always room to review and strengthen our arrangements. This year we introduced 'pupil passports' to support information sharing and will continue to refine these to ensure they capture all relevant information. We recognise that the current 'Meet the Teacher' opportunity we offer in the Summer term might not give the chance to discuss your child in sufficient detail or discuss concerns confidentially so will consider how we can arrange further opportunities for parents to meet with their child's new teacher to share any important information or concerns.
A suggestion of a more 'traditional' sports day, possibly utilising larger outdoor space available off-site.	Obviously, we sadly had to cancel last year's sports day due to the extreme weather conditions. We are planning to hold the event earlier this year to hopefully avoid a repeat need for cancellation. Over the years, Mr. Fielder has worked hard in adapting our approach to Sports Day to ensure pupils have the opportunity to experience healthy competition while also developing their wider physical abilities, fundamental movement skills and the opportunity to improve their personal bests and experience success. We recognise the value of Sports Day to the whole school community and are already looking forward to this year's event!

RESULTS OF PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE OCTOBER 2026

Congestion at drop off and pick up and requests to open the green gate by Year 1.	Hopefully, parents and carers will have noticed that, on most days, we have made every effort to have this gate open and ensure there is a staff presence there as well as in the main playground. This works particularly well when our older pupils and their families use the longer route, allowing the Year 1/Rainbow entrance to be reserved for those classes and helping to manage the flow of children and families safely.
A request for ensuring outdoor activity and physical movement continues even in bad weather.	We agree outside time is very important and actively encourage parents and carers to ensure their children come to school suitably prepared for the weather so we can make the most of our outdoor spaces throughout the year. We have also been building a stock of 'spare' waterproofs and wellies to support this. There are sometimes times when being outside simply isn't practical, but we agree that opportunities for movement and physical activity should remain a priority.

Once again, thank you so much for your valuable feedback. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do talk to us – no need to wait for a survey! We really appreciate your support in helping us do the best for all our children and families.

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDERS

BRIGHT BITES DENTAL ASSEMBLY	Monday 16th November
FLU IMMUNISATIONS	Wednesday 18th November
Y4 ANGLO SAXON WORKSHOP	Monday 23rd November
Y5 SCIENCE CENTRE TRIP	Tuesday 24th November
Y2 ART GALLERY TRIP	Friday 27th November
RAINBOW AND KS1 PERFORMANCE 10am & 2pm	Thursday 10th December
CHRISTMAS CONCERT – ALL WELCOME	2pm Wednesday 16th December
CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND PARTIES	Thursday 17th December
END OF AUTUMN 2 TERM	Friday 18th December
START OF SPRING 1 TERM	Monday 4th January
KS2 ROMANS ASSEMBLY	Thursday 14th January
RAINBOW PARENTS MATHS SESSION	Thursday 14th January, 2:45pm
Y5 BIKEABILITY	w/c Monday 18th January
NON UNIFORM FOR CHOCOLATE DONATIONS	Friday 12th February
END OF SPRING 1 TERM	Friday 12th February
START OF SPRING 2 TERM	Monday 22nd February
WORLD BOOK DAY (comfy clothes or costumes)	Thursday 4th March
SCHOOL DISCO	Thursday 4th March
VR EXPERIENCE FOR KS2	Friday 5th March
BABY SUSO ORCHESTRA VISIT	Tuesday 9th March
SPRING PARENTS EVENINGS	Tuesday 23rd & Wednesday 24th March
END OF SPRING 2 TERM	Thursday 25th March
START OF SUMMER 1 TERM	Monday 12th April
YEAR 6 SATS WEEK	Starts Monday 10th May
SPORTS DAY (Provisional date)	Friday 28th May
NON UNIFORM DAY – bottle donations	Thursday 17th June
SCHOOL DISCO	Thursday 17th June
END OF SUMMER 1 TERM	Friday 28th May
INSET DAY	Monday 7th June
START OF SUMMER 2 TERM	Tuesday 8th June
YEAR 6 RESIDENTIAL	Wednesday 9th – Friday 11th June
SUMMER CONCERT – ALL WELCOME	2pm Tuesday 29th June
SUMMER PARENTS EVENING	Tuesday 6th July
SUMMER FAIR	Friday 9th July
END OF SUMMER 2 TERM FOR CHILDREN	Friday 16th July