

Newsletter

DESS Primary Oud Metha



TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN...

How are we already at the end of the first half term of the year? It only feels like yesterday we were opening the gates and welcoming everybody back to school for another exciting year.

It was lovely to extend this welcome to all the new families who joined our school community this term. Whether your child started in FS1 or joined us further up the school, we are delighted to have them at DESS Primary Oud Metha. We hope that you and your children have settled in and are already feeling a part of the DESS family. The first few weeks for all the children can be a time of great change, and I want to thank all of you for the positive support you have given during this transition.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and may I take the opportunity to once again thank you for your continued support and to wish you and your family a restful and peaceful half-term break.

With kind regards

Tony Clarkson
Head of School



'BEING' AS A COMMUNITY

This year, we have chosen the word *Being* as a central theme for our school community. This concept is woven into everything we do, encouraging everyone – children, staff and parents – to focus on being present, mindful and fully engaged in each moment. It is about finding balance, embracing who we are and building strong relationships both inside and outside the classroom.

We started the year with a *Digital Detox* initiative, aimed at supporting our *Being* focus by encouraging children and staff to step away from screens, be present and fully invest in face-to-face interactions. This has allowed for a renewed focus on developing connections, making new friendships and deepening relationships, all of which are key to personal growth and wellbeing. It has been lovely to see how our DESS community has embraced this challenge, and I encourage you to continue the conversation at home about the importance of being present in our fast-paced, digital world.

PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP

A big thank you to all who attended our Meet the Teacher evening at the start of term. It was lovely to see so many of you engaging with your child's year ahead and connecting with their teachers. Your involvement and interest in your child's education makes such a positive difference, and we value these opportunities to work together. These evenings not only help build strong relationships between home and school but also foster a deeper understanding of the learning journey your children will undertake.

Likewise, our parent forums have been well attended, providing valuable spaces for discussion and collaboration on a range of school ideas and initiatives. The level of engagement and the positive suggestions from parents have been truly welcomed. Your feedback and involvement are crucial as we continue to make DESS the very best it can be for all our children. Together, we can create an environment where every child feels supported and inspired to reach their full potential.





OUR WELLBEING FOCUS

Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do at DESS, and this term we were excited to introduce the WeShine curriculum. This new initiative focuses on the explicit teaching of wellbeing skills, ensuring that children not only learn vital strategies for their mental and emotional health but also understand the importance of focusing on their own wellbeing during this dedicated time. Through WeShine, children explore various techniques to manage stress, build resilience and maintain a positive mindset, equipping them with lifelong skills to support their overall wellbeing.

Research consistently shows that developing wellbeing strategies from a young age has a lasting positive impact as children grow older. Learning to manage emotions, cope with challenges and build healthy relationships early in life fosters greater mental resilience and emotional intelligence, which are critical for navigating the complexities of adulthood. According to studies by the World Health Organisation, promoting mental health in childhood not only improves educational outcomes but also leads to better social, emotional and physical health throughout life. At DESS, we recognise this crucial link, which is why we place such importance on wellbeing and the holistic development of each child. By embedding these skills into our daily routines and explicitly teaching them through the WeShine curriculum, we aim to nurture well-rounded, resilient children who are equipped to thrive both now and in the future.

To further enhance this focus, we celebrated Mental Health Week, providing opportunities for the entire school community to engage in conversations, share practical tips and reflect on their own wellbeing. We recognised how our individual wellbeing can also influence those around us, making this week a powerful reminder of the collective importance of mental health. Mental Health Week provided a time to focus on growth, learning and connection, strengthening our commitment to fostering a healthy, caring environment for everyone at DESS.



SPORTING SUPERSTARS

It's been an incredible start to the year in PE and Sport, with so many children enjoying their PE and swimming lessons, as well as participating in our before and after-school sporting extracurricular activities.

In PE, our Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils have been diligently developing their movement and ball skills, while in the pool, they've been enhancing their water confidence and refining their stroke techniques. Meanwhile, our Key Stage 2 children have hit the ground running, diving into a Health-Related Fitness Unit in both PE and swimming, alongside an exciting introduction to water polo.

This term has also included pre-season training for football, netball and swimming, featuring warm-up events against JESS Jumeirah and Jumeirah Primary School. Additionally, our Under 11A netball team showcased their skills at the Dubai Youth 7's Tournament, further enhancing their competitive experience.

Looking ahead to the next half term, we're gearing up for the start of the DASSA league matches. We are also particularly excited for the [Dubai Fitness Challenge](#) initiative which encourages everyone to engage in 30 minutes of physical activity every day for 30 days!



DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

We recently completed our student leadership selection process that has showcased the remarkable qualities of our young learners and aspiring leaders.

It has been a true privilege to see so many children demonstrate courage, confidence, tenacity, determination, grit and creativity in their applications for the diverse and varied leadership roles on offer this year, including Art Leaders, House Leaders, Digital Leaders, Performing Arts Leaders, Sports Leaders, Wellbeing Leaders, Library Experts, Student Council and The Junior Leadership Team. The energy, enthusiasm and determination displayed by the children was nothing short of extraordinary.

Electing the student leaders was undoubtedly challenging, as every child brought forward unique ideas and perspectives, showcasing exceptional communication and presentation skills that left a lasting impression on the teachers and their peers. The children's ability to articulate their visions in an engaging and enthusiastic way highlighted the ingenuity and potential that exists within our children.

We are incredibly excited to see how these leadership roles will take shape over the coming year. The initiatives, ideas, competitions and suggestions that will undoubtedly emerge from our new student leaders will enrich our school community and foster a culture of collaboration and creativity. I am confident that these young leaders will inspire all of us and contribute positively to our school community.

In addition to the student leadership roles, we are committed to developing leadership skills and instilling a sense of responsibility in all of our children. We believe in providing opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom, ensuring that every child has the chance to grow and flourish as a leader. Together, we will nurture these qualities, helping our children become confident and contributing citizens.

PERFORMING ARTS

The FS and KSI children have been extremely active during their Dance and Music lessons this term; trying to find their singing voices, listening ears and dancing feet after the summer holidays. We have been having a lot of fun and look forward to performing for all the mums and dads during our Festive Singalongs at the end of Term!

In KS2, we are continuing with our instrumental provision across Music lessons. The children in 3B are progressing well as they learn to play an orchestral instrument, whilst Year 5 and 6 are sounding great as they learn to play some tricky ukulele and guitar chords.

Music Technology has been a very popular part of Music lessons this term with the children using GarageBand to explore different sounds and create well-structured music tracks. They have loved generating their own Music!

The Performing Arts Department has been a vibrant hub of activity since the beginning of this new academic term. With over 300 children signing up for various PA ECA's every week, the Department is thriving with musicians, singers and dancers all super keen to perform.

Please stay tuned for the return of 'Tuesday Tunes', when some of our talented children will entertain at the school gates, followed by our Winter Concert for ECA groups in the Latifa hall on December 5th.

All of DESS would like to congratulate Zian Chen in 6R, a very talented violinist who was recently made 'leader' of the National Youth Orchestra. Zian has been leader of both the DESS String Group and Orchestra over the past few years.

We are very proud of Zian!



NEW PARENT CAFÉ

I'm delighted to see so many of you taking advantage of our new Parent Café. It is a wonderful space for parents to meet, connect and build a sense of community within the school.

Whether you're grabbing a coffee after drop-off or attending one of our parent meetings, it's fantastic to witness the ongoing engagement and collaboration between parents and the school.



YOUNG EXPLORERS

Our Invent Explore Inspire curriculum is already in full swing. Actively shaping the future for our young people and the planet, it has been great to see the children starting to explore outside of DESS.

Last week, Year 5 dove deep into ocean conservation with a visit to the Jumeirah Al Naseem Turtle Rehabilitation Centre. This hands-on experience allowed them to explore critical issues affecting our oceans. Our students are now even more equipped to advocate for marine life and promote awareness about protecting our underwater ecosystems.

This week, Year 4 embarked on an unforgettable trip to the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, the largest single-site solar park in the world! This visit aimed to spark a passion for sustainable practices as our budding environmentalists prepare to take on their roles in the first-ever COP (Committee of Pupils!). The park's incredible renewable energy initiatives left everyone motivated to make a positive impact on our planet.



LOOKING AHEAD

As we embark on the thrilling second half of the term, I am delighted to announce that, in true DESS style, we are gearing up for another action-packed half-term that is sure to inspire our children, parents and staff alike! In addition to the exciting learning experiences unfolding in our classrooms, we have an array of engaging parent workshops, the launch of our residential trip program, the Year Four Production, National Day celebrations and our seasonal festivities, to name a few! This term also promises even more opportunities for our community to come together, whether through collaborative projects, year group showcases, or special assemblies that highlight our children's incredible talents and hard work. Please keep an eye out for our upcoming announcements – we can't wait to share all the exciting details. Together, we will continue to create memorable moments and lasting achievements!

