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# Primary Buzz

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**Learning Without Limits**

DESS Primary Oud Metha Newsletter  
February 2025

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## Contents

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### **Learning Without Limits**

The Power of Exploration

---

### **The Spirit of Exploration**

A Term of Discovery and Adventure

---

### **The Ultimate Explorer**

One Dad, Seven Emirates, 630 Kilometres

---

### **The Power of Pause**

Rethinking Our Digital Habits

---

### **A Half-Term of Triumphs, Teamwork and Tenacity**

### **Taking Centre Stage**

A Term of Music, Movement and Magic

---

### **A Vibrant Celebration of Diversity**

Our Cultural Fayre Day

---

### **Fresh Tracks**

Big Adventures

---

### **Know Yourself, Grow Yourself**

A Celebration of Wellbeing

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# Learning Without Limits

## The Power of Exploration



What an incredible start to the term we've had! Our Explore theme has taken learning far beyond the classroom, sparking curiosity, adventure and real-world discovery - from trips around our local community to unforgettable experiences abroad.

Our children have embraced every opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, taking positive risks, asking big questions and seeing the world with fresh eyes. Through real-world experiences, they have developed problem-solving skills, patience and adaptability - and learned that mistakes aren't setbacks - they are steppingstones to discovery.

Whether they were skiing down snowy slopes, celebrating our rich diversity on Cultural Fayre Day, or achieving success on the sports field, they have shown resilience, enthusiasm and a true sense of adventure. They've discovered new places, immersed themselves in different cultures and embraced the joy of learning through experience - a testament to the explorer's mindset we champion at DESS.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our fantastic parent community. Your ongoing support - whether it's joining trips, running stalls, helping in year groups, or even inspiring us by running across the UAE - makes all the difference. Thank you for being part of this shared journey.

I hope you enjoy exploring this newsletter and I look forward to many more adventures ahead!

**Tony Clarkson**  
Head of School

# The Spirit of Exploration

## A Term of Discovery and Adventure

From the moment we take our first steps, we are explorers. We question, discover and push boundaries, eager to understand the world around us. At DESS Primary Oud Metha, exploration isn't just an idea - it's a way of learning, thinking and growing.

This term, our Explore theme has sparked an adventurous spirit in every child, encouraging them to ask questions, embrace teamwork and take on challenges with confidence. Whether it's map reading and outdoor learning, or diving into new cultures, ideas and experiences, our students are developing the skills that will serve them for life - problem-solving, patience, adaptability and resilience.

And how do we bring this spirit to life? Through real experiences, hands-on learning and unforgettable moments.

Our youngest explorers in FS1 were wide-eyed with curiosity on their trip to the fire station, discovering how firefighters tackle emergencies. Meanwhile, FS2 has been travelling back in time, stepping into the world of dinosaurs, unearthing fossils and imagining life in a prehistoric landscape.

For Year 3, history became a hands-on adventure during their archaeological dig, uncovering clues to the past. Year 4 has been exploring the power of memory, delving into how scent can unlock stories and emotions, while Year 5 tested their creativity (and taste buds!) in a 'Ready Steady Cook' challenge, embracing the art of culinary exploration.

Adventure took a more practical turn in Year 6, where survival skills came to the forefront.



From treating snake bites to setting broken arms, they've been learning how to stay calm, think fast and respond to real-life challenges - skills that go far beyond the classroom.

But exploration isn't always about distant lands and grand adventures - sometimes, it's about seeing familiar places through new eyes. Year 1 and 2 took a mindful approach, soaking in the beauty of Creek Park, while Year 4 embraced a cultural journey with a visit to an Arabic restaurant, broadening their appreciation for the traditions and tastes of the region.

With so much already experienced, it's hard to believe we're only halfway through the term! There's still so much to discover, question and explore and we can't wait to see what new adventures lie ahead.

Because at DESS Primary Oud Metha, every child is an explorer - and every day is a chance to uncover something extraordinary.





## The Ultimate Explorer One Dad, Seven Emirates, 630 Kilometres

If you think running around at school drop-off is exhausting, spare a thought for Harry Amos, father of Constance in FS1 and Thea in Year 1.

While most of us were easing into the first weekend in February, he laced up his trainers in Fujairah at 4am on a Friday and set off to explore the UAE in the most extreme way possible - on foot, covering a staggering 630km in under six days.

Harry isn't just any runner. A former Royal Marine and seasoned adventurer, he's no stranger to pushing limits - having already rowed across the Pacific. But this time, his challenge was closer to home, testing his endurance across deserts, mountains and cityscapes to raise funds for diabetes care in the UAE.

His journey was as much about smart thinking as it was about stamina. He planned his route carefully, choosing to tackle the rugged Ras Al Khaimah mountains first before heading west towards the open landscapes of the Arabian Peninsula. Covering all seven emirates, he ran the equivalent of two marathons a day. From the quiet coastal start in Fujairah to the non-stop hum of Sheikh Zayed Road, he explored not just the country, but what the human body and mind can achieve.

At DESS Primary Oud Metha, we believe that exploration isn't just about discovering new places - it's about discovering what's possible when you embrace challenges, think ahead and push boundaries. Harry's journey is a perfect example of that mindset, and we can't wait to welcome him to school soon to share his adventure.

In the meantime, hats off to Harry - his is a lesson in grit, courage, and the true spirit of exploration.

# The Power of Pause Rethinking Our Digital Habits

We kicked off the term with a refreshing digital detox, encouraging both children and staff to step away from screens and reset after the holidays. This short but meaningful break wasn't about avoiding technology - it was about reconnecting in real time. The impact was felt across the School, as children and teachers embraced the opportunity to be more present.

As the term progressed, technology took centre stage in other ways, too - not as a distraction, but as a powerful tool for exploration, creativity and personalised learning. A key highlight was our Parent Forum, where parents engaged directly with tech representatives and year leaders to gain insight into how digital tools support learning across different age groups. It was a chance to move beyond the idea of 'screen time' and explore how technology enhances accessibility, fosters collaboration and empowers children to take ownership of their learning.

Parents also had the opportunity to explore the digital platforms used in classrooms, seeing firsthand how these tools remove barriers, boost engagement and encourage teamwork. Whether it's adapting resources for individual needs or opening new creative possibilities, the focus remains on balance and thoughtful integration - ensuring that technology works for children, not the other way around.

Looking ahead, online safety and digital literacy remain top priorities. In early February, our Digital Leaders took the helm for Safer Internet Day, leading activities and discussions that reinforced safe, respectful online habits - both in school and at home.

We are also excited to host the inaugural DESS Online Safety Summit, bringing together digital leaders from schools across the region. This event will put children's voices at the forefront, empowering them to shape the conversation around navigating the online world responsibly.

Finally, later this term, we welcome Barry Cummings, an expert in digital wellbeing, for a parent talk on navigating the complexities of the digital world. Known for his engaging, practical approach, Barry will provide invaluable insights into fostering healthy screen habits and building digital resilience in children.

Technology at DESS isn't about more or less - it's about better. By prioritising balance, safety and innovation, we continue to create engaging, inspiring and meaningful learning experiences that prepare our children for the ever-evolving digital world.





# A Half-Term of Triumphs, Teamwork and Tenacity

The start of 2025 has been nothing short of spectacular for sport at DESS.

With fixtures across rugby, basketball, football, tag-rugby, aquathlon, swimming and athletics, our students have been training hard, competing fiercely and making us incredibly proud.

On top of a packed calendar of events, we also managed to squeeze in an unforgettable 'Sports Day' week, where students showcased their energy, enthusiasm and team spirit in a series of fun, competitive challenges.

From school tournaments to regional competitions across Dubai and the Middle East, it's remarkable just how much we've accomplished in just one half-term.

Standout Performances included:

- DASSA Cross-Country Relay Medallists @ Dubai 7's Cricket Ground
- BSME Netball Under 11 A-Team Plate Winners @ Kings' School, Al Barsha
- BSME Netball Under 11 B-Team Bowl Runners-Up @ Kings' School, Al Barsha
- Safa Cup Rugby Tournament U11 Runners-Up @ Safa Community School.

## BSME Football U11 Tournament Champions 2025 @ Doha College

Our Year 6 footballers recently took their skills to the international stage, travelling to Doha, Qatar for the U11 BSME Football Tournament - and making history in the process. Across a weekend of fierce competition, teamwork and standout performances, they showcased skill, spirit and sportsmanship on the field.

### U11 Girls: Determined, Disciplined and Dynamic

The U11 girls' football team took on some of the strongest teams in the region, battling through the group stages with grit and determination to secure a spot in the cup competition. In the quarterfinals, they faced a tough match against Doha British School, putting up a brave and skilful fight before narrowly missing out on a semi-final place.

Finishing 8th overall, the girls should be incredibly proud of their commitment, teamwork and progress this season—well done, girls!

### U11 Boys: Champions on the Pitch

The Year 6 boys' team continued their strong start to the season, producing a string of outstanding performances. In the group stage, they conceded just one goal while netting an incredible 19 to storm into the quarter-finals. A 3-0 victory over BSAK secured their spot in the semis, where they overcame BIS Cairo 4-2 in a thrilling match.

That set the stage for a tense and gripping final against Doha British School. With both teams locked in a hard-fought battle, the boys held their nerve and - in true DESS style - clinched a last-minute winner to take the U11 BSME Football title with a 1-0 victory! Their focus, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the tournament were truly commendable - congratulations, boys!

### The First-Ever DESS Cup – Making History

The trip to Doha wasn't just about one tournament—our students also made history by competing in the very first DESS Cup against Doha English Speaking School.

Over two days of high-energy competition, our teams battled it out in football, basketball and netball, displaying skill, strategy and teamwork. At the final whistle, DESS Primary Oud Metha proudly lifted the winners' shield, but beyond the scores and trophies, this event was about new friendships, shared experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

### A Huge Thank You

A massive well done to all our athletes for representing DESS with such dedication, enthusiasm and sportsmanship. To our supportive parents and the tireless PE department, your encouragement and hard work make these moments possible.

With such an incredible first half of the term, we can't wait to see where our sporting journey takes us next!



# Taking Centre Stage

## A Term of Music, Movement and Magic

Term 2 has begun with a flourish in the Performing Arts Department, as eager young performers take every opportunity to explore new sounds, stories and stage experiences.

With so many children keen to showcase their talents, we wasted no time in bringing back our much-loved Tuesday and Thursday Tunes - a relaxed, informal concert setting that fills the mornings with music. It's been wonderful to see parents, children and staff pausing to enjoy the performances, adding a joyful rhythm to the week.

The excitement doesn't stop there. Year 2's production of *The Beast* is well underway, with classes diving into songs, choreography and stage magic. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and we can't wait to see them bring the show to life.

Meanwhile, Year 6 have been embarking on an exciting journey of their own - auditions for *Matilda*! Nerves, excitement and pure talent filled the air as children prepared for their biggest performance yet. The casting process was no easy task, but with so much ability on display, we knew we were in for something special. Intense rehearsals begin in Term 3 and, if the auditions were anything to go by, this is a show not to be missed.

Across the school, children have been exploring a world of sound - literally! Our youngest musicians in Foundation Stage have been hopping aboard the Zoo Train, meeting a new animal each week through music, while Year 1 have been travelling the globe with their World Music adventure. The



older year groups have taken a deep dive into an eclectic mix of musical influences - from Mussorgsky's evocative compositions to the timeless genius of The Beatles, and the rich, layered sounds of the Gamelan.

For some, this term has been about more than just listening - it's been about discovery. Several of our Year 3 classes received their orchestral instruments, and their dedication has been impressive - turning up to school, instrument in hand, and practising diligently at home. Their showcase later in the term promises to be a proud moment for all involved.

From early musical explorations to full-scale productions, Performing Arts at DESS continues to inspire children to discover their voices, embrace creativity and take bold steps into the spotlight. And with so much still to come, the stage is well and truly set for an exciting term ahead.



## A Celebration of Gratitude

Desert Dance 2025 was a truly unforgettable celebration of talent, dedication and gratitude. Bringing together 16 primary schools from across Dubai, the event showcased outstanding performances and the joy of dance.

For DESS Primary Oud Metha, the highlight of the evening was the Senior Dance Squad's breathtaking performance, inspired by the theme of gratitude. Titled *The Art of Being*, their routine expressed appreciation for friends, family, and the world around them—a message beautifully conveyed through movement.

With precision, energy and emotion, the squad delivered a dynamic performance that captivated the audience. Their synchronisation and stage presence left a lasting impression, a testament to the hours of dedication they poured into rehearsals. Their efforts were further recognised with the prestigious Best Stage Presence award, with judges praising their confidence, connection and ability to command the stage.

This achievement reflects not only their talent but also their commitment and passion for dance. We are incredibly proud of their performance and the way they represented DESS at this inspiring event.

Congratulations to all!



# A Vibrant Celebration of Diversity

## Our Cultural Fayre Day



Our recent Cultural Fayre Day was a spectacular showcase of the rich diversity within our school community. This year's event was bigger than ever, with a record-breaking number of stalls and countries represented, making it a truly unforgettable experience for children, staff and families alike.

A huge thank you to our wonderful parents, whose enthusiasm and creativity transformed the school into a global village. Each stall brought a unique cultural experience to life, from traditional clothing and artifacts to delicious dishes and fascinating customs. It was a day of learning, sharing and discovery, allowing our children to explore the world without leaving the school grounds.



The day also reflected the spirit of the UAE's Year of Community, reminding us that our differences are what bring us together. From colourful performances to authentic global cuisine, every part of the event was a celebration of unity, respect and cultural appreciation.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event such a resounding success. Together, we celebrated not just where we come from, but the incredible community we create when we come together.



# Fresh Tracks, Big Adventures

For a group of Year 6 thrill-seekers, joined by some of our younger DESS College students, the Swiss Alps became their classroom for the week as they swapped the Dubai sunshine for snow-covered peaks, ski boots and an unforgettable adventure in La Tzoumaz, Switzerland. With plenty of fresh mountain air, spectacular scenery and some serious skiing ahead, this trip promised fun, challenge and exploration - and it more than delivered.

## Hitting the Slopes

The adventure began with a six-hour flight to Geneva, followed by a scenic drive through the winding Alpine roads - each turn revealing even more breathtaking views. By Saturday evening, they had arrived, greeted by Nuno and the fantastic Les Elfes team, who wasted no time in getting everyone fitted for boots and skis.

Sunday was all about finding their feet - literally. The children were split into groups, from first timers to seasoned skiers and hit the practice slopes to build confidence, sharpen their skills and get to grips with their equipment. With expert instructors on hand and endless powder to explore, it wasn't long before they were making smooth turns and picking up speed.

## Blue Skies, Fresh Snow & Big Smiles

By Monday and Tuesday, the conditions couldn't have been better - bright blue skies and crisp, fresh snow made for perfect skiing days. Whether they were carving down gentle slopes or tackling steeper runs, the children made incredible progress, pushing themselves further with every descent.

Then came Wednesday and Thursday, when the skies opened, and the resort was covered in a fresh blanket of snow. Instead of slowing things down, the powder-day conditions only added to the excitement, with the children embracing the challenge and powering through the soft snow like pros.



## Beyond the Slopes: Après-Ski Adventures

The fun didn't stop when the skis came off. Evenings were packed with laughter, adventure and a little bit of competition. The children took to the ice rink, battled it out in a giant game of Cluedo, explored the village by torchlight and even dived into virtual reality gaming. A cozy movie night gave them a chance to relax, while Swiss hot chocolate quickly became a firm favourite.

A special mention goes to Amelia, who, despite an injury that kept her off the slopes for part of the trip, threw herself into every après-ski activity with energy and enthusiasm, proving that adventure isn't just about where you go - it's about how you experience it.

## Race Day & A Picture-Perfect Send-Off

By Friday, it was time to put their skills to the test in an exhilarating race day. With speed, precision and plenty of cheering from the sidelines, the children pushed themselves to ski their fastest, finishing the week on a high. Their achievements were celebrated at a special awards ceremony, recognising their determination, progress and team spirit throughout the trip.

And what better way to wrap up an unforgettable week than with a mountain-top barbecue? With panoramic views all around, the children enjoyed their final meal in the Alps, soaking up the moment before heading home.

## Memories Made, Confidence Gained

As the group said goodbye to La Tzoumaz, they left not just with better skiing skills, but with memories of adventure, friendships strengthened and stories to tell for years to come. One thing's for sure - this trip was just the start of their mountain adventures!



# Know Yourself, Grow Yourself - A Celebration of Wellbeing

This year's Children's Mental Health Week was a roaring success, bringing children and staff together to explore the theme 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself'. The week provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on emotional wellbeing, personal growth and individual strengths - perfectly aligning with this year's school-wide focus on 'Being'.

Throughout the week, children took part in a range of engaging activities led by our Student Wellbeing Leaders, including an inspiring launch assembly, a child-led wellbeing lesson and morning mindfulness sessions designed to start each day with calm and focus.

One of the most popular student-led initiatives was the Creative Station, where children designed affirmation bracelets, keychains and pinwheels - a fun and meaningful way to remind themselves of their unique strengths. The Art Competition, which invited children to create artwork representing an emotion, was another standout success, showcasing creativity, originality and self-expression. Prizes were awarded for outstanding effort and imagination - congratulations to our talented winners!

Over in the Performance Area, children bravely took to the stage, sharing songs, dances and poetry inspired by their emotions. The energy and support from the school community made this a truly special celebration of self-expression and courage.

A huge highlight of the week was the chance to unwind and recharge in two special drop-



in wellbeing sessions: a soothing sound bath with Mrs Draper and a relaxing yoga session with Ms Curran. These moments of calm were a perfect reminder of the importance of self-care.

Meanwhile, our Year Four children had the privilege of welcoming DESS College House Leaders, who led insightful activities based on the RISE Curriculum (Relationships, Interests, Skills and Emotions). The session was packed with valuable lessons and practical takeaways, helping children develop tools to support their mental health.

As we reflect on the week, we are incredibly proud of how our children embraced the challenge to know and grow themselves. The conversations, activities and performances created a sense of belonging, empowerment and self-awareness that will stay with them long after the week has ended.

A heartfelt thank you to all the children, teachers and staff who contributed their time, energy and enthusiasm. Together, we've created an experience that truly supports our thriving school community.



## But Wait... There's Even More to Come!

The second half of the term promises to be just as exciting as the first! We are looking forward to celebrating the holy month of Ramadan with our wonderful community, especially as we come together for our special Iftar event.

The adventure continues as Year 4 and Year 5 set off on their residential - Year 5 will be tackling white water rafting and catching waves in Al Ain, while Year 4 will be exploring the stunning Hatta mountains, taking on orienteering, rock climbing and high nets. Meanwhile, a group of Year 5 and 6 students will be jetting off to Cyprus for their Environmental Studies trip, deepening their understanding of the world around them.

And that's not all! We are eagerly anticipating the Year 2 production, the BSME Games, House Day and a host of exciting events including the FS2 trip to Woo-Hoo, the DESS Online Safety Summit and World Book Day - just to name a few!

With so much to look forward to, the second half of this term is shaping up to be unforgettable, and we can't wait for all the fun and learning ahead - see you there!



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