



Primary Buzz

A Year of 'Being'

DESS Primary Oud Metha Newsletter
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A Year of 'Being'

Celebrating an Incredible Year at DESS!



As the sun begins to set on another school year at DESS Oud Metha, forgive me for feeling a little emotional, and overwhelmingly proud. What a journey it has been! This year, our theme of 'Being' has woven its way through every lesson, every experience, and every magical moment, giving our children the time, space and encouragement to truly be – to be curious, to be courageous, to be kind, to be leaders, learners, dreamers and doers.

From the moment our classrooms filled with the buzz of excited children in August, we knew this year would be special. And it truly has been. Our Invent, Explore, Inspire curriculum has taken centre stage, offering children opportunities to think deeply, create boldly and discover passionately. Whether designing sustainable cities, exploring the world around them, or following their own passion projects, the children have thrown themselves into every challenge with that special DESS grit and enthusiasm.

There have been standing ovations and special assemblies, outdoor adventures and trips overseas, magical performances and sporting success. From FS1 to Year 6, our children have stepped up and risen to every occasion. They have embraced the stage, the sports field, the swimming pool and their learning with equal enthusiasm, and what they've produced has been nothing short of magical.

The end of an academic year carries with it a mixed bag of emotions. It is great to look back on the progress that has been made by individual children and by the school as a whole. However, it is also a time to say goodbye to some much-loved and important members of our community and to some highly valued staff members who are moving on to pastures new. We bid a fond farewell to Liam Kehoe, Maddy Kehoe, Sarah Curran and Kayleigh O'Grady as they return to the

UK joined by Jasiya Khan who is moving on from her LSA post to take up her first class teacher role. Adam Coutts, Emma La Forest and Lindsay Hanton as they move onto new adventures in Dubai and Millie Pattinson's time as our PE intern has come to an end. It is also a fond farewell to two of our wonderful peri teachers, Alyson Coady and Christian Wood. We would like to thank you for all you have done for DESS and wish you all the very best of luck with your next adventure.

We want to take this moment to offer our heartfelt thanks to you, our incredible DESS parents. Your support, encouragement and trust have played such a huge role in making this year what it was. From helping with home learning to cheering from the sidelines, joining trips, attending events, and everything in between, you have been there, and we couldn't be more grateful.

Finally, I would like to wish each one of you a relaxing summer. If your children are leaving us today, I hope that they will take with them many happy memories of their time at DESS. For those staying with us, I very much look forward to seeing you all at the end of August, relaxed and reenergised ready for another great year at DESS Oud Metha. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work behind the scenes from our Site Staff, Admin Staff, SLT, through to the wisdom, expert advice and counsel from Mr Gibbs, Mrs Dando and our dedicated Board of Trustees.

Thank you all for an unforgettable year at DESS. Here's to the next chapter of invention, exploration and inspiration.

Wishing each one of you a relaxing summer.

Happy holidays!

Tony Clarkson
Head of School



Farewell, Year 6

A Celebration of an Unforgettable Journey



If you ask a Year 6 child what they will remember most, they will probably say the zip line in Abu Dhabi, or the spray-paint buzz of graffiti art. Maybe the final bow of Matilda, the screams on the slip-slide, or the moment someone scored that winning goal at BSME. But if you ask their teachers? They will say it's the way this group kept showing up for each other, with grit, good humour and a real sense of who they are.

Their calendar has been bursting with memorable experiences: cheering each other on at Sports Day and the Swim Gala, showcasing sportsmanship at the BSME Games, diving into the world of words at the Literature Festival and Readers Cup, demonstrating their tech savvy in Minecraft competitions and stretching their mathematical minds in the Junior Maths Challenge and Challenge Me competitions. From scientific experiments during our Science week, working with our younger students to complete a range of tasks in our House days, to international adventures - be it skiing down European slopes, catching invertebrates in Cyprus or representing DESS sport in Qatar and across the UAE - our children have shown curiosity, courage and commitment in everything they do. A creative crew, their passion and individuality was on full display during the graffiti art trip, where they spray-painted masterpieces that reflected both their vision and bold artistic flair.

Leadership has also been a hallmark of this cohort. As Junior Leaders and role models across the school, they have led with integrity, empathy and confidence. Their passion projects highlighted their interests and values, proving that they are not only learners, but also thinkers, changemakers and future leaders.

We laughed together at the Year 6 party at Gen X, celebrated their achievements at the awards ceremony, dried wet eyes at the leavers' service and got soaked with joy during the legendary Slip, Slide and Say Goodbye event - complete with inflatables, laughter, and a well-deserved water fight with their teachers!

But perhaps the proudest moment of all has been witnessing the way these incredible children have risen to every challenge, supported one another and succeeded in all things with smiles on their faces and determination in their hearts.

And of course, watching them shine in our end-of-year production of Matilda. With humour, heart, and heaps of talent, they reminded us that our Year 6 children are certainly not "revolting children" but amazing, inspiring young people who have made DESS very proud.

As they prepare to step into the next chapter of their educational journey, there is a mix of excitement and nerves in the air. But rest assured, they are more than ready. With their zest for life, curiosity for the world and deep love of learning, they are equipped to succeed wherever they go.

To our Year 6 leavers: thank you for the laughter, the energy, the kindness, and the memories. We will miss you dearly, but we know that you've got this, and we could not be more proud.

Go forward with confidence, courage, and that unmistakable DESS spirit. The world is waiting, and you are ready. But on that journey always remember you will forever be part of the DESS family!

Matilda Magic

A Year 6 Triumph!

What a show. As Latifa Hall was transformed into the world of Matilda, and what a magical world it was. Our incredible Year 6 children took to the stage — and worked behind it — to deliver a production that will be remembered for years to come. From the moment the curtains opened, we were swept away by the talent, energy, and sheer brilliance of our children.



Every single child played their part in making Matilda such an unforgettable experience. Whether performing under the spotlight or working tirelessly behind the scenes with sound, lighting, props, or backstage organisation, their teamwork and professionalism shone through. The acting, singing, and dancing were phenomenal — packed with emotion, humour, and heart. It was a production full of confidence and creativity, and every child truly did themselves proud.

Special thanks go to our outstanding Performing Arts team, whose vision and passion brought Matilda to life. Huge appreciation must also go to Mrs West for her stunning set design, which transported us straight into Matilda's world, and to Mrs Hadri, whose incredible eye for costume detail ensured every character looked the part.

The result? A performance full of magic, mischief and magnificence — perhaps the best Latifa Hall has ever seen.



Productions like this do not happen overnight. They are the result of weeks of hard work, rehearsals, creativity, and collaboration — and most importantly, the unwavering spirit of our Year 6 children. You have amazed us, entertained us, and made us incredibly proud.

Bravo, Year 6! You reminded us all that "even if you're little, you can do a lot!" What a way to celebrate your final term at primary school. Matilda was truly marvellous.

A Spectacular Year in Performing Arts



This year, the stage belonged to the children. From the first choir rehearsal to the final curtain call of Matilda, the Performing Arts department became a space where creativity thrived and confidence took shape.

The DESS Choir brought heart and harmony to every occasion, including a memorable performance at the Ski Dubai Christmas Tree lighting. Their sound was confident and cohesive, and their presence lit up every stage they stepped onto. The Orchestra, growing in both size and sound, featured musicians from Year 2 to Year 6 and played each piece with focus, flair and a sense of real musical purpose.



Nearly 200 children performed across a series of concerts that celebrated the school's broad musical talent. From solo piano pieces to ensemble performances, these events offered students a chance to be heard, to take a risk, and to experience the joy of performing for a live audience.

In dance, Desert Dance stood out as a highlight. The Senior Dance Squad took the stage with bold, original choreography that told stories through movement. The Junior and Developing Squads

brought the same energy to every school event, delivering performances that were polished, expressive and full of spirit.



The year came to a close with Matilda, the much-anticipated Year 6 production. Every child had a part to play, both on and off stage. With sharp comic timing, strong vocals and moments of real poignancy, the cast brought Roald Dahl's world to life in a way that left audiences smiling long after the final scene.

Behind the spotlight, Performing Arts lessons continued to build more than technical skill. Pupils developed resilience, teamwork and creative thinking. They learned to trust themselves, support each other, and express big ideas through voice and movement.

Special thanks must go to the site team, whose support makes every event possible, and to Ren for ensuring no detail is ever left to chance. Thanks also to our DESS parents for their encouragement at home, their applause in the audience, and the many unseen ways they help these moments happen.

With new productions and projects already on the horizon, the year ahead promises more reasons to celebrate. If this year showed us anything, it's that our performers are ready - and the stage is waiting.



Curriculum

Term 3

At DESS, learning is never confined to the classroom walls, it is an exciting journey powered by imagination, inquiry and innovation. This term, as part of our Invent, Explore, Inspire curriculum, children from FS to Year 6 have been diving deep into hands-on projects, real-world challenges and creative adventures that have sparked curiosity, built confidence and showcased the brilliance of our outstanding curriculum.

For our youngest learners, this term has been a wonderful adventure of inventing, inspiring and exploring. The children in FS1 have worked collaboratively to design and build enclosures, houses and dens using large construction and mixed materials. In role play, they have stepped into the shoes of teachers, pilots and supermarket workers, with the role of Mrs Mead and Mr Bosch being firm favourites! They have explored storytelling in imaginative ways using puppets, retelling and twisting familiar tales, while confidently experimenting with expression, tone, and even designing their own dress-up outfits!



Our children in FS2 have truly soared this term as they explored the wonders of life on earth and the mysteries of outer space! Inspired by the story Izzy Gizmo, they became mini-makers, building their own imaginative

creations from recycled and everyday materials, bringing their wild ideas to life in the most inventive of ways. Then, an intergalactic twist took them on a space adventure with Aliens Love Underpants! When a mysterious 'crime scene' appeared, these budding investigators used clues to develop their own theories about alien visitors. Through play, predictions, and testing their ideas, the children communicated their creative inventions with excitement and confidence.



Year 1 have lived and breathed the world of traditional tales this term and used them as a springboard for powerful learning. From retelling the Gingerbread Man and baking their own delicious versions, to engineering bridges and designing sliders, every moment was packed with creativity. Inspired by the ever-busy elves, the children became creators and helpers, crafting shoes, tool belts, pillows



and aprons for the shoemaker's shop. And when poor Little Bear found himself lost in the city, our big-hearted children jumped in to help. They built 2D and 3D maps to guide him home, constructed welcoming cityscapes, and even made their own overnight oats so he could avoid Goldilocks' porridge!



Year 2 took learning to the next level by blending Social Studies with our Invent and Inspire curriculum to create a bustling marketplace experience. Each child became a designer, creator and entrepreneur, using weaving, stitching, baking, artwork and more to make beautiful, purposeful products. Excitement bubbled as the children prepared to sell their items using DESS Dirhams, a real-life currency for a real-life event! From calculating change to persuading buyers, the market brought maths, communication and creativity to life.

In Year 3, innovation took centre stage with an action-packed term full of designing, building and problem-solving. From tackling the global issue of water scarcity by designing transportation devices, to creating time machines inspired by 'Oh No, Not Again!', the children used storytelling and science in equal measure. The buzz continued as they reimagined Dubai's viral Chocolate Bar trend, crafting their own sweet creations complete with custom wrappers and advertisements. And, for a final twist, they engineered their own marble mazes, combining precision and play in a fabulous fusion of magnetics and fun!



Year 4's inventors were on a mission to save lives! Tasked with designing innovations to help during natural disasters, children collaborated in teams, drawing on their DT and Art skills to bring their prototypes to life. But, what made this truly special was the feedback process. Parents became the testing panel, offering real suggestions to improve the designs. With Austin's Butterfly as our guide, the children learned the power of specific, constructive feedback, and the joy of improving their ideas over time.

These young engineers proved that big thinking begins with empathy and teamwork.

In Year 5, inspired by 'Little People, Big Dreams', each child selected a cause they felt passionate about and followed a powerful path of discovery. Children explored injustice across five key themes: labour, gender, education, disability, and race. Banksy's art sparked deep conversations and bold creativity, as children designed protest pieces and then moved into a fashion phase, developing logos, sustainable clothing and impactful branding. Drawing on local inspiration like The Giving Movement, they also applied computing and STEM skills to develop real products and marketing campaigns.



Finally, Year 6 ended the year in dazzling style through a showcase of their Inspire 'What if...?' projects; a rich culmination of the leadership, independence and self-belief nurtured throughout their DESS journey. Armed with action plans, children explored topics they truly cared about – 'What if you could follow your dreams?'. From vegetarian snack brands to a horse-themed board game, from a global food culture blog to sustainable face creams, the ideas were as diverse as they were inspiring.



Every detail, from logos to mood boards, adverts to podcasts, were crafted with purpose and polish. Mentoring sessions with diverse members of the DESS community helped the children to refine, stretch and elevate their ideas, while learning essential life skills like timekeeping, formality and gratitude. The final showcase was alive with excitement as pupils beamed with pride, sharing their journeys with parents and teaching staff, proving they are more than ready for the challenges ahead.

From FS to Year 6, Term 3 has been an inspiring crescendo of creativity, invention and passion. Our Invent, Explore, Inspire curriculum doesn't just tick boxes, it makes passions and curiosities a reality. It empowers every child to think big, act boldly and become the problem-solvers, changemakers and visionaries of tomorrow.

Here's to another unforgettable term of exceptional learning, and to the bright ideas our DESS children will bring to life next.

Beyond Buzzwords

A Year of True Wellbeing at DESS



As the year draws to a close, it's a joy to look back on the many ways wellbeing has been nurtured, celebrated, and made part of daily life at DESS.

Throughout the year, wellbeing has stayed at the heart of our school culture. Our amazing teachers have supported each child in building emotional literacy, self-awareness, social confidence and interpersonal skills. These aren't just added extras; they have shaped how we teach, learn and connect every day.

Highlights from 2024-25 included a rich mix of community events and child-led initiatives. In Term One, Promoting Positive Actions Week brought the school together through small, intentional habits such as kindness, gratitude and strength-spotting. It was a week full of warmth and meaningful connection.



In Term Two, our Student Wellbeing Leaders led the Strengths Celebration Assembly. With clarity and care, they guided their peers

through reflections on what helps them thrive and how their strengths show up in daily life. This year's IEL projects also carried a strong wellbeing focus. Children explored innovation through the lens of empathy and inclusion, asking thoughtful questions and applying what they learned in purposeful ways.

Targeted small-group support continued to make a difference. Sib Squad provided a space for children with siblings who have additional needs to connect and be understood. In Term Three, our Transition Groups helped students explore their feelings and prepare for changes ahead.



One of the proudest moments came when DESS received the Pupil Wellbeing Award at the MENA Inclusion and Wellbeing Conference. Judges praised our approach for being both holistic and practical. They highlighted the strength of the We SHINE curriculum, the visibility of student voice, and the school-wide commitment to emotional regulation, mindfulness and personal growth.

Thank you to every child, teacher and parent who contributed to this journey. This year, wellbeing was not a programme or a single event. It was a shared commitment, seen across the community and lived every day.

This Is What Effort Looks Like

A Year to Remember in Sport



What a year it has been. From the pitch to the pool, DESS athletes have brought energy, focus and a genuine love for movement to every match, meet and training session. Across every age group, they've shown what it means to compete with pride and play with purpose.

This term alone has seen Cricket, Rounders, Swimming and Basketball fixtures keeping pupils busy right through to the final weeks. But it's the year as a whole that tells the bigger story. Here are just a few highlights:

Year 5 and 6 Rugby Boys: Champions of Dubai

In two tough finals, our Year 5 and 6 boys came away with the DASSA League title in the Under 10 and Under 11 categories. It was a well-earned reward for a season of effort, grit and strong team play.



Girl Cricketers Make History



For the first time, DESS entered a Girls Cricket team into the DASSA league. More than 30 girls from Years 5 and 6 took part, many for the first time. They finished in third place, a fantastic achievement and a big step forward for the sport at DESS.

Year 4 Netballers: Undefeated and Unstoppable



It's been an incredible couple of years for our Year 4 Netball team, who went undefeated all season. Their teamwork, determination, and skill on the court have been nothing short of inspiring.

Congratulations to these rising stars—you have set the bar high for the future!

Overall Bronze at the BSME Games

DESS finished third overall at this year's BSME Games, competing against 16 schools from across the region. With gold in Girls Football, silver in Boys Athletics and bronze in Basketball, the team brought home a result to be proud of.



Footballers Shine on a Regional Stage

Year 6 football had a standout season. The boys were unbeaten in their DASSA league, won the DESS Festive Tournament, and took home top honours at the BSME Football Tournament in Qatar. The girls matched them, lifting the trophy at the BSME Games in Dubai and showing just how far DESS Football has come.



Finishing the Year in Style

To wrap up an action-packed sporting year, our Year 3 and 4 Girls Basketball teams triumphed in their finals play-off matches last week, winning the DASSA 'North' Girls Basketball leagues. This is an outstanding achievement, especially as it marks their debut in the DASSA "competitive" leagues. Congratulations to our talented girls—what a way to finish the year!



To every student who took part in PE, Sport, and Swimming this year—thank you! Your dedication, teamwork, and love for movement have inspired us all.

Whether in the pool, on the pitch, or in the gym, you've made this year truly unforgettable.



More Than a Medal Celebrating Achievement with Heart

Across four joyful ceremonies last week, children from Years 3 to 6 were recognised for their efforts, growth and contribution, both in the classroom and beyond. The Curriculum and Sports Awards offer a chance to pause and highlight the many ways our children bring focus, creativity and care to their school life.

In curriculum, we celebrated not just high attainment, but also curiosity, persistence and progress. From imaginative storytellers to quick-thinking mathematicians, from steady problem-solvers to those who lift the energy of a classroom, every award reflected a unique strength.

On the sports side, children were recognised for their skill, resilience and teamwork. These awards reflect hours of training, the courage to compete, and the readiness to support others through wins and challenges alike. Whether on the pitch, in the pool or on the court, these students represented DESS with determination and character.



What made each event stand out was the atmosphere. These were not just moments of applause; they were celebrations of the values we see every day. Effort matters. So does kindness. And a quiet, consistent attitude often speaks louder than any spotlight.

To all those who were recognised, and to those who support from the sidelines, thank you. You show us that achievement is not one-size-fits-all, and that character is always worth celebrating.





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