



Primary Buzz

Celebrating Our School Family

DESS Primary Oud Metha Newsletter
May 2025



Contents

Celebrating Our School Family

Wellbeing

Splash! Parents Dive into FS1 & FS2 Open Swims

Making Waves

Connections that Count

Deep Dive

The Journey of the Qur'an Awards

A Term of Creative Adventures

Microclimates, Minibeasts and Mosaics

Top of the Class

Changing, Adapting, Discovering

Shaping The Future Together

Looking Ahead

Celebrating Our School Family



As the world marks the International Day of Families on Thursday, 15th May, I am reminded once again of the incredible strength, warmth and unity that defines our school community. Families come in all shapes and sizes, but at the heart of each is a sense of belonging, support and shared purpose - and that is exactly what we strive to nurture every day here at DESS.

Our school is more than just a place to learn. It is, in many ways, a family. Every child, parent, carer, teacher and member of our support team contributes to the sense of welcome, support and unity that makes our environment so special. That spirit is what enables all the wonderful things you'll read about in this issue. Whether it's the children's achievements, trips abroad or community events, none of it would be possible without the spirit of collaboration that binds us together. As we celebrate the diversity and unity that make families so special, let's also take a moment to appreciate how those same values live and breathe all over our wonderful school.

Thank you for being a part of our school family - for your support, your partnership and the many ways you help our children flourish.

Happy reading!

Tony Clarkson
Head of School

Wellbeing The Thread that Ties Us Together

At DESS Primary Oud Metha, wellbeing isn't a box to tick or a standalone initiative. It's in the way we say good morning, the way we work through challenges, the way we lift each other up. It's part of every conversation, every classroom, and every corner of school life.

We believe that when children feel safe, valued and connected, they don't just learn better, they thrive. That's why wellbeing is a shared responsibility across our whole community. It shapes how we teach, how we listen, and how we support one another.

Whether it's through the WeShine curriculum, circle time or thoughtful transition activities, our aim is always the same: every child should feel seen, supported and understood. Wellbeing is not an occasional focus, it's a daily rhythm.

Looking Ahead with Confidence

This term, our wellbeing work is focused on transition. As the year draws on, our children begin to look ahead - towards new classrooms, new friendships, and new routines. Change brings possibility, but also uncertainty, which is why we're giving it the attention it deserves. Class mixes and friendship groups are being



shaped with real care and sensitivity. We're listening closely to the children, talking often, and creating time and space for them to connect and grow in confidence. We want every child to end the year with a strong sense of belonging, and to carry that feeling with them into what comes next.

The Foundation for Flourishing

Wellbeing isn't a nice-to-have, it's the foundation for everything else. When children feel good, they learn more deeply, build stronger relationships and approach life with resilience and joy. That's the kind of growth that truly matters.



Splash! Parents Dive into FS1 & FS2 Open Swims



There was a real buzz on the pool deck earlier in the month, as our youngest children took centre stage for the FS1 and FS2 Open Swims. With confidence growing, the children proudly showed off their developing skills; floating, kicking and gliding across the water with determination and joy.

For many, it was the first chance to share their swimming journey with their families. The air was filled with splashes, smiles and the unmistakable sound of proud applause. Whether it was a child putting their face in the water for the first time, kicking their way from one side to the other or simply enjoying the freedom of movement, every moment felt like a milestone.

The poolside may have been warm, but the atmosphere was warmer still. Parents cheered from the sidelines, capturing memories and sharing in the pride of progress, no matter how big or small.

The Open Swims are a special part of our Early Years swimming programme. They offer more than just a snapshot of technique. They reveal how swimming builds confidence, coordination and a love of learning through movement.

A huge well done to all our FS1 and FS2 children for their fantastic efforts in the pool and thank you to our parents for your encouragement and enthusiasm. We can't wait to see what our little swimmers achieve next.



Making Waves

House Swimming Galas Deliver Record-Breaking Performances

There was no shortage of splashes, smiles and spirited competition as our annual House Swimming Galas took over the DESS Oud Metha pool across two action-packed weeks.

With rising temperatures shifting the action to cooler morning sessions, our pupils brought the heat in their own way, with confidence, courage, and an impressive display of swimming skill. Families packed the poolside, cheering on children from every year group as they raced, relayed, and represented their House with pride.

Key Stage 1 swimmers opened proceedings with beautifully controlled front crawl and backstroke events, setting the tone with technique and tenacity far beyond their years. Key Stage 2 followed with a showcase of strokes, speed and school spirit, each pupil choosing their own races and giving it their all.

And when it came to the relays? The atmosphere was electric. Every race finished to a chorus of cheers, with the poolside bursting into celebration as swimmers pushed themselves and one another across the line.

Adding a layer of history to the excitement, two long-standing school records were broken, including one that had stood unchallenged since 2014. A huge congratulations to our new record holders for making a splash in the DESS history books.

A special shoutout to all the children who took part with such enthusiasm and energy, and to the parents who cheered them on with equal determination. These galas may have featured fast times, but they were also about teamwork, encouragement and celebrating our House community in full voice.

House Champions by Year Group:

Year 1: Leopards
Year 2: Leopards
Year 3: Lynx
Year 4: Jaguars
Year 5: Leopards
Year 6: Lynx



Connections that Count

House Day 2025

At DESS Primary Oud Metha, House isn't just about points and prizes. It's about teamwork, encouragement and celebrating the values that bring us together. That spirit was on full display during our whole-school House Day; a vibrant, joy-filled celebration of connection and community.

This year's event took inspiration from the world of STEM under the theme Pushing Boundaries: Celebrating Women in Engineering. From the youngest learners to our oldest, children joined forces in mixed-age teams, exploring science and engineering through hands-on challenges that sparked curiosity and creativity.

Our House Leaders put real thought into shaping a day that felt purposeful and fun. Children arrived proudly in House colours, ready to collaborate and think big. Across the site, classrooms became laboratories and laughter echoed in corridors as older children supported their younger teammates through each task.

Inspiration, Ingenuity and a Lot of Marshmallows



The activities took their cue from pioneering women in STEM. Sophie Germain inspired marshmallow-and-toothpick towers that tested both physics and patience. Mary Jackson's legacy soared as children engineered space shuttles to cushion a falling egg. Mary Barra sparked creativity as teams built motor cars from recycled materials.



The result? A school alive with ideas, encouragement and shared success. From creative breakthroughs to quiet acts of kindness, it was a day where every child had the chance to shine.

Each House group also enjoyed a special picnic and play session; a chance to pause, recharge and simply enjoy being part of something bigger.

A Celebration of Belonging

In the end, the Leopards claimed the win, but the real triumph was the togetherness. House Day was a powerful reminder of what makes our school community special - the sense of belonging, the support we show one another, and the energy we create when we come together.

Congratulations to all the children for their brilliant efforts and to the Leopards for their well-earned victory. Here's to more days like this, where everyone feels seen, valued and proud to be part of DESS.



Deep Dive

DESS Makes a Splash at BSME Championships

It was goggles on, nerves steady and spirits high as 38 of our young swimmers took to the water for the BSME Swimming Championships earlier in the month. Representing DESS Oud Metha with grit and grace, the team didn't just show up, they shone.

Across a packed day of racing, cheering and record-breaking, our swimmers clocked up an impressive haul: seven golds, eight silvers, four bronzes and seven ribbons. But beyond the medals, what stood out was the unmistakable DESS energy; calm focus on the blocks, bursts of encouragement from the sidelines and the kind of sportsmanship that can't be coached.

Stars in the Swim Lane

Among the standout moments:

- Kenza, who clinched the overall trophy in the 9-year-old category; a feat worthy of serious celebration
- Aanya, who powered her way to a strong 3rd place in the same age group
- Ruth, whose consistency earned her 3rd overall in the 10-year-olds

And as if podium finishes weren't enough, our swimmers smashed six school records across individual events and relays in a testament to training, teamwork, and perhaps a little adrenaline.

More Than Medals

Of course, it wasn't just about the times on the scoreboard. Every swimmer carried the quiet confidence and perseverance that define a DESS child. Off the blocks and between races, there was encouragement, camaraderie, and a genuine buzz of belonging.

Huge thanks go to our swim coaches, dedicated staff, and the parents who cheered from the stands. From first dive to final whistle, it was a day of excellence in every sense, and one we won't forget in a hurry.



The Journey of the Qur'an Awards

A Story of Growth and Success

What began seven years ago as a small, hopeful initiative has now become a much-anticipated highlight in the school calendar. This year, the Qur'an Awards saw an incredible 122 children take part; a powerful sign of just how far this celebration of faith, dedication and perseverance has come.

From those early days, when only a few brave participants stepped forward, the event has grown in both scale and spirit. To honour the diverse abilities and backgrounds of our children, the competition is now divided into two categories: native and non-native Arabic speakers. This ensures that every child has the opportunity to shine, regardless of their linguistic background.

Spanning from FS1 to Year 6, the competition celebrates three winners in each year group, recognising effort, accuracy and growth. New this year is the advanced level, an exciting addition for those children who have memorised two or even three Juz of the Qur'an. Their achievements reflect not only dedication, but a deep love for learning and spiritual growth.

The success of the Qur'an Awards would not be possible without the unwavering support of our parents and wider school community. Your encouragement, time and belief have helped create an environment where children are inspired to challenge themselves and take pride in their progress.

We are incredibly proud of every participant, every milestone, and every moment of growth. The journey of this competition speaks volumes about what can be achieved when we nurture commitment, celebrate diversity and come together in unity.

Here's to many more years of inspiring excellence and celebrating the beauty of the Qur'an within our school family.



A Term of Creative Adventures

From Magical Doors to Urban Murals

This term, Year 1 and Year 6 stepped out of the classroom and into the world of creativity, with two very different but equally inspiring art experiences that stretched imaginations and brought learning to life in vivid colour.

Year 1 at Jam Jar – Where Imagination Finds a Doorway

For Year 1, the fairytale world took a wonderfully hands-on twist during a visit to Jam Jar, one of Dubai's most beloved creative spaces. Building on their class work around traditional tales, the children designed and decorated their own magical doors, each one opening up into a universe of make-believe.

The workshop encouraged storytelling, experimentation, and individual expression while also giving the children a chance to try out new materials and techniques. From glittering doorknobs to swirling patterns, every creation was as unique as the artist behind it. The sense of pride (and a little sparkle) travelled all the way back to school.



Year 6 at Graffiti Dubai – Spray Paint, Stencils, and Serious Style



Meanwhile, our Year 6 artists turned up the volume on creativity at Graffiti Dubai, trading watercolours for spray cans and goggles. With the support of professional street artists, they learned how to use stencils, colour fades, and tagging techniques to create their own vibrant pieces - first on massive practice walls, then on individual canvases to take home.

The results were bold, expressive, and packed with personality. Back at school, the excitement hasn't stopped. Hallway conversations are buzzing with aerosol art tips, and if the requests for more cans and canvas are anything to go by, this won't be the last time Year 6 goes full Banksy!

Microclimates, Minibeasts and Mosaics

Our Cyprus Residential

In mid March, twelve intrepid Year 5 and 6 pupils set off on an unforgettable residential adventure to the amazing island of Cyprus. And what a week it was!

There was a real buzz in the air as we gathered at the airport early that first morning; twelve wide-eyed adventurers and two equally excited teachers, ready for the journey ahead. The spirit of exploration was alive from the very start.

After a long journey, we arrived at our base in Kritou Terra. Supported by expert local instructors, the children were soon immersed in a jam-packed programme of outdoor learning, ancient history and friendship-building.



Throughout the week, children took part in hands-on invertebrate studies - both on land and in water - gaining brilliant insights into the fascinating minibeasts of the island. Orienteering and hiking challenged our navigational skills and introduced us to the unique geology, flora and fauna of Cyprus. We even learned about the island's iconic sea turtles, whose lifecycle we explored in depth.

In true DESS spirit, the children (and Miss Wright) showed incredible courage and resilience during the rock climbing and abseiling activities, pushing themselves outside their comfort zones and cheering one another on every step of the way. By the end of the day, we were proud of our achievements, tired, and ready for a well-earned evening meal.



One of the highlights of the week was our visit to Paphos harbour, where the children stepped back in time to explore stunning Roman mosaics and the ruins of ancient civilisations, topped off with a spot of souvenir shopping for our families.

Before heading to the airport on our final day, we squeezed in one last surprise; ten-pin bowling. Spirits were high as pupils took on the teachers in a lively staff versus students showdown. There was plenty of laughter, a bit of healthy competition, and a fittingly fun end to a week full of adventure.

Of course, it wasn't all science, geography and history - there was plenty of time for sunshine, team games and the occasional ice cream (or two), with much debate about the best flavour combinations. The glorious weather made every outdoor moment even more memorable, and evenings were spent sharing stories, playing games, and enjoying delicious food together.

One of the most special parts of the trip was seeing the children form new friendships, often with peers they do not usually spend time with. They also rose to the challenge of living independently, taking responsibility for their accommodation and daily routines, and showing real maturity and resilience.

We returned with muddy shoes, full hearts and a treasure trove of memories. A huge well done to our incredible children - you made us proud every single day.



Top of the Class DESS Earns Global Recognition in TIMSS 2023

It's official: we're once again leading the way in global learning! The results from the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are in, and our Year 5 pupils have placed firmly within the advanced benchmark.

Domain	Score	TIMSS Benchmark
Grade 4 Mathematics	633	Advanced Benchmarking
Grade 4 Science	629	Advanced Benchmarking

Considered one of the world's most respected assessments of maths and science learning, TIMSS puts childrens' skills to the test on an international stage. This year's results not only reflected our childrens' academic strength but also earned us two certificates of excellence at a special awards ceremony held at the Museum of the Future.

Two Awards, One Outstanding Community

Our first award recognised us as one of Dubai's top 10 schools for high-achieving Emirati children in TIMSS 2023; a proud marker of our inclusive, high-expectation ethos. The second honoured us as one of the Emirate's top 20 high-performing schools overall.

These accolades celebrate more than just numbers. They speak to the daily effort and engagement of our children, the expertise and dedication of our teachers, and the culture of curiosity that drives learning across our classrooms.



Curious Minds, Confident Learners

The results remind us that at DESS Primary Oud Metha, science and maths aren't just about formulas and facts. They're about thinking deeply, asking questions, and making connections. Whether it's hands-on experiments or tackling real-world problems, our learners are encouraged to see themselves as explorers and problem-solvers.

The 6Cs; our guiding values, play no small part. From critical thinking to collaboration, they shape the way children approach every subject, helping them grow into not just strong children, but thoughtful citizens.

A huge 'well done' to our children, teachers and families. This success is shared - and so is the pride.

Changing, Adapting, Discovering Science Sparks at DESS



British Science Week at DESS Primary Oud Metha brought classrooms and corridors to life with questions, experiments and a healthy dose of scientific wonder. With this year's theme of Changing and Adapting, children explored how living things, environments and technologies evolve to meet the needs of a shifting world.

From FS1 to Year 6, curiosity took centre stage. Break times transformed into hands-on science stations, where children investigated animal adaptations, camouflage techniques, and even tracked human growth across age groups. Helping lead the way were our brilliant Year 6 Science Leaders, who guided younger children with clarity, care and a contagious excitement for all things science.

Slime, Static and Big Reactions

Throughout the week, every day brought new opportunities to experiment. Goopy slime-making introduced chemical reactions. Pressure canisters exploded into motion. Electricity challenges tested nerves and problem-solving skills. Across every year group, there was a shared buzz of discovery as children proudly showcased their learning and inspired one another with questions and observations.

Science Career Day: Real Scientists, Real Impact

We kicked off the term with Science Career Day; a school-wide celebration of science in the real world. The goal? To show that scientists aren't just in lab coats, but in kitchens, construction

and even crime scenes. From paleontologists to drone pilots, the day invited children to see science as a part of everyday life, and imagine where it might take them.



Our youngest learners dug for fossils with wide-eyed enthusiasm and met a larger-than-life visitor from the Jurassic era. In FS2, volcanic eruptions stole the show in a dramatic hands-on experiment. Year 1 children ran an ice-cream parlour as food chemists, while Year 2 cosmetic scientists created their own bath bombs, mixing scents and textures with impressive precision. Key Stage 2 took things up a gear. F1 engineers tested race cars built for speed. Forensic scientists solved a mystery with real evidence and sharp deduction skills. Invisible ink revealed secret messages, and our drone-flying search-and-rescue teams completed airborne missions with focus and flair.

A special highlight came from a visiting Molecular Biologist, who spoke to the children about her work studying DNA and developing treatments for rare diseases, offering a powerful glimpse into science with real-world impact.



Wonder, Confidence and the Curiosity to Keep Asking

British Science Week and Science Career Day are just part of our wider commitment to embedding science across the curriculum. These moments matter - not just because of what's learned, but because of what they ignite: curiosity, confidence and the courage to explore the unknown.

Whether mixing potions, cracking codes or flying drones, our children are learning to think like scientists - and they're only just getting started. So, watch this space!

Shaping the Future Together School Development Plan Consultations

The start of term saw something truly special unfold for us; a collaborative and wide-reaching consultation to shape our new DESS Primary Oud Metha School Development Plan. It marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter, and the level of engagement from across our community has been nothing short of inspiring.

This wasn't a box-ticking exercise. It was a genuine conversation, inviting every voice to contribute to a shared vision for the future. Staff offered their insights and aspirations. Children spoke candidly about what helps them learn and feel safe. Parents shared thoughtful reflections on what matters most; communication, wellbeing and opportunities beyond the classroom.

From informal chats to structured workshops, the consultation gave space for ideas to surface and take root. Staff brought their professional experience to the table, helping us pinpoint ways to enrich teaching and learning. Parents suggested new ways to strengthen connection



and community. And our children reminded us of what matters most; feeling safe, having fun and being inspired.

So much more than a plan on paper, the process features a collective vision, shaped by the people who bring our school to life every day. Your ideas are now being carefully woven into the final plan, which we look forward to sharing soon.

Thank you to everyone who contributed. Together, we are building a school that continues to reflect our values, rise to new challenges, and champion the success of every child.



Looking Ahead Ending the Year in True DESS Style

As the summer break edges closer, the energy across school is unmistakable. We're heading into the final weeks of the academic year with plenty of excitement, celebration and creativity; just as you'd expect.

Taking centre stage will be our Year 6 children in their much-anticipated production of Matilda, with Miss Honey, Bruce Bogtrotter and the rest of Roald Dahl's iconic cast bringing the magic to life. Meanwhile, Years 3 to 6 will step up to be recognised in our Award Ceremonies, celebrating achievement in the classroom, on the field and beyond.

Latifa Hall will soon be ringing with music as the Term Three Concert returns - always a highlight of the calendar. Out and about, transition visits are underway: Years 4, 5 and 6 are heading to DESS College to get a taste of what's next, while FS1 children are off to explore Oli Oli. Every child, no matter their next step, is being supported through transitions that are made to feel thoughtful, personal and positive.

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children are preparing to share their learning through a series of Fab Finishes, and there's a definite buzz around the return of DESS Has Talent; a much-loved tradition that brings the whole school together in celebration.

And finally, we'll end the year with a moment that's always full of feeling: the Year 6 Leavers' Assembly and celebrations. A chance to reflect, honour friendships and look forward to new adventures.

There's still plenty to come, and we can't wait to use Primary Buzz to share every moment with you!



www.dess.sch.ae