

Newsletter – February 2026



Important dates for your diary:

WB 2nd March – National Careers Week

5th March – World Book Day

WB 6th March – Science Week

16th March (for two weeks) - Termly Reports to Parents and Parent Meetings

20th March – Red Nose Day (more details to follow)

23rd March – Golden Eye

26th March - End of Term Church Service

- EYFS/ KS1 - 9.30
- KS2 - 11.00

27th March – Newsletters to parents/ carers.

Headteacher update:

Letter regarding consultation

Below is a copy of the letter that has been sent to all parents and staff today. I wanted to include it in the newsletter to ensure all parents have sight of it.

Once again, Medina House has been approached by the Local Authority regarding a proposed increase to our Actual Pupil Numbers (APN). Initial conversations have occurred between the council and the leadership team as well as our school governors. We have put this document together to hopefully share some of the questions that we have already raised as well as a summary of initial answers to help in our staff and families understanding of the proposal that is being set out.

The proposal:

The Local Authority is proposing to increase our APN by an additional 30 places. This proposed change would happen in September 2027. The proposal to accommodate this increase is to redevelop a large section of the 'old Barton' site situated within our Green Street site.

Facilities included in this proposal are;

- 3 additional classrooms
- A sensory room

- A soft play space
- Extensive outside play spaces
- A large hall for sensory circuits and eating lunch

Q. How would this expansion be staffed?

Given the length of time between consultation and completion, it allows the school to ensure that the right staff are recruited as well as ensuring that we have a well trained workforce- for all children.

We would establish a clear recruitment strategy which will include mainland recruitment options as well as our own in-house professional development opportunities.

Q. Is there still an increase in SEND school places on the Island?

There continues to be a need for specialist places on the Isle of Wight. We have a steady stream of tribunal requests from families who want their children to start Medina House in Year R as well as in year admission requests. If the school is directed to admit a child following a tribunal process, we are expected to make space for this pupil. There is no regard for how many children are already attending the school or the size of existing classes.

As a school, we want Medina House to be a part of the strategic solution to this growing demand as opposed to having to stretch resources even thinner.

Q. What would transport look like for these potential new pupils?

This would be the responsibility of the council to arrange home-school transport for any eligible children. We have asked for a footpath to be investigated to speed up the walk between sites as well as looking into the current car park arrangements at our Green Street site.

Q. What would this mean with regards to the quality of provision at the school?

There is still a large number of tribunal cases within the system with parents requesting Medina House School. Although the school, alongside the Local Authority, defends our position with regards to how full we are, this is often not successful. The need for high quality SEN provision on the Island is still very much needed.

This proposed expansion would help 'level up' the facilities between Green Street and School Lane sites meaning that children would have to travel between sites less frequently. The additional places would be for Year R and Year 1 children meaning that pupils would spend several years at Green Street before gradually moving to School Lane- a far greater graduated approach.

Q. What would this mean for school lunches for all pupils, especially the quality of lunches provided?

We have had newer, larger ovens installed at our School Lane kitchen. This was to help accommodate our Chillerton pupils. The lunches would continue to be prepared at School Lane and distributed to all sites.

Many Island primary schools, including Medina House, are undertaking a tendering process with school catering companies. This is to ensure that children are receiving the very best meals each day.

Q. What will the outside areas look like at the Green Street site?

There will be an extension to the outside space to incorporate the current playground for Dolphin and Puffin class. Plans are not officially drawn up but we would imagine a discussion regarding making one large playground (including the current Ocean playground) to be used by all children.

Q. Why don't the council build us a new school?

This is a frequent conversation between the school and the Council. In short, the cost and time taken to build a new school is not something that the council has the scope to do. The best option is to utilise existing buildings and modify them to meet the needs of the Island.

Q. We are concerned about this expansion being in close proximity to Howard House?

The proposed plan would disconnect any walkway/ access point that currently exists between the two parts of the building. There would also be fencing erected to ensure that the two parts are separate. The council have already begun disconnecting key services such as fire and intruder alarms for the building and this has helped minimise any disruption to our current Puffin and Dolphin classes.

We appreciate that these are only a few of the questions that our stakeholders have and there will be consultation events planned in due course to give you all an opportunity to voice your opinions on this further expansion proposals.

Please feel free to contact the school if you have any specific, individual concerns, regarding this consultation.

Communication plan (repeated from last newsletter):

Following on from the parent meeting I thought it would be helpful to include some helpful information/ reminders about the best way to communicate with the school to ensure the most effective communication.

General enquiries – including illness, initial enquiries and requests for a call back from class:

Please call the school office or email admin@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk

You can also contact the school via the Arbor app.

Safeguarding concerns:

Please call the school urgently and/or email safeguarding@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk (this inbox is monitored over weekends and school holidays)

Class enquiries:

Whilst you can call the school office, your class team may not be able to take the call as we are prioritising learning. However, each class will shortly have their own email account for you to contact them directly, these will be in the following format; classname@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk

Repeated enquiries/ concerns:

If you have already spoken to the class team and feel that there has not been a resolution to your concern/things are not improving then please then discuss your concerns with our Assistant Headteachers.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 classes – Emma Rust (emmarust@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk)

Keys Stage 2 classes – Kev Lacey (k.lacey@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk)

Emma and Kev will bring most complex issues to our weekly leadership team meetings for us to discuss as a whole team.

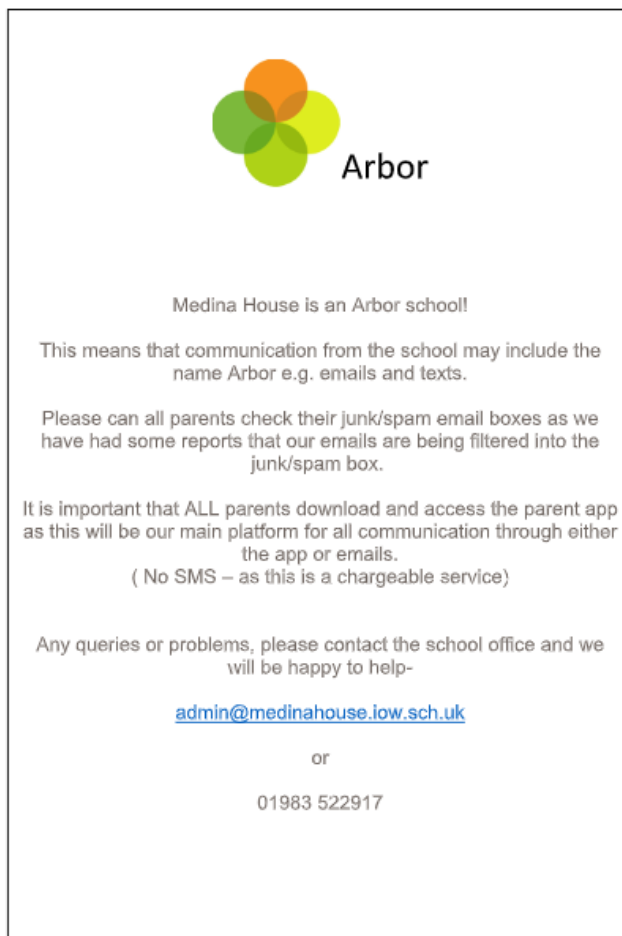
If you feel that your concern is still not being addressed/things are not improving then please contact either Vic's (victoriamakie@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk) (Newport) or Lianne (liannewest@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk) (Chillerton)

Finally, for any serious concerns or concerns that need escalating past assistant and deputy headteachers please contact myself on chrisberry@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk

It is important that we have a graduated approach to communication to ensure that those staff who know the most about the situation/concern are able to address these first. As you will be aware, senior leaders can be busy and be away from computers for long periods of time, please allow up to 48 hours for a response. If this time period is not being met then please do call the school and ask to speak to one of us.

A reminder re: Arbor communications:

The below was sent out to all parents (via the home-school book) re: Arbor communication. Please can all parents download the Arbor App (if they haven't already done so) to ensure smooth and consistent communication.



Best wishes

Chris

Class team update:

Just a quick reminder to ensure your child has spare clothes as they are enjoying playing in the puddles and engaging in water play. Please make sure all belongings are named.

We have had some beautiful weather since coming back after half term. We hope to see more of them as we go through the next few months.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you all, as always, for your continued support.

Jess and Ocean Team

Ocean Class

Our STARS of the month:

Week One: RJ and Oakley

Week Two: All of Ocean

Week Three: Nixie and Oscar

Learning we have been focusing on this month:

We have been continuing our learning all about the weather. Our sensory stories have been one of our favourites!

We made our own sunshine and even experienced the snow machine – this was so exciting!

Our new topic is 'important people'. We will be looking at the people who are important to us, as well as important people in the community who help us.

Please remember to bring in or email me pictures of your child's important people. Thank you to those that have already done this.

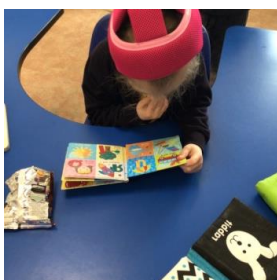
j.mcqueen@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk

Literacy

In Literacy we have been continuing to explore the different types of weather by a range of exciting sensory props for example, we have enjoyed experiencing the 'rain' by using a water spray, the 'snow' by using flour and the 'wind' by using a hand held fan.

We join in with 'Squiggle Wiggle' every day. This is an opportunity to dance to music, with colourful scarves while we develop our gross motor skills by moving our arms up, down, side to side and round and round.

We have also now started daily Phonics activities where we are listening carefully to sounds in the environment, animal sounds and nursery rhymes. This is a very fun part of our morning routine.



Maths

Maths is part of everything we do every day! From moving our bodies safely around the environment, to fitting puzzle pieces into the correct spaces and to recognising numbers. We have opportunities every day to work on our focus and attention, as well as responding to different stimuli, by using all of our senses.

We take part in daily number songs with props and join in by dancing along to the music and making eye contact with the adult.



Field Freedom!

We had the best afternoon on the field. We were let loose to explore the wider outdoor environment. We worked together to put on our waterproof clothing and our wellies.

We were very brave trying new equipment that looked new and big! Our confidence grew quickly and we are already so excited to come out again. We experienced the big round swings, the climbing frame, slide and trampoline.

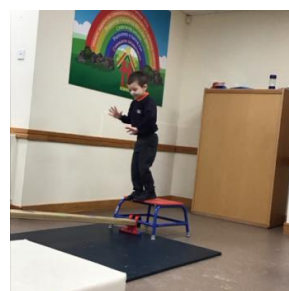
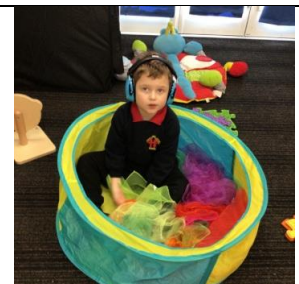
We were allowed in the muddy puddles and on the soggy grass. We were very muddy, but had the best time!



Sensory Circuit

Each morning and at different times throughout the day, we have the opportunity to explore sensory circuit.

Each day it is set up differently – this makes it very exciting. We have been developing our balancing skills, climbing skills and co-ordination, as well as building our confidence and independence.

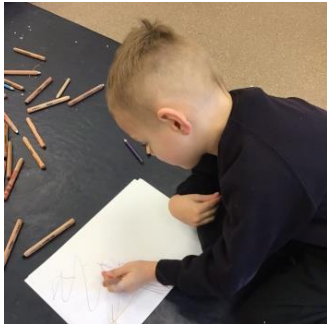
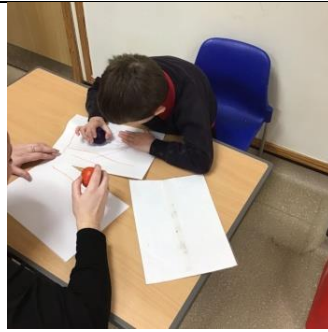


Mark Making

Mark making is such a meaningful skill that can be developed in so many ways. It supports, and is the result of secure gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

We have daily opportunities to create our own marks, in our own ways, using anything that is around us.

Some of us have been using our hands, our fingers, pens, paint, crayons, flour and pencils.



Art

Art is one of our favourite things to do. Especially if it involves us using all of our body and if it means mess!

We have been learning all about different colours and have had opportunities to explore different colours through different media such as paint, chalk and crayons.

Watch out for the next newsletter when you will see pictures all about our current art. We will give you a clue... it is based on the artist Jackson Pollock.

