

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.

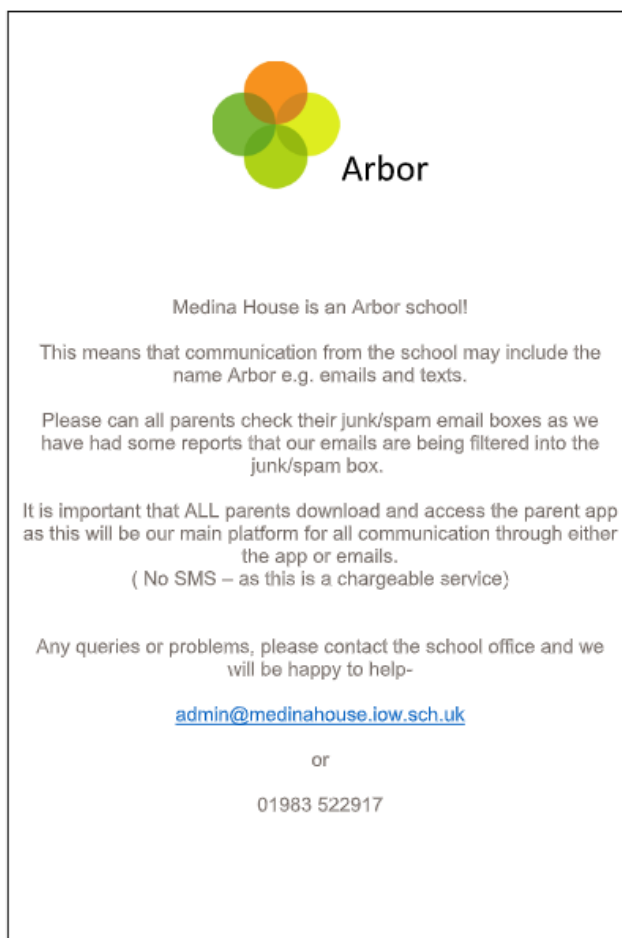
If you feel that your concern is still not being addressed/things are not improving then please contact either Vic's (victoriamakie@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk) (Newport) or Lianne (liannewest@medinahouse.iow.sch.uk) (Chillerton)

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:

Puffin Class would like to wish all the families and children a very warm welcome back from the half term break. With only a 5 week term this time round, it's going to be busy busy busy with lots of exciting activities planned for the children to engage in. Thank you for your continued co-operation with bringing in spare clothes, water proofs and welly boots for the children so they can access learning in all weathers, both indoors and outside, swimming will continue to be on a Tuesday morning- just a reminder that in order for the children to safely swim each week they will require 3 layers- a disposable swim nappy, a reusable swim nappy and either swimming trunks or a swim suit. This level of protections ensures that if children do have an accident in the pool that it is safely contained within these layers and therefore not contaminating the pool, resulting in it having to be shut and cleaned before any other classes can access it again. Thank you.

Puffin Class

Our STARS of the month:

Week One: Lily

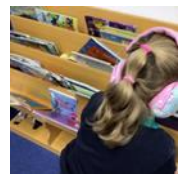
Week Two: Elijah D

Week Three: **Half Term**

Week Four: Hunter

Learning that we have been focusing on this month:

Before half term we were continuing our learning around our topic 'Weather' which the children all seemed to respond and engage in well, since returning from the half term break we have started on a new topic 'Important People' focussing the curriculum around this topic. The children, so far have all been very enthusiastic with their learning and have all been eager to participate in the activities on offer. We will be focussing on two texts in literacy "Around the world with Sir David Attenborough" and "My name is not Alexander". Our Topic words this term are **King, Queen, Doctor, Fireman, Policeman, Teacher, Mummy, Daddy, Brother and Sister**. Please feel free to practice these at home with the children using the topic book that have been sent home.



Reading

The children have enjoyed accessing stories, whether that means stories being read to them or reading books themselves, the children access reading daily in class, even when they don't realise it. Reading/recognising symbols from the timetable or now and next cards- looking at signs/symbols in the environment, using TDSNAP and choice boards to choose their snack at snack time, reading is happening all day everyday within Puffin Class!

Phonics

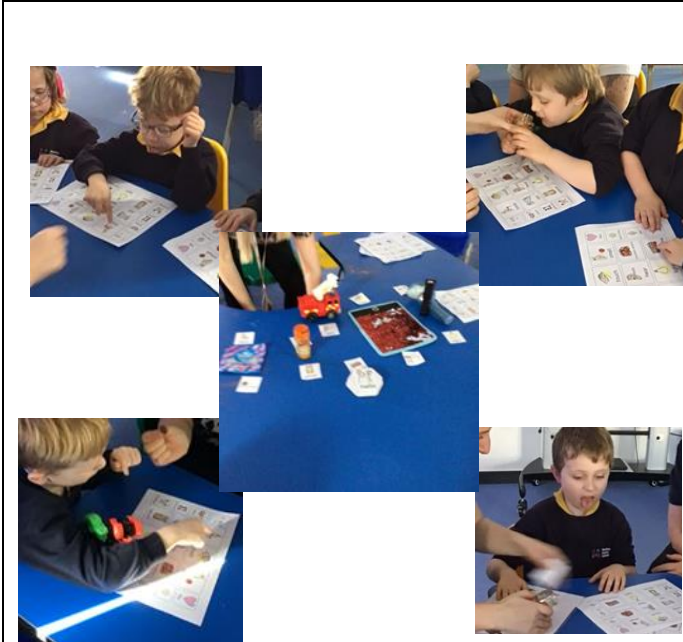
The children have excelled in phonics lesson this term, which has been lovely to see and watch their progress as the weeks go on.

We have focussed on cementing specific sounds with daily phonics games, phonics bingo and 'what's in the box' for sound sorting. We have also enjoyed listening to environmental sounds and then having a go at guessing what that sound is with the children using choice boards to help them to distinguish between the sounds.



Science

For our science activities during our weather topic we continued to focus looking at different weather types and actively experiencing these in the many weather types we had before half term! The children were able to differentiate between weathers in different seasons and how they feel and what clothes they need to wear. For our science this week we have been looking at our 5 senses, the children all actively engaged in an activity using our senses, they could use a choice board and their voice to predict what it was they were going to do and if they liked the taste, smell etc of the items they were presented with. We got to **taste** a chocolate button, **smell** different spices and herbs, **see** flashing lights and torches, **hear** a fire engine siren and **touch** some rough material. The children then used symbols to match each sense to the item!



Writing

In writing sessions the children have been matching letters to their names, attempting to form letters by overwriting using a range of different medias, including lots of different sensory exploration. They have also enjoyed mark making on the playground with big chunky chalks.

The children have worked really hard on composing/matching symbols to make simple sentences about our class stories, some children even taking resources home to continue their learning there too!!



Maths

For the last part of our topic weather the children all enjoyed filling and emptying containers with lots of different sensory items looking at the concept full and empty. We have been consolidating our counting and ordering skills by continuing our maths songs at the start of each lesson with this the progressing into the activities on offer in the classroom.

We have been looking at matching numeral to quantities and quantities to numerals up to 5 with some children pushing themselves and extending to numbers beyond 5!



Stay and Learn Sessions

A big thank you to all parents that came to stay and learn sessions. The children seemed to love having you in to share their learning with you all!

It was a very busy morning, so busy in fact, we forgot to take any pictures at all!!

For our first session we read our sensory story "How to catch a rainbow" and then followed up with some matching activities and then some sentence construction using symbols and words from the text.

For our second session we focussed on maths, with the children practising ordering and counting 1-5 during our number songs session with a follow up activity icing biscuits and counting how many smarties and chocolate buttons we could fit on our biscuits (always a huge hit!)

Thank you again for coming to share your children's learning with us all, we look forward to welcoming you all in again soon.