

DOWN'S VIEW NEWSLETTER

February 2026



Hi all,

The Spring Parade at school last week was a great success! Thank you to: everyone at school for organising it so well; for Friends of Downs View for providing refreshments on the day; to Charlie Letts who was available to speak about Short Breaks; and to the DVLSC samba band for playing so brilliantly.

Tomorrow, Tues 24 March, Will Ellis a parent at school will be joining up with local fresh food company Sussex Peasant to cook snacks for children in the playground at the school. This will promote [Will's fundraising swim](#) happening later in the year (more in the Friend's section later in this newsletter!).

I'm looking forward to celebrating Link College's 20-year anniversary on Thursday with another drumming performance from the students at DVLSC and snacks and cakes at college afterwards.

On 12 April, Room 5 at Link College will be running the Brighton 10K to raise money for the Friends of Downsview. Please support the team by sponsoring them and going along to cheer them on the day. [Donate here.](#)

A huge congratulations to Laura Strong who was nominated for a [PaCC Award](#) in the Education Sector. The award celebrates the great people and organisations that go the extra mile to support SEND families in Brighton and Hove. Very well-deserved recognition of the fantastic work Laura does here at school!

Finally, following a long-term absence sadly Sarah Doonan will not be returning to her role as assistant head. We are currently recruiting to fill the role, but wish Sarah all the best in the future!

I hope you have a great Easter break, and look forward to seeing everyone back on Monday 13 April.

Vanessa



Term Dates 2026

Spring Term

5 Jan – 27 March

Summer Term

13 April – 22 July

Inset

Tues 5 May

Half term

25 – 29 May



DOWN'S VIEW SCHOOL



Hello All,

It is so lovely now that the sun is shining and in time for our Spring Parade, which is one of the highlights in the school calendar. It was so great to see so many of you come and watch our parade and enjoy the holi paint event. Also thank you to the DVLSC samba band for joining us.

This term the students have continued to explore their topics of learning about the world around them with primary students focusing on Asia and secondary students looking further afield at Global cultures. After Easter the children will change their topic focus, primary's will be 'Under the sea/Aquatic environment' and secondary's 'Waste'.

Our student council have been busy with regular meetings and have been involved in setting class kindness goals and feeding back student requests including 'can we have garlic bread at lunchtime'. They are also planning a summer fundraising event, so watch this space for more details.

The focus of safer internet day this term was looking at online relationships and the do's and don't's, most importantly how to keep safe. If you need further support then the NSPCC have a wide range of

resources [keeping children safe online](#), also check out our website and the [Online safety](#) (Downs View Website - health, safety and wellbeing, Online-safety-code).

To support road safety awareness, this term some primary classes have taken part in road safety activities from trainers for Brighton and Hove City Council. After the Easter holidays the focus will be on cycle safety from those beginning to learn to ride, and some students developing their confidence in their cycling all safely on the school site.



Respect Aspiration Resilience



DOWNSVIEW SCHOOL

We continue to have regular visits from our local PCSO Leo, who unfortunately was on a training day last Wednesday so couldn't make the parade.



For World Book Day this year I was so impressed by the range of costumes in all classes, for both children and adults.



Finally, a welcome to a new member of staff Chloe who is the MDSA (midday meals supervisor) in Foxes class.

Thank you again for your continued support and I hope you enjoy the Easter holidays.

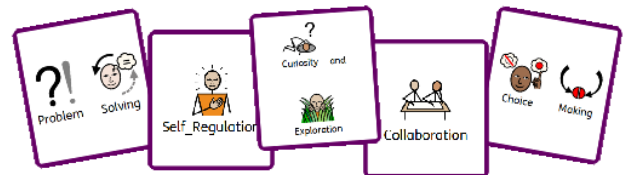
Jackie

Everyone is welcome to come along to our

Parents and Carers Coffee Morning

all about autism and how Downsview's specialised curriculum is used to teach our students effectively.

The morning is led by Daniel Whiley, the Lead Teacher for autism.



Tuesday 24th March 2026 10:00 - 11:30am

@ Downsview School, Woodingdean

There will be an opportunity to talk to Daniel, ask any questions, and also meet other parents. The morning will be informal and aimed at enabling parents & carers to meet, network and discuss all things on and surrounding autism.

Please email the school office if you would like to attend or reply to the Ping message (office@downsview.brighton-hove.sch.uk)



DOWN'S VIEW

Tesco's In-Store Vote

Excitingly we have been chosen as a project for customers to vote for in local Tesco stores. If we receive the most amount of tokens across the stores we will win £1500 to put towards new trikes. The second placed project wins £1,000 and the third placed project £500. Voting will commence in store from Tues 28 April 2026 until the end of July 2026.

So get yourselves to any of the following stores from Tues 28 April to vote for us!

Hove Express, Hove Superstore, Hove Denmark Villas Express, Droveaway Hove Express, Portslade Superstore, Woodingdean Express, Hove Western Road Express, Brighton Jubilee Street Express, Brighton Queens Road Express, Westway Hove Express, Brighton Western Road Express.

Once voting has concluded in store, votes will be collated and we will be notified of the outcome early September 2026.



MOZARTISTS

Please join us for an opportunity to take part in an immersive, relaxed and uplifting music session with your child, led by professional musicians who specialise in working in special schools.

The session will include simple, accessible ideas on how to incorporate music into your home with your child, some group singing/music-making, as well as a chance to listen to some beautiful live music!

Please RSVP through School Ping form or via school office: 01273 601680 and make sure to let your child's teacher know if you're coming so they can bring your child to join you for this musical event.

Thursday 30th April 2026
1.50-2.30pm
Downs View School - new hall

NHS
Sussex Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Positive Behaviour Support

Parent group

Brighton and Hove CAMHS-LD

For parents/carers of children who have **learning disabilities** who present with **challenging behaviour**.

Positive Behaviour Support aims to understand what challenging behaviours tell us. The focus of PBS is to improve the quality of a person's life and that of those around them.

**Thursdays at
Downs View School,
9:30 - 1pm**

4th June

11th June

18th June

2nd July

Key points

1. On Thursday Mornings
2. At Downs View School, Woodingdean
3. For 4 weeks, 4th, 11th, 18th June and 2nd July.

What is PBS?



Email: spft.camhs-ld@nhs.net to sign up!



DOWN'S VIEW LINK COLLEGE



Hi all,

We are nearly at the end of the Spring Term and we have had a great term at DVLC.

All of our students have been working on individual targets and making progress in the areas that are important for them. We look forward to seeing parents and carers at college to discuss progress at parents evening next term.

This term marks 20 years of DVLC and staff and students will be celebrating this milestone with a drumming performance from the students at DVLSC and snacks and cakes at college afterwards.

Happy Easter and have a good holiday.

Best wishes,

Juliet



Fab Café - 10-11am, tomorrow Tuesday 24 March

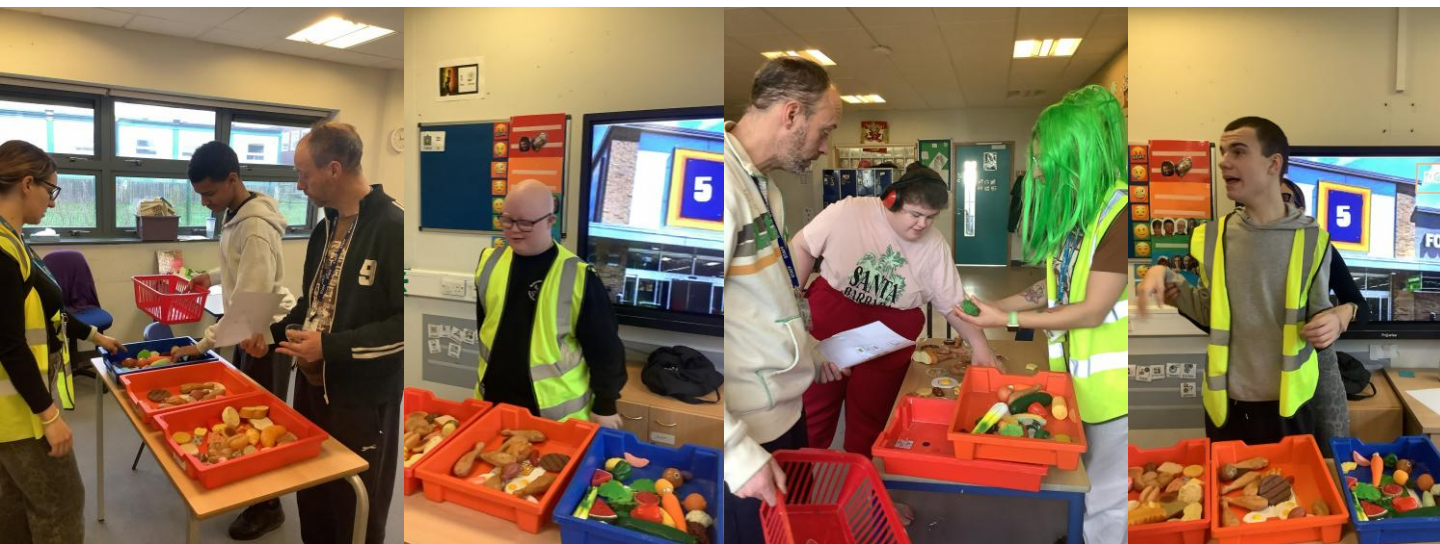
On the last Tuesday of each half term; DVLC open the Fab Cafe to parents and friends of the college.

The cafe is managed and run by the Year 13 team and the students gain work experience through this endeavour.

We have a lovely selection of treats for you to sample (available for a suggested donation of course!). Please do come along, see your young person and more of what we are doing at the Link.



DOWN'S VIEW LINK COLLEGE



Room 5

Room 5 have been visiting the café and the shops, both in our very own class 'Aldi' and out in the community. We have been reading shopping lists, making choices and using our own money to buy ourselves a snack. We have practiced being both the shop keeper and the customer, developing independence and customer service skills!



DOWN'S VIEW LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE



Dear learners, parents and carers,

We have had many exciting projects, visits and workshops as part of our community engagement and carers curriculum.

We celebrated "Carers and Special Interests Week" where learners learnt about different jobs, the people who help them and what they could do after college. Our visitors included: a doctor, Carousel youth projects, parable dance, a stained-glass artist, E-safety foundation project manager, writer and illustrator, and our wonderful Kim, admin, and Len, premises.

This term we were also visited by a police community officer. Learners learnt about safety and how police support us. They then had the opportunity to try on the uniform, sit in the car and see the sirens!

The Life Skills Band has been rehearsing to join the school in their Spring Parade, and also the Link College in their 20th anniversary celebrations - we are happy and very proud of them!

Learners have also participated in various sports event, like the Intercollege Sport event and Sports day with the Link for EDS learners.

As a college community, learners have been exploring themes such as: food waste, internet safety, International Women's Day, world book day, contact with nature and community garden.

We are very excited to announce a new partnership with Miller and Carter Steakhouse, where some learners will expand their skills and knowledge in the world of catering.

**2026**
Careers and Special Interest's week 2026



Carousal - Youth projects

Bike maintenance

Internet Safety

Administrator

Caretaker

Music Therapist

Doctor

Artist

Dance Teacher

Author & Publisher


We had a great week learning about lots of

different jobs that people can do. We took

part in many workshops and discussions!

Respect Aspiration Resilience



DOWN'S VIEW LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE

Learners in Room 6 have been exploring the senses through World Culture in Ireland this term. Some learners in Room 7 have been engaging well in TacPac, learning through music, anticipating what is next, taking turns and collaborating with others.

Thank you to all staff for the dedication to special events, it makes the college a better place!
Have a nice Easter. Best regards, Raul

Room 7

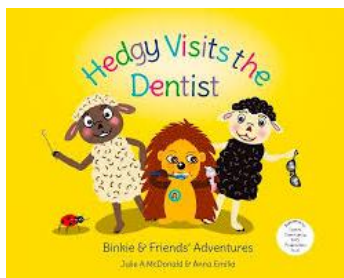


Police visit: This term, police visited to give a talk. Our students learnt about different day-to-day jobs the police do and when to ask for help. Some of our students role played arresting staff, sitting them in the back of the car!

Bike repair workshop: A highlight of careers week, was the bike repair shop. Our students enjoyed fixing the college bikes; pumping up the wheels, changing the chains and testing the brakes. Some students enjoy riding the bikes as part of their morning routines, encouraging exercise and healthy living.

Junk Food Project: Some students have been going to the Junk Food Project for their weekly work experience. They enjoy travelling on the public bus and preparing and serving food to the customers. Our students proudest meal is the giant omelette they made, which used 5 cartons of eggs! They enjoy the responsibility of making meals and socializing with old friends that have left DVLSC, who now work at the Junk Food Project.

Household Skills: This term, Room 7 has been practicing their household skills. They have been learning independence by washing up all their equipment after our cooking sessions and their everyday lunches. They particularly enjoyed the sensory exploration of the bubbles filling up in the sink!



We had a visit from Julie and Anna who wrote and illustrated the set of books 'Binkie and Friends Adventures' - books aimed at neurodivergent young people. They told us about being neurodivergent themselves and being successful publishers, authors and illustrators. They then helped us to create characters and write our own stories, there were some fantastic tales. **Room 6** dressed up as characters from 'Hedgy Visits the Dentist' which we read in class.

DOWN'S VIEW GOVERNOR UPDATE

Dear Parents and Carers,

Governors held their first Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting of 2026 at the school on 9 March. We were very pleased to welcome three new governors to their first meeting: parent governors Jack Cassidy and Alice Dwyer, and co-opted governor Carolyn Maguire. We look forward to the experience and perspectives they will bring to the Governing Board.

At the meeting, the Headteacher, Vanessa, highlighted the key points from her report. Governors were able to ask questions on a range of topics including pupil attendance, the recruitment and retention of teaching assistants, and the programme for upcoming INSET days.

School Business Manager Abi Hill provided an update on the school's finances. Governors discussed the information presented and asked further questions as part of their role in monitoring the school's budget and ensuring resources are used effectively. The next FGB meeting will take place in May, when governors will review and approve the budget for the 2026–27 financial year.

Governors also received a report from Jacqui Shepherd, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. Jacqui carried out a visit to both the college and school sites on 6 March to observe and review safeguarding arrangements. During her visit to the college site, she observed learners during their morning break and reported that they appeared calm and content. She also discussed a range of safeguarding matters with staff, including access to the site, peer protection and staff safety. During a brief tour of the school site, she noted that students appeared happy and relaxed, and she had the opportunity to speak with Deputy Headteacher Jackie Hutchings about current safeguarding practices.

Finally at the meeting, governors were pleased to elect Judy Bingham as Co-Chair of the Governing Board.

On 18 March, several governors attended the Spring

Parade at the school. This provided a valuable opportunity to meet some of the Downs View families and to enjoy the event in the spring sunshine.

The Governing Board would like to wish all pupils, families and staff a happy and restful Easter break

Meet governor Sam Parrott



Hi, I'm Sam, one of the new governors at this amazing school. I'm the appointed Local Authority Governor which means I was nominated by the local authority, I don't have any special powers and my job, like all governors must be to always act in the best interests of the school.

I became a local councillor in Westbourne and Poets Corner in May 2025, and was additionally given the lead role for disability in the council. I asked for this role because not only am I disabled myself, but as a Psychotherapist I have worked with many parents and carers of young disabled people in our city, and I have many close friends who are also parents of young people with disability. It has been and remains a huge part of my life. I see and hear the impact disability has and I want to support this school and the staff to ensure that all who attend this school get the most out of their time here.

As well as being a councillor and a psychotherapist when I have any moments at all I love to sing, read and go to the gym. I also love to travel. I am thrilled to be a small part of this school and look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.



FRIENDS OF DOWNS VIEW – UPDATE

AGM

Thank you very much to those parents who came along to Al Campo Lounge for the meeting. The atmosphere was positive, supportive and forward thinking.

We have yet to fill the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary however and so discussions will take place with Vanessa Hickey after the Easter holidays to find ways to secure the future of the charity.

Spring Parade

The Friends provided refreshments for this lovely event at the school and raised £60 in donations. Parents and staff were so generous as always. Thank you very much! It all helps us reach our fundraising goals.

Brighton 10K Run 12th April

Not long now! Our runners are training hard and excited about the event.

Please follow the Just Giving links below and support the [Room 5 Link College staff](#) and [Dan, a parent at the school](#).

Will's Epic Swim!

He is training six days a week, so please show your support by [following this link](#) and sharing with friends and colleagues.

Will has also teamed up with Sussex Peasant, a local fresh produce company, who are supporting his fundraising for Downs View. They will be at school on Tues 24th March, cooking and providing snacks for the children.

Keep a lookout for dates for your diary for Friends events in the Summer term.

Until then, have a lovely Easter break!

Lisa Burgess, on behalf of FODV.

