

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM MRS SYRADD

Dear Parents,

As we reach the halfway mark in a busy school year we can reflect on another half-term full of exciting learning at St David's. Across school the Senior Leadership Team have seen a variety of active learning taking place in all subjects and the Pupil Leadership Team have fed back that pupils enjoy and engage positively with learning that allows them a hands-on approach such as maths investigations, research projects, science experiments, creation of pupil led music, digital photography projects and messy play involving polystyrene icebergs and creating bug hotels. This inspires pupils to drive their learning through their curiosity, asking questions and taking risks.

Our value this half-term has been Ambition and as well as being celebrated in our weekly assemblies, it has been evident through pupil voice - something I am extremely passionate about and I am continually inspired by the way our pupils embrace every opportunity to share theirs. Their confidence in speaking up, shaping school life, and inspiring one another is a powerful reminder of what student leadership truly looks like. We have been led in assemblies by the Eco Warriors and their ambitions for a sustainable future, Leo House have helped us to focus on positive mental health, Cygnus House organised and led a book and toy sale for charity and Love languages gave a brilliant performance in both French and Spanish. In addition, our PLT and Unity Dragons have led projects and feedback around school to ensure that all pupils

have a platform to share their ideas and opinions.

Ambition has also been evident in the hard work that our Form 6 pupils have put into their assessment and scholarship days for their chosen secondary schools. Local secondary school headteachers often comment to me about how impressive St David's pupils are on taster days and within interviews due to their confidence and ability to articulate themselves to others. We are starting to see some wonderful results which I look forward to sharing these with you later this academic year, as places become finalised. It was wonderful to welcome existing Nursery and Reception parents, alongside new and prospective parents, to our 'Stay and Play' session last week. All of the children and parents had a wonderful time and did not let the drizzle dampen their spirits. If you know any families who will be looking for Nursery and Reception places over the next couple of years, please share details of our upcoming 'Dinky Dragons' sessions running in March to allow them to visit and sample what St David's has to offer.

We are starting to see signs of Spring appearing with more daylight hours and I hope that you are able to get out and about to enjoy the half-term break together. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school on Monday 23rd February and to celebrate St David's day with our traditional Eisteddfod celebrations.

Mrs Sarah Syradd
Head Teacher

"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think," Margaret Mead

SPORT

It has been an incredibly wet start to the year, which has unfortunately led to a number of our fixtures being postponed—some at very short notice. However, this certainly hasn't dampened the children's spirits. They have been working extremely hard on developing their gymnastics skills, with a particular focus on working in partners. The children have been learning that working as a pair can initially make things more challenging but, with true St David's determination, they have achieved some fantastic results.

Despite the weather, we were still able to hold our Inter-House Football competition. These events involved all children from Years 3 to 6 and gave everyone the opportunity to proudly represent their house. As always, results varied across the year groups, making it tricky for the children to predict the overall outcome. On this occasion, the victory was split between Leo and Cygnus!

U11 SWIMMING

A fantastic group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils represented the school at the Swimming Gala hosted by Banstead Prep. The children gave their absolute all in every race, showing real determination and team spirit. It was brilliant to see them securing points across several events and celebrating each other's successes along the way.

Although we didn't take home the overall win this time, the energy from the poolside told a very different story. The cheering, encouragement, and sheer enthusiasm from our swimmers made it feel as though we were champions.

U11 NETBALL V ROYAL RUSSELL

Some of our children enjoyed a fantastic opportunity this week as two of our girls' teams travelled to Royal Russell to take part in an exciting round of "Bees" netball. This fast-paced format, played with fewer players on court, gives everyone more room to move, explore different roles, and build confidence across all positions.

The girls embraced the challenge with enthusiasm, showing impressive teamwork, growing tactical awareness, and some brilliant individual skills.



CROYDON SCHOOLS U11 NETBALL TOURNAMENT

With 15 teams in the tournament across 2 leagues, we came 2nd in our league, scoring some fabulous goals and demonstrating amazing teamwork. This took us through to the semifinals which we narrowly lost. The children were a total credit to the school and more importantly, had an amazing time. Well done team!

U11 GIRLS' NETBALL V CROYDON HIGH

We took two teams to Croydon for our very first netball fixture, and for many of the girls it was their first ever competitive game – what an experience! It was fantastic to see them really taking on board the advice given during play, trying new things, and supporting one another on court. By the end of each match, every single girl had shown huge improvement and, just as importantly, a real boost in confidence. It was wonderful to watch them grow with every minute they played.



SCHOOL EVENTS

FORM 3 TO CHESTNUT

CARE HOME

Form 3 recently enjoyed a wonderful visit to Chestnut Gardens Home for an afternoon of book sharing and singing. The pupils behaved beautifully and took great pride in reading their chosen books to the residents. The residents were equally delighted, commenting on the children's impressive reading skills and engaging so warmly with the activity. The visit ended with a lively sing-along featuring a wide range of songs, from 'Sweet Caroline' to Ed Sheeran's 'Sapphire'. We look forward to returning with Forms 4-6 throughout the rest of the year.



FRENCH THEATRE COMPANY

On Tuesday 3rd February, Forms 3-6 were treated to another entertaining performance by our visiting French theatre company. The play, *Shipwrecked en France*, told the story of an English boy on holiday in France who finds himself stranded a long way from his hotel and his parents. As he struggles with his basic French to make his way back to his resort, there is much slapstick humour and comic frustration! Audience participation added to the fun and the play was thoroughly enjoyed by all of our Key Stage 2 pupils.



LOVE LANGUAGES

On Friday 6th February, ten of our Form 5 pupils took part in City of London Freemen's annual 'Love Languages' Competition. We had a fantastic time as always, performing our own play and watching all the entries in both the Years 5-6 and Years 7-8 categories. We are very proud of our students who have worked hard this term, putting together a play about two celebrities trying to decide what to wear to the Oscars. Three designers show their creations, however one appears to have an empty dress bag. As the Instagram Influencer comments, it's giving her 'Emperor's New Clothes' vibes!

We are extra proud this year to have won Second Prize in the Years 5-6 category! This is a brilliant achievement and testament to our pupils' hard work and enthusiasm.

Well done to: Sivansh, Kyra, Ellora, Audrey, Anaé, Sophia, Malaika, James, Alexa, Isla

A huge 'thank you' to City of London Freemen's for hosting another wonderful event.



EYFS STAY AND PLAY

We were delighted to welcome so many families to our recent Stay and Play session at the field. Despite a rather soggy start, the turnout was fantastic and we truly appreciate everyone who joined us and braved the weather.

The children threw themselves into a wide range of outdoor activities, from planting sunflower seeds and creating their own bug hotels to tackling a lively obstacle course and making beautiful artwork using natural materials. Their curiosity, creativity and enthusiasm were evident throughout the morning and it was wonderful to see them exploring and learning in such an engaging environment.

It was especially lovely to have so many parents attend and take part alongside the children. Your support helps make events like this so memorable and we are grateful for the sense of community you bring.

Thank you once again for helping make the session such a success!



CHINESE NEW YEAR

Nursery and Reception children enjoyed a vibrant celebration of Chinese New Year, taking part in a variety of creative and cultural activities. In Nursery, the children enjoyed creating with dragon-themed playdough and exploring a vibrant sensory noodle tray as part of their Chinese New Year activities.

Reception children joined in the festivities by creating striking red lanterns symbolising good luck and making traditional red envelopes representing prosperity and happiness. They practised using chopsticks to pick up rice and pom-poms, an exciting challenge that helped strengthen their coordination and fine motor control and had fun writing Chinese numbers.

The children also shared a delicious Chinese meal at lunchtime, complete with fortune cookies, adding even more excitement to the day. It was a wonderful experience filled with learning, creativity and cultural discovery, bringing joy and good fortune to all!



SCIENCE IN FORM 1

Form 1 had lots of fun during our Science lesson while testing different types of food. We learned all about the different tastes on our tongues and how they help us identify flavours such as sweet, sour, salty and bitter. Then they had the tricky task of sorting a variety of foods into the correct taste categories. This involved plenty of thinking... and even more brave tasting! As you can see, some flavours were definitely more popular than others.



FORM 3 ASSEMBLY

Form 3 delivered a fantastic assembly this half term, showcasing their enthusiasm and dedication to learning. They were excited to share everything they have discovered about volcanoes, confidently presenting their knowledge to the audience. Each child had the opportunity to explain what they had learned and proudly share their poems and comic strips. Some pupils even performed a short drama piece bringing their learning to life. The class also worked incredibly hard to learn and perform a rap and they did a brilliant job. Well done Form 3 on a truly impressive assembly!



LEO HOUSE ASSEMBLY

This term, Leo House took to the stage and delivered a fantastic assembly to the whole school. They learned their lines and songs so well, and even with a few nerves, they rose to the occasion brilliantly.

Their assembly on Children's Mental Health was not only fun and engaging, but also thoughtful and important. Amazing job everyone!



READING CHALLENGE



The St David's Reading Challenge has been up and running now since January and many pupils in Years 3-6 are now enjoying reading their 'Challenge books' and then answering comprehension questions. The Reading Leaders (Anantha, Liyanna and Roshni) have been doing a great job of helping to lead this project. They have designed certificates and stickers, marked comprehension answers and they have given updates to the whole school in assemblies. Well done to Isla in Form 5 who has already read over half the books for her Reading Challenge of '10 before 10'!



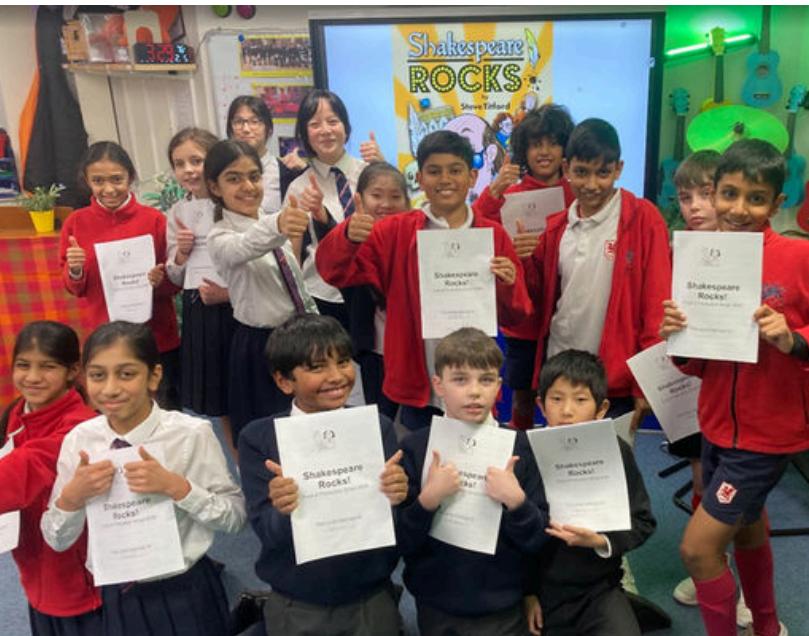
INFORMAL CONCERT

Our ears were enlightened in the latest informal concert in the music room with the twinkling of the ivories, the delicate sound of the flute, the rich, warm tones of the guitar and the trumpet majestically sounding. Children from Form 1 - 6 played to a small audience, which was lovely to experience. We look forward to the next one, on 24th March. There are still a few slots left if any children still want to sign up to perform.



FORM 6 PLAY

The Form 6 children waited with anticipation last week as the much-awaited Form 6 production for 2026 was announced in class. The setting takes us back to the days of Shakespeare, where 'Shakespeare Rocks' takes us back through the most well known plays of The Bard himself. It is going to be an exciting production with lots of singing, rapping, amazing acting and captivating choreography. The children were incredibly excited and are looking forward to the rehearsals starting soon.



TOYSHOP

We had a very special visit from Perform, and what a magical experience it was! The children had a fantastic time stepping back in time as they explored and played with olden-day toys, sparking curiosity and excitement from the very start.

As the session continued, their imaginations truly came alive. The children transformed into dinosaurs, creeping and stomping their way through the forest, before embarking on a final adventure to save the toy shop toys. With the help of their creativity – and plenty of sprinkled fairy dust – they worked together to bring the story to a joyful ending.

Although a few of the children were a little nervous at first, their confidence quickly grew as the session progressed. Soon everyone was fully engaged, joining in with big smiles, lots of laughter, and wonderful enthusiasm. It was a delightful session that captured the children's imagination and created many happy memories.



ECO WARRIORS

The Eco Warrior team have been meeting weekly to explore ways to make our school more sustainable, with a focus on improving waste management. This half term, they led their first assembly to highlight the importance of recycling and using the correct bins. They created their own presentation and organised a whole-school vote to choose the most effective recycling posters, which are now displayed around the school to help everyone dispose of waste responsibly



TFL WORKSHOP

Form 6 took part in a Transport for London workshop this half term which was aimed at preparing the children for independently using public transport in and around London. The workshop focused on safe and responsible use of public transport as well as exploring how to plan a journey, seek support or help when travelling alone and the environmental impact of various transport methods. The children were very enthusiastic and enjoyed taking part; they are now well prepared for when they leave us and move on their new secondary schools in September.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

During Children's Mental Health Week 2026, our school embraced Place2Be's theme, This Is My Place, by creating a striking whole-school artwork: our Wall of Belonging. The Unity Dragons (Anaiya, Aryan, Kaylan and Leyla) set the tone with a beautifully designed central logo that captured the spirit of inclusion and community. Every child in the school then added their name to the wall and it was especially heart-warming to see older pupils guiding and encouraging the younger ones, as they worked on their designs. Once complete, the artwork will be proudly displayed for everyone to enjoy, serving as a joyful reminder that each of us has a place here and that we truly belong



STAFF UPDATES

A big thank you goes to Miss Adam for leading Nursery this half term. Miss Abendroth will be returning to us for the second half term, now that her secondment at another school has finished. We are pleased to welcome Miss Olivia Lewis as our new Form 2 teacher whilst Miss Cadogan is on maternity leave. Finally, huge congratulations goes to Miss Cadogan on the arrival of her baby girl, Olive Maisie Jansz. They are both doing well. We send Miss Cadogan and her husband our best wishes as they enjoy being a family of three.

MISS LEWIS



PTA UPDATE

>Your Fundraising at Work

Thanks to the fantastic support from our school community at PTA events, we're delighted to share that we have recently been able to approve and fund three teacher bids, all of which will directly enhance the children's school experience:

- A new **full-size table tennis table**, supporting the popular Forms 5 & 6 Table Tennis Club and table tennis within the creative curriculum for Forms 3-6
- A **Tri-Golf kit** for PE lessons, giving children in Forms 2-5 the opportunity to develop new skills and be introduced to golf
- A replacement **digital piano** for the hall, ensuring music can continue to be enjoyed by the whole school during assemblies, performances, and parent events

This is a wonderful example of how attending events, volunteering time, donating, and supporting fundraising activities makes a real and lasting difference to the children's day-to-day experience at school.

A huge thank you to every member of our school community – none of this would be possible without you.

As ever, we'd like to thank you for your continued support of the PTA. Your involvement truly helps make our school such a vibrant and enriching place for our children

Best wishes

Manolee and Deepa

PTA DATES

Tuesday 24 February

Happy School Bag Clothing Collection

Friday 27 February

Movie Night

Thursday 26 March

International Food Festival

Friday 27 March

Easter Egg Raffle (winners announced during school assembly)

Saturday 28 March

Second Hand Uniform Sale

Wow – we blinked and it's half term again! We hope everyone has settled back smoothly into the new year.

Although it's been a slightly quieter half term, we still managed to squeeze in one of our favourite events; Break the Rules, which is always a firm favourite with the children. We absolutely love seeing everyone take part, especially the creative (and sometimes wild!) hairstyles. We raised a whopping £437!

After half term, we'll be holding the Happy School Bag Clothing Collection, a great opportunity to donate any clean, unloved clothes. The collection will take place on the morning of **Tuesday 24 February**. The more it weighs, the more money we raise for the school – so every bag really does count.

We're also very excited to announce our **Annual Movie Night**, taking place on **Friday 27 February**:

- Early Years will be watching Tiddler and The Highway Rat
- Form 1 and Form 2 will be watching Kung Fu Panda 4
- Juniors will be watching Wild Robot, as voted for by the children themselves

Looking ahead, the PTA are incredibly excited to be partnering with the school to host our very first **International Food Festival**. An International Day will be held for the children on **Thursday 26 March**, and we would love our wider school community to be part of this celebration after school dismissal that day and share donated food.

We are looking for families who would be willing to donate food from their country – whether store-bought or made with love. It's already giving Borough Market vibes!  

Please keep an eye out for further communications, or speak to your class reps if you'd like to get involved.

We're also delighted to share that we will be holding an **Easter Egg Raffle**, with winners announced during school assembly on **Friday 27 March**.

 Lots of chocolatey prizes to be won – More details on how to enter will follow soon.

PUNCTUALITY PLEA

A punctual start to the school day for pupils has a positive impact on both their learning and their wellbeing. Arriving on time gives pupils valuable opportunities for social interaction in the playground, helping them to settle and connect with friends before heading into school.

Once in their classrooms, children often take part in important morning activities before assembly begins promptly at 8:40am. Arriving after the gate has closed at 8:30am can disrupt the morning routine for pupils and puts additional pressure on the school office, which is staffed by just one member of the team until 9am.

Our gate is open from 8:10-8:30am to allow a staggered entry into school and we kindly ask all families to allow plenty of time for the morning journey so pupils can enjoy a positive and settled start.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our school day begin smoothly for everyone.

Form 5 Booster Groups

Maths: Mr Raffield

24th Feb, 3rd March, 10th March

Verbal Reasoning: Mr Muringapasi

25th Feb, 4th March, 11th March

English: Miss Varndell

26th Feb, 5th March, 12th March

Form 6 Lifelab Sessions

Perfect Pitch Tuesday 10th March, 2-3.30pm

Enterprise Fair Monday 16th March

Clubs

Commence week beginning Monday 23rd February

Swimming

Form 1 Monday mornings

Form 3 Wednesday afternoons

AI INFO FOR PARENTS

We celebrated Safer Internet Day 2026 with an assembly looking at the positives and negatives of AI in our increasingly digital world. Pupils were helped to understand that not everything they see is real and to learn how to identify 'fake' news and imagery. Please see overleaf a useful poster to provide advice for parents and encourage further online safety discussions at home.

DATE LIST (SECOND HALF TERM)

Tuesday 24th February

Happy School Bag Collections

Wednesday 25th February

Young Voices at the O2

Thursday 26th February

Form 5 trip to Knole Park

Friday 27th February

ST DAVID'S DAY

PTA movie nights

Tuesday 3rd March

EYFS World Book Day

Thursday 5th March

KS1 and KS2 World Book Day

Nursery Trip to "Get Fired"

9.45am Dinky Dragons Toddler Group

Monday 9th - Wednesday 11th March

Form 4 to Carroty Wood

Tuesday 10th March

Form 6 Perfect Pitch

Thursday 12th March

Form 1 Class Assembly and Bookshare

Form 3 trip to BEECHE

9.45am Dinky Dragons Toddler Group

Monday 16th March

Enterprise Fair (Form 6 Lifelab)

Wednesday 18th March

Reception trip to Pizza Express

Thursday 19th March

9.45am Dinky Dragons Toddler Group

Form 4 to Care Home

Friday 20th March

Eid in EYFS

Saturday 21st March

South London Harriers Cross Country

Tuesday 24th March

Reception Class Assembly and Workshare

Informal Concert

Thursday 26th March

International Day and Food Festival

Friday 27th March

Last day of Spring Term



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) SOLUTIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ROOM FOR INACCURACY

AI solutions, such as language models, generate their responses purely based on the data they've been trained on, which often comes from sources on the Internet. Whilst questions will often illicit relevant responses, if some of the information they've been 'fed' is incorrect, it follows that the answers too may contain factual errors or inaccuracies.

REINFORCING BIAS

AI solutions, such as those generating content or images, can perpetuate existing biases present in the data they were trained on, whether through the algorithms written by humans or the content taken from the web. This could easily lead to biased responses and potentially reinforce existing stereotypes, such as those around gender, race or disability.

IRRELEVANT INFORMATION

AI solutions don't have the ability to understand the context or meaning behind a question or a user request. Although highly advanced, the AI relies entirely on the data it's been exposed to and is devoid of independent thought or reasoning, which could lead to irrelevant or even nonsensical responses to queries.

AI solutions are becoming increasingly popular. Trained on vast datasets of text (such as books, articles and websites) in order to learn patterns and relationships, AI solutions can generate text, images, audio, video, code or synthetic data, and can be used for things such as crafting poems or books, creating digital imagery or delivering video content. Recently there's been significant discussion in relation to the benefits and risks of AI solutions, with many undecided on whether it will be a force for good or potentially reduce the need for some job roles.

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Fundamentally, AI solutions are machines or technology programmes that don't have the ability to take responsibility for the responses they generate. This could lead to confusion or misunderstandings in certain cases if the answers are taken as given. For instance, image-generating AIs can lead to output clearly derived from other peoples' content but without any attribution to the original source artist's work.

STIFLING CREATIVITY

One of the potential risks of children and young people continually using AI solutions for things (such as their homework) is that eventually, they might become reliant on it. In the long term, this could potentially impact their development and hamper their ability to think creatively or solve problems independently without the aid of an AI tool.



Advice for Parents & Carers

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If possible, try to be around when your child uses any type of AI solution and employ content filters to try and reduce the chance of profanity or age-inappropriate subjects appearing in responses. AI with any kind of technology, it's important to ensure that children are using AI solutions responsibly and to be there to enable opportunities to discuss their use as part of a safe environment.

PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Explain to your child that AI solutions can be used as one of many tools to help them research and learn, but that they shouldn't simply accept the responses they receive as the truth. Encourage them to question, verify and think critically about the information they get back – all of which apply equally to any website or platform they use.

DISCUSS BIAS

Talk to your child about the potential biases that may be present in the data that AI solutions are trained on, and how these viewpoints might find their way into the responses that AI generates. Again, with many things children might read online, it's healthy for them to consider whether the information is factual and presented fairly.

ENCOURAGE HUMAN INTERACTION

Not only should children supplement any use of software like AI with additional resources such as books and reputable internet sites, but they also should remember what they can learn from interaction with other people. Discussing things with teachers, relatives and friends isn't just an important and often invaluable aspect of learning – it's an essential part of life, too.

CHECK SCHOOL RULES

Make yourself aware of any rules or guidance your child's school might have about the use of AI solutions. Most software is still extremely new, so many schools may not yet have a policy, however, it's important to make sure your child is aware of how to use it appropriately and will be using it for the right reasons.

Meet Our Expert

Stuart Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that adults and children alike become more aware of the risks associated with technology, as well as the many benefits.



National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://openai.com/blog/changes/> | <https://generativelock.net/> | <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explained/what-is-generative-ai>

DATES CAN BE
BOOKED FOR THE
WHOLE WEEK OR
INDIVIDUAL DAYS!

THE DRAGONS

FEBRUARY HOLIDAY CLUB

MONDAY 16TH - FRIDAY 20TH
FEBRUARY

£43 PER DAY, £5 FOR EARLY DROP OFF AND LATE COLLECTION

JOIN US FOR CRAFTS,
COMPETITIONS, GAMES AND
LOTS MORE!

NURSERY TO FORM 6
9-5PM

OPTIONAL EXTRA 8AM-8AM AND 5PM-6PM

BOOKINGS AVAILABLE BY EMAILING
US, VISITING OUR LINKTREE OR
SCANNING THE QR CODE.



ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE EMAIL:
STDAVIDSAFTERSCHOOL@ROYALRUSSELL.CO.UK

VALENTINES BREAKFAST CLUB

This week, we enjoyed a Valentines Themed
Breakfast Club

Breakfast included heart shaped pancakes, strawberries
and cream, fruit salad, heart shaped jam on toast, hot
chocolate, pink milk and a variety of cereals



Keep an eye out for our next themed
Breakfast Club...!



23-25 Woodcote Valley Road, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3AL

CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL IN PURLEY FOR AGES 3-11



BOOK A PLACE AT OUR UPCOMING
OPEN MORNINGS

Wednesday 4th March 9am-10.30am

Saturday 18th April, 9am-12pm



PART OF THE ROYAL RUSSELL SCHOOL TRUST

We are delighted to invite you to



BOOK HERE

Dinky Dragons



CHILDREN UP TO
AGE 4 WELCOME

Join us for playtime, activities,
stories and snacks

Thursdays 5th, 12th and 19th March

9.45am - 11.00am

OUR NEXT THEME:

Commotion in the Ocean



WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU
ALL AGAIN ON MONDAY 23RD
FEBRUARY.