



Dormers Diary

December 2017

From the Headteacher...

Welcome to the final *Dormers Diary* of 2017.

This half term has been a significant one and I am very excited about the creation of the Dormers Wells Learning Trust, the umbrella body under which we at DWHS will work with our colleagues at Dormers Wells Junior School (DWJS) with the aim of continued improvement through challenge and commitment. The two schools serve the same community; their children are our children. I've had the pleasure of meeting with DWJS staff and I look forward to working closely with them as we all learn from one another in the pursuit of the excellence that all of us are seeking to deliver. I was very proud at the very end of last half



term to represent Dormers Wells at an Outward Bound Trust event hosted by HRH Prince Andrew in the Great Hall at Buckingham Palace. The event saw headteachers whose schools participate in the Outward Bound Trust's activities celebrating the achievements of 2017 and looking forward to 2018, with Buckingham University Vice Chancellor Sir Anthony Seldon discussing the importance of outdoor pursuits. We look forward to participating in Outward Bound Trust activities again this year.

Another source of excitement this half term has been the visit on none other than DWHS alumnus and now minor TV celebrity James Devine-Stoneman. James, as I wrote in our October issue, is appearing on the

current series of *University Challenge* as the team captain for St John's College, Cambridge. At the time of writing two episodes have been screened, with James leading his college to victory on both occasions. Further episodes are expected early in 2018. We were delighted to welcome him back to school at the start of December, when he took the time to speak to students from Years 11, 12 and 13 about the PhD research he is currently undertaking. We are finishing the half term on a very positive note with a strong set of pre-public examination results to celebrate and we can look forward to 2018 as a year in which the Dormers Wells community will build upon its successes of the past twelve months. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable festive period.

Róisín Walsh
Headteacher

DWHS hosts Speak Out Challenge regional final

Dormers Wells had the privilege of hosting the Ealing final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge on Tuesday 12 December. The event saw students from high schools across the borough battling it out for the right to progress to the regional phase of the competition in front of an audience that included dignitaries London Assembly member (and DWHS alumnus) Dr Onkar Sahota, Deputy Mayor of Ealing Tejinder Dhami and Councillor Dr Aysha Raza.

Dormers Wells earned the right to host courtesy of James Makepeace's victory at this stage last year, and James returned to compere the event. Dormers Wells also supplied the entertainment for the event, with both its Year 10 and 11 dancers and Year 10 singer Alicia Masih appearing.

This year's Dormers entrants, Ibrahim Deen and Priyanshu Grover, were unable to repeat James's success, despite each delivering excellent speeches.



Model United Nations

Eighteen DWHS students participated in the London International Model United Nations weekend in November. The event saw them join peers from across the south east for a weekend of diplomatic exercises in which they represented UN member states. Students who participated were very positive in their appraisal of the event. Year 12 Maria Williams (pictured right with fellow delegate Ravneet Kaur as the session began) said this year's event was the best of the three she has taken part



in. Representing Bolivia, she found the most valuable lessons from the weekend to be the importance of cooper-

ating with those you do not agree with. Faheem Ashraf, meanwhile, was a first-timer. He represented Jordan and while he initially found it nerve racking, soon became acquainted with lots of delegates and enjoyed the teamwork required.

Both found that the sessions, with their heavy emphasis on the drafting of resolutions, nurtured their ability to articulate themselves concisely, a skill they recognise will be useful in writing essays for their A Level subjects.

Students learn lessons from Auschwitz

November saw four A Level students taking part in the *Lessons from Auschwitz* project, which is run by the Holocaust Educational Trust. One of them, Kevin Varghese, explains the project.

To help us grasp the realities of the Holocaust we first attended an Orientation Seminar, where our eyes were opened to what Jewish life in Europe was like before the war. We also had the privilege of hearing the testimony of a Holocaust survivor, Eva Clark, and were prepared for our upcoming visit to Holocaust-related sites in Poland. A week later, we were in the Polish town of Oświęcim, where we visited one of the biggest labour camps and the biggest extermination camp of all, Auschwitz-Birkenau. Auschwitz I was the camp which was used to house mainly non-Jewish prisoners. These included Polish political and religious opponents of the Nazi regime, gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses and Soviet prisoners of war. Auschwitz II, otherwise known as Birkenau, was the purpose-built extermination camp and the main centre for Jewish and Roma and Sinti (or 'Gypsy') prisoners. Visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau was a hard-hitting way to understand how the normality of life was taken away from so many people, and helped us to scratch the surface in learning about the experiences they went through. It also enabled us to remember



that all those involved were individual human beings, no different than you or me. This not only applies to the victims of the Holocaust, but the perpetrators, bystanders and the collaborators as well; an even harder concept to grapple with.

The following week we met again with our group in central London, where we processed what we had seen and reflected on the way in which the Holocaust is taught in Britain today. I would highly recommend to each and every single one of you to visit a place like Auschwitz-Birkenau one day in your lifetime. It truly is a life-changing trip.

Support offered for Duke of Edinburgh challenge

The Community Cohesion Team, led by Ms Blakebrough, is now supporting students undertaking Duke of Edinburgh awards directly and students in Years 10 to 13 wishing to undertake these application-enhancing qualifications are encouraged to see her for further details. Year 13 Ameerah Noor, who is currently preparing for her Gold Award, is in no doubt about the value of the scheme: "Achieving my Bronze and Silver Awards allowed me to volunteer at a charity shop, earn a Grade 3 Merit in Violin, a Level 2 Sports Leadership Award and more. The wild country expedition was quite mentally and physically challenging. I learnt about first aid, how to map read and run away from horses. The whole experience, though testing, helped me develop as a person. As part of my Gold award, I had the great chance to complete my residential section at the University of Oxford, where I studied engineering for a week."



6th Form Open Evening



The Sixth Form Open Evening on 16 November was the best attended so far, with Year 11 students and their parents hearing more about DWHS's strong record in both examination results and university entrance. Staff and current students were on hand to talk to prospective Sixth Formers about each of the subjects on offer (including Spanish led by Mr Perea and Year 12 student Faheem Ashraf above). There was also a presentation on the considerable academic and extra-curricular support provided to students.

The deadline for applications is Monday 5th February, with earlier submission encouraged. Application forms are available on the school's website or as hard copies from the Sixth Form team.

Why choose DWHS Sixth Form?

We asked current Sixth Formers....

"The best thing is the unity between students in the 6th Form, both years 12 and 13" "I knew Dormers had a record of students going to exceptional universities" "We get the chance to be independent, but still receive support from the school" "The best thing about 6th Form is the support from teachers during my UCAS application process" "I knew the teachers were very good and I was already comfortable"

Remember!

If you receive nasty, rude or bullying messages, SAVE them as evidence.

Show a responsible adult who will help you get them stopped. It is often possible to track down WHO it is.

Artwork of the half-term

Our final Artwork of the half-term for 2017 is *Insanity* by Year 13 student Lucas Melo. The piece (on the right in the photograph below) was one of four by Lucas included in the *Omission* exhibition which was held at the Maverick Safehouse 2 exhibition space in southeast London at the end of November. A second of his works can be seen in the background. His works were exhibited alongside pieces by other young artists from across London and Kent, including former DWHS student Raghda Zuraiki, who is now studying Maths at the University of London's Queen Mary College.

As well as being exhibited, Lucas and his fellow artists played an important role in putting on the exhibition, finding the venue and becoming involved in applying for funding.



Diary dates

Wednesday 20th December: School breaks up for Christmas holiday

Thursday 4th January 2018: School resumes

Thursday 25th January: Sixth Form Open Evening

Thursday 1st February: Careers Conference for Year 9 students

Friday 9th February: School breaks up for February half term

Work Experience BA Cargo visit

A group of Year 12 students visited BA World Cargo for a careers event on October 18th as part of the activities for National Work Experience Week.

Ravneet Kaur, one of the students who attended the event, said: "The British Airways Careers Fair was quite informative as it widened my knowledge of apprenticeships and work experience in the field of work I want to go into. Also, it was a very pleasant experience as we had the chance to see the British Airways Headquarters."



Students enjoy half term of sporting success

The **Year 10 netball** team (right) has made a very impressive start to its season, defeating Twyford 9–6 in its opening league fixture on 31 October, and then going on to secure silver medals at the annual borough tournament at Ellen Wilkinson School late in November. Their plaudit-winning performance at the tournament saw them defeat Drayton Manor, Elthorne, Villiers, Cardinal Wiseman and Brentside in the group stages, before defeating Ellen Wilkinson in the semi-final. The final saw the girls lose 9–6 to Drayton Manor. Congratulations to



Abbie, Aisha, Carina, Hannan, Louisa, Madijah, Riymah and Shannon.

The **senior girls basketball** team (left) are celebrating after being crowned Ealing borough champions this half term. The girls performed extremely well in their three games, emerging undefeated from the competition despite facing some tough competition. Congratulations to Afua, Aisha, Catia, Carina, Hosneara, Ramaie, Riymah, Ruth and Shabana.

Three Year 10 students had the honour

of representing Ealing in the **London Youth Games cross country** at Parliament Hill on 18th November. Mohamed Ali came first, Adbi Khalif came third and Hanad Ahmed came thirteenth. The trio had finished in first, second and third places in the borough competition at the start of the month.

The boys' **Junior Basketball** team (below) won their second game of the season against Villiers in a very convincing fashion, finishing the tie as 45–8 victors. Wai Yan was the top scorer for the side.



DWHS students aiming higher



The process of **applying for university places** for September is now well underway and Dormers Wells is delighted that its Year 13 students are enjoying significant success. Four have been interviewed by Cambridge (one each for Engineering, Law, Maths and Psychology) and they are being assisted by recent Cambridge graduate Sahira Butt and former DWHS student Avnish Grewal, who began her studies there in October. Invitations to interview are also arriving from leading institutions including Cardiff, Leeds and Manchester.

Year 10 and 11 Business students have enjoyed **trips to the head office of Ernst & Young** (above) at Canary Wharf. They

participated in workshop activities to help develop presentation and communication skills and were tasked with planning and presenting a project to a panel of judges. They also had the chance to meet a panel of employees, who came from similar backgrounds to them, to learn more about their careers. The impressive backdrop of Canary Wharf made this an aspirational day for all involved.

This half term has seen **peer mentoring activities** (right) begin across the school. Twenty-five Year 11 students are being mentored in English and Maths by Year 12s, 25 Year 7s are working on reading skills, literacy and numeracy with Year 9 mentors, and Year 10 students are work-

ing with a group of 25 Year 8s on their 'My Skills' booklets and home learning.

A large number of Year 10 and Year 11 students have attended '**My Future**' **evenings** this half term. They consisted of careers-focused presentations, information about university destinations and the launch of several super-curricular schemes including the Model United Nations competition and a PhD representative from the Brilliant Club launching the new scheme. Sixth formers and Year 11 students from DWHS also presented key information about their experiences with UCAS, revision and enrichment opportunities in which they had participated.

