



Dormers Diary

October 2017

From the Headteacher...

Welcome to our first *Dormers Diary* of 2017–18. I am delighted to once again start the year by reporting improved exam results. A trend of year-on-year improvement has now been established, underlining how well our approach is working. I was particularly pleased by the success of Cambridge-bound Avnish Grewal and Head Boy Muhammad and Head Girl Foteini, who have both won places at QMUL. Muhammad's success is especially gratifying; after Year 11 he spent a week at another Sixth Form before realising his ambitions were better served at Dormers Wells. I am delighted that his decision to re-join has been justified. I was also pleased to learn that three students beginning courses at Swansea — brothers Nikola and Aleksandar Radivojevic and Antonio Bifsas — will share a house together there. As important as exam results are, other things one gains at school such as friendships, are also valuable. We also have an eye on our future success. I was pleased to see record numbers of Year 6 families visit us on Open Evening and I am very proud of the work student ambassadors are doing sharing our success with local primaries. In the more immediate future, the current Year 11s have made a very promising start to 2017–18. It was standing room only at their Focus Evening



and we have already seen the students embracing the revision sessions that have begun. Another source of encouragement is the latest statistics for the use of GCSEPad, a resource that provides podcasts to help with studies; we have now broken through the 5,000 threshold.

Further excitement has come with an appearance on *University Challenge* by Dormers Wells alumnus James Devine-Stoneman. James, who is remembered fondly by a number of current staff, was captaining St John's College, Cambridge.

I am also pleased to report that our charity focus this year will be mental health and our fundraising efforts will support two charities; MIND and The Samaritans. We look forward to contributing to the excellent work that both do.

We already have much to celebrate this year and I want to acknowledge the commitment of staff and students that makes it all possible. The school's Governors have also asked me to convey their appreciation of the continuing hard work they see. By maintaining the focus and application with which we have begun the year, the school community gives itself every chance of enjoying yet another summer of celebrations in 2018.

Róisín Walsh
Headteacher

A Level and GCSE success celebrated

Dormers Wells enjoyed two days of celebrations as students collected their A Level and GCSE results in August.

At A Level, 48% of all grades were A*–B with 21% at A*–A, 84% A*–C and 100% A*–E. The strong results mean that the highest-ever proportion of applicants from Dormers Wells have secured places on higher education courses this year. Leavers are destined for a wide variety of courses including Archaeology, Civil Engineering, Interior Design, Physiotherapy, and Screenwriting. Almost a fifth of applicants (18 per cent) will be going to Russell Group institutions. Joining Cambridge is Avnish Grewal. She gained an A* and two As in Sociology, Psychology and History and will be reading Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. Six students are heading to Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL): Foteini Bifsa (Biochemistry), Zuhaib Hydrie (Aerospace Engineering), Wajeehullah Mahmood (Biomedical Sciences), Trishal Ravalji (Accounting and Management), Muhammad Umer (Biomedical Sciences) and Raghad Zuraiki (Mathematics). Paige Harris will be reading Film and Television Production at York, while Dev Patel will be reading Mathematics with Actuarial Science at Southampton.

Those who had taken GCSEs (right) enjoyed an equally successful results day, achieving the strongest set of outcomes yet for Dormers Wells. Fifty per cent of candidates earned the top 9–5 grades in the new, more rigorous

English and Mathematics examinations. The top performers were Kashfa Fatima and Seneka Balamurali, who each gained the coveted new Grade 9 in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics, as well as 6 A*s in their other subjects. Many of those who made it such a successful year at GCSE have returned to Dormers Wells' Sixth Form.



Career options explored

Year 13s enjoyed a **STEM-focused event** (below) to help them understand careers options and study routes in science, technology, engineering and maths, courtesy of a visit from Gavin Eade of Access Aspiration and a twelve-strong team of STEM ambassadors at the end of September. The day included skills and interview technique workshops, networking sessions with the ambassadors and one-to-one sessions providing advice on UCAS applications.

Year 10 Science students have also been learning more about the varied **career options in engineering**, thanks to a visit by Andrew Tate, Regional Director at Hurley Palmer Flatt. Attendees said the event had been very informative, increasing their understanding of different careers in engineering, how the study of the different specialisms would differ at university, and the grades they will need to pursue their chosen fields. Students also said that the event had helped them to connect the different industries in engineering with the sciences they are studying.

Meanwhile, Year 12 students have been working with the **Inner Drive** organisation, taking part in workshops focused on revision technique, coping with exams and changing mindsets. The sessions reinforced the importance of a positivity, working for success rather than expecting it, and finding things that motivate you every day so that you are driven to work hard and achieve your dreams.



Life models prove big draw

Three Year 12 students took part in a life drawing workshop at the beginning of October. Held at Latymer School, the all-day **Big Draw** event saw participants working independently to create images of many different models. It was favourably reviewed by participants Alex Ward, Gaby Lady and Savannah Bhatti, who reported that it tested their skills and widened their experience.



Diary dates

Monday 30th October: School resumes after half term

Thursday 9th November: Year 9 Parents' Evening

Thursday 16th November: Sixth Form Open Evening

Thursday 30th November: Year 8 Parents' Evening

Thursday 14th December: Winter Fair

Wednesday 20th December: School breaks up for Christmas

Open events



Prospective students and their parents and carers have been given a warm welcome to Dormers Wells High School this half term. Year 6 students from ten schools were welcomed to a week-long session of half-day **open events** that gave them a glimpse of life at Dormers Wells by allowing them to sample lessons (above) including a business enterprise challenge. A well-attended Open Evening, meanwhile, saw parents and carers being given tours of all of the school's departments and hearing from the Headteacher about Dormers Wells' ethos.

September, meanwhile, saw Dormers Wells participating in its fifth **Open House London** event. Visitors, including a number of alumni, were given guided tours of the school by Ms Rana and Ms Grewal. The guests remarked on the brightness and open spaces students enjoy and the opportunities the facilities afford them, with the alumni sharing reminiscences about their time at the school.

Did you know?

When you send someone a photo, you **MIGHT** also be sending your **Location** and they can tell **EXACTLY** where you are on a street plan. Keep 'Location' facilities on smartphones switched off until you **NEED** them.

Speak Out Challenge begins



Six Year 10 students will go head to head against one another in an assembly at the start of November in a bid to win a place in the Ealing regional final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. The six — Ibrahim Deen, Priyanshu Grover, Nasrim Hakimzada, Abbie Jensen, Alicia Masih and Renee Miles — go forward following a visit by the Speakers' Trust in mid-September that saw sixty students enjoy coaching on the skills required for effective public speaking. Their speeches will tackle issues including family values, Islamophobia and mental health.

The two winners will compete in the regional final, which Dormers Wells is proud to be hosting on 12th December. The winners will be hoping to emulate the success of Year 11 James Makepeace, who reached the Grand Final of last year's competition.

Ceramicists go on display



Late September saw Dormers Wells students' work featuring in an exhibition of ceramic art held at Central Saint Martins' (CSM) Granary Building at Kings Cross. Dormers Wells' contributions were created by Year 9 students in a two-day workshop led by CSM staff and exhibited alongside pieces created by other West London schools including Northolt High School and Queens Park Community School. Held as part of the *Make Your Future* project, which aims to inspire young people by connecting traditional crafts and digital technologies, the exhibition was organised by the Crafts Council and supported by John Lyon's Charity and the Arts Council of England.

Sporting success

Dormers Wells' athletes enjoyed a successful day at the Ealing borough **cross country** championships at the beginning of October. The team dominated the Year 9 and 10 event, with Mohamed Ali coming first, Abdi Khalif second and Hanad Ahmed finishing third. All three boys (below) were a long way ahead of the rest of the field, with Hanad finishing out of sight of the fourth-placed runner.

The school's **footballers** have also enjoyed success early in the school year, with the Year 10 team securing a 6-3 victory in an exciting fixture away at Brentside. Goals were scored by Habibur Musthafa (2), Giovanni Leon Rivera (2), Abdi Khalif and team captain Mohamaed Ali.

The successes come just a matter of months after twenty-six students enjoyed an inspirational evening visiting the **World Para Athletics Championships** at the Olympic Stadium in Stratford on 17th July. The group witnessed two new world records being set.



Chefs try hand in professional kitchen

A group of nine Year 10 students had the opportunity to test their culinary skills on a visit to the kitchens at the University of West London (UWL) at the end of the Summer term. The students won praise from UWL for both their enthusiastic and engaged approach to the day and the knowledge and skill they displayed as they went about their tasks.



Artwork of the half-term

The first Artwork of the half-term of the 2017–18 academic year has been created by Year 10 student Lara Saib. The piece was inspired by a photo shoot in school that was staged as part of students' work on food in art. This work is based on the photo-realistic artwork of Tjalf Sparnaay.



Students enjoy Cambridge and SOAS insights

Five Year 13 students – Aayush Alkesh, Shahir Ahmed, Tanmeet Ahuja, Parmeat Grover and Jasmin Popalzai (below) – enjoyed a **residential visit to Jesus College Cambridge** in September. They had the opportunity to experience life at Cambridge, enjoyed a tour of the college and attended workshops designed to help them with personal statements, interviews and admissions tests.

Meanwhile, two Year 12 students – Hana Hasan and Asiya Siddiq – have won places on the School of Oriental and African Studies' **SOAS Scholars: Thinking Globally!** project. It aims to furnish participants with improved knowledge about university study, student life and the financial support available to them, thereby encouraging them to apply for higher education and helping them to make effective applications.



DWHS students among first on Imperial health careers programme

Sixth Formers Maha Iqbal and Yasmine Maalin (below) were among the first cohort of 20 London secondary school students to complete the WATCCH (Widen Access to Careers in Community Healthcare) programme delivered by Charing Cross Hospital in September. Designed by Imperial College, the workshop series helps those aiming to be the first in their families to go to university to pursue careers including medicine, nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, pharmacy and public health research, by giving them an insight into the careers available to them and valuable work experience to enhance their applications. The project required Maha and Yasmin to attend a pre-induction session at Imperial, to undertake a three-day period of work experience, and a post-placement session during which they presented their reflections on what they had done and learnt.



Brilliant Club students graduate

The final weekend of September saw 24 students at King's College London to attend their Brilliant Club graduation ceremony. Participants followed either a STEM or an arts pathway and eight students – Chana Amarvir, Dugh Arvind, Geis Aisha, Mahamud Yusuf, Mohamud Hafsa, Palra Harnit, Qureshi Abdullah and Vigneshwaran Soruban – passed with a first class grade.

