

DORMERS DIARY



FROM THE HEADTEACHER

This term has been one of immense pride for our school community. Among the many achievements and opportunities our students have embraced, one moment stands out: Dormers Wells High School has been nationally recognised by the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson, for our exceptional outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

To be acknowledged as one of the best schools in the country in this area is both humbling and inspiring. This recognition affirms the work we do every day to ensure that every young person, regardless of background, is supported, challenged, and empowered to thrive. It speaks to the tireless dedication of

our staff, the ambition and resilience of our pupils, and the unwavering support of our families and wider community.

The Secretary of State praised our commitment to inclusion, high expectations, and the quality of education across our school, encouraging us to share our best practice nationally. This is a testament not just to our results, but to our ethos—an ethos built on belonging, thriving for all.

Alongside this national achievement, the past weeks have been filled with rich enrichment experiences across the school. From STEM innovation and creative collaboration, to leadership, service, and community events, our students continue to represent Dormers Wells with maturity, curiosity, and character. Students' enthusiasm in every activity reminds us why this school is such a special place to be. As we look ahead to the rest of the term, we do so with pride in what our school has accomplished and excitement for what is still to come. Thank you, as always, to our students, staff, governors, and families for your ongoing support.

Wishing you all a safe half term.

Ms Walsh
Headteacher

UPCOMING DATES

23rd February Back to School	23rd February PPE 2 starts	4th March Y10 Swanage Trip	5th March World Book Day	6th March Y10 Swanage Trip return
8th March International Womens Day	9&10th March Year 9 IAG	16th March House competition week	26th March Year 10 Parents' Evening	27th March Last day of term and celebration assemblies

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Mankirat has been an outstanding role model throughout his time at school. He has taken on a strong leadership role in multiple assemblies as an MVP (Mentor in Violence Prevention), consistently carrying out his responsibilities with professionalism and a genuine commitment to supporting others, showing the character values of determination, service and wisdom. He is always willing to help and goes out of his way to ensure that younger students feel safe, respected, and included.

On one occasion, his calm judgment and strong sense of responsibility directly helped prevent a potentially serious situation from escalating. Beyond his mentoring work, Mankirat has co-led and managed the Bhangra Club and has successfully guided a dance group in performing at several international evening events.

His reliability, work ethic, and positive impact on the school community make him highly deserving of this nomination.





FROM THE HEAD STUDENTS

It has been another busy and exciting period at Dormers, with students across the school getting involved in a wide range of enrichment opportunities.

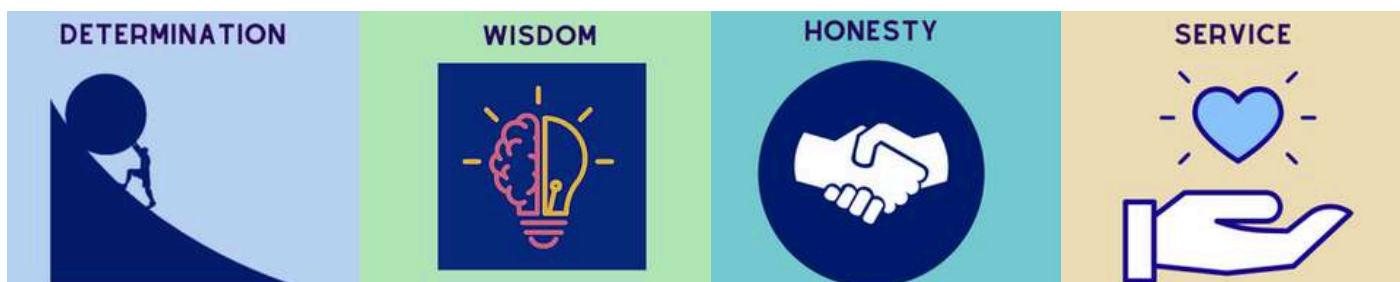
Our Year 8 students took part in a Heathrow STEM workshop, giving them hands on exposure to real world applications of science and maths. STEM continued to be a big focus with our in school Big Bang STEM Day, where Year 9 students spent the day rotating through workshops centred on engineering, coding, computing, and design.

We also welcomed students from Islip Manor for a MISST Together Day, encouraging collaboration and shared learning experiences. In Maths, students explored Geometry City, applying their knowledge creatively to solve practical problems. Year 11 students benefited from a Sixth Form Taster and Tertiary Day, helping them explore their next steps, while Year 8 and 9 students and families attended the Options Fair to support informed subject choices. We also hosted a Degree Apprenticeship Day, where ex-student Manny returned to share his journey and offer valuable advice on what it is like to do an apprenticeship.

Finally, our clubs continue to thrive with Chess Club being named Club of the Term for their enthusiasm and commitment.

CHARACTER VALUES IN ACTION

- Well done to **Rion (8KD), Rein and Dean (8IL)** for being such fantastic help to staff during immunisations, displaying the Character value of **service**.
- Well done to **Nurul (9TE), Yusuf (9CC0 and Akshayan, Aroush and Giulia (8ED)**, for helping with our families support event. Showing **service** towards our community made the event a fantastic success and allowed parents to access very important services that may change their life.
- Well done to **Sarah HM** for exercising **determination** and **wisdom** during the Jack Petchey speakout challenge. She was overcome during her speech and had to leave the stage but showed real courage and tenacity, coming back on stage to complete her speech, receiving the largest cheer of the night.
- Well done to **Aviraj B, Ranrha H, Ayesha S, Amarvir S, Arjun B, Aaron M, Dhruv S, David C, Nirnthana V, Maria A**, who all demonstrated **service** by helping create a safe travel map for the school community and showed **wisdom** through thoughtful planning and clear communication of their project to their peers. They successfully presented their work to the year group, supporting others to travel safely and promote greener travel. They should be very proud of their dedication to the project's aims.
- Well done to **Josiah M**, who has been offering his support to potential medicine students in Year 12, displaying our character value of **service**.
- **Kavya F** is being recognised for showing **determination** to succeed in his science lessons by always asking for support when he needs it and taking on board feedback exceptionally well.
- **Besan A** has settled into school extremely well and has shown **determination** and resilience in embracing a new environment and new routines. She has approached new situations with confidence and a positive attitude and has quickly embraced the culture and expectations of Dormers.
- **Mia P** has shown great **determination**, consistently doing her best in every lesson and demonstrating calm, amicable behaviour throughout.



CELEBRATING NATIONAL RECOGNITION

We are proud to share that our school has been recognised by the **Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson**, for **outstanding outcomes for disadvantaged pupils**. This national recognition places us among the **best in the country** and reflects the positive **impact of our work**.

Roisin Walsh, CEO of Dormers Wells Learning Trust, said: *"This achievement recognises the high standards and supportive culture across our schools. Our learners' success reflects their dedication and the quality of teaching they receive. We are proud to be preparing our students for the future."*

This success reflects the dedication of our staff and the hard work and resilience of our pupils. We are especially proud of how our community supports disadvantaged learners to access opportunities and thrive. The Secretary of State praised our ambition and commitment and encouraged us to share best practice with other schools. This recognition reinforces our focus on high expectations, inclusion, and continuous improvement. We thank our staff, pupils, families, governors, and wider community for their continued support. Together, we will continue to raise standards, nurture potential, and give every child the best possible start in life.

A message from Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education



Dear Colleague,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at your school achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the **very best nationally**, and this is a **significant achievement**.

This success reflects the **dedication of your staff** and the **hard work of your pupils**. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the **best possible opportunities to succeed**.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Your sincerely,
Bridget Phillipson

Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

EVENTS & ENRICHMENT



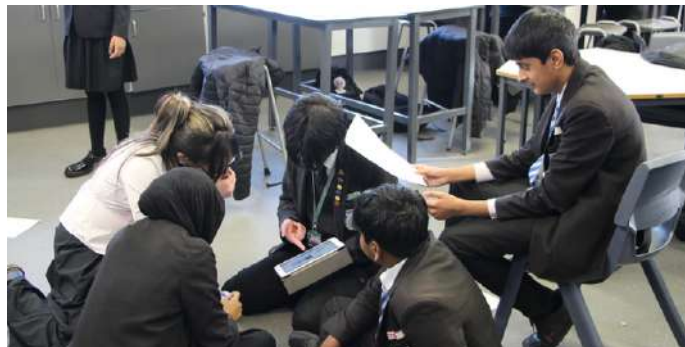
SIXTH FORM TASTER DAY

While our Sixth Form students focused on their examinations, Year 11 stepped into their shoes for the day and experienced life as Sixth Formers. Students took part in dedicated A Level Taster and Tertiary day, giving them a valuable insight into further education. Dressed for the occasion, Year 11 students enjoyed full Sixth Form privileges, including access to the common room, the freedom to leave site for lunch, and the opportunity to wear their own clothes. Throughout the day, they attended a variety of taster lessons, allowing them to explore the range of courses available.

MISST TOGETHER DAY

January saw a special celebration of music and community as we proudly hosted the MiSST Together Day at Dormers Wells High School. We were delighted to welcome students from Islip Manor, who joined our students for a day of collaboration, creativity, and rehearsal. Throughout the day, students worked together to prepare for an end of day concert, showcasing their talent and teamwork. The performance was outstanding and very well rehearsed, with parents and guardians cheering enthusiastically in support. Well done to everyone who took part in making the day such a success. We look forward to many more inspiring collaborations in the future. Head to our Instagram to see more!

CURRICULUM



BIG BANG AT SCHOOL

Earlier this term, our Year 9 students took part in an exciting "Big Bang at School" STEM Day, spending the day off timetable and immersed in hands on learning across Science, Design & Technology, and Computing. Students rotated through a range of interactive workshops delivered by external specialists and our own staff. Highlights included Spike Engineering, where pupils built and programmed robotic models, and Sphero Coding, where students developed their knowledge on computer programming in a new way by controlling robotic balls. In Mission to Mars, students worked as space scientists to solve real world challenges, while Energy Quest focused on renewable energy and sustainability. The Dyson sessions explored design and engineering, showing how innovative products are developed and in IT they looked into 3D printing with our in school printer. The day was filled with enthusiasm, creativity, and teamwork. Students thoroughly enjoyed the practical activities and problem solving challenges, gaining valuable insight into STEM subjects and future career pathways. The event was a great success and an inspiring experience for all involved.



GEOMETRY CITY IN MATHS

Our Year 7 students proudly showcased their incredible Geometry City creations during a whole year group gathering in the main hall. After weeks of planning, designing, and building, they presented detailed city models filled with geometric features including angles, nets, symmetry, three dimensional shapes, and precise measurements, and confidently explained every aspect of their projects to the year group.

A huge thank you to our judges, Dr Rhiannon A. Savage, Mr Klaasen, and Ms Kadri, for giving their time, expertise, and support. We are so impressed with the hard work and mathematical thinking shown by all students. Well done, Year 7, winners are yet to be announced.

HOUSE AND CLUBS



★CLUB OF THE TERM★

Students are invited to join the **Chess Club on Thursday lunchtimes** in the **Business area**, whether you're a beginner, a seasoned competitor, or simply a fan of the game. The club has become a relaxed and welcoming space where students can challenge themselves, make new friends, and sharpen their skills. Beyond the fun of playing, chess helps develop forward thinking, planning, problem solving, and patience. We're excited to see the club continue to grow and look forward to welcoming even more players in the weeks ahead!



SPELLING BEE

Our Spelling Bee house competition was buzzing with excitement! After three action packed rounds, Invictus soared ahead with two round winners. It was incredible to see such an enthusiastic turnout, with a fantastic number of students eagerly taking part and giving it their all.



KNOT TYING COMPETITION

Students across the school enjoyed going head to head in this term's House Competition. The challenge was great fun and gave everyone the chance to learn some useful new life skills. With the help of PowerPoint presentations, students learned how to tie different knots safely and understand how they can be used in real life, especially for activities like Duke of Edinburgh, camping, and Scouts. Form tutors also got involved, supporting and encouraging their groups throughout. The competition showed fantastic teamwork and enthusiasm from everyone. A big well done to all students and staff who helped make this event such a success. We're already looking forward to the next house competition!

CAREERS



YEAR 8 AND 9 OPTIONS FAIR

Options Evening was a great success, with Year 8 and 9 students taking the opportunity to explore the subjects available to them for the next stage of their learning journey. Students visited different departments, spoke with teachers and subject leaders, and gained valuable insight to help inform their choices. It was wonderful to welcome families into school and see such positive engagement and parent partnerships.



DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

We were pleased to welcome former student Manny Singh, currently a Degree Apprentice, along with Gabriel Ort and Alison Delius from the University of West London, who visited the school to deliver a series of workshops on degree apprenticeships.

The sessions included workshops for Sixth Form students on assessments, CV clinics, interview skills, and sourcing suitable apprenticeships, while Year 11 students took part in an introductory session on degree apprenticeships. The day proved to be extremely valuable, giving students a clearer understanding of how degree apprenticeships work and the opportunities they provide. Students were grateful for the information shared, which highlighted the educational, financial, and practical benefits, as well as opening up further options for future pathways.



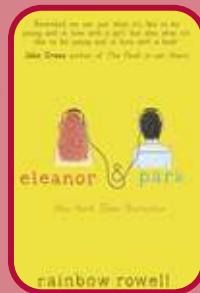
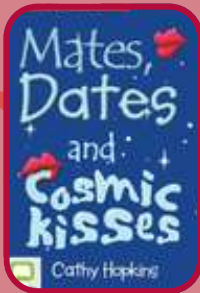
HEATHROW WORKSHOP

Dormers Wells High School had the privilege of hosting members from Youth Careers Collective and volunteers from Heathrow Airport, who facilitated an exciting Heathrow STEM Generation session for Year 8 students. This two hour workshop introduced students to the fundamentals of coding and robotics using the Kitronik Simple Robotics Kit with the BBC micro:bit. Working collaboratively in small teams, students programmed a :Move Motor vehicle to navigate an A2 map of Heathrow Terminal 5. The session provided valuable insights into the diverse career opportunities at Heathrow, with a particular focus on engineering, while also incorporating the Skillsbuilder framework to enhance essential workplace skills. Fully engaged in the hands-on challenge, students developed their problem solving abilities and gained practical experience that will aid them in making informed choices for their GCSE options.

READING

Reading Recommendations *Valentines Edition*

Year 7

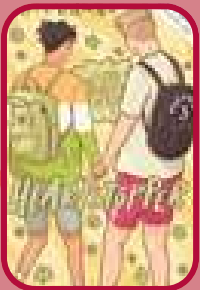
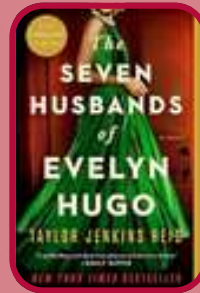
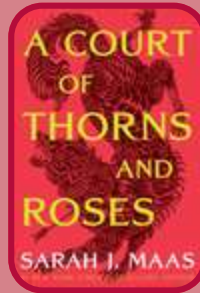
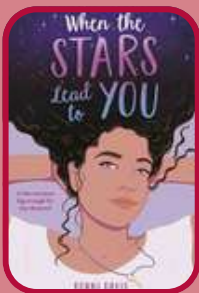


1. The Third Wheel (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #7) by Jeff Kinney
2. Flipped by Wendelin Van Draanen
3. Mates, Dates, and Cosmic Kisses by Cathy Hopkins
4. Well, That Was Awkward by Rachel Vail
5. Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

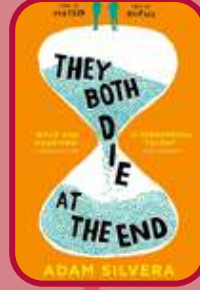


1. The Summer I Turned Pretty by Jenny Han
2. Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell
3. What a Desi Girl Wants by Sabina Khan
4. To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han
5. Goodbye Stranger by Rebecca Stead

Year 10 & 11

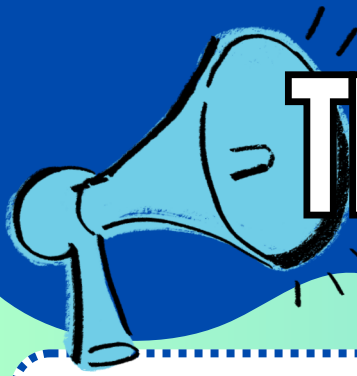


1. When the Stars Lead to You by Ronni Davis
2. Perfect on Paper by Sophie Gonzales
3. The Do-Over by Lynn Painter
4. Anna dressed in blood by Kendare Blake
5. Heartstopper Series by Alice Oseman



1. A Court of Thorns and Roses series by Sarah J. Maas
2. The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid
3. Funny Story by Emily Henry
4. Check & Mate by Ali Hazelwood
5. They Both Die at the End by Adam Silvera

Sixth Form



THE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

FOR THE STUDENTS BY THE STUDENTS

CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

Challenge: Don't use your phone for 48 hours 📵

Bonus: Tell a friend you appreciate them 🤝

Creative: Draw something using only 2 colours 🎨

RIDDLES

I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have nobody, but I come alive with the wind. What am I?

The more you take, the more you leave behind.

What am I?

DID YOU KNOW...

There is a phobia which consists of a fear of long words, and it's called *hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia*.

The inventor of the Pringles can was buried in one

Your brain can trick you that your phone buzzed, it's called 'phantom vibration syndrome'

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The expert in anything was once a beginner."
Helen Hayes

"Don't compare your beginning to someone else's middle." Jon Acuff

"Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will."
Suzy Kassem

TV SHOWS TRIVIA

The Last of Us: What is Joel's primary goal in the series?

- a) To find a cure for the infection
- b) To escort Ellie safely across the country
- c) To rebuild a community

Stranger Things: What is the name of the parallel dimension?

- a) The Other Realm
- b) The Upside Down
- c) The Dark Side

Never Have I Ever: What is Devi's main goal?

- a) To become prom queen
- b) To start a band
- c) To improve her social status

Money Heist: What city is the group aiming to rob?

- a) Madrid
- b) Barcelona
- c) The Royal Mint of Spain

Now flip the page upside down to reveal the answers!

ANSWERS: The Last of Us: b) To escort Ellie safely across the country. Stranger Things: b) The Upside Down. Never Have I Ever: c) To improve her social status. Money Heist: c) The Royal Mint of Spain.

PERSONALITY QUIZ

Answer each and tally your most common letter for the result!

What's your favourite way to unwind after school?

- a) Binge-watch a new series
- b) Watch a documentary
- c) Play a video game

When choosing a show, you prefer:

- a) Something thrilling
- b) Educational
- c) Comedy

You prefer characters who are:

- a) Complex and flawed
- b) Inspiring and heroic
- c) Funny and relatable

When a show has a complicated plot, you:

- a) Love trying to figure it out
- b) Sometimes get lost but keep watching
- c) Give up and find a show with a simpler storyline

READY FOR THE ANSWERS?

Mostly A's:

You love to immerse yourself into a variety of shows and you watch entire seasons in one go. Thrilling plots and complex characters keep you intrigued. You're all about riveting storytelling and don't mind taking a couple of all nighters to finish a show.

Mostly B's:

You prefer quality over quantity and appreciate each episode in depth. Shows with deeper meanings interest you. You enjoy analysing characters and themes and often share thoughtful insights with friends.

Mostly C's:

You're not crazy obsessed with watching shows as you merely see it as a means of relaxing and having fun. Comedy shows recommended by friends appeal to you the most. You like a good laugh and prefer shows that don't require too much mental energy.

INTERVIEWS

MS QUINN-GUEST

What is your favourite Book?

Lord of the Rings

What are you interested in reading in the future? (whether it be a specific book or a genre)

More non-fiction

What would you write about if you got the chance to?

Fantasy – I would like to write like Tolkien!

Are there any books you regret reading?

No! Even bad books, you learn from

If you could get others interested in reading, what would you say to them?

"It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the things that connected me with all the people who were alive"

What kind of books would you recommend to high school students?

Whatever things in life you are interested in, find a book!

MS WALSH

Are you a reader?

Yes

What is your favourite book?

The salt path

Why do you like the book?

It is a love story and a story of life, and it encompasses English Coastal Walk as a mirror of the challenges of life.

How would you encourage children to begin reading?

Reading is an escape to another land

When do you prefer to read?

In the evening before sleeping. In the early evening, I do educational reading and research.

MS MURRAY

What is your favourite Book?

The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern

What are you interested in reading in the future? (whether it be a specific book or a genre)

I have a few fun summer reads ready for the holidays, but I have a book of poems being analysed by a poet that I'm excited to get into.

What would you write about if you got the chance to?

I would write a story that takes place somewhere beautiful that hides ugly truths.

Are there any books you regret reading?

Conversations with friends – I really don't understand the hype around Sally Rooney – just not for me.

If you could get others interested in reading, what would you say to them?

There are books on everything, and you don't have to read something you're not enjoying. Just don't give up.

What kind of books would you recommend to high school students?

I love a bit of magical realism, and I think everyone can appreciate it sometimes.

WHO SHOULD WE INTERVIEW NEXT?

Make your suggestions to Malayka (13SJV) or the library!

The Black Cat

A book review by Malayka N (13SVJ)

With the aim of seeking a psychologically structured read, I selected *The Black Cat* from the library after Mrs Cattell recommended it as her "absolute favourite weird tale." My initial reaction to the title was that I should prepare for clichéd references to the historical association of black cats with witches. Although I was not entirely wrong, Poe struck back at me, utilising the cat's supernatural nature not as an external threat but as a device to amplify the horrors of humanity. Below is a passage from the text that particularly intrigued me due to its unusual manifestation of morality, followed by my analysis:

"And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of PERVERSENESS. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart— one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?"

Edgar Allan Poe seems to clearly, and yet implicitly, highlight the anarchic human nature of self-destruction. 'The spirit of perverseness' is actively and consciously personified by Poe, shaping deviance in an abstract manner, with it implied to possess autonomy. This agentic element, which deliberately gives 'direction to the character of Man', creates a definitive power dynamic, with 'perverseness' holding dominance compared to the inferior, passive 'Man', suggesting the inevitable human tendency toward self-sabotage, as it is our emotions that dominate us. Poe points out the "primitive", and thus innate, impulse to defy moral norms and regulations "merely because we understand it to be such," emphasising the psychological strain of obedience and compliance that pushes us to reject them.

Although the rest of the text characterises the protagonist as a villain, here Poe forces the reader to relate to this malicious character through the use of the collective pronoun "we" in the rhetorical question, "have we not a perpetual inclination... to violate that which is Law?" Consequently, any initial judgement and disgust at his desire for "perverseness" is destabilised, as Poe reminds us of our unsettling similarities with this immoral, horrifying being. In particular, Poe uses the symbolism of the "human heart" as an antithesis to the recurring animal motifs, presenting the horrors of humanity as a collective in contrast to the "unselfish and self-sacrificing" nature of animals. Therefore, the typical expectation that animals are "primitive" is shown to be flawed; it is humanity that proves 'primitive' and "savage" in its pursuit of violence and self-interest.

That being said, Poe does, himself, deviate from social norms. However, he showcases the readers how to do so in a meaningful manner, through addressing social issues and promoting change rather than "being deviant for the sake of being deviant."

Upon reading this, I realised how truly timeless Poe's theory is. I began to observe how counterproductive humans in the modern day may be. In the midst of exams, I found myself considering how students, myself included, often prioritise immediate gratification over delayed gratification, when in fact the latter produces a multitude of positive outcomes such as the building of discipline and the growth of knowledge. Perhaps it is not instinct that must drive us, but rather reflection. Thus, I will leave you all with a question to ponder: is it the lack of discipline and hard work that appeals to us, or the desire to rebel against social norms, regardless of how harmful this may be to ourselves?

Endurance

A poem by Hibba A (11LI)

When I first stepped onto this road,
back in the early years,
I thought it stretched out straight and
simple—
a smooth path, winding neatly
towards the sparkly future everyone
talked about.

But as the years rose ahead of me,
the ground shifted.
The road grew steeper,
tracks muddy from battles fought in
silence
oceans of pressure splashing at my ankles.
Some days it felt like my shoes
were too heavy to lift.

I've walked through fog thick with doubt
where every signpost I passed
seemed clearer to everyone else but me.
I've carried books like my life depended
on them,
deadlines like heavy rucksacks
revision notes stacked
higher than my confidence;
yet, still kept moving forward
even when the way bent sharply
in ways I wished it wouldn't.

But every rough mile,
every tough lesson,
every late-night revision session,
every moment sat under buzzing
classroom lights,
every pounding step taken alone,
has shaped something in me—
a small strength I didn't see at first,
a steady whisper saying,

"Keep going. Just one more step."

And now, standing in the middle
of this winding road, exams on the
horizon,
I look back
at the stress,
the pressure,
the failures,
and realise:
school hasn't just taught me lessons.
It's taught me how to walk
when the path is uneven,
how to push through mud and rain,
how to trust that the road,
no matter how far,
is still leading me somewhere worth
reaching.

I'm still travelling
but I've learned this much:
even when the road is rough,
rise again, brace yourself,

and just keep going.

FURTHER EDUCATION

WHICH COURSE SHOULD I DO?

To get help choosing courses go to: <http://www.ucas.com/careers-quiz>.

This quiz asks simple questions enabling you to focus on the areas of study and activity that you are good at, as well as suggest courses that may be of interest to you.

You can then use the UCAS website to find out more on the institutions offering these courses and the tariff that is needed.

If you are still not sure after completing the quiz, ask the Connexions advisor or Head of Year

Where Should I Go? Why?

This depends on what you are looking for. There are several factors for you to consider.

Course

Getting the right course is essential as some courses may only be offered by a small number of institutions.

- Is this really for me? Does it seem really motivating? What is the form of assessment?
- What is the teaching like? Check OFSTED
- What do Post Grads go on to do?
- Do you get to go to Europe, US or somewhere for a year?
- Do you do a year in industry? Do you get paid for this?

Location

You will have to spend three or more years at your chosen institute.

Ask yourself:-

- What is the campus like, what area is it in?
- Is the campus in town? Some universities have campuses that are up to 50 miles from town.
- Do I want to move away from home? Who will do my laundry, cooking etc?
- What is the cost of living in different parts of the country.
- Can I cope on my own or do I need to stay where my family can be there for me?
- What is the town like? Is there night life/Student cheap drink/food nights

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.hero.ac.uk

www.ucas.com

www.nus.org.uk

www.opendays.com

www.whatuni.com

<https://www.morrisby.com/>

<https://www.nus.org.uk/student-hubs>

FINANCE

Student Finance <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance>

Student Loans Company:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company>

NHS Bursaries: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-bursary>