



Dorset
Studio School

Newsletter Autumn 2022



Creativity in problem solving

DSS students showcasing their resilience and determination to progress to new heights at our recent school Open Morning.



▲ Message from the Principal

Dear Parent and Carers,

Welcome to our first newsletter of this new academic year. It has been another busy but dynamic start to the term, where congratulations must go to all of us; staff, students, parents and carers alike. Collectively we have worked together to ensure that the young people in our school community have got off to a flying start!

Students have, in just the first six weeks, benefitted from extra-curricular trips and experiences organised by the Arts, Land and Environment, Maths and Geography departments. There are more planned for the next half term, notably from the English department in particular.

We continue to work hard to ensure that the support provided for our young people is unrivalled. We recognise that they are living through unprecedented times. We are proud to share our ethos, that we are 'helping our community to flourish through a culture of personalised support and challenge.' This is being reflected through the manner in which we plan lessons, in how we provide our support and through the staffing model that we are building. To this end, we have significantly increased our support staffing over the last year.

Similarly, all staff have attended training in relation to supporting students through therapeutic approaches to behaviour management for example.

A further priority this year is to continue to build upon the work we are doing to provide for our more able students. Our Year 7 intake have attainment scores amongst the highest I have seen in my twenty-eight years in education, and we have many other incredibly able students across a range of disciplines in all years and all subject areas. Further details will be coming out to parents shortly.

Admissions

If you have looked at our website recently, you will know that we have begun a consultation period in relation to planned changes to our admissions policy. I am pleased to note that this is something that is necessary due to the popularity of the school and the fact that we have been oversubscribed every year since introducing the lower school years in 2019. The proposed changes relate only to making the policy easier to understand and to the priority order of admission for applicants in circumstances when we are oversubscribed. The previous policy made no reference to siblings for example, and therefore it might be possible for one family member to gain

admission to the school, where another might not. Clearly, that would seem unfair and the proposed policy seeks to address this issue. There are no proposed changes to the numbers admitted or to any defined catchment area for example. The policy is available for you to view and we welcome any comments in relation to this.

Parents Evenings

You will know that I recently canvassed the opinion of parents and carers in respect to your wishes around Parent Teacher Consultation Evenings. I received 117 responses, with the majority of parents opting to attend parents' evenings in person. Consequently, but subject to any provisions for the management of COVID, we will host all future parents' evenings this year in person. Whilst the online appointment booking system will remain in place, the evenings will be conducted as face to face in-person meetings on the school site. I'm afraid that logistics and facilities would not allow for a hybrid system.

As I write, I wish all students a restful and productive half term, whilst reminding our year 11 students that mock examinations are now but four weeks away!

With kind regards
P A Green
Principal



▲ Message from the Executive Principal

Our recent open morning attracted almost 350 visitors from across the county. This is a strong indication that our curriculum offer is meeting the needs of a rural county and that after five years of operations, we are still fully committed to our specialism. Strategically, we are effectively addressing the need for increased accommodation, with both our Kingston Maurward and Poundbury sites providing high quality premises for our students. We are fully staffed across all our curriculum and our strategic planning ensures that all students have access to subject specialists to support their learning and personal development.

We are very fortunate to have such a productive relationship with Kingston Maurward College with many of our recent leavers continuing their studies on the campus. By working together, we can offer an 11 to 19 programme of study on a beautiful campus that fully supports our joint specialism.

Our waiting lists indicate that we will need more space in the future and I continue to work in partnership with the Department for Education and Dorset Council to address this need. However, on-going governmental changes

have affected the rate of decision making in relation to the potential of a new school building. I am hoping for an update over the next few weeks and I will keep you informed as soon as I have more details of the plans for the future.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support.

Dr A Minard
Executive Principal

▲ Arts - Black History Month

Students from Dorset Studio School were invited to be involved in the Stand Up To Racism event at Shire Hall in Dorchester celebrating diversity in Dorset for Black History Month where a series of events were held throughout the month of October.

As part of the music curriculum, year 7 students have been learning to sing a selection of African songs in their lessons. Students are given the opportunity to sing and understand the culture and history associated with African music as many songs of today have strong connections with the rhythms and melodies of African music in the past.

Some of the students bravely agreed that they would perform

the songs as part of the event and on a Sunday. They sang brilliantly with strong voices, and were warmly received by the organisers of the event. What an experience to sing in Shire Hall, which was the courtroom used for the trial of The Tolpuddle Martyrs.

Well done and thank you to Jacob, Ellie and Rihanna!



▲ Literacy – Reading +

This term we have introduced a new reading programme called Reading +, which is a digital library to help with comprehension, vocabulary and visual skills. The students in KS3 have been using this for homework and in lessons to aid their reading and build their context. So far, the students have been using the programme really well and achieving lots



of literacy goal points! Please do let us know if you have any questions in regards to this.

▲ Maths – Higher Education Trip to Reading University

A group of our Most Able students were recently invited to Reading University to explore their department of Agriculture, Policy and Development. Students from years 10 and 11 had a tour of the University campus, chatted to an undergraduate, and had a talk by a PhD student studying at the faculty. All of the students made brilliant contributions to the day, and the faculty staff were enormously impressed by the students' knowledge of soil sampling, global warming, and wider issues in agriculture.

▲ Humanities

It has been a busy, but rewarding start to the new academic year in the Humanities Department. It was lovely to greet our new Year 7 students in their Humanities lessons where they have started their secondary school journey learning about the country they live in and have been studying map technique and about the British weather.

Year 8 students have made an equally fantastic start to the new year where they have been

learning about the British Empire and the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. A particular poignant topic which is especially relevant as we reflect on Black History month. Students are also already looking forward to the Shire Hall visit next term where they will learn about the hardship endured by agricultural workers during the Industrial & Agricultural revolution. They will focus on the plight of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the entire year group will visit the cells where the Tolpuddle Martyrs were held and later placed on trial at Dorchester's Shire Hall Museum.

Our Year 9 Humanities students have been learning about 20th century history which will culminate in a summer visit to the Imperial War Museum in London. We would like to thank Ben, who shared with his teachers and classmates a fascinating album of original photos showing Heidelberg in 1938, capturing the experience of a visiting tourist against the backdrop of Nazi pageantry and Nazi images of the time. It truly is a priceless artefact that really brings History to life.

In Year 10 students have begun their GCSE Geography and BTEC Travel & Tourism studies and have embraced the demands of these courses. We look forward

to taking the out in the summer to complete their Geography fieldwork. This will be a similar visit to the one completed by Year 11 students in September where they conducted an urban regeneration study of Dorchester's Brewery Square and a physical Geography investigation on coastal management at Lyme Regis. We had two amazing days out of school and the students proved to be exemplary ambassadors for DSS.



Looking ahead, we are in the process of planning a summer residential visit to France & Belgium where students will be afforded the opportunity to visit the World War I battlefields including the Somme and Passchendaele. The Humanities Faculty aim to partner with the French department to offer a cultural experience to students of all year groups. Details will be released to parents and carers in the coming months.

Mr Dearden
Head of Humanities



▲ Forest School

It's been wonderful to welcome a fresh batch of year 7's to the woods and the ways of forest school. Students' forest school journey starts with a run through of our safety boundaries around use of the woods, tools and campfire. Here Lilly is expertly demonstrating grading of the fire wood and the respect position needed when tending the fire.



The team have been really impressed by the levels of engagement in nature shown by our new students. Sophie and Indi shared their skull collection with the group and through discussion and discovery understood they were omnivorous badger skulls. This led to discussion around bears and human impact on extinction.

Year 8 forest schoolers have returned to the woods and refreshed their safety and risk



assessing skills before ploughing into their activities. It's been amazing to see such progression in their skills – their creations are even better than the forest school leaders!

Jessica has developed fine motor skills and patience whilst weaving her dream catcher.



▲ Land & Environment

Huge thanks extend to Jake Hancock from Wessex Conservation Grazing who is running workshops for our year 7 groups. Jake's workshop introduces farmland as the first habitat the groups will be investigating in terms of content, pressures and steps we can take to encourage healthy landscape.



▲ Year 9 Land Based Students

Year 9 have started their study towards their Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies. Their practical work with livestock is following the farming year with livestock health assessments. Students are understanding the markers for good health by carrying out ram and ewe MOT's. Henry got a masterclass in handling with the cull ewes. The land-based teachers were so proud to receive such a glowing review of our students' work ethic and attitude from the farm staff.



▲ Animal Care

In animal care the students have been doing behavioural observations on a wide range of animal at the farm and the animal park. They have been producing their own ethograms to record the animals' behaviour and used this to assess whether it is safe to handle them.

▲ Summer tutoring

Over the summer, a small group of students attended our Dorset Studio School Bespoke Tutoring Programme.

Working with their tutor they focused on their literacy and numeracy skills through a range of creative activities from zip wire building, cake baking and bridge construction. Students finished each day with their choice of sporting game, usually badminton or rounders.

It was a very enjoyable few weeks for all the students

who came along and for the staff too. It was great to see them have fun and given the opportunity to see their peers over what can seem like a very long break away from school.

▲ Student voice

Dorset Studio School values the importance of the student voice and as such, the school has formed a School Council with two members from each form group representing their year group. The three strands of the school council are Quality of Education, Environment and Charity.

Students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions about improving the school and supporting the community which is then discussed at school council meetings. Once information is activated, it will be displayed on

the 'you said, we did' board in the school main area.

Students have already begun contributing to the local community through organising collections of food for the local food banks. This was kick started with the year 9 students in the Charity section leading a conference for years 7-9 to highlight the work of the local community food banks and the links with Harvest. In addition to this, student within the Environmental section have completed and collated data for Mr Humphreys regarding the demographics of our students so we have a clear understanding of our students interests.

The school council have a busy year ahead with organising school events and we will keep you updated with future initiatives.

▲ Employability skills





We are excited to announce the introduction of Skills Builder Launchpad to our Personal Development curriculum.

Starting after half term, this new online resource platform will be made available for all DSS pupils in all year groups to build upon the key employability skills of:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Creativity
- Problem Solving
- Staying Positive
- Aiming High
- Leadership
- Teamwork

Alongside our weekly Personal Development lessons, the Skills Builder Launchpad provides interactive modules for every step of the employability skills framework listed above. These 10-15 minute modules can be accessed on laptops, tablets and smartphones and can be completed at any time. Throughout this term and beyond, all of our pupils will be building a record of how they have developed these skills, which they will be able to access when applying for college, sixth form, work placements and employment opportunities.

For more information on how Skills Builder supports employability skills development,

please go to

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework/>

▲ Top tips for talking about mental health

The theme of 2022's World Mental Health Day, set by the World Federation for Mental Health on 10th October, was 'Make mental health and wellbeing for all, a global priority'. As a school community, we understand how important talking and listening are in supporting mental health and wellbeing, but also how challenging this can sometimes be.

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families has produced a concise and informative leaflet for parents and carers on talking mental health with young people of secondary school age, providing simple advice and guidance about how to make discussions about feelings part of everyday conversation.

A digital copy of the leaflet can be found at:

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/advice-for-parents-and-carers-talking-mental-health-with-young-people-at-secondary-school/>

▲ Free School Meals

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit - provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If your child qualifies for free school meals, not only will they receive a healthy meal on every school day, they'll also get,

- access to free holiday clubs
- extra money for their school towards more teachers and activities

It's easy to find out if you qualify - complete the confidential checker at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/free-school-meals> or telephone 01305 221090



▲ Notices and key dates - Year 11 Exam Schedule

Wed 23rd Nov 2022 to Thu 1st Dec
Mon 13th Mar 2023 to Thu 2023

Year 11 Autumn Mock Series (7 days)
Year 11 Spring Mock Series (4 days)

Mon 15th May 2023 to Fri 16th June 2023

Year 11 GCSE Summer Exam Series (4 weeks)

Date of Exam	Exam	Paper	Length	AM/PM
Tue 16th May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Biology) 8464 B/1F	Paper 1 F	1 hr 15 min	AM
Tue 16th May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Biology) 8464 B/1H	Paper 1 H	1 hr 15 min	AM
Wed 17th May 2023	English Literature 8702/1M,1N and 1P	Paper 1	1 hr 45 Min	AM
Fri 19th May 2023	Maths 1MA1 1F	Paper 1 F Non Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Fri 19th May 2023	Maths 1MA1 1H	Paper 1 H Non Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Mon 22nd May 2023	Geography 8035/1	Paper 1	1 hr 30 min	PM
Tue 23rd May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Chemistry) 8464 C/1F	Paper 1 F	1 hr 15 min	AM
Tue 23rd May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Chemistry) 8464 C/1H	Paper 1 H	1 hr 15 min	AM
Wed 24th May 2023	English Literature 8702/2	Paper 2	2 hr 15 min	AM
Thu 25th May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Physics) 8464 P/1F	Paper 1 F	1 hr 15 min	AM
Thu 25th May 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Physics) 8464 P/1H	Paper 1 H	1 hr 15 min	AM
Mon 5th June 2023	English Language 8700/1	Paper 1	1 hr 45 min	AM
Tue 6th June 2023	Maths 1MA1 2F	Paper 2 F Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Tue 6th June 2023	Maths 1MA1 2H	Paper 2 H Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Fri 9th June 2023	Geography 8035/2	Paper 2	1 hr 30 min	AM
Fri 9th June 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Biology) 8464 B/2F	Paper 2 F	1 hr 15 min	PM
Fri 9th June 2023	Combined Science Trilogy (Biology) 8464 B/2H	Paper 2 H	1 hr 15 min	PM
Mon 12th June 2023	English Language 8700/2	Paper 2	1 hr 45 min	AM
Tue 13th June 2023	Combined Science trilogy (Chemistry) 8464 C/2F	Paper 2 F	1 hr 15 min	AM
Tue 13th June 2023	Combined Science trilogy (Chemistry) 8464 C/2H	Paper 2 H	1 hr 15 min	AM
Wed 14th June 2023	Maths 1MA1 3F	Paper 3 F Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Wed 14th June 2023	Maths 1MA1 3H	Paper 3 H Calculator	1 hr 30 min	AM
Fri 16th June 2023	Combined Science trilogy (Physics) 8464 P/2F	Paper 2 F	1 hr 15 min	AM
Fri 16th June 2023	Combined Science trilogy (Physics) 8464 P/2H	Paper 2 H	1 hr 15 min	AM
Fri 16th June 2023	Geography 8035/3	Paper 3	1 hr 15 min	PM