



Dorset

Studio School
Newsletter
Summer 2023

Exploring the nature of learning

Dorset Studio School pupils embrace the unique opportunity to combine their love of the environment with a collaborative exploration of the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to meet the needs of modern life.





▲ Message from the Principal

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing this as we come towards the end of another fantastic year in school. Year 11 students have recently finished their examinations and we wish them much success when they finally collect their results on the 24th August.

Our Year 10 students will be on work experience by the time you receive this. They are embarking on some truly inspiring placements.

A number of students returned from France and Belgium this week, having attended the fascinating 'battlefields trip,' ably lead by Mr Dearden and his team. I was incredibly proud to hear how our students represented the school, not least through laying a wreath

at the Menin Gate in front of a two thousand strong, assembled crowd. Others met the King and Queen consort in Poundbury this week, in a totally unplanned and somewhat bizarre encounter!

When I reflect on the learning opportunities that have been available to our students this year, I can be nothing other than immensely proud of, and thankful for, the wonderful team of staff and students that we have here.

The school arranged for two external reviews this year. Visitors were asked to evaluate the school and its provision for students. I have included some of the comments here: '...students were polite, cheerful and friendly. They were proud of what they were achieving at school. Students who had moved to DSS during KS3 because of difficulties in larger settings were very positive about the move. The school leverages its 'USP' of land-based courses superbly, achieving buy-in for core curriculum subjects from most students. There was evidence in many lessons, and in the curriculum of the school generally, of personalisation for students. The range of land-based courses were clearly popular, and in classroom-based subjects there was a good deal of evidence of staff adjusting their

questioning and level of support responsively. ...student behaviour was generally excellent. Small group interventions were clearly personalised and effective.' I am confident that we will continue to go from strength to strength.

As we approach the end of year, inevitably, it is time to record our thanks to a small number of staff who are moving on to other opportunities. I would like to thank Mrs Sadd (Examinations officer) who has moved to employment more local to her. She has managed a complex role with aplomb. Mr Timmons, our Science technician on the KMC site, moves on to other opportunities. We thank him for being a dedicated member of our team. Mrs Manning, having moved to Dorset last year, joined us as a teacher of PE and Head of Year 8 and 9. She is moving to a position more local to home, having been the consummate professional, and having developed some strong relationships with all. Mrs Thompson (has been with us for the last two years, teaching French, and most recently accompanying the French trip. She has made a real difference to our students. Mr Pavely has been with our Science team just a little longer. He has established positive relationships with the students and will be missed by



them I'm sure. He moves to a Science teaching position in another local school.

Finally, Dr Minard (Executive Principal), who has been with the school almost since the beginning, is retiring. She has led the school admirably, demonstrating the rare vision to be able to make a success of something so innovative. I am pleased to note that she will continue work for us, through project managing the creation of the new build.

Over the coming weeks we will be sending home details of some summer work that we would like students to complete. More to follow on that. And now, a turn to parents.

We recently held our inaugural 'Friends of Dorset Studio School' meeting. I subsequently sent out a questionnaire asking if parents might like to be part of this venture. Thank you so much to all of you that replied. We will hold a second meeting towards the beginning of next academic year. I will be in touch.

We have also organised a string of parent workshops over the last term. These have been well attended and very well received. We will arrange more next year and plan to hold a celebration evening for all during the first term.

I would also like to send a small questionnaire out to parents over the next week or so. I would be incredibly grateful if you were able to complete it. It will help to make the school even better.

Thank you all so much for all of your wonderful support. I look forward to seeing you all next academic year!

With kind regards

P A Green
Principal



▲ Letter from the Executive Principal

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone, families, staff and students for all the support I have received during my time as Executive Principal of Dorset Studio School.

Although I will no longer be

involved in the running of the school, I will be continuing my work with teams from the Department for Education to develop a new school building for all our students. This is a project that I have been involved in for the last six years but the impact of COVID and recent political uncertainty has delayed progress. However, as you are aware, funding has been agreed and we are now designing accommodation that will provide facilities of the highest standard. The design will fully facilitate our specialism, enhance curriculum delivery and meet the needs of the wide ability range we work with. I will continue to keep you updated as the building project progresses. What an exciting time we have ahead of us!

I will miss our friendly and enthusiastic students. They are fully committed to the learning they experience every day and I admire the distances many of them travel to attend our school and follow our unique provision.

Our staff work hard to build positive relationships with our children and young people. It has been an honour to work with such a creative and committed team and I know they will continue to support all our students and explore ways to enable them to thrive, both academically and socially.



Mr Green, remains as Principal and will be the overall leader of the school. Under his dedication and hard work, I am fully confident that the school will continue to go from strength to strength.

Thank you so much for entrusting Dorset Studio School with the education of your sons and daughters. By working in partnership, I believe that we have established a happy and successful school together.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer holiday and I would like to wish you and your families, every success in the future.

Best wishes,
Dr Annetta Minard

▲ Humanities - Learning Outside the Classroom



As another successful term draws to a close we look back on what has been a fabulous few weeks where learning outside of the classroom has been a real focus.

In June our Year 10 GCSE students completed their mandatory fieldwork visits to Lyme Regis and Brewery Square respectively. The aim in Lyme Regis was to evaluate the effectiveness of the coastal defences built to halt the erosion of the town from the sea, including analysing the success of the sea wall, beach nourishment project and rock armour placement. In addition, they looked at the issues caused by long-shore drift and measured the effect it has had on the Lyme Regis coastline.

The second part of the fieldwork was to assess whether the Brewery Square development



in Dorchester had improved the urban environment of the town. This involved completing pedestrian accounts and developing questionnaires to survey the general public as to whether they believed the multi-million-pound project had improved the area.

Year 8 spent the morning following the footsteps of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Building on their learning of the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions earlier this year, students visited the cells and courtrooms where the Tolpuddle Martyrs were held and sentenced in 1834. They investigated the reasons for action taken by the Dorset Farmers as well as the heavy price paid for protesting against low wages and a rising cost of living.

▲ Battlefields Visit

This summer some of our Year 9 and Year 10 students were lucky enough to participate in our World War I Battlefields visit



Ypres. In the evening we visited the Menin Gate where two students; Ruben Edwards and Benedict Turner placed a wreath to the fallen in front of over 2,000 onlookers who were there for the Last Post ceremony. This is an experience they will never forget.



to France and Belgium. We left school on Monday 26th June and travelled by coach and ferry to France, then Belgium where we settled in to the Oubde Abdij Hotel in the small village of Lo in Western Belgium. The following day we visited Langemark, the German war cemetery followed by Essex Farm Dressing Station where Canadian Poet John McRae penned 'In Flanders Field' plus Tyne Cott which is the largest British war cemetery in the world with over 11,000 soldiers buried there. In the afternoon we visiting the Flanders Field Museum in Passchendaele, home of one of the most brutal and bloody battles of the war. Students got to walk in the trenches and experience the amazing exhibits before enjoying free time in



students and staff engaged with. Overall the visit was a massive success and I am already planning a future visit for those students who were unable to partake this time round.

At DSS we try to provide a broad range of learning opportunities that allow our students to investigate and explore exciting topics and themes outside of the normal classroom environment. The Humanities Faculty are committed to ensuring all students are given the opportunity to experience a range of learning activities.

The following day we headed back into France where we walked in the trenches and tunnels at Vimy Ridge which was a raised strategic trench position that swapped hands several times during the conflict. Students then visited the Thiepval Memorial site to look for family connections amongst the names of the missing and deceased. Free time in the town of Arras allowed the students to practice their French and enjoy French culture.

Evenings were dedicated to free time where students enjoyed the beautiful hotel grounds, socialised and played table tennis and other games. I would like to say a big well done to Naomi Ball who created a quiz which all



Mr Dearden
(Head of Humanities).





▲ English

A Cyclical Sonnet by Mr Remmer

Teaching you all; some points to be aware:

We meet, I teach, you argue, we all share

You ask 'Mr Remmer, where is your hair?'

You mock and shout 'bewk' as I stand and stare.

I tell you 'bout hubris and Macbeth's dare,

Bonnie scorns and says 'But I just don't care',

Lily comes in late - 'I just want that chair-

Oh Mr Remmer, this just isn't fair!

In truth, I loved the chaotic affair.

You've read hard texts with precision and flair

We've laughed as Marley gave Scrooge a big scare

And saw life lessons through the Inspector's glare.

Now you leave me; your new door opens - there

Your memories will always fill my classroom air.

Library volunteering opportunity

Dorset libraries would welcome volunteers between the ages of 14 - 16 years to help with the Summer reading challenge over the Summer holidays.

If you volunteer for 10 hours or more you will receive the Dorset Award Certificate for volunteering and the hours can be used for the service element for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. For further information search Dorset libraries Volunteering or click on this link <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/en/libraries-history-culture/libraries/volunteer-with-dorset-libraries/opportunities-for-young-people>

If you live in another Council area, try searching for your council's name plus volunteering or ask in your local library.

▲ Land and Environment

Year 10 visit to New Forest

Year 10 visited the New Forest National Park as part of their preparations for their synoptic assignment assessment in year 11.

The groups explored how geographical factors were effecting the choice of land use – a variety of land based sectors were covered including forestry, horticulture and adventure, sport & leisure.



Year 10 carrying out soil pH tests in the New Forest. These revealed relatively acidic conditions which explained by the immediate vicinity was so bare.





Year 9 land based students have been investigating the invertebrates in the river on the estate. Students were learning how the type and abundance of insects found can indicate how healthy or unhealthy a river is in terms of agricultural pollution.



Year 8's have completed their John Muir Trust Award. This environmental award tests their ability to discover, explore and conserve an area. This year Ringstead beach was chosen as a focus location as this also compliments our Eco-school marine theme.

Forest school sessions blossomed this summer term. As the sun baked down, students were kept cool by the green canopy so they could busy themselves cooking up feasts and creating crafts. Tia and Evelyn made crowns of cleavers and ferns at Pigeon House Farm Woods. Our thanks to Kip and Ruth Kirby for allowing us to have our forest school adventures in their beautiful woods. Special thanks to our amazing trained forest school volunteers Helen, Jenny, Emily, Georgia and Netty for their phenomenal year long contribution of their time, care and skills.



▲ Animal Care

Logan very kindly helped with Discover Farming at Open Farm Sunday. He spent time teaching visitors about dairy farming, including helping children milk Clover the pretend cow, and calve Gertie the cow.



He also told lots of people about Dorset Studio School and was a fantastic ambassador for the school. He also got lots of compliments from both visitors and other members of Discover farming.





▲ **Arts** - LAMDA examinations at Dorset Studio School

Lorena Selby
Maya Carswell
Megan Follett
Daisy McCarthy
Ruben Edwards
Tilly Jones (not pictured)

These six creative students were brave enough to train, rehearse and enter the drama examination courses offered by the London Academy of Dramatic Arts, where they gained merit and distinction passes in April this year. Here they are proudly holding their certificates. Students had to learn scripted pieces from a range of scripts for this exam. They can perform as soloist or in duos. Drama is

as an extra-curricular activity at the school to encourage pupils to gain confidence in performing and in speaking and listening skills. The training was delivered by the Principal of The Artori Academy Kelly Hunter and her associate, Jane Quan.

Pupils, staff, parents and carers were also treated to a public performance of their exam pieces here at Dorset Studio School on Tuesday 4th July. The students and others will continue to take more examinations in November this year and we wish them the very best of luck. Anyone wishing to participate in some drama work with or without an exam should contact Mrs Harris, Arts Lead in the first instance.

▲ **Safeguarding** - Three tips for a safer digital summer

As summer approaches, now is the time we begin to make plans for family fun, amazing adventures and making memories. Of course, it will also be time to think up ways to combat “Mum, Dad – I’m bored!”. Given the current cost of living crisis, for many families, this summer will be about finding easy entertainment options that are budget-friendly...preferably free!

So, it’s no surprise that a Barnardo’s survey found 71% of 11-to-17-year-olds are expected to spend more time online during this year’s summer break, compared to term time.

But while digital devices and online activities are a cheap and cheerful solution to school break boredom, oursaferschools.co.uk have put together our top three tips to make sure it’s a safer digital summer for children and young people.

1. It’s good to talk

Just as you chat to your child about their offline life, make sure you’re discussing their digital world, too! The experiences they have there are just as valid and important. It’s where they are forming friendships, socialising



with existing friends and new, having their opinions shaped and creating and sharing content.

And just like in the offline world, their experiences online can be good and bad so it's important to keep the lines of communication open so they feel they can talk to you about their online life.

The summer break is a great time to begin these conversations; whether it's day trips in the car or lounging in the garden, there will be more opportunities to chat. You could begin by asking questions about apps they've mentioned, games they like to play or something you've seen in the news. For example:

- Are there any new games out this summer you're looking forward to playing?
- Do you still use Instagram a lot or are there any other apps you and your friends use?
- I heard something in the news about Twitter having less moderators these days, have you or your friends ever experienced seeing something harmful or upsetting on there? What did you do and how did that make you feel?

Discussing Online Life With Your Child – is a helpful video from Ineqe Safeguarding Group

https://youtu.be/pqvWqZ_Nt5U

2. Try out online platforms for yourself

To get a better understanding of what the child or young person in your care experiences online and on digital devices, try it for yourself!

This can be particularly useful if your young person finds it difficult or embarrassing talking to you about their online life. Not only will it allow you to become familiar with the kind of things they will be engaging with, it may also bridge the gap to those conversations about the digital world.

By using the same social media platforms, games, and websites they're spending time on, you will be able to understand the sorts of experiences they are having online and what type of content they are being exposed to.

3. Take action to protect their online presence

Spend time with your young person going through their favourite apps, games and websites. Discuss and choose together the best privacy settings for them and practice reporting content and blocking other users. This means that if they should ever need to block and report someone, they already know

how to do it! It's possible that the young person in your care will tell you they already know how to use some or all of these settings and features. In that case, ask them if they can show you how it works and let them teach you instead.

You can visit "Our Safety Centre" at <https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/> to find guides on how to block, report, and use important settings and controls on some of the most popular platforms and games.

Also make sure you have turned on all the safety settings and parental controls that you want to use – we know how easy it is to have good intentions about using these features but never get round to it! So, here's a to-do list of actions you can consider taking:

- Turn on safe search filters on my internet provider's settings.
- Enable parental control settings on all devices my child uses.
- Change social media privacy to the strongest setting.
- Visit "Our Safety Centre" at <https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/>

Always discuss any parental control features you are enabling with the child or young person in your care to help establish mutual trust. It's also an opportunity to talk about why you're choosing to use them!



So, for a safer digital summer, remember to
Talk, Try, and Take Action!

For further helpful Online Safety guides, please see the following links:

- Social Media: <https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/safetycards/>
- Gaming: <https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/online-safety-guides-gaming/>
- Streaming: <https://oursafetycentre.co.uk/online-safety-guides-streaming/>

Finally, in our KS3 ICT lessons this half term we have been discussing the benefits and dangers of digital technology, with a particular focus on Artificial Intelligence or “AI”.

As with most digital technology, there are lots of really positive ways to use AI, however it is important to recognise its limitations and potential pitfalls. Please find overleaf a guide to safe use of ChatGPT and similar “chatbots”.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer break,

Mr Paul Chapman
Assistant Principal & Designated Safeguarding Lead

▲ **Summer in Dorset** - An initiative by Dorset Council, funded by the Department for Education

During Summer in Dorset you can expect...

A wide variety of sessions including sports, music, arts and crafts, cooking, drama, story writing and much more.

Lots of unique and exciting experiences to enjoy with new friends.

Tasty meals at activities and tips for how you can eat well from home.

All sessions and activities will be free of charge for children and young people who receive benefit-related free school meals.

Sign up now



dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/summer-in-dorset

Summer
in Dorset

Music

Adventure

Arts

Sports

Workshops

Nature

Get ready for a summer of trying new things, making friends and having fun experiences!

Get involved - Sign up now



Using AI ChatBots for Good

You've probably heard of ChatGPT, the wonder AI chatbot. From writing poems to C.V.s, it seems there's nothing this artificial intelligence can't create! That does, unfortunately, include homework.

ChatGPT's terms of services says users must be least 13 years old and those under 18 must have their parent or legal guardian's permission. However, between the press coverage and the lack of age verification, it's likely that many young people are using it regardless.

But is it *really* helping with homework? Here are some points to consider if the young person in your care wants to use an AI chatbot.

-  **SOMETIMES AI CHATBOTS ARE WRONG!**
This means if someone is relying on them for facts, they might be wrong too. And it might become obvious that they've used AI to complete their work.
-  **CHATBOTS AREN'T ALWAYS UP TO DATE.**
ChatGPT knows about the world up until 2021, after that its knowledge is limited.
-  **CHATBOTS ARE BANNED IN SOME PLACES.**
If a young person is using chatbots but their school has banned it, they might have to face the consequences of breaking the rules.
-  **EVERY VOICE IS UNIQUE.**
Although you can ask a chatbot to create text in a certain way, it's incredibly unlikely that it will sound identical to the user... and even if a young person doesn't think they have a writing style, you can bet their teachers do!

Age Rating Age Rating Age Rating
13+
Age Rating Age Rating Age Rating

CHATBOTS AREN'T ALWAYS SHORTCUTS
By the time you're finished fact-checking and editing the grammar, you may as well have written it yourself!

Alternative ideas for using AI together

PRACTICE FACT CHECKING

Knowing how to fact check is a very useful skill, both for school and for everyday life. Ask ChatGPT for facts then check them together by Googling, in the news and even in good old-fashioned books!

Being able to tell fact from fiction will also help you and the young person in your care spot fake news and misinformation on social media.

USE CHATGPT TO INSPIRE

Instead of making the chatbot do all the work, use it for prompting ideas. For example, you can give an example of your favourite novel and ask for recommendations of similar books you might enjoy.

I am 14 years old.
My favourite book is the Hobbit.
Can you suggest three novels I might like?

Sure, here are three book suggestions you might enjoy based on your love of The Hobbit:

1. Eragon by Christopher Paolini ...

MASTER THE SKILL OF EDITING

The text produced by AI chatbots usually needs a lot of changing. Practising editing text for spelling, grammar and comprehension could help improve schoolwork.

LEARN ABOUT AI

There's no denying that artificial intelligence like chatbots can be fascinating. How does it learn information? Who made it? Researching this together could even inspire a future career in AI!

STAYING SAFE WHEN USING AI

Make sure the young person in your care knows who their trusted adults are and that they can talk to them if they see something that upsets or worries them online.

Harmful, unhelpful and untrue answers on ChatGPT can be reported by selecting the 'thumbs down' button beside the answer.

Some young people have been using AI for mental health advice. Talk to the young person in your care about what to do if they're feeling depressed, stressed, or upset.

For young people, using AI as a way to get out of homework might be very tempting. If you know the young person in your care is using AI chatbots, talk to them about the *possible risks*, *age limits* and *alternative ways* you can use AI chatbots together as a *force for good*.

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