

NEWSLETTER

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, ALNWICK



SUMMER 2015

Headteacher's Report

Welcome to our Summer Term Newsletter and a special welcome to our Year 8 parents and students who will be joining us in September.



The last few months have been extremely busy and productive. Our most exciting news is that our school community has been given national recognition for our Creative and Performing Arts through being awarded Artsmark Gold. Very few secondary schools in the North East have gained this prestigious award and it is a reward for many years of high calibre work and achievement

by our students and staff. It also highlights how many individuals and organisations within our wider community support our school in delivering such a fantastic array of opportunities for our young people. Mrs Brown, our Head of Creative Arts explains the award in more detail later in this Newsletter.

The exam season is coming to its close and once again over 600 of our students have gone through the stress and the all-consuming demands of such an experience. As a school we have tried to make every effort to prepare and support our students in as many ways as possible. For those students leaving us in Year 11 and 13 we have provided special Leavers Assemblies at St Paul's Church. These were lovely, heart-warming occasions which I hope will be remembered by all that were there. I have always wanted our young people to recognise the deep roots and sense of place that North Northumberland can provide and how special and unique each one of them is. We wish them well!

Over the last few months we have been engaged in a number of surveys with parents, students and colleagues about our priorities for the next academic year. Areas identified include:

- **Further development of our Marking and Feedback system**
- **To review and make changes to our communication with parents**
- **Extended writing across subjects and further focus on Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**
- **Further recognition of the importance of numeracy skills**
- **Raising the aspirations of students and families who struggle to engage with school**
- **Reducing absence levels for those students who have more than 10% absence over the year**

- **To work with other organisations to provide the best possible Personal, Social, Health Education programme (including Careers Support)**

All of these are vital to our desire to provide high quality education in an inclusive community setting. They generate clarity of thinking at an exciting time as we begin our final countdown to moving into our new school buildings in September 2016. By the autumn of this year the walls, roof and windows will be completed, the playing fields will be seeded and work will have commenced on the interiors. We are working hard to make sure that change and transition does not impact on the here and now.

Finally at May Half Term we said farewell to two of our most long serving colleagues, Ian Brown and Louis Spence. They have been teachers at our school for 23 years and 14 years respectively and have given significant amounts of their time to teaching and extra curricular. We wish them well.

There are many exciting things to read about in this Newsletter. I hope you can appreciate the time and energy that goes into the life of our school.

Wishing you all the best for the summer break.

Kind Regards

Maurice Hall, Headteacher



Paul Kiddell June 2015

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Bullying

As a school, we do our utmost to support students who experience bullying and educate students to be a respectful member of the school community. The advice below is a general framework used to support students irrespective of the type of bullying that is experienced. Each case is taken individually however and will warrant a unique response. There is no single solution to bullying or best way to handle a bully. It may take some experimenting with a variety of different responses to find the strategy that works best for your situation.



TIP 1 Understand the truth about bullying

Walk away from the bully. Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions so don't react with anger or retaliate with physical force. If you walk away, ignore them, or calmly and assertively tell them you're not interested in what they have to say, you're demonstrating that they don't have control over you.

Protect yourself. If you can't walk away and are being physically hurt, protect yourself so you can get away. Your safety is the first priority.

Report the bullying to a trusted adult. If you don't report threats and assaults, a bully will often become more and more aggressive. In many cases adults can find ways to help with the problem without letting the bully know it was you who reported them.

Repeat as necessary. Like the bully, you may have to be relentless. Report each and every bullying incident until it stops. There is no reason for you to ever put up with bullying.

Record incidents: by recording key information about any incidents of bullying, you can provide specifics for someone to be able to support you.

TIP 2 Reframe the problem of bullying

By changing your attitude towards bullying you can help regain a sense of control.

Try to view bullying from a different perspective. The bully is an unhappy, frustrated person who wants to have control over your feelings so that you feel as badly as

they do. Don't give them the satisfaction.

Look at the big picture. Bullying can be extremely painful, but try asking yourself how important it will seem to you in the long run. Will it matter in a year? Is it worth getting so upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

Focus on the positive. Reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. Make a list and refer to it whenever you feel down.

Find the humour. If you're relaxed enough to recognise the absurdity of a bullying situation, and to comment on it with humour, you'll likely no longer be an interesting target for a bully.

Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond our control—including the behaviour of other people. Rather than stressing, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to bullies.

TIP 3 Find support from those who don't bully

Having trusted people you can turn to for encouragement and support will boost your resilience when being bullied. Reach out to connect with family and real friends (those who don't participate in bullying) or explore ways of making new friends. There are plenty of people who will love and appreciate you for who you are.

Find others who share your same values and interests. You may be able to make friends at a youth group, book club, or religious organisation. Learn a new sport, join a team, or take up a new hobby such as chess, art, or music.

Share your feelings. Talk to a parent, pastoral mentor, coach, religious leader, or trusted friend. Expressing what you're going through can make a huge difference to the way you feel, even if it doesn't change the situation.

Boost your confidence. Exercise is a great way to help you feel good about yourself, as well as reduce stress. Punch a mattress or take a kick boxing class to work off your anger.

Don't beat yourself up. Don't make a bullying incident worse by dwelling on it or replaying it over and over in your head. Instead, focus on positive experiences you've had.

If you are being bullied, remember:

Don't blame yourself. It is not your fault. No matter what someone says or does, you should not be ashamed of who you are or what you feel.

Be proud of who you are. Despite what a bully says, there are many wonderful things about you. Keep those in mind instead of the messages you hear from bullies.

Get help. Talk to a parent, teacher, pastoral mentor, or other trusted adult. Seeing a pastoral mentor does not mean there is something wrong with you.

Learn to deal with stress. Finding ways to relieve stress can make you more resilient so you won't feel overwhelmed by bullying. Exercise, meditation, positive self-talk, muscle relaxation, and breathing exercises are all good ways to manage the stress from bullying.

Gold!

Students and staff are riding high on the fantastic news of their successful application and awarding of Artsmark Gold by Arts Council England and Trinity College, London.

The award is an outstanding achievement for the school, and celebrates DCHS as a centre for excellence and outstanding arts provision (*one of only 3 High Schools in Northumberland and 15% of secondary schools nationally*). The award is a prestigious achievement and following a lengthy application and validation process, we are immensely proud to be recognised by Arts Council England as an exemplar school for Outstanding Arts provision and opportunities within the Arts. "[As a school] you encourage all students to take part in ambitious student led productions and arts initiatives which impacts positively upon all those involved: students develop confidence, independence, responsibility and a real sense of achievement..." commented our validator during their vigorous assessment of our application.

As a school we have for many years, recognised, nurtured and developed the talents of our young people across all of the Arts disciplines – Art, Music, Film, Photography, Dance, Drama & Theatre Studies, Textiles and Creative Writing – working with a wide range of external arts providers such as The Alnwick Playhouse, Tyne & Wear Museums and The Baltic, to create skilful, confident and vibrant young professionals.

"This is an outstanding achievement and deserved recognition for all the students, staff and wider Arts practitioners & organisations who have dedicated so much time, energy and passion, both during and extra-curricular, to raising the profile and value of all the Arts disciplines across the school and the wider community. We are enormously proud of this award and of our students – they have always been 'Gold' standard in our eyes and this award confirms this... on a national level! In an ever changing climate where the Arts are being squeezed out of curriculum time, this is a clear and loud statement of the investment and value made to the Arts by DCHS."

RUTH BROWN
HEAD OF ART & CREATIVE ARTS FACULTY

The creation of a new Creative Arts Faculty (Art, Photography, Music & Film) and with a new school on the horizon, we aim to take the Arts provision to new heights, delivering and bringing even more opportunities for students to stretch, challenge, explore and create.



FrogLearn is an award-winning and easy-to-use virtual learning platform, designed with the user in mind.

Reducing paper, simplifying administrative tasks, keeping track of students' work, catering to different learning styles, and making lessons more interactive – these are just some of the things made possible through the Frog Learn Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

The school benefits are as follows:

For Teachers:

- See individuals performance at a glance, spot trends and instantly see who needs support
- Provide real-time feedback on all work which boosts confidence and learning outcomes
- Access thousands of resources enabling the teaching of students the way they want to be taught
- Use polls, walls, notifications and forms for feedback and student self-assessment

For Students:

- Access their own personal and lesson dashboards – both inside and outside of school - making learning more engaging
- Store all work in one secure 'timeline'
- The ability to share work with teachers, parents and peers
- Enable access to the same technology they love to use outside of school

For Parents:

- Access live feeds on 'timelines' for each child, never missing a moment
- Receive school news feeds through the Parent Dashboard
- View, like and comment on their child's work direct from their dashboard

Initially all students will receive a unique User ID and password allowing them to access the learning platform with plans to provide the same to parents.





What Is It?

A brief outline of pupil premium payments – who gets them and what are they used for?

What is pupil premium?

There is some debate over whether this is, as the government describes, additional funding, or rather funding that has been reorganised. Either way pupil premium funding is designed to be used by schools to “close the gap” between groups of students the government describe as “disadvantaged” and their peers. These groups have been targeted across the country because it is recognised that as a cohort they do not always fulfil their potential - it is important to note that because a student has been identified as belonging to one of these categories it DOES NOT mean they are not going to succeed in school, in fact it can mean that with the additional support available through this funding, they have the opportunities to exceed expectations. The payments are made directly to schools

as part of their annual budgets and the school is, in turn, accountable for how those funds are spent and the impact the money is having on the outcomes for these identified groups of students.

Who is eligible for pupil premium?

There are three groups that are eligible for Pupil Premium awards to the school and a fourth who receives funding that stays under local authority control.

Services Students

It is recognised that students with a parent serving in the regular armed forces may have had to move more than most and may face additional stress factors associated with parental deployment which can have an impact on their education. All students with

a serving parent, or a parent who has left the forces within the last 3 years, are eligible for this funding - this is called Service Premium.

Free School Meals or ‘Ever 6’

All students who currently receive Free School Meals or have received them at any point in the last six years are eligible for this extra funding. It has been identified that students in this group have historically done less well than their peers in school and the pupil premium funding is designed to tackle this difference.

Adopted from Care

Students who have left the care of the local authority, at any point are eligible to the largest amount of pupil premium funding. It has been determined that the challenges some children face as “looked after children” do not always disappear as soon as they leave care. For this reason, regardless of when they left care, all children who have been looked after and are now either adopted or living under a special guardianship or residence order, are entitled to this funding right up until they leave school.

Looked after Children

Those children who under the care of the local authority are entitled to this higher

pupil premium award. This funding is slightly different as it remains under the control of the local authority and school liaises with someone called the “virtual school head” to account for the spending of it.



How does the school spend this money?

The aim of this money is to ensure that students within these identified groups have the same opportunities to achieve that other students do.

The reasons for these students not achieving can be as varied as the students themselves, perhaps attendance is a key issue, perhaps the students haven’t had the same enrichment opportunities outside the



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classroom, perhaps friendship groups and social skills is an area they need support with.

The school has a Pupil Premium Champion in Diane Murphy whose role it is to examine the data on our pupil premium students and identify the most effective areas we can spend this money on, and to analyse the impact to ensure we are spending the money wisely.

A small example of some of the strategies we have employed this year include:-

- Support for essential school trips, music tuition, learning materials
- Supporting the cost of key members of staff to allow extra time to support PP students and their families (attendance, learning, progress, and behaviour)
- Careers advice and guidance
- Literacy programme in Year 9 and Literacy and Numeracy programme in Year 10
- Appointment of Attendance Support Officer + liaison with EWO and wider LIST team to improve attendance and 'readiness for learning'
- Maths intervention programme in order to raise achievement and progress (presently lower than English) – includes liaison with KS3 programmes in Middle Schools
- Establishment of a wider curriculum (enrichment) to support and motivate students who need access to a wider choice

How do I make sure my child gets what they are entitled to?

Services:

If your family are eligible for the Service Premium funding because a parent does (or has in the last 3 years) serve(d) in the regular British armed forces, you should inform the school so we can be sure our records are up to date and your child is receiving the funding they are entitled to.

Free School Meals:

The school is notified by the local authority if a student is registered for Free School Meals. If you believe you might be eligible to receive free school meals but you haven't registered please visit myfreeschoolmeals.com to apply.

Left Local Authority Care:

If your child has ever left care through adoption, special guardianship or residence order, you can declare this to the school directly. You will need to supply supporting evidence such as a copy of the court order. This will allow the school to apply for the funding and use it to further support your child.

If you have any questions about pupil premium and whether you think your child is entitled to it, please contact the school.

Well done Zara!!

Zara Browell who is currently in Year 12 has been presented with 'The Mayor's Civic Youth Award' 2015. This ceremony took place at St James Centre to honour those who have been involved in charity work, community service and voluntary activities. These awards recognise the town's community heroes.

Zara is currently studying Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Textiles at school and has just taken her AS level examinations. Her attendance and punctuality are exemplary. She has also enjoyed success outside of the classroom this year as she rose to the challenge of being Stage Manager and working on costume for this year's School Musical, "Disco Inferno" at the Alnwick Playhouse. It showed her commitment and dedication, contributing to what was a hugely successful and enjoyable production.

It makes it all the more remarkable, therefore, that a teenager with such a busy and demanding schedule can find time for others in her community, but this is exactly what Zara has achieved. She has been active in the Air Cadets for over three years, during this time she has helped with the fundraising which helped to raise money for ex-RAF personnel who have been suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Her volunteer work doesn't end here; Zara has a placement at the Barndale School in Alnwick over the summer and has a second placement at a retirement home in Wooler as part of her 'Home Service' scheme.

Zara said ' *it pleases me to know that all the years in which I have been in the Air cadets have been put to something worthwhile and I hope I can continue to work as a volunteer with the organisation for many years to come.*



Zara receives her Award from Alnwick Mayor Bill Grisdale

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PSHE UPDATE

We are coming to the end of a very busy year for PSHE. Year 9 have continued to be taught PSHE lessons in their tutor group.

The start of the year saw them focussing on team building skills resulting in some fantastic model islands being produced. This allowed them to develop key skills and get to know their peers and form tutor. They demonstrated exemplary behaviour when taking part in the Dove self-esteem workshops - learning about confidence and body image. When learning about multicultural Britain and how we can celebrate diversity and appreciate the benefits of living in a multicultural society their discussions showed great maturity.

They have worked together to produce some outstanding work on how we can create an environment where we treat others equally, with dignity and respect and seek to promote race equality at all times. Year 9's are currently taking part in sex education sessions which again they have engaged with very responsibly and maturely.

This year has seen the introduction of PHSE into the Year 11 curriculum, as pupils were guided through a diverse range of themes in their tutor groups. There has been a great deal of excellent work accomplished on careers and options for the future. This has been essential in preparing our Year 11 pupils for their next steps and has significantly helped students as they engaged in their post 16 options choices.

Year 11 have also accomplished work to prepare them for their GCSEs; investigating revision techniques and learning to deal with exam stress, hopefully impacting on their success in the summer.

Sex education sessions were similarly scheduled into the curriculum, with groups being animated but mature in their conduct. A wide variety of additional topics have also been delivered including drugs and alcohol, healthy living and relationships and the criminal justice system, all of which have broadened our pupil's awareness and understanding of the wider world around them.

On a whole school scale, a wide range of PSHE themes have been delivered in tutor time and assemblies. The school engaged in learning about the General Election and took part in a mock election. The politics department produced fantastic resources, including manifestos written especially for the DCHS from each candidate in the Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency,

to help our pupils learn about democracy in the lead up to the election. When all the votes were in, the Green party came out on top, closely followed by the Conservatives.

Democracy is in action within our school, with pupil and staff voice being used to help evaluate the PSHE curriculum. The responses have shown that pupils really appreciate their PSHE lessons and learn new skills which help prepare them for life beyond school.

Requests for new topics are now being used to update the PSHE curriculum ready for September.

The fundraising committee and sixth form senior students have continued to demonstrate their hard work by fundraising on Red Nose Day. Some of our Year 11 boys bravely volunteered to have their legs waxed (*see picture below*) and we had a 'Wear Something Red' Non-Uniform Day, raising £863.59 for Comic Relief. More recently they co-ordinated a small change collection in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake raising £197.85.

This was donated to Unicef to help enable them to continue to deliver clean water and other life-saving supplies to children and families in danger in Nepal. It is most gratifying to see our pupils learning about and helping the wider world around them.



Tin Can Metamorphosis

Fifteen Year 9 Students from The Duchess's Community High School, Alnwick, worked in collaboration with Textile Artist Donna Cheshire, to create sculptures from Tins on a coastal theme.

Year 9 Students Involved:

Eliza Ogden
Barnsley

Alice
Thomassen

Lauren Carr

Marta
Nieciecka

Eve Buddle

Catherine
Jackson

Poppy
McDonald

Lucy Hodgson

Xenia Johnson

Jess Duffy

Isabelle
Fountain

Sophie Allan

Cody Harrison

Megan Gray

Jade Anysley

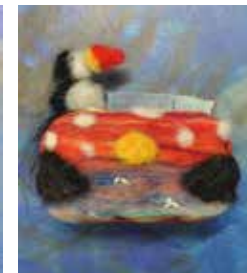
Inspired by the local coastline, students transformed every day sardine tins into tiny sculptural forms, capturing their personal interpretation of the coast and how we respond to it.

Using needle point felting, collage and embroidery techniques, students created lighthouses, seascapes, rock pools, funfairs, star fish and sea life to shape their compositions.

The work you see before you was created and developed by Year 9 students during a one day workshop with Donna. Students thoroughly loved working and engaging with the materials and watching their designs and thoughts develop through in to constructed soft sculptures from such humble beginnings. The outcomes are a real testament to their hard work and enjoyment of creative practise.



The Duchess's
Community High
School, Alnwick
is an ArtsMark
Gold School.



About Donna Cheshire

Donna is developing a reputation in the North East of England and beyond. Her work can be seen in the April edition of Mini World magazine. She has exhibited at the British Craft Trade Fair in Harrogate, The Contemporary Textile Fair in Teddington, The Biscuit Factory in Newcastle and Farfield Mill in Sedburgh. She features on the Useful Art Company website and exhibits regularly with the Fusion Textile Artists network with a retrospective taking place at the Castle Douglas Gallery in May 2014. Donna's work sells direct to the public via ETSY.com in her lovetextiles shop. She also runs workshops for the public, in schools and with adults with learning disabilities. Donna loves encouraging others to have fun with textiles and get creative. Donna is also happy to take commissions from individuals and organisations.

FORESTERS

14 Fenkle Street, Alnwick 01665 602138
and at 41 Queen Street, Amble 01665 710424

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Social Media – the pressures on young people



Is social media more stressful than exams for pupils?

With the exam season coming to an end, we thought we would share with you this recent article sent to us from our E-Safety support team.

From my own experience, my selfie-stick loving step children have taken to using special apps in search of more followers on instagram because in their words 'you're really unpopular if you have no followers'. They are 9 and 12. Following on from that, I know of adults too that use these apps to increase their online profiles status by 'buying up' followers and likes. In an attempt to appear more successful and more popular in job hunting for example. The superlatives echo our need to feel accepted and looked up to. Are we all guilty? Do we all in fact feel the same pressures?

Students can have literally 24 hours a day of constant contact, photos, statuses and texts at the touch of a button. This can be a particular problem when students fall out and where it was previously left at school gates, now students complain of an inescapable virtual presence at every turn. And in an environment where students can have in excess of hundreds of friends

and followers, every thought and picture is scrutinised, judged and commented on. I feel for them a great deal. As an 80's child, I am so pleased that our school years weren't filled with selfies and status updates and instead was just being nagged for spending a mere 5 minutes on a landline.

Scarily, it's now reported that kids can spend up to 44 hours a week in front of smart phones and tablets, with a further 23% admitting to some sort of addiction to games and social media. Knowing this applies to at least half of my class, it's apparent how addiction and pressure to keep 'in the social media loop' is a complete distraction from real life and provides some sort of escapism.

So, looking forward, what can we do to alleviate these pressures and refocus children? I think firstly lead by example, I know I am guilty of scrolling through my phone during downtimes, it's important to show we can have self control and abide by no phone/tablet times - even though initially this would be unpopular it does provide an alternative focus from technology and gives a chance for free time to be 'uncontaminated'.

We can encourage students to turn off notifications from social media sites, if, every time the screen flashes up with another picture or status update, the young person is so tempted to stop what they're doing and then be drawn back into the cycle. If you spend 30 seconds scrolling the internet it will then take you at least 5 minutes to fully re-engage in what you were doing beforehand.

Transition 2015

As unbelievable as it seems, we are at the stage of the year where preparations are being made for the smooth transition of our Year 8 students from their middle school to The Duchess's Community High School.

Data has been received, transition meetings have been held with lead staff in each feeder school and parents of Year 8 students have been met with an effort to best support each of the 250+ students starting with us in September.

The 2nd July sees our Transition Day where students will spend the day with their new form tutor, getting to know the school and being set challenges to enable new relationships to be forged with both staff and peers.

From 6pm, parents will come in to meet the form tutor and get a chance to learn about the daily routine, speak to uniform providers, school transport and the school canteen.

It is a busy, but important time of the year where we have a strong sense of wanting to 'get it right' for the new students so that they can excel as a member of The Duchess's Community High School community.

Schoolcomms

Improving Links with School

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our links with you and keep everyone up-to-date and well informed. As sending written information home is sometimes unreliable; we have decided to implement Schoolcomms, an electronic school communication system. This will enable you to receive all your information from school quickly and reliably. We can send letters by email to your inbox and short messages directly to your mobile phone as a text message, or if you have an Apple or Android mobile phone, by app message.

You will:

- Receive letters more reliably and promptly
- See letters in your inbox like any other email
- Get a short text or app message if we need to contact you urgently
- Still get paper letters if you don't have email
- Not need to rely on your child for delivery
- Be able to reply by email, text or app message, and be able to send us any reasons for absence via text, email or app message

We can:

- Send more letters and information
- Save money on admin time, printing and paper
- Contact you urgently when necessary

Next steps:

1. The school will use the email address and mobile number that we hold for the Priority one contact(s). If you are not certain that we have your correct details, please inform the school either by email (schoolcomms@dchs-alnwick.org) or by contacting the school office on 01665 602166
2. If you do not have an Apple or Android device, skip to step 6
3. Go to your app store and search for "School Gateway" and download the app
4. Once downloaded, select the "I'm a New User" button; enter your email address and mobile number that we have on record for you. Select

Send PIN and a PIN number will be text to your mobile phone

5. Log in with your email address and the PIN, your account is now active and you will receive instant notifications of messages in your notifications bar
6. If you change your contact details please let the school know as soon as possible

Schoolcomms is registered with the data protection act. All information you provide will be kept private and will not be passed on to any other organisation. Your details will only be used for the purpose of school business. You will not receive any SPAM or marketing material.

FAQ for Parents

How will the emails get to me and what will they look like?

The emails will arrive in your inbox at your email address just like any other email and will have the name of your child's school in the 'From' box

Will I get any advertising or SPAM?

No, the contact details are not shared with anyone except the administrator in your child's school. You will only receive messages from Schoolcomms that have been sent by your school

What if I change my email address or mobile phone number?

Your school uses your details from their database. Please contact the school directly and inform them of any changes to your contact details

Can I reply to emails or texts?

For emails, click on the 'Reply' button and send your message. Alternatively your email from school may give a specific address to reply to in the body of the message.

For text messages click on reply and send your message. Some schools may have this function switched off

You may wish to save the text reply number in your mobile phone contacts list. You will only be charged your normal text message rate or it may be included in your free bundle

NB: you can only reply to the school from the email address or mobile number that is linked to the school. This helps prevent spam and nuisance messages

Will I get a message for each of my children?

If the message is identical, then duplicates will be removed and you will only get one copy to any one email address or phone number. If the message is personalised, and contains the name

of your child, you will get one for each of your children concerned

I don't want to get electronic communications

Contact the school and ask them to flag your name as opted out. Then you will only receive paper messages

For issues or problems, do not hesitate to email: schoolcomms@dchs-alnwick.org or follow the link on our website



Ecuador Expedition

Going to the Amazon Rainforest has been a dream of mine for rather a long time and nearly two years ago now, I decided I had to do something about making that dream a reality.

I started to investigate trips to South America and was directed to Richard Wood - a qualified World Challenge leader, from whom the Ecuador expedition has grown.

The team is made up of six Year 13 students (Alice Hall-Thomas, Caitlin Wood, Catherine Walker, Laura Dorothy, Laura Leadbitter and Millie Harrop) all happy to go along with my crazy vision, and from just the spark of an idea we have made it happen. Numerous fundraising events and countless kind donations have all contributed to the venture, so we are now finally ready to jet off to Ecuador for a month!

We will be flying out on the 2nd July and trekking into the Amazon jungle to stay with a village of the Shuar people. Whilst there, we will be visiting the school to teach English, as well as taking out some much-needed resources to give to them - hopefully having an impact on the lives of

those in the village, as well as learning from them ourselves.

As well as this jungle phase, we will also be experiencing more of Ecuador, such as completing a challenging 4 day trek in the mountains with some local guides and staying a night in the capital - Quito. Final preparations are now being made, the last pieces of kit bought and everyone is raring to go. It's hard to believe that something which started as just the glimmer of an idea is now so huge and almost upon us!

Here's to hoping we're not devoured by jaguars, alligators or anything else lurking in the bushes!

Adios!

Catherine Walker



SPORT

Boys Sports Report

Cricket

The term started with an enjoyable trip down to Barnard Castle School in Durham for the u.15 cricket team to compete in the regional round of the county champions trophy. DCHS bowled first and managed to restrict the opposition to 145 all out. The pick of the bowlers were **Tom Harrop** with 3 for 27 and **Oli Tulip** who took 2 for 27. In reply the school collapsed to 68 all out in the face of accurate bowling and tight fielding. Following on from this game sees the school un-beaten with comfortable wins against Ashington, St Thomas More and Berwick. They have also reached the semi finals of the County Cup as they defend the trophy from last year.



U.15 CRICKET TEAM

The new u.14 team have some very promising cricketers in their ranks which has helped them perform successfully this term. Notable performances have come from **Matisse Richards, Leon Midgley** and **Jamie Comber**. All 3 have made valuable contributions with both bat and ball. They are also enjoying a good cup run and have reached the County Cup quarter finals.



U.14 CRICKET TEAM



LEON MIDGLEY
BATTING

Athletics

The school has achieved success in the local athletics competitions this year. Qualifiers from the area competition include:

Ben Kelly (1500m)

Will Aitchison (200m)

Josh Breeds (200m)

Brandon Mallaburn (100m + shot)

Dan Fletcher (400m)

Gregor Sharp (discus and hammer)

Dallin Jorgenson (javelin and high jump)

Brandon Crombie (high jump)

Jack Balmbro (100m + 200m)

Lewis Smart (long jump)

Leon Midgley (javelin)

Phil Winkler (800m)

These boys move on to the county championships at Gateshead.



BRANDON
MALLABURN IN
THE SHOT

Golf

The school's long tradition in golf continued again in 2015. At the Northumberland Schools Golf Association Championships this year **Ben Kelly** won the Nett award shooting 79-14=65. This was good enough to rank him number 1 in that section of the tournament. Other entries in this prestigious competition were **Luke Denny, Aidan Topham, Sam Thompson, Marc Friar** and **Connor Thompson**, all of whom played with a high degree of competency on the day.



BEN KELLY
WITH HIS
NSGA
TROPHY

Girls Sports Report

Athletics

At the 2 major events so far, English Schools Cup and Area Championships, 35 girls competed for the school.

Area

Due to excellent performances at the area competition the following 17 girls were selected to compete for North Northumberland at the County Championships at Gateshead on June 13th.

Jess Barnaby and **Philippa Kane** performed so well in competition taking second and first place respectively and the County Champion Titles in their respective events. They now go on to represent Northumberland at the Inter-Counties at Gateshead on the 20th June. **Well Done!**

Sophie Bronze will also compete at the English Schools Finals at Gateshead in July. She comfortably got the qualifying standard in 3 events but has chosen to compete in the Shot.

Junior

Jess Duffy: 800m
Eve Buddle: 1500m
Ciara Healey: 200m
Katie Hilton: 100m & Hurdles
Holly Mossman: Discus
Izzy Nowell: HJ
Kitty Lindley: Shot.

Inters

Sophie Robinson: 800m

Jenny Bolam: 800m
Amy Lawson: 200m & 300m
Jess Barnaby: 100m & Hurdles
Larissa Brown: 100m
Amy Thorne: Javelin
Becky Stephenson: HJ & TJ
Lily Robson: HJ
Becca Reed: 1500m.

Seniors

Sophie Bronze: Hurdles & HJ
Phily Kane: Javelin.

At the English School Cup Competition first round the Duchess team were fifth.

Tyne & Wear competition is on Wed 17th June at Monkton Stadium where a team of 10 inters will compete against Newcastle schools. Good Luck.

Year 7 Sports Day

To be held on the 3rd July.

Over 50 Year 9, Year 12 Leadership students, and Year 10 GCSE students will be organising the event involving 250 middle school athletes.

Rounders

Friendly matches and tournaments are arranged throughout the summer. Rounders is particularly popular and 20 girls regularly turn up for practice each week.

2 teams of Year 9/10 combined competed against Berwick for a place in Finals of The Northumberland School Games at Cramlington on 24th June. Duchess girls were triumphant, soundly beating Berwick 26-14. Well done to Captain **Becky Stephenson** who did a marvellous job organising everybody.

Sports Dinner: celebrating success

Friday 15th May saw 130 of our talented sports people all dressed up to celebrate their successes on the sporting field. They tucked into a delicious buffet at the rugby club and enjoyed the speeches by their captains and cheered at the awards given.



Football

We entered 2 teams in the Tyne and Wear 7 aside U15 competition. With both teams playing each other in the final it was a dead cert that the Duchess girls were going to take the trophy!

A fantastic result!

7 A SIDE
FOOTBALL:
YEAR 9 WINNERS



7 A SIDE
FOOTBALL:
YEAR 10
RUNNERS UP

GREAVES GRINDLE

Chartered Accountants

Victoria House, Bondgate Within, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1TA

Telephone: 01665 510222 / 603460

Important Calendar Dates

Friday, June 26	Y7 Stem Day University Open Day – Newcastle/Northumbria Y11 Prom
Monday, June 29	Y12 Work Experience Week begins
Thursday, July 2	Y8 Intake Day
Friday, July 3	Y7 Sports Day
Monday, July 6	Y10 Mock Exams (all week)
Tuesday, July 15	Y10 Presentation Evening
Thursday, July 16	Y9 Presentation Evening
Friday, July 17	Non School Uniform Day and school closes for Summer Holidays
Thursday, August 13	AS/A2 Results: A2 from 8.00 am/AS from 10.00 am until noon
Thursday, August 20	GCSE Results – from 9.00 am until 2.00 pm
Tuesday, September 1	Training Day

2015 – 2016 beginning of term

Wednesday, September 2	Y9 and Y12 students only (Y12 for period 1, 2 & 3 only) – 8.50am
Thursday, September 3	Y9, Y10, Y11 and Y13 students only – 8.50 am
Friday, September 4	All students in school – 8.50 am

Advanced notice of next academic year's holidays!

Training Day (no students in school)	Tuesday, 22 September 2015
Training Day (no students in school)	Friday, 23 October 2015
Autumn Half Term	Monday 26 – Friday 30 October 2015
Christmas/New Year	Monday 21 December – Friday 1 January 2016
Training Day (no students in school)	Monday 4 January 2016
Spring Half Term	Monday 15 – Friday 19 February 2016
Easter	Friday 25 March – Friday 8 April 2016
Training Day (no students in school)	Friday 29 April 2016
Summer Half Term	Monday 30 – Friday 3 June 2016
Summer 2016	School ends on Wednesday 20 July 2016