

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, ALNWICK

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017



art & photography: page 10

Headteacher's Report



Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter.

Prior to writing this piece I looked back over the last three years of newsletter editions. It is lovely to see the positive picture they provide about our school in terms of breadth of opportunity and how they portray so many of our young people in such a positive light. They are all available on our website.

It has been an exciting and, on occasions, challenging few months since we moved into our new build. As I have said before there is no doubt that the school runs more smoothly and more effectively in our new buildings. We have been able to increase the variety of opportunities that our students can access and spend more time on what happens in the classroom rather than dealing with leakages, smelly toilets and inadequate heating. One point worth noting however is the fact that students can now spend all of their school day inside the building whereas before they had to do quite a lot of walking and getting fresh air; something we may give further consideration to as we move into Spring. We don't really want to be going from one extreme to another!

You will all be aware of the complexities of sorting out the extension. We are just as disappointed as you are that we have another issue to tackle at a time when we all wanted things to run smoothly. It is likely that building will begin in April and we will make sure that we keep you all informed of its progress as well as arrange opportunities for you to come in and be updated as to how we will plan to operate prior to its completion. We will put your children first in every decision we make.

One area that has proved impossible to

move on over the last few months is that of Lettings, both after school and at weekends. I know there are a number of community groups who are keen to access our facilities. I am afraid that there is so much going on at present that it is unlikely that we will be able to move forward during this academic year. Issues such as security, staffing, extra costs and documentation are all things we are yet to finalise and with further building works and temporary accommodation on the horizon we feel that all of our time and effort need to be put into getting things right for our students during the school day.

Being more than half way through the school year, we have to turn our attention to the coming exam season which starts, in earnest, from the middle of May (less than 5 schools weeks away!). So many changes to keep up to speed with; New English (all exam, no coursework) and Maths GCSEs – both graded 1 to 9 instead of A* to G, new A Level specifications and the continued removal of AS exams counting towards final grades, and significant changes to BTEC courses with many now involving an exam component. In many ways these are only the start to the changes that will be taking place over the next 2 to 3 years. It will be 2020 before we are out the other side!

Success in exams can only happen for our students if parents and colleagues can work together to a) get students to recognise their importance and b) be organised enough to put good quality preparation in prior to the exam themselves. Please contact us if you need any help to 'switch on' your child or you have concerns that they may be 'switching off'! Our good press this year and

our results from last year show we can make a difference... but only if we work together.

A few weeks ago there was an interesting article in one of the weekend newspapers entitled 'How to future-proof your child'. It included 25 ways parents can help their children of today operate in the world of tomorrow. Over the next three Newsletters we will include a number of these. I am not saying I absolutely agree with all of them but they do generate debate. Here are the titles of the first set of eight. Details about each one can be found in a separate article within this Newsletter:

- Teach children that hard work pays
- Lead by example
- Help them to listen
- Dare to be different
- Talk about their feelings
- Promote Digital Literacy
- Restrict their screen time
- Send them to bed

As a parent myself I am not sure how I would prioritise all of these. However, what I do know is that they all give food for thought; particularly as we move to also supporting our Year 7 and 8s from September.

Digital Literacy is especially important. It worries me that many of us are struggling in the battle of supporting our children in their use of social media. It simply is not supportive to allow them free reign to use social media when and how they please. It will do little to help family cohesion. We are always available to help support any family who asks for help in this area.

As you will see from this Newsletter there are many many positives about being a student in our school community. I look forward to these expanding further with the changes to our age range. We are always looking for more opportunities for our young people so if you have ideas or experiences that you feel we can gain from then please get in touch as individuals, community groups or businesses.

Exciting times lie ahead.

Best wishes,

Maurice Hall, Headteacher

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FAME

CREATIVE ARTS TEAM

Photos courtesy of Jane Coltman/Northumberland Gazette



'LIGHTING UP THE SKY LIKE A FLAME!'

On Saturday 11th March 2017 after a 5 show sell out run 'Fame' closed to a standing ovation and brought down the curtain on another highly successful year for the Creative Arts areas with their public performances at The Alnwick Payhouse.

Quick maths shows us that over the course of the year over 2000 people attended either '1984' or 'Fame' and supported our highly talented young people. This is a real testament to the community support and parental engagement with what we try to do in the creative arts. 'Fame' saw over 40% of the cast making their stage debuts and reinforced what a fabulous production line this community has in the areas, of acting, dance and music! It has been a wonderful year once again with some stand out performances and some memorable moments and it has been terrific to see so many young people growing in confidence, ambition and skill. Once again the band this year was made up entirely of students as was the backstage, lighting, sound and front of house teams. Promotional materials and videos were also produced by the young people of our school and it is an important reminder for us all about the talent that we are so lucky to work with.

We are proud of our Artsmark Gold status, of our mention in Tatler and the increased interest in would be musicians, dancers and performers wanting to join our school. It was wonderful to see The Alnwick Gazette Reviewer refer to 'Fame' as 'the best production she had seen in 10 years of writing for the Northumberland Gazette and its sister papers'.

Thank you to all that supported us over the course of this year. We are already planning for our 2017-2018 shows and we are excited about the new talent we will get when we become an 11-18 school. See you all in November!



I joined DCHS in January. I have found the staff and students to be extremely welcoming which has helped me to transition into my new role as subject lead for Health & Social Care and Childcare.

I attended DCHS as a student from 1998-2003 and after leaving 6th form I studied BSc Food Science and Nutrition at Northumbria University.

Prior to training to become a Teacher I worked for Cavaghan & Gray, part of Northern Foods plc based in Cumbria. Cavaghan & Gray supplied chilled ready meals to Marks & Spencer and ASDA. My first role within the company was in development working as a Process Development Technologist. I progressed within the company to become a Factory Technologist. I worked closely with my team, monitoring the safety and quality of the food produced on site.

Throughout my time in the food industry I gained hands on experience in cooking, processing, microbiology and nutrition. A number of products that I developed and launched are still sold in M&S and ASDA.

I qualified as a Teacher in 2010, and took up a post at the Northumberland Church of England Academy in Ashington where I taught KS3, 4 & 5 Food Technology, Health & Social Care and Childcare for over 6 years. Since qualifying I have wanted to work at the DCHS, so I was thrilled when the position was advertised last year. Many of my teachers from my student years are now my colleagues. It has been wonderful to reconnect with them.

My husband and I live locally and our daughter Charlotte turns four this month. Baby Bettaney No. 2 is due to arrive the first week in July. **Natalie Bettaney.**

Ways To FUTURE PROOF your children



Teach them hard work pays

Don't jump in to help with their homework, and reward them only when they have truly worked hard. It's essential for young people to experience the feelings of satisfaction and achievement that accompany hard graft. Society has become so set on achieving a healthy work-life balance that the younger generation has become work-shy, according to Simon Sinek. They leave work on the dot yet wonder why they're not moving up the career ladder.

Lead by example

Children mimic their parents. "If you want them to grow up well adjusted, you must first evaluate yourself," says Sinek. This means modelling social skills to help your

child get on in the world: eye contact, positive body language, good manners and consistency in your behaviour. "If you've banned your children from having phones in the bedroom, don't have yours by your bed", he says.

Help them to listen

The simple act of listening is invaluable in today's changing workplace, according to Hugh Milward. "Nurture their fascination with ideas and concepts", he says. "An inquisitive child is nearly always a good listener".

Restrict their screen time

It is unreasonable to think you can ban screens entirely but you must restrict their usage to protect your child from the social pressures that accompany them, insists Saddleton. Time Tokens (timetokens.com) is a scheme whereby children can "buy" screen time from their parents using vouchers. Sinek urges parents to enforce a rule banning phones from the kitchen table. "A phone on the table at dinner or in a meeting gives a subconscious message that you have more important people to talk to", he says. "Phones are highly addictive, like gambling, alcohol and nicotine, and so you need to use them in moderation".

Dare to be different

Encourage your child to have an opinion, and a thought process through which they have arrived at it, says Laura Hinton of PwC. "Employers are impressed by this, even if they don't agree", she says. Parents should also support their children to do things differently from their friends, adds Sinek. It will build their confidence.

Talk about their feelings

However unnatural it feels, you need to tell your child that it is OK to feel sad, angry or nervous rather than trying to make things better for them. Research by the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence suggests youngsters who can label their emotions and articulate them grow up to be happier, healthier, higher-achieving students who make better decisions in their lives and relationships. "Emotions are the drivers of attention, decision-making, relationships and our health," says Mark Brackett, director of the Yale centre and founder of RULER, an emotional health programme that is being adopted by schools across Britain (ei.yale.edu/ruler).

Promote digital literacy

Even if your child has no interest in becoming a software engineer, the ability to think analytically and sequentially will help them in a world where technology is a fundamental part of life. Coding is now part of the national curriculum but parents should also be promoting it at home. There are apps and games available to show children that coding can be creative and fun while Code Club (codeclub.org.uk) runs after-school clubs for 9 to 11 year olds.

Send them to bed

Be strict about bedtime, says Saddleton. Sleep has proven advantages for memory and performance and recent research has suggested that long-term sleep deprivation can increase the risk of heart disease, obesity and cancer. A minimum of eight to nine hours' sleep on school nights is recommended for teenagers by the NHS – and if we also turn out our own lights at a reasonable hour, that will only help to make parenting easier.

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Northumberland County Council

**Education Welfare Service
Child Employment**

Did you know that?

All children from the age of 13 years and who are working must be registered with the Local Authority and be issued with a work permit.

It is an offence for an employer to employ children without registering with the local authority first.

The numbers of hours you can work whilst attending school are restricted. Children must not work before 7am and after 7pm.

Any children working without a permit is not covered by their employer's liability insurance.

If your child is working please ensure that an application form for a work permit is completed.

More information and application forms can be obtained from:
Education Welfare
Virtual Schools
Education and Skills Service
Wellbeing & Community Health
Services Group

Brunel Building, 64 Regent Street, Blyth
NE24 1LT

Telephone: **01670 622800**

&PHOTOGRAPHY art

Another busy term has passed for Art and Photography; as well as preparing for the imminent Art Exams for GCSE and A Level, we have been able to offer a wealth of exciting curricular and extra-curricular activities. Sixth form have been busy preparing portfolios for interviews at a wide range of Art and Design University destinations whilst year 11 ponder their creative options for next year.

Year 9 students produced a wonderful installation of Artwork reflecting upon Holocaust Memorial Day which as I write is currently on display in the School Library. Students from every Year 9 class created mixed pieces which were then presented together to commemorate the Holocaust.

Charlotte Walton of Year 9 was a winner in the Bailiffgate Museum's Art Competition, which celebrates the exhibition of Harry Potter illustrations, and her work, along with other winners, will be displayed with the work of illustrator Jim Kay from Friday 17th March for 3 months. **Congratulations Charlotte!**

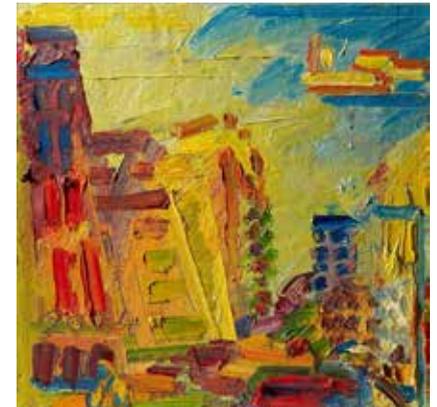
Year 10 are currently participating in not one but two exciting projects; Miss Hynes' Year 10 are applying their Art and Design skills in collaboration with The Alnwick Playhouse to renovate dressing rooms and bathrooms. This is a great chance for students to do a live project and to see how Art is applied to the real world in a practical way, it is also a chance for

students to work towards an extra qualification through a Bronze Arts Award. Year 10s from Art, Photography and English are also collaborating with the Laing Art Gallery and Artist Nicola Maxwell on a project called ARTiculate, which will lead up to students work being exhibited at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle later in the year. The project is a visual literacy project which will, as well as being an amazing creative opportunity, enable students to develop skills and confidence to support them across the curriculum. We're looking forward to showing work which shows how Art and Creative English don't just live in a subject box but cross thoughtfully into each other. Details on the exhibition to follow!

Our GCSE students in Year 11 benefitted from another visit to the Laing Art Gallery and the Great North Museum: Hancock on a cold day in the first week of January. We were exceptionally proud of the way our students worked in both venues, where they had drawing and mark making workshops responding to the museum's collection, and had a morning exploring the Laing's galleries, where no less than four separate exhibitions were showing. A splendid exhibition called "Out of Chaos", which amongst other work showed the work of displaced and persecuted people in particular generated some very thoughtful ideas in our students. Students created masses of drawings and photographs which have all gone towards supporting their



CHARLOTTE WALTON
WINNER IN THE BAILIFFGATE MUSEUM'S
ART COMPETITION



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art CONTINUED

GCSE Exam work which is due to be completed at the end of the month.

Finally, our set design team, with a special mention to **Lucy Middleton** and **Megan Hallows** of Year 12, have been outstanding in their creative work for Fame; the whole team has worked tirelessly to create a fantastic set and props. Needless to say, we are extremely proud of their work which has added so much to the production. We could not have done it without the team!

Mr Richard Hay

ACTING HEAD OF ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY



Pieces from the Holocaust Memorial Day Exhibition



E-SAFETY IN THE NEWS



Can selfies affect a child's mental health?

The desire to explore and manipulate our identity is a normal process of development and underpins much of the appearance-driven behaviour that we see amongst young people.

Up until recently, this was done in front of the mirror; experimenting with clothes, hairstyles and makeup. More recently the selfie has begun to play a role.

While there is a benefit to articulating one's identity and getting feedback from one's peer group, the problem is that doing this via selfies means that this feedback group, which reflects back to us how we appear, has increased and with it the uncertainty of how we are perceived, and valued, by others.

The process of posting the 'perfect selfie'

The act of taking multiple photos, scanning them in order to reject the unflattering ones, then editing them, whether through the use of filters or other apps, is literally an exercise in poor body image. To compound this further, once this process is complete, we then post the selfie for all to see and comment on- and so begins the painful wait for the accumulation of likes that will hopefully (temporarily) allow us to feel ok about the 'self' we have created.

This access to up to date research on how we are received and where we stand socially can be debilitating- especially for young people where peer acceptance is paramount. The process is like having

a global focus group providing running commentary on who you are and the decisions you make.

The worrying thing about this kind of exposure to others' beliefs is that there is no end to it. If what others think or believe about you matters and your visibility is not something that you can control then maybe you will never be able to firmly say who you are.

There will always be another like or comment or share ready to unsettle you – and if we are conscious of this, that's when you lose the freedom to be you or to know who you want to be – and ultimately you begin to feel that you can never live up to the selfie they've created.

Using selfies as a comparison tool

The other issue, of course, is the fact that selfies are used as a means for comparison – a ruler to see how we measure up to our peers. More often than not these are images that reflect their subjects in the most positive light: the right angle, perfect lighting, amazing friends, always having fun.

Lasting impression of selfies

Being exposed to idealised images day after day would have an effect on anyone, but on young minds, it can leave a more lasting impression that is much harder to shake off. When you're faced with a constant stream of images showing perfect bodies in perfect locations with perfect friends, it's hard not to avoid a sense of inadequacy and the feeling that you're not keeping up. Those feelings can eat away at self-confidence and self-

esteem, but avoiding social media isn't really an option when all of your friends' lives are playing out on there.

What parents can do to help

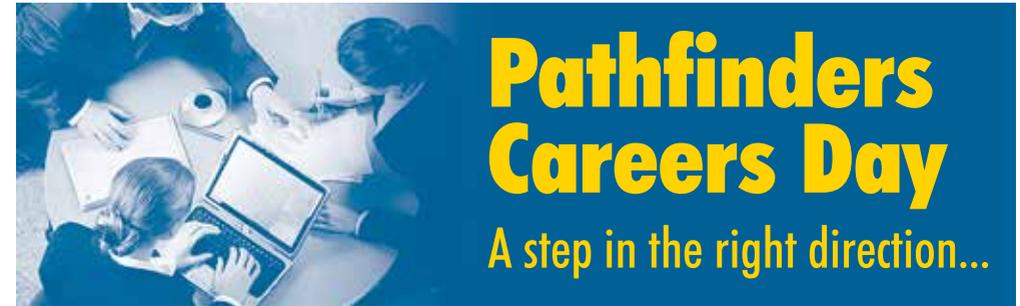
Talk to your children. As adults, we understand that the world of social media, just like any other form of media, is stage-managed, but often we forget to reinforce that message to children. Explain that people aren't perfect and talk to them about people who are posting – who's taking all of these perfect pictures? How many shots do you think they took to get that perfect angle?

Likewise, it's just as important to talk to them about what they're posting so they don't get sucked into the cult of perfection. Real life is what you see all around you, not just what you see through the filtered lens of an iPhone. Discuss why it's important to disconnect from the 'constructed' identities we all feel we need to develop online and underscore the notion of being free to be who you really are.

Keep an eye on who they're following on sites like Instagram and what they're posting and talk to them about the effect their images could have on other people.

Useful links:

-  www.thinkuknow.co.uk
-  www.internetmatters.org/
-  www.commonsemmedia.org/
-  www.childnet.com/
-  www.e-safetysupport.com
-  Ceop.police.uk



Wednesday 22nd March 2017 was a significant day for the young people of our school and, as the day ended, there was a real buzz and excitement about what opportunities had been offered by visiting employers.

Working alongside Gill Barrett and Margaret Unsworth of Pathfinders, our careers day brought together 37 local and national businesses and higher education providers and colleges to meet with all the young people across all year groups in our school to talk employability skills and jobs. Alongside the opportunity to meet real employers, our students had their timetables stopped for the day and they had the opportunity to focus on key skill sets, and discuss the current labour market in the north east. Everyone also spent some time considering what good CVs and covering letters might look like and to discuss what their dreams and ambitions were and crucially what the 'real world' of work needed from them.

Our school aim when we relocated to this part of the town was to build positive working relationships with local businesses and to give as many opportunities as we could to celebrate the potential talent of our young people and for our local businesses to have the opportunity of tapping into that talent.

It is fair to say that the atmosphere and discussions were highly positive and many businesses who have attended other careers events talked about how our students engagement, interest and questioning were some of the best that they had encountered.

We are delighted that this event has proved so successful with some students already getting part time jobs or work experience from the contacts they made. It is just the first step in our plans to make sure that every student at DCHS is employability ready by the time they leave us pursuing whatever career they desire. A big thank you from us all to the businesses who attended and a massive well done for the interest and engagement of our young people!

FORESTERS

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and at 41 Queen Street, Amble 01665 710424

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CONTAGIOUS CHAPLAINCY TEAM

Contagious is a local Christian charity, set up by the churches in Alnwick to support young people. The charity already works in the First (now Primary) and Middle schools in Alnwick.

DCHS is pleased that in the new year a Chaplaincy Team will be available to support the school community. Chris and Caroline Friend who are known to many in Alnwick,

are training for ministry and while in training will regularly visit school to offer support to individuals and groups. Between them they have experience of mentoring, counselling including bereavement counselling, supporting children in care and young people who are themselves carers.

In addition to working with the Directors of Learning who will identify young people who will benefit from their support, Chris and Caroline will be available to have an input into assemblies and some PHSE lessons.

The school is grateful for the support of Contagious and looks forward to welcoming Chris and Caroline into the school community.



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INDUSTRIAL LINKS REPORT

Many of the courses we offer in Design & Technology increasingly refer to 'real world' situations to help put the students' learning in context. In D&T we have always tried to maintain strong links with industries both locally and further afield in order to give our students similar opportunities to those students in schools closer to centres of industry.

Around 30 keen Year 9 students were recently able to visit the Nissan plant to experience the highly automated factory floor environment first hand and to see how the cars that we drive around in every day, are manufactured and assembled. Nineteen Year 13 students who study automation as part of their Engineering course, were also able to look specifically at modern manufacturing methods in the Nissan manufacturing plant.

We also have a long established link with the Caterpillar plant in Peterlee, where students can relate to some of the manufacturing techniques used to assemble much larger earth moving vehicles. Listening to students, standing next to articulated vehicles with tyres that are taller than them, talking about how the skills that they are learning in school can also be used to manufacture products on a much larger scale is very encouraging.

Whilst it is great to be able to have links with large scale manufacturing, we are equally grateful to our local companies such as Metrology Software Products for sponsorship of the Greenpower project, Blackshaws Garage for their willingness to loan parts and staff and Pure Fishing and Drone Ops, with whom we hope to develop future links. A recent visit from Blackshaws Garage brought the Nissan Leaf onto site for our Year 11 students to have a 'close-up' look at the technology going into this vehicle; even more relevant when the presentation was given by ex-students Ross Straughan and Euan Dawson.

We believe in making the students' learning real. We like to think that we have a good relationship with our industrial partners and it is these experiences that are invaluable to the students as they can see their learning in context and for many students, a possible future career path. It is particularly rewarding for us when former students are prepared to come back into school and share their experiences with the young people who may be about to embark on similar career journeys.

Craig Watson





Public Services Careers Day



Duchess's High School recently held a Public Services Careers Fair for Year 9, 10, 11 and Sixth Form students, giving them the opportunity to broaden their thinking about their future careers and courses of study.

A variety of public services were represented – including the armed forces, Police, Fire, Ambulance, Merchant Navy and Coast guard – with 18 guests attending in all. We even had a display from the Police dogs which was a great success. Students were able to take part in one-to-one discussions with the professionals, asking relevant questions to build up a picture of the particular area they were representing. All students benefitted enormously from the huge amount of knowledge and experience that was available to them, gaining exposure to a number of different career options they

may not otherwise have considered.

Last year we only had the armed services, which was an enormous success, however feedback from parents and students suggested that we should expand on this and give all students the opportunity to attend. Mr Neale Brown, Head of Public Services Course, said 'These events allow our students to gain information to make informed decisions on how they should plan their future. It is essential that they have every opportunity to find out what is best for them and be able to ask questions'.

Another Careers Fair is being planned for later in March, which include local companies and businesses and will be open to all students and parents.

STEM EVENTS IN SCIENCE

It's been an exciting year in Science already with the number of STEM events that students have been involved in.

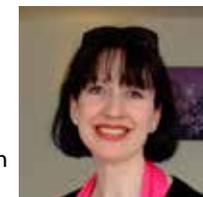
We have immersed ourselves in 'Science Technology Engineering and Maths' (STEM) opportunities with various focuses on Practical Skills, Employability, Science Understanding, and Careers pathways.



This year we have forged even stronger links with the University of Newcastle who have brought ambassadors and speakers to the school, including talks on Crime Map Psychology to our Applied Science students. The Chemistry department again engaged in the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) Olympiad and our Year 13 students were once again superb and hugely successful. Some of the other highlights so far have included:

Visit from the President of the Royal College of Pathologists, Dr Suzy Lishman:

We were fortunate enough to welcome Dr Lishman to the school who held seminars with our Year 10 students and our Sixth Form Biology students.



The seminars were superb opportunities for our future medics, pathologists, midwives, forensic scientists and beyond, to find out what life is like working in the NHS with real life anecdotes of University life, career paths and choices, areas of study and experiences that Dr Lishman had encountered on her way to the top of her profession as President of the College Pathologists. We heard about the surprising role of a pathologist and how it impacts on the present day and the reliance on them by many other occupations in the NHS. Students asked fantastic questions that led to a demonstration of how to remove a human brain for analysis! We are looking forward to a return visit when students will be performing an autopsy.

Newcastle University: Sixth Form Biology Workshops

All Year 12 and 13 Biology students took the opportunity to attend a host of workshops at Newcastle University which has now become an annual event. These give useful insights into life at a University but particularly gives students valuable experience of working in a laboratory and using specialist equipment like micro-pipettes, centrifuges, and gel electrophoresis kits. Students found out about how the Immune system defends against different pathogens, how DNA can be analysed for paternity testing or forensic crime scene evidence, how urine samples are used in medical diagnosis, and simulating how humans give birth.

STEM ambassadors visit: Dentistry and Genetics

Year 10 students became apprentice Dentists for a morning and made model casts for human teeth and even had a go at extracting teeth!! With a little more practice we may have some future dental practitioners! Messy fun and very engaging! The students also got to talk to the ambassadors about life at University and the career pathways that they could make in science.

Year 13 students put their understanding of Genetics into practice and gained further experience of using specialist lab equipment when they carried out a Polymerase Chain Reaction method. Great support for their current studies preparing them for the summer exams.

Centre for Life: DNA workshop

Year 12 Applied Science students put their practical skills into practice during a DNA workshop at the Centre for Life to support their learning. They were able to use restriction enzymes to digest samples of DNA and then carry out separation of DNA fragments using gel electrophoresis plates and view their genetic fingerprints using UV light. So many skills on display and we clearly have some budding Forensic Scientists in our year 12 cohort.

We will be looking forward to more STEM activities in the Summer term when we will have the Ecology Field Trip for A Level Biologists, a trip to Edinburgh Zoo to look at the role of Genetics in Conservation, and of course this Easter brings the immensely exciting Iceland Trip for Biologists and Geography students.

GREAVES GRINDLE

Chartered Accountants

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

Telephone: 01665 510222 / 603460

Tell us about medical needs and medication!

We keep records in school of information supplied to us by parents/ carers to enable us to support students with medical conditions. Details of the full policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, are on our website as well as copies of forms to complete should your child need medication while at school. Please read the information and complete the relevant forms if your child has a condition we should be aware of. It is your responsibility to inform us of any condition, change to a condition or medication for your child.



SIXTH FORM HELPER

Rachel Allan, Year 12



For my Community Service, every week on Friday afternoons I take a group of 12 Year 9s (which changes each term) to Hillcrest residential and nursing home. It's fairly local as it's only a twenty minute walk from the school. The Year 9s selected have chosen to do community work as further enrichment, and I have chosen to do it for volunteering experience. We talk to the residents, asking them questions about their childhood and life experiences. A lot of them suffer from dementia and so the questions help to refresh their memories. We also paint their nails, do quizzes with them, encourage them to do art, among other things. The activities are designed to keep them occupied, and I feel they have improved the Year 9s ability to make conversation, have empathy and patience, and it has improved their confidence around elderly people. It's good to see how over time the Year 9s have developed natural conversations with the elderly and I do believe there is now mutual respect and understanding between both sectors of our society. We as youngsters have a greater appreciation of what the elderly have done in their lives, which were so different to ours when they were young teenagers, and hopefully they can see us in a far more caring light. You can see that in the end they have enjoyed the experience.

SEND EXTERNAL REVIEW

In February this year the school SEND department welcomed an external review panel for a day consisting of Alan Carrick (Northumberland Commissioner for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) and Christine Inskster (Education Consultant). As part of the review day the team observed lessons within school, examined data on attendance and progress, met with members of the SEND support staff and also spoke with both students and parents of students with additional needs.

The day yielded many positive points and highlighted areas in which many of our staff go above and beyond the normal expectations to try and support the learning of all students in their classes. Following the visit we received a formal review report to support the verbal feedback and discussions held on the day and we thought we would take this opportunity to share with you the main commentaries from the review.

The report highlights the following areas as being of particular strength within our school:

Students with education, health and care plans and those with a statement of special educational needs achieve well compared to similar students nationally because of the good levels of support they receive.

Students in the sixth-form are ambitious for their futures and some are gaining places at universities or colleges. They are well-prepared for their future education, employment or training.

Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing through effective marking and feedback of their work and through the aspirational targets they are set. This enables them to 'move on' successfully in their learning.

Students display positive attitudes to learning and there was a calm, purposeful atmosphere in lessons observed during the visit.

There are strengths in the leadership and management of special educational needs. Parents spoken to during the visit endorsed this view, indicating that the special educational needs coordinator and a number of staff 'go the extra mile' to support their children.

Arrangements for transition from feeder middle schools are effective in helping students settle in quickly.

Verbal discussions as part of the review also highlighted and praised the confidence and communicative nature of students within our school and recognised how well they are able to articulate their own learning and their views and feelings about school. This was something that the review team had not seen in many other schools they have visited and was a real credit to the students here at DCHS.

Building on this has now formed one of our main areas to develop over the coming months and years of our SEND provision. The students we are fortunate to support and teach have excellent observations and ideas on the ways in which teachers and support staff can help them learn; they recognise strategies and skills that work well and can suggest realistic and achievable solutions to barriers they may face.

We now want to empower their voice further within school and develop more opportunities for them to have their say and influence and shape the additional provision and quality of teaching they receive so that, together, we can achieve even better things than already seen.

SPORT

CROSS COUNTRY

Three 6th Form students - **Rebecca Reed (Yr13), Dan Fletcher (Yr12) and Ben Kelly (Yr12)** - represented Northumberland at the **National Schools Cross-Country Competition** held at Norfolk Show Ground on Sat 18th March 2017. They were all members of the senior team.



The ESAA National Cross Country Championship is the most eagerly anticipated event of the winter for young athletes. Organised entirely by volunteer teachers, it brings together the best athletes in each of the 45 Counties in England to compete for the honour of being the best in the Country.

Entry to the event is by virtue of athletes being selected by County Team Managers to represent their County. County Championships are normally held in late January or early February and a preliminary County Team is then selected. One or two weeks later, County Teams may compete between other neighbouring Counties in an Inter-County match, after which the team to represent the County at the National Championship is finally selected.

Teams comprise a maximum of 12 athletes, of which only 8 are allowed to compete. The first 6 finishers in each team count towards the team competition - finishing positions are added up and the team with the lowest score wins. If teams are tied, the team with the highest 6th finisher takes precedence.

In addition to individual championships, there is also a team competition between Counties. The Inter-County competition is split into 4 groups, where each group contains Counties of similar sizes as defined by the number of eligible pupils. The team aggregate results reflect each group: big Counties, medium, not so big, and little Counties.

NORTHUMBERLAND won their category as being the best of the smaller counties - a fantastic achievement.

Many congratulations to the students involved, their parents for their support and the coaching they receive from **Geoff Campbell at Alnwick Harriers.**

GIRLS' SPORT

Hockey

The dark nights and no hockey pitch on site have been very limiting to the Duchess's hockey teams as they have nowhere to train on a regular basis. However the U14's, with consistent team selection and hard work on the pitch are now becoming much more tactically aware. They have been playing teams who have a 4 year head start on them as the private schools have been playing together since Y5. They are growing in confidence and Captain **Ruby Wyld's** inspirational play and organisation really motivates the team. Their season came to a positive end this week at the County Tournament with some spirited play which really boosted their confidence only losing one match. A recent 2-0 win over Berwick was also a highlight considering they have an astro- turf pitch on site. This season has had mixed fortunes for the other squads. The U15's have struggled to capitalise on scoring chances despite hard work on the pitch particularly in the County Tournament where they did not lose one of their five matches. The U16's have struggled with availability due to exam/ coursework pressures. The lack of a pitch to practice on is a real detrimental factor and more girls need to join Alnwick Ladies to continue their development. The U16's admirably



Under 14 Hockey Squad

captained by **Jade Craddock** have battled on, remained positive and **Kitty Lindley** and **Jade Craddock** have played so well they have often been selected for the seniors. The U18's have also struggled with availability and injury but played well and enjoyed the season. Captain **Lauren Baillie** has been a fantastic role model on and off the pitch.

Football

The County leagues consists of 10 teams who battle it out during October and March. We enter age groups U14 & U16 and with the U16's currently placed equal first they should win through to the County finals in April. Last year they were runners up so hopefully the title will be theirs this season - watch this space! **Caitlin Duns** has been selected for Northumberland. **Well done!**



Netball

The U14/U15/U16/U18 teams all entered the county leagues and tournaments.

Unfortunately we have had limited success. However the year 9 and 10's have a great attitude and have continued to improve with our Thursday night training.

A few girls have been attending Netball club on Tuesday nights at Willowburn, notably **Lauren Baillie**, **Grace Forsyth**, **Emily Davies** and **Robyn Thompson** and have played regularly in matches.

Year 11 and senior teams have struggled a bit due to Exam pressures and lack of opposition in the County.

Rugby

Some Yr9 and 10 girls have been enjoying coaching in lesson times on a Monday when **Janey** from the RFU development team puts them through their paces. She has been mightily impressed and the girls played in a county tournament getting some good experience and crunching tackles! Northumberland representative honours for **Aimee Anderson** and **Emily Chapman**. **Well done.**

Cricket

Congratulations to **Elizabeth McLean** who once again has been selected for the County squad and has been training through the winter.

Badminton

At the recent area competition the yr9 Duchess's team competed against 4 other teams from Berwick and Longridge Towers. They came second. Well done to the team of **Lauren Shepard**, **Megan Spours**, **Hannah Taylor** and **Phillipa Musgrove**.



BOYS' SPORT

Football

The U19 B team played their first fixture of the season against Longridge Towers School. The game allowed some of the students who haven't featured for the 1st team an opportunity to get some game time. Duchess won the game 5 - 1 with some well taken goals from **Jay Graham (2), Alfie Murton, Owen Robson** and **Jack Robson**. The team performed really well and all students enjoyed playing the game against Longridge.

The U19 team have resumed their fixtures after the Christmas break. The team were recently defeated 1 - 0 against Dame Allan's but won in convincing style against Astley High School defeating the Seaton Sluice school 4 - 1. Hat-trick hero **Josh Turnbull** was the man of the match scoring 2 goals in

the first half and 1 after the break. **Brandon Mallaburn** also scored in an impressive first half performance. The U14, U15 and U19 teams all have fixtures to play over the next few weeks.



Man Of The Match Josh Turnbull



Under 19 Football Team

Badminton

The annual schools badminton tournament was held in Berwick this January. The Year 9 boys team performed particularly well. They won their early games but came unstuck against a more experienced Longridge team to lose narrowly 3 games to 2. They ended up finishing in a creditable 2nd position.



Oli Telfer, Jamie Kelly, Cameron Prentice and Ian Taylor.

Important Calendar Dates

Friday, April 7

School closes for Easter holiday

Monday, April 24

School reopens after Easter holiday
Progress Check 3 for Y11/12/13 opens

Friday, April 28

Progress Check 3 for Y11/12/13 closes

Monday, May 1

May Day Holiday

Thursday, May 4

Y9 Parents' Evening

Friday, May 5

Progress Check 3 for Y11/12/13 issued

Monday, May 8

Progress Check 3 for Y9/10 opens

Friday, May 12

Progress Check 3 for Y9/10 closes

Monday, May 15

Summer Exams begin

Friday, May 19

Progress Check 3 for Y9/10 issued

Friday 26 May

Y13 Study Leave begins
School closes for Summer Mid Term holiday

Monday 5 June

School closes for Summer Mid Term holiday
Y13 Study Leave begins

Wednesday 14 June

Y12 Higher Education Information Evening

Friday 23 June

Y13 Leavers' Dinner

Sunday 25 – Friday 30 June

Public Services Expedition Week

Monday 26 – Friday 30 June

Y12 Work Experience Week

Monday 26 June

Progress Check 4 for Y9/10 opens

Wednesday 28 June

Y12 Progression Day

Thursday 29 June – Saturday 1 July

Stratford Trip

Friday 30 June

Progress Check 4 for Y9/10 closes

Friday 7 July

Progress Check 4 for Y9/10 issued

Monday 3 – Friday 7 July

Year 5 Enrichment Events

Friday 21 July

School closes for Summer Holidays

AS & A2 Results – 17 August 2017

GCSE Results – 24 August 2017

Training Day – **Monday 4** and **Tuesday 5**
September 2017



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