

NEWSLETTER

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, ALNWICK

SPRING 2016



The
Duchess's
Community High School

Headteacher's Report

Welcome to our Spring 2016 Newsletter.

Those well-known auditors of education, Ofsted, speak often when inspecting schools of 'quality of provision'. They examine this in a number of different ways but in reality it is about the quality of teaching and learning, the breadth of choice available both in and out of the classroom, the development of the child in terms of making the right choices in a safe environment, and, of course, academic outcomes. This auditing is intensified when looking at specific groups of students especially those they determine as Disadvantaged in any way.

We have always kept a level of readiness for our visits from Ofsted because they do mean so much in terms of perceptions of our school. However there are aspects of our school's unique circumstances at present that Ofsted do not consider but I feel need to be shared with you as parents.

The present building programme for our school and the reorganisation of the age range of the Alnwick Partnership of schools are mammoth tasks in terms of finance, procurement, and HR work. No extra financial or staffing capacity has been forthcoming to support these changes. Physically moving our school from our site to the new site will be very much on top of all of our other work as we move from April through to September. These are genuinely challenging times for us as we add extra jobs to our 'to do' lists over the coming months. The New Build continues to be on track in terms of construction. More and more of our staff and students are getting to visit and look around. It is going to make a real,

positive difference to the continuity of our day to day work. However please be patient over the coming months as colleagues take on extra roles to support the process of moving.

You will have seen in the news recently that consultation has begun on a new national funding formula for schools. I have spoken at length about our lack of funding over many years. Below is my present shopping list if we had the predicted money following such changes. These are taken for granted by the majority of other secondary schools in England:

- Smaller class sizes
- Increased mentoring for students with learning, behaviour, or attendance concerns
- Alternative Education resources for students struggling with mainstream classes
- More opportunities for the Most Able and Least Able
- Revamp of resources such as textbooks and other subject equipment

This year has seen an unprecedented level of staff and student illness. There is never one reason for this, however staff absence has added to the strain of running an already underfinanced school. We have worked hard to make sure long term absences have been covered by qualified subject teachers who have been of good quality. The beginning of the summer term will see a number of colleagues return



from maternity and ill health absence. We have appreciated your patience as we have gone about dealing with these unforeseen difficulties.

The combination of all the above could easily have had a detrimental impact on our provision. We have worked extremely hard to avoid this. Predictions for our exam year groups are strong. Revision programmes have already begun and we hope that you will help make sure that as many students as possible access our after school programmes in the coming weeks. The opportunities that our students can access outside the classroom are as varied as always. Many are mentioned in this Newsletter. Special note needs to be made of our musical Rock of Ages – a remarkable example of what students can achieve given the right level of support and challenge. Work has also progressed in areas such as Life Studies/ PSHE, and Careers. Our desire to make sure all our students have the skills to carefully consider choices re Health, Risk and Lifestyle is strong and vital in a society that continues to provide real challenges to teenagers in

terms of their mental and physical health.

Finally, conversation and communication is at the core of how a school works with its parents. We will always try and do our best to deal with issues as and when they occur. In this newsletter is an up to date list of email addresses of individual colleagues who have specific responsibilities. They will always be happy to respond to your concerns or receive positive comments. As I have said in the past please allow five working days for a reply. If you do not receive a reply in this time period then please e mail my PA, Karen Gregory, on admin@dchs-alnwick.org who will then pick any issues up on my behalf.

Finally, please read the letter on the subject of Parent View included with this newsletter.

Hope you have a good Easter Break.

Kind Regards

Maurice Hall, Headteacher

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What **YOU**
don't know
can hurt
them

There is more to e-safety than simply talking to children

The current standard advice from experts in the field of e-safety is that talking to children and young people is the best protection against the risks they might encounter online. Whether in school or at home, open conversation helps build confidence and resilience.

At DCHS, we agree that good communication between adults and children is an essential part of the process, but there are other pieces of the e-safety jigsaw that schools and parents should be considering.

To begin with we start from the premise that e-safety isn't solely the responsibility

of schools, or parents, or government, or any other group. E-safety is a societal issue. We should all care about and seek to limit the effects that easy access to violent and extreme content could be having on a generation of children. We believe that in working together, we can start to create community-wide e-safety strategies.

With any safeguarding incident, it's not unusual to hear schools say that they had no way of knowing in advance that a child was at risk. Similarly, parents often blame themselves for not knowing what their child had been doing for months in that online world where they had been increasingly spending their time. Schools and parents give children these powerful communication devices - laptops, tablets and smartphones, where anyone can access almost any type of content in moments - yet have little idea how they really use them.

Understand

In most other areas of a child's life it's accepted that supervision is essential but they're frequently let off into the online playground without even basic supervision. At the very least, a responsible adult should know what search terms those children are using, what web sites they're visiting and what apps they use regularly - and this should be across any network, wherever and whenever the child connects a device. Perhaps there should also be some view of who they are communicating with on a regular basis?

Something as simple as being able to see what search terms they've used, on a laptop in school, on the bus with a smartphone, in their bedroom using a tablet, can give a safeguarding officer or parent a powerful insight into the content they're consuming. Many situations that lead to problems will have started with a search for more information. For the school or parent, this insight can guide the conversation and inform the discussion in a way that wouldn't otherwise be possible. With this in mind, we have bought a new network surveillance system to monitor all activity within the schools network. The software alerts any violation in relation to 'danger' words being typed by students.

Of course, this approach also enables moderation of the content that's available; It's essential to stop young children accessing pornography, gambling, violence and other unsuitable types of web

content. And again, these rules must be consistently applied across all their devices, wherever they are used. Once there's a good understanding of this online world that children inhabit, then it's possible to have far more effective conversations and lessons can be planned to tackle the issues that emerge.

Engage

We have subscribed to the E-Safety Support organisation to support our students and parents in developing the best possible communication strategies. We regularly promote safer internet use through our parent engagement events / evenings and sign post students to the potential dangers of a digital footprint as well as places they can go to for help.

Educate

You can't wrap children in cotton wool all their lives. At some point they'll have full access to everything good and bad that the online world has to offer. How they deal with this - the confidence, awareness and resilience that they have developed - will be based on the quality of the education they've received. We do this at school through assemblies, morning tutorials, life skills lessons, external partners and ICT lessons. We suggest that parents check privacy setting on their children's devices, have an up to date knowledge of the apps being most regularly used and have security settings in place on home Wi-Fi and electronic devices.

UNDERSTAND, ENGAGE AND EDUCATE



Children and Young People's Health and Well-being survey summary 2015 for Year 10 students

A summary of the survey provides us with the following information:

There are **many positives** that have been raised in the health questionnaire; the majority of students feel **happy at school** and many are making **healthy choices** in terms of their diet and exercise regime.

The majority of students **did not smoke or drink alcohol** and of the students that do drink alcohol their parents were fully aware that they did so. **Very few students are worried about bullying** and for those that experienced it, once they had spoken to someone again the vast majority said it had **stopped**.

There does not seem to be any concerns about peer pressure and **91% of students felt it was important to attend school**. Resilience in learning was good and students remarked highly on the **level of feedback** they received in their work. Finally students felt that the **school valued their ideas and opinions** on lessons, learning and the environment.

As parents and carers you need to be aware there were **some concerns about body image** and how students compared themselves to people in the media. Girls especially had **worries about how they looked** that also affected their self-esteem and how often they might exercise. **Some concerns** were raised about the **level of signposting** they receive in regard to other services they can access, for example, sexual health, drug and alcohol, and the school nurse.

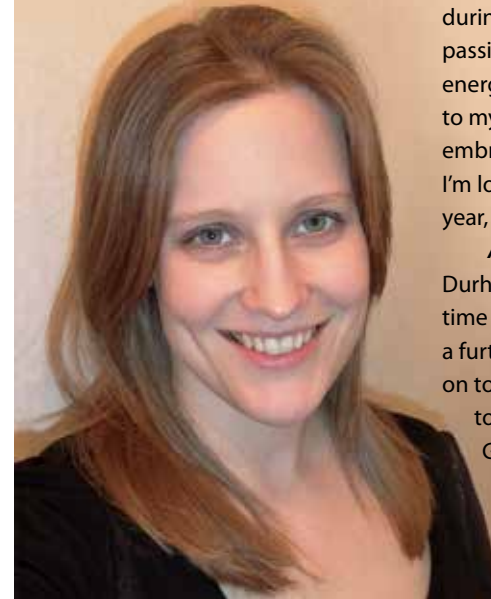
Bullying, whilst reported as being **low**, is a concern for some students **especially cyberbullying**. Despite students saying they had been given advice about Esafety, **only 62%** had actually followed it.

Finally **bedtime routines** are a cause for concern with many students going to bed after 11pm on a school night and using mobile devices prior to going to sleep. 34% of students stated that they **go to bed between 11-12 midnight** and 9% went later. 76% of students were on their mobile phone prior to bedtime, 40% were on their tablets and 22% were on their computer. **What can we do to change this?**



NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

Jen Sibbald



Living locally and having heard such positive comments about DCHS, I was thrilled when Spanish was introduced to the curriculum and I had the opportunity to join the school as Joint Head of MFL. During my first two terms here, I've been fortunate enough to work with some wonderful staff and students; from my Year 13 class who amazed me during my first week when they confidently and passionately debated the pros and cons of nuclear energy in French for an entire lesson, right through to my Year 9 beginners Spanish classes who have embraced their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. I'm looking forward to introducing GCSE Spanish next year, as well as moving into the new school building!

About me: I studied French and Spanish at Durham University from 2000 to 2004, during which time I spent 8 months teaching at a school in Lille and a further six months studying in Granada, before going on to complete my PGCE at Newcastle University. Prior to joining DCHS, I taught French and Spanish at Gosforth Academy for 10 years, five of these on a part-time basis whilst raising my two young children. I also enjoy travelling and playing the piano whenever I get the opportunity to do so.

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.





Exam Preparation

As you will be very aware, the main exam series is nearly upon us. Preparation is the key to success in exams. Some courses contain a coursework or controlled assessment element which can significantly boost overall grades. You should ensure that this has been completed to the best of your ability before you enter the written exams.

During the week leading up to the exams, you must begin preparation. Following the tips below can alleviate stress and panic.

Start early – there is no time like the present and the earlier you start the more you can get done.

Find out when, where and how you work best – are you an early bird or a night owl? Can you work in your bedroom, dining room, on the sofa? Do you work well alone, in a pair or in a group?

Plan your revision – set up a revision timetable for evenings and weekends and then for whole days during exam leave. *Don't forget to include breaks and treats to keep you going.*

Condense and summarise key concepts and topics – try to vary your techniques too. This could include mind maps, flash cards, voice recording etc.

Pay attention in lessons – teachers know how the exam boards allocate marks and will be giving out lots of hints and tips for the exams in lessons. Ask questions too.

Use past papers and mark schemes from the exam board – learn instructions you may be given, practice timings, look at how the paper is marked and the different types of questions that can come up.

Attend extra revision classes where possible.

Buy a revision guide – class teachers will be able to guide you about what to buy.

Alternate between easy and difficult topics and subjects – this will help you to stay focused and motivated.

Revise the more difficult topics when your mind is fresh.

Make sure you know where and when the exams are – this will be on your exam timetable, check with your teachers what equipment you will need too.

Use family and friends to test your knowledge.

Cover all topics – don't rely on topics not appearing on the actual exam.

During exam season it is important to stay healthy. Regular meals, drinks and snacks can improve memory and retention.

Try to get eight hours sleep each night but if this is not possible aim to get six hours minimum.

Don't try to pull an all nighter!

In the exams make sure you:

Take a bottle of water. (With the label removed)

Listen to the instructions read out at the start of the exam – put your hand up to ask questions if necessary.

Read the questions carefully – especially any words that give instructions e.g. write down, explain, identify, calculate, evaluate etc.

Skip the questions you don't know – you can return to these at the end if you have time.

Know how many questions you have to answer.

Keep an eye on the time.

Double check your answers at the end.



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Newton Rigg

RESIDENTIAL VISIT

FEBRUARY 2016

Successes for all, the students were a credit to DCHS.



The Newton Rigg residential trip required students to take part in residential activities:

- Animal care
- Game keeping
- Milking – which included a voluntary session at 5am
- Climbing wall – all students participated
- Forest management
- Farm/animal management

They also had to live together throughout the trip. Even during this short period of time this resulted in improvements in students' social abilities, improved teamwork, communication and enhanced relationships with peers and staff.

Many of the activities undertaken on the residential trip required teamwork, the ability to listen and to participate to be completely successful. It is within this teamwork, that the students learned to listen to their peers, ask questions to make sense of their own understanding, help others, be more accepting of each other, provide reasons for their ideas and share knowledge. We observed an increase in confidence and independence over the two days especially with regards to the more challenging activities; the climbing wall for example.

These are all transferrable skills to the classroom that will assist with students' learning in the future.



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ArtsMark Gold



Spring has sprung and our Arts students are all fully under way in a range of creative practise across the Faculty. It never ceases to amaze me just how much our students get up to both during and after curriculum time – it's usually standing room only on a lunchtime with all the different activities going on in Bailiffgate.

In Art, Year 9 Photographers have learnt about studio lighting, DSLRs, portraits and working outside to take photos and learn the skills involved in the subject. We've also been experimenting with Photoshop which has created a range of exciting and interesting results! There has been a lot of interest in this subject from students and it's been another good addition to the department. It's an exciting time for Photography, with the launch of our new GCSE Photography course for September. I'm sure it will prove to be a popular choice.

Year 12 have now fully established a Clothed Life Drawing class, open to all

interested students to develop and hone their observational skills every Wednesday lunchtime. Fine Art students have had the additional support of PGCE student teacher Miss Elsdon, who is helping them refine their skills and process's, with some excellent results being showcased in their portfolio work.

Year 13 continue to receive excellent University offers across all the Faculty areas of Art, Music and Film Studies – with success stories from Leeds, Edinburgh College of Art, Newcastle College for Art Foundation studies, Manchester, Sunderland, Leeds College of Music, Northumbria to name a few studying anything from Fine Art, Popular Music, Interior Design to Surface Pattern Design, Photography and Film Production.

In Film, Some 6th Form students have entered their short films into this year's Royal Television Society awards, to be held at Sunderland University in May. The students whose short films have been submitted are Sam Jagger, with Reunited, Rachael Latto and Matthew Brooks with Burnt Toast, Fynn Riseborough and Ryan Bell-Dodds with Odd Contract, and Freddie Hinsley with Overflow. Their work is outstanding, and we hope they will be successful at the Awards Ceremony later this year.

GREAVES GRINDLE

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The next Alnwickist newspaper will be out in June, with a key focus on the new school, including lots of images and interviews with key people, so readers can get a real picture of where we'll be in September. There will also be a piece on boxing, exam pressure, segways and making the transition to Year 9.

Freddie Hinsley in Year 13 is looking forward to a future in Film Production after securing an unconditional offer at the prestigious Northern Film School at Leeds Beckett University. He is all set to enjoy the great facilities and opportunities that come with this.

Ryan Bell-Dodds, in Year 13, is also looking forward to studying a BA Hons degree in Video and Film Production at Wolverhampton University. In the meantime, he is working hard to secure the grades needed for his place. We wish them the best of luck!

Music continues to offer a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities during lunchtime and after school. The Department is having a well-deserved rest after the intensive rehearsal programme for Rock of Ages, which I'm sure you will agree, was a fabulous collaboration of talents and skills from across all the Arts Faculty.

Spring also sees the majority of our students sitting their Art, Music and Film Studies exams – they are always longer and earlier than all the other exams, but given the passion and commitment shown by all our students, I'm sure their success will be secured. Well done to everyone this term – it's always the busiest, most stressful and usually the shortest... but probably the most rewarding!

Ruth Brown

Head of Art And Creative Arts Faculty.

FORESTERS

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

SUPPLIERS OF UNIFORM FOR YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL:

Key Staff Emails

Role	Name	Email address
Director of Learning Year 9	Mr A P Rogers	ARogers@dchs-alnwick.org
Director of Learning Year 10	Miss A L Smith	ASmith@dchs-alnwick.org
Joint Directors of Learning Year 11:	Mrs E Gair Miss L Sweet	EGair@dchs-alnwick.org LSweet@dchs-alnwick.org
Director of Learning Year 12	Mr C Routledge	CRoutledge@dchs-alnwick.org
Director of Learning Year 13	Mrs E D Drummond	EDrummond@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of English	Mr M Allenby	MAllenby@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Mathematics	Mrs J Steel	JSteel@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of IT	Mr R Lee	RLee@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Science	Mr T Hillman	THillman@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Chemistry	Mrs S D Bowden	SBowden@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Physics – acting	Ms S Willis	SWillis@dchs-alnwick.org
Responsibility for Applied Science	Miss E J Robertson	ERobertson@dchs-alnwick.org
Joint Head of Languages:	Mrs C Brown Mrs J Sibbald	CBrown@dchs-alnwick.org JSibbald@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Humanities	Ms L Smith	LSmith@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Geography	Mrs A Harrison	AHarrison@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of History	Mr M W Booth	MBooth@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Religious Studies	Mr J Thompson	JThompson@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Technology	Mrs D Murphy	DMurphy@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Art and Creative Arts	Mrs R Brown	RBrown@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Music	Mrs S Cochrane	SCochrane@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of PE	Mr S Harrop	SHarrop@dchs-alnwick.org
In-charge of Girls' PA	Mrs F Steele	FSteele@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Business & Politics	Mr C Routledge	CRoutledge@dchs-alnwick.org
SENDCo & Learning Support	Miss N Richardson	NRichardson@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Social Sciences	Mrs J Copeland	JCopeland@dchs-alnwick.org
Head of Public/Uniform Services	Mr N Brown	NBrown@dchs-alnwick.org

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Intermediate Maths Challenge

The following students sat the Intermediate Maths challenge in February and have successfully been entered for the follow-up round (Intermediate Mathematical Olympiad and Kangaroo) stage.

Year 11: **Martin Murphy, Lewis Finney**

Year 10: **Ross Edwards, Catherine Jackson, Oscar Wilson, George Dodds**

Ross Edwards also got *Best in School* as well as best in year.

Martin Murphy achieved *Best in Year*.

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.
- The numbers of hours you can work whilst attending school are restricted. Children must not work before 7am and after 7pm.
- It is an offence for an employer to employ children without registering with the local authority first.
- 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 and Community Health Services Group, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 622800

March's musical 'Rock of Ages' marked two particularly significant emotions for me: pride and sadness. Pride, at seeing how my 4 years of productions and efforts have culminated into this one spectacular 'Artsmark Gold' show

and sadness at performing in my last ever DCHS drama production.

Rock of Ages

DAN THOMASSEN REFLECTS ON HIS TIME IN DRAMA AND MUSIC AT DCHS

on to be in the November play, 'Wuthering Heights', playing the character Edgar Linton and falling in love with acting and drama.

From that point on, there was no question that I was going to audition for all the following productions to come, I did so and got in even scoring one of the leads roles in 2014's 'Cyrano De Bergerac'.

This is to say, that during my time at The Duchess's Community High School I have become completely integrated and a part of the Drama department. And not only myself but the majority of my friends – with particular notice of Amy Barrett, Kirsty Hensleigh and Fynn Riseborough who have been in these shows with me - although whether we are friends because of the productions is debatable.

These productions have seen me develop both on and off stage; I have not only become confident and comfortable acting in front of an audience but have also had to develop a plethora of skills besides such as role allocation, team-work and other communication skills. I have loved my time at Duchess's and will always remember the friends, teachers and memorable lessons that I've had; but nothing will hold a greater place in my memory or in my heart as the fun I had in rehearsals and on stage with my friends, my fellow actors and the unbelievably skilled, visionary and patient teachers who invested their time and emotions into these shows.

In particular I'd like to thank **Mr M Allenby**, for his great love of drama, working with students and for taking the time out of his life to help us achieve the utmost of our ability in all fields of life, not just in lessons or in rehearsals; but in doing so - educating the whole person. *Thank you for these memories sir.*



Student Voice

The last Student Council meetings were held on 28th and 29th January 2016.

We decided to ask students their opinions on bullying and to find out what makes them worry.

Years 9 -11 students reported that they did not know how bullying was dealt with, this was also backed up by a recent health survey carried out by our Year 10 (Northumberland Children and Young people's Health and Wellbeing survey) where 22% of students reported that they did not know how bullying was dealt with. However, it is important to note that only 4% were afraid of being bullied.

Mrs Armstrong (Deputy Headteacher) has sent a written reply to all tutor groups explaining our Anti-Bullying policy and procedures; she will also attend the next Student Council meetings to explain our pastoral systems. Students also commented on issues that can occur outside of school. All students have now received a 'Safeguarding Signposts – where to find help if you're feeling unsafe' leaflet containing contacts names and numbers they can use in and out of school. Our Year 11 students said they worry about exam stress and revision. Miss Robertson (Science Department) has produced an advice leaflet on how to revise. Miss Sweet (DOL year 11) has collated all the information on revision classes which will be running 16th March – 4th May, Wednesdays afternoons from 2.40 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. This information has been sent to parents and students.

We are currently working on 2 projects as part of Student Voice:

- **Edris Ramezanpour and Jamie McCauley are putting the finishing touches on their video of life at DCHS, this will soon be available on the school website and FROG – watch this space!**
- **A representative from each tutor group will soon visit the new school and take photos / produce a report to present to their peers on their return. Many students have already volunteered and are looking forward to their visits.**



On Friday 12th February, Duchess's High School held an Armed Forces Careers Day which was aimed at all students in Years 10, 11, and the 6th form who wanted to find out more about jobs in the British Armed Forces.

UNIFORMED SERVICES Armed Forces Careers Day

FRIDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2016

The Navy, Army and Royal Air Force Careers teams set up in the Main school hall where students could visit them throughout the day.

Each service brought information for students to find out more about educational

opportunities after Year 11, as well as employment routes beyond higher and further education.

The attendees were able to get their questions answered about life with the armed forces, as well as finding out information about applying to join.



Joe Pope, a former student who joined the Navy, volunteered to help out on the day whilst on leave from his ship HMS Scott. Joe has helped out on a number of occasions with the Public Services Course as has a number of students who are all eager to help students achieve

This day has contributed to the rich experience to all students and is an essential part of their preparation for the future.

praised the quality of young people who expressed an interest in the services.

It's important to make our students individuals who are able to make informed decisions about their future careers.

Mr Neale Brown, Head of Public Services Course, who organised the event said *"I'm delighted that everybody who came to the event from both sides of the table had a really enjoyable and informative day. Our students made a really good representation of*



Kirk Douglas and Joe Pope talking to year 9 students

themselves and have left a lasting impression with the recruitment teams that they are more than willing to come back again next year."

There are lots of benefits tied in with working for the British Armed Forces that help to make a career with the military more enticing than the average civilian job.

30 Days Annual Leave

The Armed Forces offer a generous holiday package and when you are stationed overseas you could be given extra leave on top of your standard allowance.

Military Pension

The pension is one of the key benefits of the British Armed Forces as unlike most civilian



Once again our students did our school proud with their eagerness to find out information about careers and their politeness towards the exhibitors and interviewers.

Royal Navy Petty Officer Kirk Douglas

pensions the MoD make all the payments without you having to contribute anything. It is also a final salary pension which is not often available in civilian jobs now. You will be entitled to pension benefits provided you have had two years of reckonable service.

Your pension is based on your final pensionable pay. This starts from your first paid day of service in the British Military and the way it is paid depends on how long you have served and how old you are.

See the Benefits section for more details.

Pension for Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF)

The MoD will pay you a pension for the time you are mobilised as a member of the VRF, (for example the Territorial Army). You have a number of options as to how this is arranged depending on when you joined.

See the Benefits section for more details.

Health Care

You will receive free medical and dental health care to a standard that at least matches the NHS. All military families will be treated by standard NHS facilities. However, overseas healthcare will be provided by the Armed Forces for your family.

Meals

If you are living in Armed Forces barracks you receive subsidised meals that are much cheaper than civilian alternatives. The food is generally of a high standard and the cost is taken out of your wages.

If you are out on operations your food is provided for free.

Housing

The cost of housing is also subsidised and council tax is much cheaper than it is for civilians. New recruits undergoing training are housed in barracks, but after that there are choices to live in 'halls of residence' type of accommodation or flats/houses depending on your family status.

Many new accommodation for single personnel now feature en-suite bathrooms. If you are married or have a civil partner, or if you are a single parent, you will have the opportunity to rent a suitable sized accommodation at a reduced rate.

Life Insurance

The MoD doesn't actually provide life insurance, nor does it recommend commercial companies. However, it has arranged a special policy with a commercial life insurance product for all service members, including reserves.

This means that members of the British Armed Forces are never refused life insurance cover regardless of their activity.

Find out more information in our Benefits section.

Travel

All members of the Regular Forces are eligible for the HM Forces Railcard which costs £15 and then gives a 34% discount off most rail fares. Spouses and children are also eligible for the railcards and there are also discounts off family groups travelling together.

The railcards are available from Armed Forces Personnel Offices.

Show Racism the Card

As part of the continued effort towards delivering high quality, relevant PSHE at The Duchess's Community High School, the end of the Autumn term saw a 2 day visit from the team at Show Racism the Red Card. Show Racism the Red Card is the UK's anti-racism educational charity and was established in January 1996. The organisation uses the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society. The majority of the campaign's output is the delivery of education to young people and adults in their schools, their workplaces and at events held in football stadiums.

Former Sunderland AFC Captain Gary Bennett led the practical sessions with 2 highly experienced teachers leading on the classroom workshops. Each Year 9 form class had a collapsed timetable for a day whilst they took part in the various engaging and interactive workshops, question and answer sessions and football based practical activities. The end of the second day saw the whole year group come together for a final Q&A in the main hall where some really challenging questions were asked.

The team delivering the workshops were excellent and created an atmosphere where our students were able to engage in open discussion without fear of embarrassment. Key topics of Racist Language, Prejudice, Hate Crime, stereotyping and Extremism were covered in a way that made no one feel uncomfortable and it was that both staff and students alike learned a great deal. One particularly interesting activity saw the students rank who they would prefer to live next to based on a stereotypical description of different people within society.

The feedback from the team was excellent; they were hugely impressed with the attitudes, maturity and engagement from our young people, they work in many schools and don't often have the level of discussion and debate that they received at DCHS. They were glowing about the support offered by staff who attended the sessions too.

This was a valuable and important piece of the overall education that our young people receive around our core values of Honesty, Empathy, Ambition, Respect and Tolerance.

PHSE UPDATE

Last term Year 9 worked on what it means to be healthy; looking at what they eat, what can happen if they have an unbalanced diet and eating disorders.

Students discussed their ideas of body image, investigating how the media portrays the ideal body and the steps they take to distort images for advertising. Classes discussed alcohol and drugs and spent a lesson understanding what Cancer is and how they could spot the symptoms and where to go for advice and guidance.

This term Year 9 are learning about multicultural Britain, showing understanding, respect and tolerance for the diverse country that we live in. They will look at the history of Britain and how it has led to our very diverse nation, Racism and ways of tackling Racism, developing empathy and understanding who they are in terms of their own identity.

Last term Year 10 focussed on moral and spiritual discussions, tackling what we understand by Prejudice and looking at moral dilemmas so that they are able to articulate their thoughts and ideas on Euthanasia, Abortion, Capital Punishment, Belief in God and animal testing.

This term students will work further on how to stay safe online and the links between self-esteem and relationships. Part of this course covers parenting skills; the role and responsibilities of a parent and what makes a good parent. They will also spend some time understanding why homework is an essential part of learning and why good attendance matters.

Last term Year 11 carried out further work with external agencies to look at who they can access for support around sexual health and relationships. They spent a large portion of time looking at careers, working towards creating their own CV and practicing filling in job application forms.

This term students will identify what causes them stress and anxiety and learn strategies to deal with this, working towards supporting themselves towards and during their examinations. They will also work on staying safe, healthy living and the importance of having good family relationships.

SPORT

Boys Sports Report

Football

The school U18 team are enjoying one of their best seasons for a long time. They currently sit in 2nd place with 2 games in hand. In the league they have won 5 and lost 1. The most recent game saw us host RGS. This turned in to a very one-sided encounter with the school eventually running out 15-nil winners. **Paul Anderson** scored 5 and **Ryan Harrison** scored 4. Promotion to league 1 is certainly on the cards.

Rugby

The latest round of 10 a side tournaments took place at Bullocksteads and our Year 9 and Year 10 teams were represented. The stars of the

day were the Year 9 team who remained unbeaten all day, **Drew Thompson** performing particularly well. The Year 10 team also performed well and ended up with a playing record of won 2, lost 1 and drew 1. The Year 10 squad travelled to Dame Allan's in the County Cup semi-final but found the opposition too strong although the spirit and endeavour shown was very encouraging.

The senior squad travelled to Druid Park for their tournament and yet again put in some great performances. They beat Tyne Met College, Hayden Bridge and drew against a very talented Hexham side. Leading try scorer on the day was **Sam Eggleston**.

The NSB 7's is always a popular day out. The seniors travelled down more with hope than expectation and were unlucky to be drawn against eventual winners Durham School early on. However, they moved on to the plate and reached the final only to lose 12-10 to RGS in the plate final but a good day was had by all. Player of the day was **Duncan Smith**.

The U15's were also entered in to the NSB 7's and also performed well. They played some



Senior 10's squad

good rugby and should be happy with finishing 4th overall. Player of the day was **Jamie Comber**.

Badminton

The boys and girls, Year 9 and Year 10 teams played in the North Northumberland regional qualifying event at Berwick. All teams played well but the Year 9 boys team emerged as the only outright winners. They then moved on to the County competition in Blyth to represent North Northumberland. The standard was much higher here with every point being hard fought. The Duchess boys acquitted themselves very well and finished 3rd to take the bronze medal after losing to Cramlington HS.

Joe Eggleston, George Cockayne, Matthew Wood and **James Stanley** are pictured right with their medals.



Sports Leaders

As well as training to achieve the Community Sports Leaders Award the year 12 students have also passed their cricket Level 1 leadership award and their tag rugby leaders award and are now qualified to assist with local tournaments. For example, they are leading the first school tag rugby competition at Alnwick RFC and now work at the Duke's School every Friday morning with the PE department and rugby development officer **Rob Green**.

They are pictured in training with Rob.



Girls Sports Report

Hockey

The dark nights have been very limiting to the Duchess's hockey teams as they have nowhere to train on a regular basis. However the U14s with consistent team selection and hard work on the pitch are now becoming much more tactically aware and have been playing teams who have a 4 year head start on them as the private schools have been playing together since Year 5. They are growing in confidence and Captain **Fern Walton** is a good organiser and **Amy Reed** is consistently player of the match. **Claire Robson** and **Freya Moss** have been playing also for the U15s when required which is a good achievement. Their season came to a positive end this week at the County Tournament with some spirited play which really boosted their confidence. This season



Hockey Seniors last hockey match

has had mixed fortunes for the other squads. The U15s have struggled to capitalise on scoring chances despite hard work on the pitch particularly by **Lucy Jackman** who is so fit she can play three positions at once! **Kitty 'Woo' Lindley** has been outstanding in goal thwarting even the best strikers in the county. *She is arguably the best keeper in the county...* as the opposition often tell me! The U16s 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



U15 Hockey

Ladies to continue their development. The U16s, admirably captained by **Lauren Baillie** have battled on, remained positive and **Becky Stephenson** and **Larissa Brown** have played so well they have often been selected for the seniors. The U18s have played well and enjoyed the season. Captain **Annabel Blythe** has been a fantastic role model on and off the pitch and has organised availability admirably. Her undying optimism and cheerfulness has helped the team cope with the lack of success.

Football

Unfortunately the girl's county league has not had the same depth of competition this year and there have been very few games in this county wide league that Duchess Teams

have won in the past. The league has been split into 4 areas and North Northumberland had just 4 teams entered. However both age groups U14 and U16 should win through to the County finals in April. Watch this space. **Jade Barrett** has been selected for North East Northumberland as has **Kitty Lindley** who is also the full county keeper.

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 10s have a great attitude and have continued to improve with our Thursday night training. A few girls have been attending Netball club on Tuesday



U16 and U18 Hockey

nights at Willowburn, notably **Lauren Baillie** has played regularly in matches.

Year 11 and senior teams have struggled a bit due to Exam pressures and lack of opposition in the County. Both teams have a great spirit and hopefully with restructure of County Leagues will have more opportunities next year.

Rugby

Some Year 9 and 10 girls have been enjoying coaching in lesson times on a Tuesday 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! North East representative honours for **Annabelle Young**. *Well done.*

Cricket

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



Inters Cross Country County Championships

Badminton

At the recent area competition the Year 10 Duchess's team beat Berwick and lost to Longridge Towers. Well done to the team of **Kitty Lindley, Jade Craddock, Cora Drummond** and **Jade Barrett**.

Swimming

Alnwick Dolphins swimmer **Kate McPhee** has had a fantastic season qualifying for the Scottish Nationals in Edinburgh.

Cross Country

Area, Junior and Inters won this event with 9 girls chosen to represent North Northumberland at Temple Park. Year 9 **Callie Henderson, Yazmin McCann, Jess Burke, Sophie Enser, Eliza Ogden Barnsley, Abi Lewington, Sophie Robinson, Jess Duffy** and **Emily Davies**. Well done to **Callie Henderson** and **Ben Kelly** who were selected to represent Northumberland at the National Inter Counties in Nottingham at the beginning of March.



Year 9 Cross Country County Championships

Important Calendar Dates

Monday, April 11	School reopens after Easter Holiday
Monday, April 11	Progress Check 3 opens
Friday, April 15	Progress Check 3 closes
Thursday 16 – Monday 20, April	A2 Art Exam
Tuesday 14 – Friday 22, April	AS Art and Photography Exams
Thursday, April 21	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Friday, April 29	Training Day
Monday, May 2	May Day Holiday
Thursday, May 5	Y11 Presentation Evening
Monday 9 – Friday 27 May	Y12 Study Leave
Friday, May 13 – Friday 24 June	Summer Exams
Thursday, May 26	Y13 Leavers Assembly
Friday, May 27	Y11 Leavers Assembly
Friday, May 27	School closes for Summer Half Term Holiday
Monday, June 6	School reopens after Summer Half Term Holiday
Monday, June 6	Progress Check 4 opens
Wednesday, June 8	Y12 Higher Education Evening for parents/student finance
Friday, June 10	Progress Check 4 closed
Thursday, June 16	Y12 Progression Day – TBC
Friday, June 17	Year 13 Leaver's Dinner
Friday, June 24	University Open Day – Newcastle/Northumbria
Friday, June 24	Year 7 STEM day
Monday 27 June – Friday 1 July	Y12 Work Experience Week
Thursday, June 30	Y8 Intake Day
Friday, July 1	Y7 Sports Day
Friday, July 1	Year 11 Prom
Monday 4 – Friday 8 July	Y10 Mock Exams
Monday 4 – Friday 8 July	A Level Art Exhibition – The Playhouse
Wednesday, July 13	Y9 Presentation Evening
Thursday, July 14	Y10 Presentation Evening
Wednesday, July 20	School closes for Summer Holidays
Thursday, August 18	AS/A2 Results
Thursday, August 25	GCSE Results
Monday, September 5	Training Day