

DASP NEWS

**The Newsletter of the
Dorchester Area Schools Partnership**

Issue 1

January 2004

What's been happening in DASP?

This newsletter is aimed at all those who are working in DASP – teachers, support staff and Governors. It aims to keep you informed about the myriad of activities and initiatives taking place in DASP schools. We are especially interested in projects involving co-operation between schools. However, all contributions which reflect the variety of work within DASP are welcome. Also, if you would like to preview events in this newsletter, we would be interested in hearing about them. If you would like to contribute, please see the contact box on the last page.

DASP Early Intervention Project

During the Autumn term, the DASP Early Years Intervention project, with Rachel Nesbitt as the seconded early intervention teacher, was launched. The first venue was Broadmayne First School. The project aims to support schools in implementing strategies to promote social and emotional development in young children. These skills help children learn to their full potential.

The children selected at Broadmayne spent seven weeks working in an environment which nurtured their self esteem and social and emotional needs. Then they were gradually integrated back into their classes.

It is too early to evaluate the project as a whole. However, from Broadmayne's perspective, it was an innovative and valuable experience. The project extended our knowledge and understanding of strategies to support and develop those young children who were experiencing difficulties with their learning. They had an opportunity to learn some of the necessary skills in a small, specialised class.

Following her time at Broadmayne, the Early Intervention teacher, Rachel Nesbitt, will be based at Manor Park First School (Spring

term) and Charminster First School (Summer term.)

As with most new projects we adapt and make changes as we go along. We intend to put some of the nurturing principles in place in our schools on a more lasting foundation. In this way we should have a positive impact on the learning of, not just those groups of children involved in the current project, but also on groups in succeeding years.

**Ann Clark
Headteacher,
Broadmayne First**

The following account by children, outlines a school trip that took place as part of the Early Intervention Project.

Our Visit to Wyevale Garden Centre Broadmayne First School

'For our end of class trip we went on a visit to Wyevale Garden Centre. We went on the mini-bus and it took us about 10 minutes. We looked at the plants. Everyone liked the bonsai trees and the spikey cactus! All the Christmas decorations were up. It was good.'



'My favourite things about our visit to the Garden Centre was seeing all the pets'.

Allan

'My favourite thing was seeing the budgies. I also liked taking photographs and having my photograph taken'.

Zac

St Mary's Charminster First School - Tree Planting

On a very cold Monday morning, just before Christmas, 14 children from St Mary's First School, Charminster planted some apple trees on a piece of ground, now called Miller's Community Orchard.



The children were invited by the Parish Council to be involved as representatives of the village. Different people, representing groups connected with the village, had planted other trees.

Before the planting, Danny and Wayne talked to the children about the value to the environment and the ecology of the area of planting trees and especially apple trees. The trees were three year old saplings, so it will be a few years before they fruit; although they should blossom in the spring.

Five years ago, children from St Mary's planted trees on Prince's plot under a similar initiative from DCC and the Parish Council. However, this year it tied in particularly well with this term's topic of the seasons, trees and plants and the environment.

DASP Conference

October 16th and 17th 2003 saw the DASP Annual Conference take place. A residential two day event, the Conference was an ideal chance for senior and specialist staff from

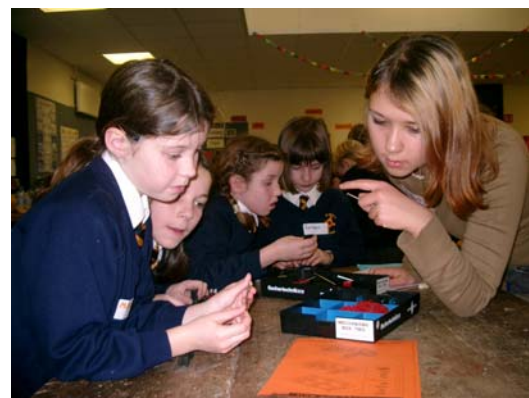
across all DASP schools to get together to reflect and to look forward to future DASP initiatives.

The Conference was introduced by a speaker from the National College of School Leadership. Following this were presentations from DASP staff on ICT, Assessment for Learning, Gifted and Able Pupils and other initiatives from within the Partnership. However, the highlight for many would be a presentation by David Powell (Head of St Mary's Middle School) with musicians Roger Watson and Musa Mboob. This detailed a multicultural project that David had instigated in his previous school. The project used music and dance to promote an intercultural understanding in pupils. This was very much a 'practical' session and is intended to pave the way for a similar project within DASP. To see DASP Heads and Deputies dancing to a mix of African rhythms and traditional English melody was an inspiring sight indeed!

Much time was also provided for discussion away from the everyday pressures of running a school. All present appreciated the chance to reflect and share experiences.

Extension of Enrichment Sessions for the very gifted and able

Following the successful pilot scheme run for Years 4 and 5 in the summer of 2003, the Headteachers of DASP have decided to continue and extend the project. After a full evaluation of the pilot scheme, a varied programme of enrichment sessions is being compiled to extend and engage students from Year 4, 5 and 6.



This started in early December for 27 students in Year 5 and 6 across the three middle schools. Pictured are students participating in a Technology enrichment session at St. Osmunds. The aim of the session was to discover machines used for irrigation and then design their own models. Students also

attended an English/Drama enrichment session at the Thomas Hardy School. This session was based upon the story of the Trojan horse.

The future will see enrichment sessions on history re-enactments, microclimates and the geology of the Jurassic Coast. These sessions will run in the latter part of the spring and summer terms.

Damian Barry
The Thomas Hardy School

DASP Christmas Carol Concert

On Friday 5th December, St Mary's Middle School in Puddletown hosted the Annual DASP Christmas Carol Concert. Over 400 pupils represented the First schools and the orchestra of Dorchester Middle School performed a range of tunes from traditional Carols to a jazz band session. There were also pupil readings in between the Carols. Many DASP Governors were present, in addition to a number of LEA Consultants. All agreed it was an excellent way to get in the Christmas mood!



DASP's Young Journalists - an ICT Project

Over the course of this school year, every DASP First school will be producing a newspaper, using computer technology. Although, in itself, this is not unusual, what makes it interesting is that contributions will be made to each paper by other First schools using e-mail.

Schools have been allocated into groups for the project and are given a deadline to produce their paper by. The contributing schools then e-mail their stories during the week or so before publication. The day itself brings a panic about completing in time. However, so far, each school has finished the paper on schedule, using either Word or Publisher. The children have improved their

ICT, editing skills and working in groups. They have also had the chance to use e-mail for a real purpose. Support for the schools producing newspapers has come from DASP's e-learning Manager and Nikki Griffin from the County ICT Advisory Team.

The newspapers produced so far are available to download from the DASP website at:

<http://www.dasp.org.uk>

(then follow the link to DASP Community and look for Projects)

Some are in Publisher format and you will need the appropriate version to view them.

ICT Club @ Damers First

Here at Damers School we intend to run a ten week ICT club for parents and Year 4 pupils together. The club will focus on basic computer skills using Windows and Microsoft Word; we will also learn about the Internet and e-mail. We have planned seven structured sessions with three flexible sessions to allow for revisiting or extending skills. The children will be introduced to web sites that support their school activities in an interactive way, in particular our own school web site www.damers.dorset.sch.uk and **Gridclub** www.gridclub.com. We hope to have a lot of interest in the club and although we have to limit numbers to 18 children (and their parents), we will repeat the course next term, if necessary.

News from Piddle Valley First School

Creative Arts Festival

During the week starting Monday 24th May, Piddle Valley are having a Creative Arts Week. This will involve a day's drama workshop with Norman Schamroth, Multicultural Dance, and work with multicultural musicians as part of the pyramid inter-cultural project.

All First Schools in the Dorchester partnership have been asked to join together for a visual art exhibition to round off the festival. The theme is 'Earth Air Fire and Water' as we thought this a broad and yet stimulating title which should produce an interesting array of exhibits.

We hope that as many first schools as possible within the partnership will participate: just deliver your 2 and 3 Dimensional Art work to

Piddle Valley and we will display it for you. If you could mount it as you would wish it to be seen this would be great; and for identification purposes, a pencilled note on the reverse, of the name of the school would be helpful. All teachers, children and parents from partnership schools are warmly invited to visit Piddle Valley over the weekend to see the exhibition.

Visualisations: Dreams & Fantasies

We are looking forward to undertaking a creative interpretation of this QCA ICT Unit of work in the Summer Term. The children will be creating short abstract films, using small digital video cameras and these will be accessible on the 'Artsmark' page of our website.

Review of Early Years Practice

Piddle Valley Headteacher, Carole McCormack will be visiting schools in Finland with Peter Farrington, Rob Davies and Hilary Over. The focus of her work there will be the methods used in kindergartens and early years classes to prepare children to be engaged and effective learners. Clearly an evaluation of these methods may well produce development of early years practice at Piddle Valley. Nicky Curtis, our Nursery Nurse is currently studying for an Early Years Practitioner's degree with the Open University and is discussing creative, less formal and didactic teaching methods

Dorchester Middle School Readers on BBC!

The English Department at DMS has been busier than ever! In the summer term, the whole of Year 5 took part in the nationwide 'Write Here. Write Now' competition organised by the DfES. We were thrilled when a group of three children were winners of the Journalism category for the South West region. In November, those children attended a star studded ceremony, at the British Library, to collect their prizes.



Picture taken from TV Broadcast

September saw the introduction of an all new Book Group for children in Years 5 and 6. This after school club meets weekly on Wednesdays and has a devoted membership of 30! The children love having a forum to discuss a variety of children's books and have an opportunity to read books that they wouldn't normally choose to read.

Word of our Book Group got out and the BBC came down to Dorchester, to film a corporate video for a Conference that explored how the BBC reaches the wider community through the Big Read. After spending an afternoon with us, another crew came to DMS to make a short film about our Book Group and how we would be voting in the big read. This was shown on BBC2 on 15th November.

Based on this, we then had another phone call from the BBC. This time CBBC's programme Xchange wanted 3 children to participate in their version of the Big Read, called The Little Read; where each child had to champion a specific children's book from the top 21. We had to travel up to London for the day, to go to Television Centre and the children appeared live on the 10th December. Definitely a day to remember.

**Fiona Ray
Dorchester Middle School**

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