

DASP NEWS

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

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What is the impact of DASP at The Prince of Wales School?

Inspired by the last DASP newsletter, come these thoughts about how DASP contributes to the work of our school and vice versa.

Teaching & learning: as related in newsletter number 2, I was one of four DASP colleagues who visited Finland in January 2004. Thoughts from this visit have now been shared with SEN Co-ordinators and Headteachers / Deputy heads. At The Prince of Wales School, outcomes from this visit are being linked with Rachel Horne's work on developing a more relevant, engaging and child friendly curriculum in Year 1. There are clear links with DASP's Early Intervention project and it is hoped to develop the links with the exciting work on creativity in the curriculum at Piddle Valley School.

Partnership can appear to be a cosy and supportive relationship and of course, it is. There is also a harder edge to this that helps to drive up achievement, by providing an element of challenge. Thus, we value our close link with The Dorchester Middle School which helps to raise standards. Every year, Sarah Sprague, Assistant Headteacher and Assessment Co-ordinator at DMS, shares with feeder first schools the individual and collective results of past pupils in the Year 6 SATs. This leads to the identification of things to celebrate and areas to improve as a group of schools. A recent direct outcome of this approach has been the production of the maths booklet for parents across DASP, which arose out of maths co-ordinators from across phases working together to agree common strategies and progression. There is a real sharp edge to this relationship that leads to a mutual question for the middle school and the first schools: are we doing the best we can for our children?

Arts: during our Arts Week, all our teachers and children in Year 2 visited the Earth, Water, Air & Fire exhibition at Piddle Valley, to which all the first schools contributed. It was a fantastic display and all credit to Cath Rothman at Piddle Valley for her commitment in organising a huge display. One of our



children was moved to say: "That picture is so good, I want to marry it!" The theme of our Arts Week was "Traditional Dorset" and we were indebted to the Traveller Education Support service for organising the visit of a gypsy vardo to the school and helping the children with traditional canal art and introducing them to some aspects of traveller culture. This provided lots of opportunities for staff and children to discuss prejudice and stereotyping.

Children in Year 3 also participated in a dancing festival at Puddletown First School. The arts week was ably organised by Jen Roberts and culminated in an outdoor display of dance, music and visual arts. An ex-student from Thomas Hardy also helped Year 4 children with a collage of Dorset life. She was taking part in an innovative training programme for potential teachers arranged through teachers at The Thomas Hardy School.

ICT: our school is now equipped with interactive whiteboards and ceiling mounted data projectors in every classroom. Training the teachers to take advantage of this state of the art technology is obviously critical. We are indebted to Richard Scott, the DASP E-Learning Manager, for fulfilling this role with a calm acceptance of individuals' range of responses!!

For 5 years our school has hosted a summer soccer festival for Year 3 and 4 children. This is part of the range of competitive opportunities in soccer provided throughout the year for children in DASP schools by Milborne St Andrew, Winterborne Valley and Charminster. As well as swelling our school association coffers by increasing the consumption of beefburgers at our summer fete, the festival also provides a venue for our youngsters to compete in a sporting way and to meet children from other first schools. Over the years, the contribution of girls to many teams has been significant. There are many talented youngsters in our schools. However, it would be good to expand into games that might include more girls as a matter of course. Who is up for a netball (High Fives) tournament?



Finally, it was a great privilege for us to be involved in the DASP Year 4 Gifted and Able Project. This provided an opportunity for children from across the partnership to be able to use our reconstruction of an Iron Age Settlement and to be involved in a range of challenging activities across the curriculum. It was great fun for all concerned. The Year 4 children from our school who participated in the sessions run by other

teachers from within DASP also thoroughly enjoyed these opportunities. One parent commented that this project has the potential to "open doors of interest and excitement to my child" and hoped that it would continue and expand.

Peter Farrington
Headteacher, Prince of Wales First School

News from St Mary's First, Charminster

Nurture Groups

During summer 2004, Rachel Nesbitt was seconded to our school to help us develop skills to establish Nurture Groups in KS1 as part of the DASP Early Intervention Project. The Teaching Assistants who worked alongside with their class groups have continued to run Social and Emotional skills groups for children in KS1 and KS2. In KS1 this is the teaching assistant who works full time in the class.

The groups meet twice a week, each a one hour session aimed at strengthening school rules and setting specific targets for each child related to their individual needs. Throughout each session a range of activities takes place, e.g. role play, group discussions, scenarios, movement and music. Games and independent tasks are set to encourage a child's self-government of their own behaviour and emotions and to recognise others. A reward system is incorporated in the sessions to create a link between the class teacher, teaching assistant and the children, all being able to offer a compliment to a member of the group, outlining the achievement.

So far we have focused on

- Good looking, listening and sitting
- Taking turns
- Sharing
- Feeling happy
- Feeling sad
- Feeling angry
- Understanding conflict
- Dealing with conflict
- Friends
- Winning and losing
- Working together
- Consequences

Every week a meeting is held to plan and review how the sessions are progressing and the children's response to the strategies that we have been using with them. A constant liaison between the class teacher and assistant takes place to ensure the nurturing strategies progress from the sessions into the class

environment to provide continuity throughout the whole school.

Social Eating!

Once every half term the whole school has a social eating time. The children are encouraged to display patience and polite table manners. The children sit with peers from other classes and are encouraged to get to know one another better. When everybody has finished eating they all help to tidy up, not forgetting the washing-up!



Race Equality

In Classes One and Two we have been exploring the Race Equality materials. Our circle times have focussed on 'The Skin I'm In' sessions created by Eve Lee. We have been looking at similarities and differences between people. We have used puppets and drama to develop the ideas in the pack. Children in Class 2 are enjoying matching pictures of a variety of children.



Children in Class One are welcoming 'Marsha', their puppet, to the class. She has been well-received by the children

St Mary's First School Charminster

Getting back into school...inclusion in action!

The Reflections of a Penwithen pupil.

"It was alright and I liked going there. I have done some running, badminton, basketball, dodgeball and table tennis. I liked all the sports and didn't mind what I was asked to do. I have always worked with the same group and made some good friends.

I think it has been good for me."

For many years Penwithen has been fortunate in being involved in the DASP partnership. One of the most significant aspects has been related to the co-operation and support given, particularly from The Thomas Hardy school and the two Dorchester Middle Schools, in enabling Penwithen pupils to return to a mainstream setting. On many occasions this has been the opportunity for our pupils to make a full return to a school in their local area or, in some cases, to schools within DASP.

On behalf of the many students who have benefited from this, thank you very much for your help.

Lyle Harmon
Headteacher, Penwithen School

The Essence of DASP: When Year 10 and Year 2 Work together

A recent collaboration between Year 10 students at Thomas Hardy School and Year 2 pupils from Manor Park has demonstrated perfectly how DASP is a partnership and not a pyramid. Hilary Over from the Thomas Hardy English Department and Lesley Goldsack from Manor Park joined forces to encourage creative writing from the Year 2 children.

The project began with a joint visit to the County Hospital to see some art work that was on display there. Thomas Hardy students were paired up with their younger colleagues and this pairing was kept throughout the project. The next stage was for the Year 2 children to visit the Upper school, meet with their 'buddy' again and work on computer animations together in the new Languages ICT Suite. To see how the Year 10 students worked with the younger children was inspirational. They showed maturity, understanding and consideration. Not only that, but some exceptional work was produced by the children working together.



A week later, at the First School, the Manor Park children wrote short stories based on the animations that had been created. Once complete, these were e-mailed back to their Upper school partners. This project was a perfect example of how, and why, DASP works. Its spirit of co-operation and partnership is demonstrated in its most important resource, the children.

Our New DASP Headteachers

Ron Jenkinson St Osmund's Middle School



I was appointed in May last year, but took the opportunity to take my wife and three young children, Ella, Poppy and Sophie on sabbatical to New Zealand for the Autumn. We had a great time experiencing a different and fantastic culture and being together as a family, I also learnt that 'whingeing poms', as the English are often referred to, only whinge half as much as a losing Kiwi and that we all are jealous of the Aussies!

I have been a Headteacher since 1999, of which the first 5 years were at King Alfred's Middle School, in Shaftesbury. Both that and St Osmund's are Church schools and this has been important to me, as I see our responsibility to young people as being a very broad one, that involves the development of the whole child. To that extent, my core purpose is to ensure young people have very chance to achieve at St Osmund's. And I am convinced, as Dorchester schools regularly prove, that high expectations enable pupils to achieve more in every aspect of life.

Jane Mockridge Manor Park First School



I have lived just outside Weymouth since 1983, with my husband Tony and two children Rebecca and Tom. Becky is an audiologist at Dorchester Hospital and Tom is studying engineering at Poole College. I have worked in the primary sector since the early seventies, spending several years teaching abroad with the Service Schools Authority. During my 'career break' (we were fortunate enough to have them then!) I became quite involved with pre-school education and have certainly enjoyed teaching and learning alongside the entire primary age range.

I came to Headship relatively late and learned 'on the job' at Cerne Abbas, working with an incredibly supportive team. The move from village to town took me into a long stay at Wimborne and a strong and exciting association with the creative arts. A return to DASP at Manor Park has brought me, very happily, full circle.

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