

DASP NEWS

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

Issue 12

March 2008

DASP Schools achieve Outstanding status with OfSTED

**"...the school is among
the best in the country"**

This is what Inspectors said about the Thomas Hardy School during the recent OfSTED inspection of October 2007.

In the report they describe the school as 'exceptional' and that students make 'outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally high examination results'. They write that students enjoy school very much and that behaviour is 'exemplary' in a school that is calm and purposeful.

Thriving on high expectations students in the sixth form are singled out for their 'outstanding' results and the excellent support they are given as they move into work or University. The school sets extremely challenging targets for all its students and they respond in an 'extremely positive' way. The inspectors identified a pursuit of excellence in the school that leads to outstanding teaching and learning, but also identified that additional and extra-curricular opportunities were an 'immense strength'.



Students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. The school produces confident, highly successful students who 'thrive in an excellent environment for learning'.

Head teacher, Dr Iain Melvin said *"This is a superb report that reflects all the hard work that is done in this school and throughout the Dorchester Partnership of Schools. To be described as 'one of the best in the country' is a wonderful and I believe deserved accolade for all who work and learn here."*

"Outstanding St Osmund's!"

That's what delighted Governor's, parents, pupils and staff at St Osmund's Middle School in Dorchester were told by the OfSTED Inspectors when they visited the school in January. The Lead Inspector reported that St Osmund's is 'an outstanding and inclusive school'. Headteacher, Ron Jenkinson said 'We are particularly proud that inspectors recognised how much pupils enjoy their learning and how the school has become "one large family". We see this as a key to our success and the inspectors agreed that the outstanding academic results of our pupils were achieved because of this culture of support and expectation'.

There was particular praise in the report for the teaching team, who were identified as 'skilful practitioners who understand well how to challenge pupils, in order that they make the best possible progress in their learning'. Mr Nick Power, Chair of Governors and an ex-OfSTED inspector himself, was thrilled that Inspectors found a 'sense of shared responsibility among all staff and pupils' which

helped in finding leadership, including Governance, as outstanding too. Mr Power, speaking as a Governor and as a parent said 'I have read over 800 OfSTED reports as part of my previous job and none read as positively as this report about St Osmund's. We knew it was an outstanding school and are glad OfSTED agree!'

And more good news with:

DASP First School OfSTEDs

Winterbourne Valley First School have been told they are a good school, with many outstanding features, by OFSTED Inspectors. The Inspectors highlighted the supportive Christian ethos, outstanding leadership by the head teacher and an excellent partnership with parents, the local community and neighbouring schools in the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership. Standards across all age groups were judged to be above the national average, with standards in reading being highlighted as particularly high. They also said 'The head teacher receives good support from staff and governors in promoting a caring ethos, that nurtures pupils' achievement and well being.' Mrs Rachel Horne, head teacher at the school since September 2006, said: 'I am absolutely delighted that the inspection recognised we are a successful school on a journey to excellence and that the report acknowledged the hard work our teachers and support staff put in to provide an enabling environment and a rich, exciting curriculum which motivates the children to learn. I am also very proud of our children who contribute so positively to the life of our school.'

And we just have time to report on the very successful Frome Valley First School, January OfSTED inspection. The judgement of the Inspectors was that Frome Valley is an 'outstanding' school where "Pupils make good progress because of the high quality provision" and "consistently excellent teaching seen in all year groups". The Inspectors praised the way the school had adapted the new Literacy and Numeracy strategies to meet the needs of its pupils. They also said that it is "a very caring school, where rigorous attention is paid to pupil's health and safety". The School's success was "due to outstanding leadership and management at all levels". The Inspection also recognised the strength of Partnership within the school, especially that with DASP and also its Parents.

STOP PRESS!

Just as this newsletter was going to printing, we learned that the Prince of Wales First School had also received a judgement of

'outstanding' from its OfSTED inspectors. More detail in our next issue.

These OfSTED judgements are not only testimony to the quality individually of these schools, but also the support that being part of DASP provides.

News from Cerne Abbas

The children from Cerne Abbas First School have been improving their gymnastic skills with Mrs. Helen Greenwood, who is a specialist P.E. teacher. In Key Stage 2 they have been concentrating on 'flight' and working with a partner. The photo shows Mrs. Helen Greenwood with Abbey Class Key Stage 2.



Some sad news

Jackie Bowell was a Teaching Assistant at Piddle Valley First School for 23 years. She retired in July last year, but was then admitted to hospital 2 days later and suffered various complications. She passed away peacefully in her sleep, in the early hours of Friday 14th December. The following is a tribute to Jackie from the staff at Piddle Valley First School

Jackie was a highly valued member of staff and a mainstay at the school and nothing was too much trouble for her. She was able to bring the passions she had in her home life into her work at school. Hundreds of children learned to swim through her guidance and expertise as a lifeguard. As a keen cook, she encouraged numerous children to develop a love of cooking, even baking and decorating their own Christmas cakes. Somehow she managed this despite the limitations of the National Curriculum. It was simple, weighing and measuring is obviously maths and following recipes is reading isn't it?

Her energy and enthusiasm were demonstrated by the way she led country dancing in the school, helped out on residential trips and patched up children who needed first aid. A fine needlewoman she cherished traditional crafts and taught those skills to the next generation. She was also responsible for

a multitude of costumes which she lovingly made for school performances throughout the years. Despite her love of the traditional, Jackie was not afraid to embrace modern technologies. She was, for example the first in the school to create a stop frame animation! A meticulous and organised person, her work was always of the highest standard and this was an inspiration to adults and children alike. Her patience was unending and all the children in the school respected her and loved working with her. Jackie was generous with her time and her enormous knowledge and skills were passed on to all members of staff. As the longest serving member of staff, Jackie was a valued mentor to all the Teaching assistants and a fount of knowledge for the teachers as well!

She particularly loved the Christmas period and her legacy is everywhere throughout the school. As a staff our lasting memory of Jackie is seeing her, with the other school leavers, rolling down the bank (a long standing tradition when you leave the school!) at the end of her last day in school in July. Jackie leaves a huge space in Piddle Valley School, she just loved working with the children and they loved working with her.

The Get Up Early Gang at St Mary's First School, Charminster

The School's Breakfast Club was put into action last September at the start of the autumn term with just two children on the register. We are now up to an average of nine children per day!

'The Get Up Early Gang' meet in the school hall at 8 a.m. An arrangement of courses is on display for each child to make their own choice. These range from egg bread, croissants, pancakes and the normal availabilities of cereals, toast and fruits. We all sit together in a sociable and organised environment. It gives us the chance to talk to each other, share our news and also reveal any worries or concerns that we may have. It gives us the opportunity to support each other and to make each day more enjoyable. This rewards the children with the feeling that they have established positive relationships with others. The true meaning of breakfasting together!

They take this 'good start to the day' feeling into their classroom as they greet their mates. Moving from Breakfast club to the classroom on time, gives them the opportunity to settle into the morning routine. Our breakfast club creates a settled, relaxed and fun start to each school day. It makes it easier for the children



to cope with any difficulty that may arise, any challenge that may appear and any emotion that they may encounter. This gives them a really positive start to each school day.

DASP Football Tournament

On 14th November 2007, 16 teams competed in the 9th Dorchester area first schools Year 3 and 4 football festival, at Milborne St Andrew First School. Each team played 5 matches and every player received a certificate to say they participated in this special event. Tom Leech, Head teacher of Milborne St Andrew school who organised the tournament said, "The annual festival celebrates the sporting excellence that exists in our local schools. It is an opportunity for the children to enjoy a feast of football, with pure enjoyment as the main 'goal'.



Science Outreach

Science Outreach has been set up by The Thomas Hardy School, to work with all their partner schools in DASP. During this school year, the middle schools have taken part in Enrichment and "Whizz Bang" sessions held at the Thomas Hardy School. Lunchtime clubs have been set up at Dorchester Middle School, St Mary's and St Osmund's Middle Schools and an after-school Science & Engineering club, has involved pupils from all three middle schools. The highlight of the Science &

Engineering Club's autumn programme was a trip to the Welsh Millennium Centre to make musical instruments in a "Stomp" (www.stomp.co.uk) workshop.

Outreach provides "one off" projects in lessons e.g. "Christmas Chemistry", and after-school sessions e.g. participation in a film competition for the Institute of Engineering and Technology. In which sixteen pupils, in two teams won £2000 for the school and £1000 for themselves. The Dorchester Show last September was a great success, that saw hundreds of children taking part in science experiments. Later this term outreach is extending into the community and is going to work with Cub Scouts on their science badges.

David Morgan
Science Outreach Teacher for DASP
(David is also a science teacher at Thomas Hardye School)

Broadmayne (East Dorchester) Children's Centre

Since September, contractors have been busy at the Broadmayne First School site, building a Sure Start Children's Centre. It has been an exciting time for the children to watch the work, with a range of large plant, such as diggers and cement lorries, going to and fro. The most amazing sight was a giant crane that travelled across the playground on a specially laid metal track, swinging sections of the mobile building high across the school roof and into position on the newly laid foundations.



When it opens, our Centre will provide services for families, with children aged between 0 and 5 years old, in a geographical area which includes Dorchester East, Puddletown, Crossways and Osmington. Children's Centres offer a range of services which may include Ante natal support and advice; Speech and Language therapy; support and advice on returning to work; stay and play sessions; courses on first aid, parenting and healthy eating. They also aim to reflect more local

needs identified by the families in the community.

The new building has an office, meeting room and crèche room, as well as providing new purpose built accommodation for our onsite Pre-School. The Pre-School has now moved in and is enjoying its new bright and comfortable surroundings. The school and its community look forward to working closely with the Broadmayne Children's Centre to the mutual benefit of everyone.

Anne Clark
Broadmayne First School

Modern Foreign languages in DASP First Schools

Following its September launch, the unique DASP Primary French program is now well underway, with children and staff in our phase 1 first schools experiencing the excitement and stimulation of learning French in year 3.

The project is underpinned by the KS2 framework for languages and the fundamental principles of collaboration, continuity and progression between our first and middle schools. The supported introduction of French in year 3, is enabling our younger children to experience the sounds, rhythms, patterns and culture of the French language through traditional stories, games and songs, whilst simultaneously training the class teacher in its delivery and methodology. In addition, the complementary twilight language training sessions have helped to build teacher confidence in using the language and have supported its practical application in the classroom, with teachers now assuming responsibility for delivering part of the lesson themselves.

The way ahead is an exciting one with plans to explore the use of ICT in the primary classroom and the possibility of establishing links with partner schools in France.

Ursula Dé
DASP MFL Project

To contribute to this newsletter, e-mail:

rscott@thomas-hardye.dorset.sch.uk

DASP Website: www.dasp.org.uk

Or post to Richard Scott at the Thomas Hardye School, Queens Ave, Dorchester, DT1 2ET