

# **DASP NEWS**

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



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## **Record Breaking Exam Results at Thomas Hardy**

Another very successful year for Thomas Hardy School, was celebrated when the students arrived in August to collect their results. 87% of GCSE Students at the School have gained 5 or more A\* to C grades, an increase of 11% on last year. Over 76% of students achieved 5 or more A\* to C including English and Mathematics. In fact these results equate to the average student at Thomas Hardy School achieving nine A\* grades. 22 subjects achieved over 80% A\* to C. One student gained 13 A\* and 3 A grades, 16 students gained 10 A\*'s and 33 students gained 15 or 16 A\* to C grades. There was an overall total of 402 A\* grades.



These results reflect a remarkable achievement for all students and indicate the depth of quality of the teaching and learning at the school. Most of all, they vindicate the decision of the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership to undertake Key Stage 3 in two years.

In A Levels, the pass rate of 98.5% is, again, well above the national average. 77% of all grades were A – C and 27% of all grades were the top A grade. 32 subjects gained a 100%

pass rate. The School is also delighted with the very successful results of the first students to complete the two year International Baccalaureate programme. Our students achieved an average IB score of 33, (equivalent to four A grades at A Level). This result exceeds the world IB average (30). Two IB students scored over 40 points.

Headteacher, Dr Melvin commented: "87% is a remarkable pass rate which re-affirms our place as one of the best comprehensive schools in the United Kingdom. Taken alongside our 98% pass rate at A level, the School has had another superb set of examination results."

### **Year 4 Orienteering Festivals**

One week last term, Dorchester Middle School saw a steady stream of year 4 pupils from Damers, Prince of Wales, Winterbourne Valley and Cerne Abbas First schools. There was a special reason for their visits; each of the first schools sent all their year 4 children to participate in orienteering festivals.

The festivals were organised by School Sports Co-ordinator, Demelza Roberts, and led by Level 1 Sports Leaders. The leaders ran 2 different courses, whose aims were to encourage the pupils to explore the school grounds and search for either a feature or a control. Pupils had a chance to use the professional maps that schools now use, as well as the proper orienteering equipment. The year 4 pupils were not only able to make the most of the glorious weather and fresh air

and to vastly improve their orienteering skills on a new site; they were also able to explore a new school! This exploration in itself is a huge benefit to many who are preparing to join DMS in September. It gave these small groups of year 4 children a chance to have good look around, in an informal setting and see what a wonderful, friendly school they will be joining.

Assisting with these festivals were some of the year 8 Young Leaders from DMS. These students were outstanding in their dealings with their visitors. They proved to be excellent role models, as well as friendly faces in a new school.



## News from Puddletown First School

Earlier in the year we held an ICT open Day. We invited parents in to school, to work alongside the children in the computer suite. The children were all keen to show off their skills. Each class had a slot in the ICT suite. The parents were keen to join in and some of them used a Roamer or a Pixie for the first time.



The adults were impressed with the childrens' skills and how independent they are becoming, when using the computer. The day was well supported and both the parents and children had fun.

### **Karen Reeve** ICT Co-ordinator

Following on from a very successful Arts Week in the Summer Term, with the theme of Rights

and Responsibilities, Puddletown First School was awarded the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award in July. Linked with our work on this, the photo below shows the SDA Primary School in Tafo Ghana, that we have links with. We recently received this e-mail from Humphrey Barclay (Development Chief), regarding a donation we sent from money raised during our Arts week.



*"We have just heard from the Development Council that the Headmaster of the SDA Primary has decided to use your two recent donations to paint the whole school, inside and out, and the Kindergarten as well! It has never been done before and will be a tremendous boost to morale. Thank You from Humphrey"*

Friends of Tafo is a UK based charity. Their web address is [www.friendsoftafo.org](http://www.friendsoftafo.org)

### **Sharon Downes** Puddletown First

## **Peter Farrington visits St. Mary's Catholic School**



During the week beginning the 21<sup>st</sup> April, all the children at St. Mary's Catholic First School participated in 'Hinduism' week. On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, DASP Director, Peter Farrington came to visit, to share

his knowledge from his recent trip to India.

The children enjoyed participating in a traditional Indian story, learning about giving without expecting anything in return. The Year 4s felt privileged to be asked to perform in the story, wearing stunning Indian costumes, jewellery and accessories. Mr Farrington ate several onion bhajis and samosas, telling us how lovely and tasty they really were!!! All the children were greatly enriched by this live experience and wish to thank Mr Farrington for such a fantastic assembly.

## Pyromania

Last term, St Mary's Middle School in Puddletown played host to a presentation by Dr Roy Lowry of the University of Plymouth, under the title 'Pyromania'. This was a spectacular demonstration of the explosive nature of science. There was a discussion, examples of the power of gunpowder and mini flame throwers of varying colours. Whilst the inflammable nature of banana flavour Angel Delight thrilled students! In the course of 3 'performances', children came not only from the 3 DASP Middle schools, but also from schools in Wimborne and Poole.



## Rights Respecting Schools

Rights Respecting Schools is a worldwide award scheme which promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as the basis for enhancing teaching, learning, ethos, attitudes and behaviour. DASP is enthusiastically supporting this scheme and all our schools are working towards Level 1 status. Our staff have worked in conjunction with Peter Barton, UNICEF Education Officer. We are pleased to say that 4 schools have already achieved Level 1 status. So congratulations to: Winterbourne Valley First, Manor Park First, Puddletown First and Damers First. To keep up to date with this scheme, check out the DASP website at:

[www.dasp.org.uk/rrs.htm](http://www.dasp.org.uk/rrs.htm)

## DMS ICT Mark

Congratulations to Dorchester Middle School and their ICT Co-ordinator, Penny Ettlting, for achieving the ICT Mark. This is a national award that recognises excellence in the teaching and provision of ICT in schools. To achieve this, the school must demonstrate a commitment to incorporating ICT across all subjects.

## 2008 Prom Concert a great success!

Saturday 28th June, saw the culmination of many weeks work, when DASP held its third annual Prom Concert in a large marquee in the grounds of Thomas Hardy School. 17 schools were represented in the wide range of musical ensembles performing there. Organised by the DASP Music Service, Music Co-ordinator Liz Adams said 'the evening was a triumph, not only for its excellent music, but also for the way it allows pupils from across all our schools, at all phases to work together'.



Music ranged from traditional orchestras and choirs to world music groups. The evening opened with the National Anthem sung by the choir, backed by the Thomas Hardy School Orchestra. Then we had Saxaphonics, a saxophone group from Thomas Hardy, St Mary's Puddletown and St Osmund's School. The choir sang 'Bridge over troubled water' followed by a dance interlude, provided by Damers First School. Pupils from the 3 Middle schools provided a display of African drumming and then the First Schools Orchestra played selections from Saint-Saens 'Carnival of the animals'. The first half closed with a performance by Thomas Hardy's rock band - Epic Journey.

The second half began with the Thomas Hardy Brass Ensemble playing 'Drunken Sailor'. However, the sight of all those brass instruments was nothing compared to what came next; in what some claimed was an attempt to get in the Guinness book of Records for having the most guitars on a stage! The Guitar Ensemble involved children from all DASP First schools and made for a very impressive site. This was followed by some wonderful choral work from the Royal Albert Hall Singers. The evening finished with the, now traditional, grand finale of 'Dam Busters March' and 'Land of Hope and Glory'. As if that wasn't enough, the musical fireworks were later followed by the real thing as the night sky was lit up above Thomas Hardy School.

Honoured guests were the Mayor of Dorchester, Kate Hebditch and her guest, the Mayor of Lübbecke, visiting Dorchester to celebrate 35 years of twinning. DASP Director, Peter Farrington, addressing the audience at the end, said that this event was a tribute to all those who worked so hard to make it happen and especially to the school's staff and children who make the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership the continuing education success story that it is.

### Manor Park Arts week

During a rare week of summer sunshine the children, staff and parents of Manor Park enjoyed a truly wonderful Creative Arts Week. The overall theme was the Four Elements with an art focus on sculpture. There were many, many highlights of the week. Here are just a few!



The children in Year 2 experienced "Dancing in the Rain" with Sue Cottam, using their own umbrellas as props. Years 3 and 4 loved their Sculpture Chain workshop with Sue Morgan and Sue Sloane. They were given a "gift" wrapped in newspaper and given the challenge "to turn the strange object into sculpture – using their imagination". Once the children had transformed their objects a "gallery" was created where they could reflect on their experiences as sculptors.

The Foundation Unit children created beautiful Japanese Flying Carp kites, carved suns out of plaster of paris and made sparkling masks.



When the teachers and students from The Thomas Hardy School came, Year 2 explored the Four Elements through an amazing nine workshops. They created a Haiku poetry book on the computer, made finger puppets, totem poles, exploding volcanoes, sculptures in the style of David Bachelors "unplugged" and took part in music, dance and drama. The Multi story Theatre Company gave an excellent performance of "The Firebird". The children then created their own firebirds out of clay, tissue paper, wrote poems and made a large firebird banner.



Undoubtedly for everyone the biggest highlight was having James Sutton as our 'Artist in Residence'. The project was very successful in that, not only did James create a beautiful chrysalis out of Portland stone for our new "Breathing Places" area, but he was also brilliant with the children. They were able to see a piece of art evolve from

beginning to end and become aware of all the processes involved. Although they did not contribute to the sculpture, they were so inspired by how an artist works, observing and talking with him on a daily basis.

**Lesley Goldsack**  
**Manor Park First School**

### A new Headteacher for Broadmayne

At the end of the Summer term, Head teacher Anne Clark was given a wonderful farewell by the staff and children of Broadmayne First School. Anne has decided in a change of direction and will be working with new entrants to the teaching profession.

Although Anne will be very much missed, Broadmayne are very lucky to have appointed Melanie Austin as their new Headteacher. Melanie has established connections with DASP, having been Deputy Head at St Mary's Charminster. We wish both Melanie and Anne continuing success.

**To contribute to this newsletter, e-mail:**  
[richardscott@dasp.org.uk](mailto:richardscott@dasp.org.uk)  
**DASP Website: [www.dasp.org.uk](http://www.dasp.org.uk)**  
**Or post to Richard Scott at the Thomas Hardy School, Queens Ave, Dorchester, DT1 2ET**