

DASP NEWS

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

Issue 15

July 2009

New member for DASP!

Sunninghill Prep in First Full Partnership between State and Independent Schools

Sunninghill Prep School in Dorchester has joined the DASP schools partnership in a pioneering venture that will break down traditional barriers between state and independent schools. Sunninghill Preparatory School is a co-educational school for children aged 2 years 9 months to 13 years. The partnership involves co-operation on planning for new initiatives in the curriculum, such as ways to deliver effective preparation for the demands of the Government's new Secondary curriculum. It also involves teachers working together at all levels and pupils collaborating on special projects.



Mr. Andrew Roberts-Wray, Headmaster of Sunninghill Prep, enthusiastically points out: "Sharing good practice between teachers helps to generate creative solutions to shared problems and thereby increase the standards

achieved by all the schools involved. At the same time, breaking down the artificial divide between our pupils and those from state schools, will benefit the community and offers a model that could benefit society in general." He goes on to emphasise: "It is time to break down the social barriers that can cause problems for young people in later life by creating opportunities for them to work together without fear or prejudice during their school years."



Sunninghill's Chairman of Governors commented: "The established DASP partnership is nationally recognised for its excellent academic results, through close co-operation between its schools and yet every school involved retains its individuality and ethos. As Governors we support this move as it creates stronger links with Thomas Hardy Secondary School, to where many of our pupils move onto at 13."

DASP Director, Peter Farrington and Head of Prince of Wales First School in Dorchester summarised. "Inviting Sunninghill into our partnership has given us a new dimension that supports our commitment to aim to provide the best education possible for our young people. We hope to share good ideas and get involved in new joint initiatives that will enrich and broaden our curriculum."

When asked, what were the potential pitfalls of working so closely with state schools, Mr Roberts-Wray replied: "Clearly parents who chose to send their children to a fee-paying school want to know that they are getting excellent value for their money and so although we are working more closely with

local state schools, we are still heavily involved in IAPS, the leading Prep Schools organisation, and the local Independent Senior Schools to which many of our pupils go at 13, often with scholarships. We feel that by being closely involved with both sectors we are genuinely offering our pupils better than both worlds.”

Chief Executive of IAPS, David Hanson, commented, “We fully support this initiative by Sunninghill Prep and Andrew, who has been an active member of IAPS for a number of years. It is only by building closer links between the independent and state sectors, which encourage and support best education practice, that we can offer the world class education we all want for our children.”

Thomas Hardye School Teacher selected for Antarctic mission.

Lyndsay Hilton, Head of Chemistry at Thomas Hardye School, is going to the Antarctic for 2 months in November 2010 to conduct a science research project. The expedition is run by a charity called the Fuchs Foundation, with an aim of generating an interest in the Polar Regions and inspiring young people to study science.

One of the key benefits of Lyndsay going is that she will produce a number of lesson plans/resources based on her experience and give them in her own and other schools (particularly within DASP). It will not just benefit science, as she will collect a range of data for other subjects. Examples might be collecting physiology data to be used with PE, diary entries to be used with English, climate information for Geography, historical information on Antarctica for History etc.



Lyndsay says “The science project I will be carrying out concerns the impact that nanoparticles could have on the world in the future. Nanoparticles are tiny particles that can only be seen with a very highly powered microscope, and billions of pounds is currently being spent by industry and the government into the benefits these particles may hold for us. Exciting new research has found that the

glaciers in Antarctica may contain nanoparticles of iron oxide which may actually be able to slow global warming. Part of my project is to analyse the glaciers, to determine if they do contain iron oxide, how much, and if this will have an impact on global warming. The second part of my project involves testing the wide variety of clothing that now contains nanoparticles. These have been engineered specifically to produce, for example, clothing which will never stain and socks that will never smell no matter how long you wear them. I am looking forward to testing those claims out! “

Participants each need to raise £14,000 to go on the expedition, and she is keen to get the schools within DASP involved to help her reach this target. If you are planning on ordering from a retailer online, you can do so through her webpage and she will receive up to 12% of the purchase order from each retailer towards the expedition. Retailers include Next, M&S, Thorntons, Waterstones and the Early Learning Centre. It will cost you absolutely nothing and there are often unique special offers to be had through her website: <http://www.buy.at/lhilton1>.

If you would like to follow the progress of her fundraising, training and expedition, please go to <http://lhilton1.edublogs.org>. If you would like to make a donation, please go to www.justgiving.com/lhilton1.

Yoga in DASP Schools

An innovative project has been taking place across the DASP First and Middle Schools enabling Marj Snape, an experienced local Yoga teacher, who works for an organisation called Yoga At School, to teach Yoga to children as part of the school day. The project was organised and co-ordinated by Demelza Roberts of West Dorset School Sports Partnership and funded by a grant from Awards For All.

The aims of the project were:

- To extend access and participation and offer an alternative form of exercise for children who don't enjoy traditional school PE.
- To increase skill and creativity as well as complementing the school curriculum and work on SEAL.
- To improve quality of life, encouraging more children to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and to improve their physical, as well as their emotional well being.

Marj worked in most of the schools over a four week period, usually for a morning or

afternoon a week and would teach whole classes for 30 minute sessions.

The lessons were based around four main themes: CALM, FOCUS, BREATHE, LISTEN, and incorporated many Yoga postures, simple breathing techniques and relaxation. The sessions gave students the opportunity to participate by demonstrating postures themselves, working in pairs on balances and sequences, and taking part in games such as Sneaky Trees, Sharks and a Yoga version of Rock, Paper, Scissors. Older students were able to create and develop their own Yoga sequences.

As well as improving physical and emotional well being, the lessons gave much scope for developing communication and teamwork skills and for enhancing self esteem and self confidence. A real bonus was that all students were able to participate in the Yoga sessions, including those with mobility issues.

Also each half term an after-school workshop was held which children, parents and staff could attend. These were well supported and Marj hopes to be able to do some follow up work in the Autumn.

Some of the feedback from staff and students:

"I wouldn't have believed that just 4 weeks could make such a difference" DASP Headteacher

"The sessions left the children feeling calm and relaxed. They have also given the teachers and teaching assistants a new repertoire of balance and co-ordination moves to incorporate into the PE curriculum throughout the year". DASP Headteacher.

"The course was fantastic and the teacher's methods and approach were extremely effective". Year 4 Teacher .

"The course was first class and helped children with Special Needs to focus on the activity and it held their interest." Year 4 Teacher.

"The quality of the course was excellent and the consensus of the pupils was that they enjoyed it much more than they thought they would". Middle School PE Teacher.

"I really enjoyed doing the shapes of animals and relaxing. Thank you". Year 4 student

"I learnt how to calm down if I'm angry, upset or annoyed". Year 4 student.

"I enjoyed Yoga and my favourite shape was the tree shape". Year 3 student.

"Thank you for teaching us about relaxing and breathing". Year 3 student.

For more information contact Marj on 01305 259261 / 07747429559 or marj@yogaatschool.org.uk

Two more "Outstanding" DASP Schools

Hot on the heels of the last newsletter announcement of DASP schools achieving outstanding status, we are delighted to add two more of our schools to the list of those deemed outstanding by Ofsted Inspectors.

On 28th April, Milborne First School were inspected by OfSTED and judged Outstanding in almost all areas. Headteacher Tom Leech said "In my final term as a Headteacher I am very proud that every area of school life has been judged as outstanding by Ofsted. I am especially pleased that the report recognizes the significant contribution every member of staff makes towards the school's overall excellence and the exceptional academic and emotional progress made by all pupils."



The report also praises the great support the school receives from DASP – "The school has forged outstanding relationships with parents and a range of other schools and agencies which benefits pupils' education and welfare especially well. Of particular note is its membership of the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership which brings excellent benefits in supporting staff development, enriching the curriculum and providing expert guidance and support for pupils."

In Mid June, Manor Park First had a two day Inspection, that also resulted in an Outstanding judgement.

The Inspectors said that "This is an outstanding school. It constantly and successfully strives for excellence in all aspects of its work. It is also a very happy school, where there is much laughter that reflects the pupils' love of learning and the way in which they and adults work so closely

together.” They added, “Outstanding teaching and learning are the main reasons for pupils’ impressive academic and personal development. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together, providing an excellent model of co-operation for pupils to copy.” The contribution of Headteacher, Jane Mockeridge is recognised in the Report with the comment “Outstanding leadership and management at all levels stem from the Headteacher’s inspiring leadership and drive for improvement”. However, Jane says that she is “particularly pleased for our whole community, as the report reflects the strong partnership we have with them.”

Congratulations to both schools on their excellent achievement, which again serves to demonstrate the strength of DASP and its component schools.

Tom Leech Retires

Following on from his very successful OfSTED Inspection, it is perhaps sad to report that Milborne’s Head teacher, Tom Leech, has decided to retire at the end of this term. This was a decision made more than a year ago, but it is obviously very pleasing for Tom to know that he is leaving the school in such a strong situation. Here are some comments from other DASP Headteachers.

“Tom made me feel really welcome as a new DASP Head, with his warmth and easy-going attitude.” **Melanie Austin, Broadmayne.**

“A quiet gentleman, lovely to work with and we’ll miss him”. **Viv Burgess, Puddletown.**

“Tom is a very supportive and reliable colleague who shows wonderful understanding and awareness of others as well as being a great calming influence at times of crisis” **Ian Donnelly, Charminster.**

Another Prom Night Triumph

On the evening of Saturday 27th June, in a Marquee in the grounds of Thomas Hardy School, the DASP Music Service held its annual ‘Last Night of the Proms Concert’.

The concert Involved students from all DASP Schools; ranging from Reception to Sixth Form. Taking part, for the first time, were pupils from Sunninghill Prep school, who recently joined DASP. A visual highlight was the First School’s Guitar Orchestra, where some 60 plus guitarists filled the stage! Damers First treated us to a dance display with backing from Saxaphonics. And a magical ‘Ain’t No Mountain High Enough’ from the Harmony Group was a vocal delight. As usual,

the evening concluded with rousing performances of Land of Hope and Glory and Rule Britannia (featuring soloists Pippa Goss and Jon Pugsley). The Thomas Hardy School Orchestra played with its usual gusto and precision, demonstrating the musical talent that the school possesses. They were directed by James Baker, Head of Music at Thomas Hardy and Walter Brewster.



All Dorchester schools have a commitment to fostering the joy of music to its pupils. The children rehearsed very hard to attain this level of performance and the evening provided a fantastic spectacle for its audience of parents and other members of the community. Incoming Director of DASP and Head of St Osmund’s Middle School, Ron Jenkinson, said the event was a tribute to the work of music teachers and the DASP Music Service, led by Liz Adams. It also showed the strength of the way DASP worked, by school children of all ages and from across the area, working together.

Traditionally now this event incorporates the presentation of the annual DASP Citizen Awards. These celebrate pupils who have demonstrated exceptional effort at being good citizens within their school community. The winners are nominated by their peers and must demonstrate throughout the whole year their commitment. The Mayor of Dorchester kindly presented the awards to the pupils.



The evening concluded with a lively firework display, courtesy of the Thomas Hardy School. The Prom Concert has become a fine tradition for Dorchester and provides not only a fantastic spectacle, but also a very real demonstration of the talent of young people in the area.