

DASP NEWS

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

Issue 14

May 2009

Prince Charles drops in on Thomas Hardy School

On the 12th December 2008, the Thomas Hardy School was pleased to host a Royal visit from HRH Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cornwall. During the visit the Royal Couple met with students, staff and governors. Prince Charles unveiled a plaque to officially open the new sports hall, creche and library.



During his visit the Prince said he was impressed with the school that his Great Uncle had opened at another site. He went on to say "The school has an enormous reputation not only in Dorset, but elsewhere."

The Prince said "Can I say how much my wife and I have enjoyed being with you briefly this morning, probably causing enormous disruption to all your normal activities." He went on to wish pupils luck with their exams before declaring "All I can say is I'm so relieved that I don't have to do exams anymore." The whole school turned out to wave the Prince off to his next appointment.



MORE OUTSTANDING OFSTED SUCCESS FOR DASP SCHOOLS

Two more DASP schools have been awarded outstanding status in their latest OfSTED inspections.

In February, Damers First School marked the Inspectors' verdict with a day of celebration and fun. As part of this celebration, the school commissioned a huge cake, which everyone got a slice of. The Inspectors said that Damers is "an outstanding school. Pupils and staff are happy, confident and enthusiastic." They also said that "Excellent provision results in pupils making outstanding progress and achieving particularly well."



On the day, the school also took the opportunity to officially open their new Pirate Ship activity centre in the playground. This proved immediately popular with the children!

Congratulations to Head teacher Phil Minns and his staff for their excellent achievement.



In March, St Mary's First School, Charminster also achieved an Outstanding verdict. In fact, they achieved the top grade across all headings. Head teacher, Ian Donnelly said "To be given this highest possible grading is a testimony to the dedication and hard work of the excellent staff in school and of course to the children."

In the Report, the Ofsted Inspectors said "St Mary's is an outstanding school. Pupils' achievement and personal development are excellent. Exemplary leadership has led to excellent improvement since the last inspection." They added that "Standards were above average in Year 4 last year, and the current Year 4 pupils are on target to reach even higher standards this year."

We offer congratulations to Ian and his staff for their wonderful achievement. And also to both schools, for continuing to demonstrate the strength and success of DASP and its schools.

CSL RESIDENTIAL

In the Autumn term, West Dorset School Sports Partnership ran, what is hoped will be, the first of many residential Sports Leaders Level 2 courses. During October, Demelza Roberts (SSCo, Thomas Hardy School) took 25 Year 12 students under canvas to Carey Camp to meet up with 15 Beaminster and Colfox students. The course ran for 3 days and involved many different activities and challenges for students to complete. The main part of the syllabus, for this nationally recognised award, was delivered over these 3 days.

Students had to work together to deliver activities, lessons, role plays, risk assessments, challenges and many more exciting pursuits which culminated in them delivering their own activities to a group of year 4 school children.



The students were a credit to themselves and their respective schools. They worked together to produce support and encouragement and they delivered high quality, safe and enjoyable activities for the year 4 pupils. Many students mentioned that the highlight was the working with these year 4 pupils, as well as their **6am** wake up call to 'Eye of the Tiger'!!! On the whole they were a joy to work with for the 3 very exhausting days and nights.



FIRST SCHOOL CONCERTS

April 1st and 2nd, saw the annual concerts of DASP's First Schools. As in previous years, the venue was St Osmund's Middle School and on both nights the hall was packed with parents, to enjoy some marvellous singing. This years theme was the Rights Respecting Schools Award (of which more below), which all DASP schools have been undertaking.

Marvellous ensemble performances, the product of much hard work and rehearsal, stirred the audience. In between these, each school performed their own piece of music and/or dance. And each performance was a highlight in its own right.



Well done to Rachel Horne (Head teacher of Winterbourne Valley First) and her Team of organisers for bringing these fantastic events together. Thanks also to all the teachers in each school who rehearsed the children and worked so hard. Each night involved more than 150 children on one stage, yet all went without a hitch. St Osmund's Head of Music, Ray Pontin and Duncan MacBean of Prince of Wales First School, provided most of the musical accompaniment on both nights. It is also important to acknowledge the contribution of St Osmund's to making the events a success. Not only for providing a venue, but also the hard work of the School's Site Management and Technical teams in setting up furniture and equipment.

The First night was attended by Peter Barton, UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Officer, who spoke about the scheme. On the second evening, Dorset County Inspectors David Powell and Mike Hillary spoke about DASP's success in the scheme, which has been in collaboration with Dorset Children's Services.

CRACKING CATERPILLARS

We have re-launched our celebration assemblies this year with a theme to help children get a better understanding of the DASP Citizen Charter. So at the beginning of the autumn term we started 'The Cracking Caterpillar' Assemblies. These take place every Thursday morning. Two children are chosen from each class to sit at the front of the assembly to receive a certificate for an achievement connected to the DASP Citizen Community Charter. The first achievers are shown here:



Their certificates are sent home that day to their parents/carers and their names are put up on a display board to create an ever growing caterpillar for all to see in the school corridor. They also receive special caterpillar stickers too.

Here we can see the growth of the caterpillars and the development of the school community.



Helen Pegrum
St Mary's CE VC First School, Charminster

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

DASP enthusiastically supports this nationwide 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. Dorchester schools have entered the scheme as a complete Partnership, probably the first in Dorset to do so. Linking with our own DASP Citizen scheme and our very active Student Voice, it encourages our students to know their rights, but also to make sure they know they have responsibilities that go with these. They also realise that every one else has rights that we must respect.

Each DASP school has worked towards reaching Level 1 status. This is achieved by judgement from an independent observer. They look to see what schools are doing to ensure they become Rights Respecting Schools. And it is important that the philosophy is embedded in the school curriculum and is not just a 'bolt-on'. Schools have held events and special days to celebrate children's rights and responsibilities. Some schools have entered Dorset's Rights Respecting Schools Song Competition, with the prize being a guitar signed and presented by Billy Bragg.

As of April 2009, 13 DASP schools have achieved Level 1 status and we expect the rest to soon follow suit. Our Schools have worked in co-operation with Dorset LA and UNICEF to provide input to support teachers and inform children. The next step, once all schools have achieved Level 1, is to see what we can do to ensure the principles are embedded in our way of working. And to move on to achieving Level 2 status.

NEW THOMAS HARDYE WEBSITE

The Thomas Hardy School have re-launched their website with a new look. Featuring news about the school and links to curriculum information for students, as well as providing the gateway to the school's future Virtual Learning Environment developments. The new website was created by Thomas Hardy staff member Marilyn Peddle. Do take a look around at:

<http://www.thomas-hardye.dorset.sch.uk>



And don't forget to have a look at the DASP website as well:

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

Where you will find lots of information about DASP Schools, E-Safety and information for parents about helping their children with school work. Speaking of which

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN WITH MATHS

"It wasn't like this when I was at school!". Have you found yourself saying this when asked to help with your child's maths? Advances in ways of teaching mathematical principles have moved on so fast that we, as parents, don't always recognise how our children are working things out. Using a series of booklets and the DASP website, a group of Dorchester Maths teachers are seeking to help parents.

A booklet was produced about 3 years ago to show parents of young children the variety of maths methods being used in school. However, it was felt that this needed updating and expanding to take in the whole of Key stage 1 and 2. So over the last year they have collaborated to produce 3 booklets called 'Make your child a Maths Star'. Booklet 1 is for Years 1 and 2, Booklet 2 for Years 3 and 4 and Booklet 3 for Years 5 and 6. Each one takes you through the different methods for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The booklets are free and paper copies have already been distributed in schools. However, they are also available for download at the DASP website.

<http://www.dasp.org.uk/DASPMaths/mathspubs.html>

It was realised, however, that just putting this down on paper wasn't enough. And so it was decided that the best people to teach parents these maths methods were the children! So, also at the DASP website, you will find a series of videos which show children demonstrating and talking through each maths method.

Many of the videos use the ability to record someone writing on the interactive whiteboards, that are now such an essential classroom tool. So like magic, you will see the children's working out, as they describe what they have done. These videos can be seen at:

<http://www.dasp.org.uk/DASPMaths/mathsvideo.html>



The website also features links to other websites which can help with maths and even some which show that maths can be fun!

We hope that we will be able to support other subject areas via the DASP website. In fact we already have some information there about the teaching of French in our First schools and some ICT information. This is all part of DASP's commitment to provide as much useful information as possible to parents.

NOTICE OF FUTURE EVENT

DASP PROM CONCERT 2009
Saturday 27th June

To contribute to this newsletter, e-mail:

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