

# **DASP NEWS**

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

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## **DASP Gets Investors in People Award**

In October 2005, DASP received its recognition as an Investor in People. In order to achieve this status, a strategic assessment was undertaken to confirm the commitment of the Executive Team and each Headteacher to Investors in people principles across the entire organisation.



The strategic Assessment comprised:

- A review of the DASP vision/mission, strategic plan and broad aims and objectives.
- A discussion with the executive director and executive team to confirm the overall commitment to the principles of Investors in People within DASP.
- A follow on discussion about how the principles of Investors in People are applied in DASP with appropriate members of the top management responsible for strategic planning, people topics/issues and systems.
- Identification of audit trails from the strategic assessment that can be followed through by the lead assessor in building block assessments and vice-versa.

- Establishing whether the organisation strategies are actually applied across the whole of DASP.
- Visits to a selection of building blocks to establish the continued position of DASP against the Standard.

Achieving the Standard confirms that the DASP model is both effective and innovative. It is our pupils who are the ultimate beneficiaries of DASP investing in all people, sharing and learning together, developing and distilling good practice.

This award is apt recognition by IIP and a credit to all our colleagues in the Dorchester Partnership.

### **The DASP Annual Conference - What is the DASP Citizen?**

Held at the Sandbanks Hotel, Poole for the first time, the DASP Conference is a chance to reflect on how we work and also look to the future. The Conference is now planned and organised by the DASP Development Group. This group contains representation from across the DASP staffing structure, including teaching and non teaching staff. The theme this year was the concept of the DASP Citizen. Arising out of a belief that children's behaviour is changing across the country. Schools, in partnership with parents and students, have a responsibility to ensure they are doing their best to send students out into the world with a correct set of standards, values and beliefs.

The event opened with an introduction by DASP Director Rob Davies to set the scene. There then followed a showcase presentation

of what DASP does well. It was felt to be important to start on a positive note rather than the belief that children are inherently naughty! In fact, when you saw the presentation, you realised just how many opportunities there are for students in DASP to participate in shared, positive experiences. And these experiences allow them to develop skills in working together, communicating and understanding what it means to be part of a community.



With events such as shared, cross phase concerts and Carey Camp, DASP shows how schools can collaborate to the benefit of every child. We saw two examples of First school children, visiting Thomas Hardy to work with senior pupils, a learning process for both age groups. The point was made that, after you have worked in DASP for a while it is easy to think that this is how it is done everywhere. However, talk to teachers in other parts of the County and you will find that this is not always the case.



After having given ourselves a well deserved pat on the back, it was time to then look at what the children actually think of us. A video had been made to show the 'Pupil Voice' within DASP. Starting with Reception pupils and taking us through

First, Middle and Upper school students, we heard what they like and dislike about school and what they think makes a good citizen. What was interesting to see, was that children's beliefs and desires remain fairly constant through the years, only the language they use to express it changes. Basically, they want to be happy and they want people to show respect for each other and for property. We also saw a selection of comments from parents.

Next, we had an excellent input from Elliot Dunworth, leading on to discussion on what

schools believe a DASP Citizen would look like and how we can start to take this forward. Looking at how we can effect change in children's behaviour by creating a positive ethos in school and how we might teach good citizenship.

Day 2 began with a presentation by Michael Brearley, from the company Independent Thinking. This was a lively, thought provoking look at how children learn and what we do to help or hinder this. Calling it 'Emotional Intelligence' he challenged many pre-conceived notions and created much food for thought. The talk was laced with humour and warmth and the odd activity for the audience. One of these was to throw a ball over your shoulder into a bucket. Guided (or not) by a partner. To see the Partnerships most senior staff throwing plastic balls all over the place was an inspiring sight! Incidentally, the task was designed to show how we can allow someone to learn and make mistakes, **without** doing it for them.

### ***Then the Pupil Voice ...in person!***

It was decided early on that any discussion on what constitutes a DASP Citizen would be worthless without an involvement by the young people themselves. Therefore, on the second day of the DASP Conference, we were joined by students from the Thomas Hardy School.

It is perhaps not surprising that their views were incisive and thoughtful. It also did not take them long to overcome any shyness to take part. One session was called 'Gingerbread Men' and involved drawing around a 'volunteer'. The groups (including the students) then wrote how a DASP citizen should feel inside the 'body' and what could be done to facilitate this by others around the outside. The students then joined the staff for a hotel lunch and continued the discussions.



The DASP Conference was a great success, with excellent input and discussion. It now falls to the DASP Development Group to follow up

the work done at Conference and make the concept of the DASP Citizen not only a reality, but also something that is recognised as a positive step for children's development across the Partnership.

## The DASP Key Stage 3 Two Year Programme

In May 2005, all students in Year 8, of our three middle schools sat Key Stage 3 SATs in Mathematics, Science, English and ICT.

This departure from the traditional three year programme was a major leap of faith for DASP and could only have been achieved because of the positive relationships and trust that have been established over many years across the Partnership.

The perceived benefits of initiating a two year programme included:

- A more sensible cut off point for Key Stage 3 in the three tier system. For staff and pupils, the end point to Key Stage 3, coinciding with the transfer to the third phase of the system would focus minds, clearly identify where the accountability lay and make target setting the sole responsibility of the Middle Schools.
- Affording a more flexible approach to the 14-19 curriculum and in particular to offer a more imaginative and creative approach to the Year 9 curriculum.
- Opportunities for Middle and Upper School curriculum leaders to meet and work together to revise curriculum plans and schemes of work – to identify and eliminate areas of duplication and to find opportunities to combine topics.

Senior staff and subject leaders had clear expectations that the attainment of pupils overall, at the end of a two year KS3 would be at least as high as that of pupils following a three year curriculum. This expectation was based on past performances and trends and the evidence of the critical pathways data of the 2005 cohort.

In the event, the pupils achievements surpassed all expectation. Not only were they the best results in Dorset, but they compared more than favourably with the national figures.

The results detailed here are quite astonishing and are further testimony to the success of our Partnership's working and to the hard work of our staff and students.

## Key Stage 3 Results from the three DASP Middle Schools May 2005

	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Science</i>
<b>Level 5+</b>			
<i>Girls (%)</i>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>85.3</b>
<i>Boys (%)</i>	<b>73.6</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>84.9</b>
<i>Combined</i>	<b>82.1</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>85.1</b>
<b>Level 6+</b>			
<i>Girls (%)</i>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>52.9</b>
<i>Boys (%)</i>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>55.0</b>
<i>Combined</i>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>53.9</b>

## Teaching Assistant NVQ 3 Awards

Teaching Assistants have been taking on the challenge of the NVQ 3 Award. DASP started to train its first cohort of about 30 candidates, 2 years ago. At the same time, it was also training another group of experienced TAs as Assessors. It was very much a pilot project, because the TA NVQ was a new qualification and everyone was learning as we went along and, inevitably, some fell by the wayside.



However, by last Summer, 6 Assessors had survived and qualified successfully and the first 4 candidates for the Award had been successful. Subsequently, a further 5 have qualified and we have now been informed that there have been 3 more since. That makes 12 and more are expected before Christmas; others are still pressing on. One of the first successful candidates, has also almost completed her Assessor qualification.



The NVQ3 is a prestigious award and not gained lightly, for candidates have to demonstrate their competence through the successful completion of 10 modules covering the whole range of a TA's role. Those who have achieved it - and their Assessors - certainly deserve our congratulations and should be really proud of their achievement.

## Carey Camp

Once again, this June, 10 of DASP's First Schools attended Carey Outdoor Education Centre (usually known as Carey Camp). With each school staying for two nights over the course of a week, a wide variety of experiences are had. Such as, learning to work in groups, often with children from other schools. Discovering about Romany signs, using ICT devices to examine the environment and cooking a stove meal. With nearly 200 children attending during the course of the week, all getting on well with each other (and their teachers and helpers), Carey Camp is a great example of DASP Citizens in action now!



## The DASP Intercultural project

The aims of the project were to involve all schools, in all three phases of the pyramid, in getting in touch with their cultural roots through song writing, dance and instrumental work. It was also valuable for them to learn about the cultures of other countries and to develop the concept of inter-culturalism in all DASP schools – not for the duration of the project only, but as a lasting principle.

The main work with our schools was by Sue Cottam and the DASP Music adviser, Liz Adams. Each First school received workshops in adapting existing songs and tunes and composing new ones using a variety of cultural influences. Resources on other cultures were used as starting points. Middle schools also worked on composing songs, whilst the Upper school had a small group of musicians producing an instrumental piece of music.

Work was videoed throughout and this then edited into a 30 minute record of the project which was distributed to all DASP schools.

## St Mary's Middle work with Billy Bragg



During the Summer term, students from St Mary's Middle School in Puddletown worked with Billy Bragg to write a song about the Tolpuddle Martyrs. This was to be performed, along with a play written by the children (with their teacher, Simon Douglas), at the Martyrs Festival in July. Billy spent two days in school to create the song. Lyrics were written and re-written, whilst the tune also changed a number of times! At the Festival itself, the school had 3 spots on the stage to perform the play and each part of the song, with Billy Bragg accompanying. This was certainly met very enthusiastically by a crowded Marquee audience. They then joined the customary festival parade, with a banner they had created in school. Later in the afternoon, the students joined Billy Bragg in his set, performing backing vocals on a song created especially for the festival.

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