

July 2021

Headlines – Good News

Dear Parent/Carer

Despite being an extremely challenging year, possibly the most challenging in my school career, there is still lots of good news to celebrate. So much in fact, that I have had to divide the Headlines into two parts: Good News and Information. Please keep the information section handy as a reminder for September. The Good News will eventually also appear on our brand-new academy website along with photos of the events so please do have a look. Hopefully, you will like the new format of the website and find it much easier to navigate.

Year 7 Camp

There was a real buzz of excitement as Year 7 prepared to leave Swindon to head out for the annual Year 7 camping trip to Cranham - a trip that we never thought possible! As always half of year 7s attended Monday to Wednesday, with the other half Wednesday to Friday. This year's camp was another huge success with the students and staff alike having a fantastic time, despite the pouring rain at the start of the week.

One of the highlights was the walk to Prinknash Abbey followed by the wonderful ice creams! Students cooked their own food on the first evening and served up some wonderful culinary delights, although the washing up was not quite so well received! An introduction to camp song favourites like 'Great Big Moose' and 'Singing in the Rain' (very apt) was a must, before hot chocolate and very excitable campers had to settle down and sleep. Students cooked their own breakfast after cereal and cups of tea, fuelling up before an action-packed day ahead.

On Day 2 students took part in a carousel of events with hardly a minute's breath: problem solving with the pipes and plates, manhunt in the woods, orienteering on the common taking in the beautiful views and of course everyone's favourite activity, The Vaccine assault course, dams and legendary 'Mars Bar Challenge'. Day 2 ended with a barbeque cooked by the staff, beautifully organised by Mrs Barton, Mr Shorey and Mr Haynes, prior to an evening of brilliant camp entertainment led by Mrs Barton and her trustee helpers. Singing at the tops of our voices, group songs and of course the Mars Bar awards. Chubby Bunnies were a highlight and caused a great deal of laughter as always.

The camp was enriched by the attendance of Year 10 work experience students who played their part in making it a memorable and well organised event. Without a dedicated team of staff who are willing to commit unselfishly to a full-on week of activity it could not run. We would like to thank all the staff, who worked tirelessly all week to give the students an amazing opportunity, made possible because of their enthusiasm, energy, patience, and dedication. The Year 7's fully embraced camp and will have taken many lifelong skills and some very happy memories home with them. A huge well done to everyone. You are now part of the Year 7 Dorcan camping legends!

Year 10 Virtual work experience

On Monday 5 July Year 10 students completed a virtual work experience programme to help them gain experiences of workplaces, as a 2015 government report indicated that only 18% of 16 to 17-year-olds are experiencing the world of work through part-time jobs. Students were able to take virtual tours of employers such as Barclays Bank, BT, Morgan Sindall Construction and Ipswich Town Football Club,

learning about the types of jobs people do within these organisations. Students were also able to develop their employability skills through courses provided by Eton and BeReady, a bespoke employability platform made for The Dorcan Academy. During the week students had the chance to have at least one virtual interview with an employer and we wish to thank Intel, Nationwide Building Society, Arval UK, Reading Scientific Services Ltd, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Virgin Media and the School Governors for their support with the interviews as students found them invaluable. Students found the week very helpful commenting on the importance of employability skills in their future.

Year 10 Sports Afternoon

In a year of postponements, cancellations and adaptations, Year 10 Sports Afternoon was a rare opportunity to bring at least part of The Dorcan Academy together to celebrate students epitomising the Dorcan values.

Badminton, Football, Rounders and Netball were first on the menu and it was clear from the outset that the Year 10s were loving having the opportunity to get competitive and enjoy an afternoon of sport with the rest of their Year. After an hour of drop shots, half volleys, no-balls and bounce passes, it was over to the field for some alternative athletics events. Anyone that dared to venture onto the field would have been welcomed by sack races, eggs and spoons, hoops and flying wellies as Eagles, Falcons, Ospreys and Kingfishers tried to run, jump and throw their way to glory.

Kingfisher went into the final event in the lead, but the Tug-of-War can be full of surprises. The Eagle tutor groups showed the teamwork and resilience to overcome their challengers, but even being undefeated in every pull was not enough for 10EY1 to stop the mighty 10EYA becoming overall champions in the inaugural Year 10 Sports Afternoon. Their togetherness, commitment and leadership, not to mention their skill, power and intelligence took them to the title of Year 10 Sports Day Champions!

An incredible afternoon enjoyed by all, where students were kind, showed respect and absolutely tried their best. Congratulations to 10EYA on their victory, but the real winner, on the day, was competitive sport!

Moon Rocks!

Year 7 students had the unique opportunity to take part in a Space event where scientists from the Open university dialled into school to talk to students about careers in space, their work and some upcoming space missions! After touring us through their work and some of their experiments, Dr Alice Dunford and Dr Neil Hollyhoake of the Open University Space instrumentation Centre took on our students in a lively Q&A session, fielding questions such as 'How likely is that the JUICE mission will find life on the Moons of Jupiter?', 'How do you protect astronauts from meteorite impacts' and 'How long can humans live in space?'. After the talk there were space - based activities to take part in, including Miss Creed-Miles' collection of Apollo mission books and Lego, meteorites and related rocks (such as Ilmenite – only formed when meteorites strike sand!), and finding out where the Apollo missions landed using Google Moon! On the return to school in September the Space theme will continue in STEM club, as we look at 'Living on the Moon'! Mrs Morley, Director of Teaching and Learning and Science teacher could not praise the event enough saying, 'It was academia at its best'. Thank you to Miss Creed Miles and one of our governors Mr O'Nion for making it possible.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Throughout this challenging year the bronze, silver and gold Duke of Edinburgh students have demonstrated excellent dedication and commitment to the award. Each student has given up their own time to complete the three sections of the award– volunteering, physical and skills. They have each made a valuable contribution to the local community, broadened their own experiences, and learnt new skills. Here are just a few examples of the fantastic work which has been completed- litter picking in the local area, becoming pen pal for terminally ill children, helping younger siblings with home learning, learning a new language including sign language, improving personal fitness by completing the couch to 5k app, creating recipe books and learning bike maintenance.

The bronze students were able to complete both their practise and qualifying expedition this year, albeit without the camping element. They were very unfortunate with the weather but showed fantastic team spirit and perseverance to keep going throughout the torrential rain! Our Silver students were able to camp on their expedition and recreated some year 7 camp memories as they completed their practice expedition from Cranham! Their qualifying expedition has unfortunately had to be postponed until the beginning of September. These teams have been particularly well organised and showed great navigational skills throughout their practise expedition. We wish our gold students all the best for their upcoming 5-day expedition!

Current year 8 and 9 parents will have recently received a parent mail about beginning either the bronze or silver award next year. We hope to see the DofE award continue to thrive with new students taking on the challenge. If you have any questions about the award please email Miss Trigg atrigg@dorcan.co.uk

Other great news!

We're excited that over 20 of our students are taking part in a 4-day activity holiday at PGL in Liddington in August. After a difficult year for many young people they will be entertained, enjoy the great outdoors and be with their friends in a safe and fun environment. They will be able to do two activities per day and will have lunch in the beautiful grounds. Thank you to Mrs Abbott who organised this.

26 students contributed to our anthology of student writing, 'Dorcan Writes' which is a fantastic achievement. Thank you to all students who participated and for Miss Keller who inspired everyone and brought it all together. If you would like a copy of the anthology they are available at £2.50 each with all proceeds to Poppy Alexander's fundraiser. There will also be copies in the library.

Mr Roke has reported that Year 8 Drama have 'blown his mind' with their effort and progress through their last topic of theatrical clowning. They have all successfully been able to demonstrate and analyse the key skills required to ensure their best performing capabilities. Well done Year 8 and your fantastic drama teacher, Mr Roke!

Mr T's Trek!

Mr Tollemache is walking 88 miles along the Ridgeway Trail, starting on 2 August for 5 days to raise money for Jessie May Children's Hospice & Swindon Food Collective (as nominated by our students). The 'Chuck it in the Bucket' campaign (collecting loose change from students at breaks) has already raised over £100! We wish Mr Tollemache every success in his venture – and hope he's got a comfy pair of shoes!! If you wish to donate a Gofundme page is soon to be set up on the Dorcan Academy Facebook page.

Social workers in schools

We have been incredibly fortunate to have been allocated our own social worker, employed by Swindon Borough Council, Trudie Jones to work in our school over the past few months. We are delighted that the funding has been continued and Trudie will continue to work with us and with our most vulnerable families. We thank her for her excellent work and for the significant difference she is making particularly in these challenging times.

Year 11

We trust that you enjoyed your time at Dorcan and wish you every success in the next stage of your education or employment. We look forward to seeing you on results day and again on our GCSE presentation evening which will be held on Thursday 2nd December 2021. Further information will follow.

Rewards

As we have been unable to hold our end of year whole school celebration assembly this week, we will be holding this virtually in Tutor groups during the first full week in September. This will enable us to award our certificates and prizes. I will therefore not be able to reveal the end of year House points and the winner of the House trophy until September!!! So, I am leaving you on a cliff hanger.... who will win the Cup?

We wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing Year 7 on Friday 3 September and everyone on Monday 6 September.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham
Headteacher

