

DAME ALLAN'S Digest

APRIL 2021



A welcome from the Principal

As I write my welcome for this Digest, it is a pleasure to look out of the office window to see our pupils enjoying the sunshine and unseasonable warmth on the field with their friends and classmates. We have been blessed with some lovely weather in recent weeks. And even if April does serve up a dose of more traditional British spring weather, I'm sure we'll all be making the best of opportunities to be outdoors, seeing friends and family.

Our return to school on Monday 8th March felt very much like a fresh start. We're very proud of how well pupils and teachers have worked together through our distance-learning systems, and pleased with your children's academic progress throughout this turbulent year and how they have responded to the ways our staff have provided pastoral support and socially-distant extra-curricular activities. But this way of working could never replace the experience of being in school with friends, teachers and colleagues.

Social interaction, team-working and physical activity are critical contributors to personal development and are aspects we have always championed as part of our holistic approach to delivering a well-rounded education. With that in mind, our focus over the past four weeks has been on providing pastoral opportunities and support to help pupils across the Junior and Senior Schools transition from digital to face-to-face interaction.

Alongside that, there has been a welcome return to extracurricular activities and now filming is underway at the Junior School for their Combined Arts production.

As you are aware from our recent Special Edition Digest, the plans for the North End Development of the Senior Schools are now underway. Continuing the theme of new beginnings, this marks the next chapter for the Schools as they continue to evolve, and one which we are confident will facilitate our provision of an excellent education for many years to come.

I wish you all a very restful Easter break, hopefully with some much-needed time with extended family.

The Big Bounce Back

To mark the return to school on Monday 8th March, we welcomed back our pupils with our 'Dame Allan's Big Bounce Back', a programme of activities which prioritised socialising, good mental wellbeing and just having fun!

In the Junior School and Nursery, children were greeted by our two Snow Dogs, Ellie and Allan, newly repainted in their smart school uniforms. PSHEE activities focused on helping the children get used to working and playing together again. There was also a welcome return to clubs and extra-curricular activities in line with current guidance regarding social distancing.

At the Senior Schools and Sixth Form, an extensive timetable of after-school activities for all pupils from Years 7 to 13 was put in place. All activities were planned to promote outdoor physical activity, socialising with their classmates and spending time off-screen in a safe and enjoyable way.



Debating and Public Speaking

There has been recent success for our debating and public-speaking teams.

The debating team took runner-up in the regional final of the ESU Schools' Mace Competition, successfully opposing the challenging motion 'This House regrets the glorification of the genius narrative'. Emily, Ben and Libby each gave a wonderful performance, which really showcased how much progress they've made since first joining Debate Club in Year 9. The judges agreed that their speeches were the most enjoyable of the evening, with their rhetoric and humour second to none.

We entered two teams into the ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition. Team one consisted of Nasif, Denny and Imogen, and team two was Issy, Ben and Andrew. Both teams received a lot of praise and team one went through to the regional final - the first time we've got through to that round in this competition! Imogen was awarded 'Best Questioner' in the regional final; the judges said she was 'outstanding', that they were 'spellbound' by Denny's speech and that Nasif's chairing style was 'warm, confident and engaging'.

Boys vs Girls Hockey

The annual hockey match between the Year 13 girls' hockey squad and the boys' rugby team was a little different this year as social distancing meant the usual crowd around the astro-turf was not in attendance. However, credit to all of the students who participated as the game was reportedly played in good spirits with a dash of healthy rivalry.

Those who were fortunate to see the match said it was an excellent game of hockey with much creativity, invention and improvisation on display. Despite trailing 2-0 to the boys early in the second half, the girls began to play their trademark hockey and took the win 3-2. Well done to them!



Business Meeting

On 4th March, Year 12 students studying business and economics got the chance to take part in a Google Meet with local entrepreneur and Old Girl, Sabrina Oubinov.

Sabrina left Dame Allan's in 2010 and, following her A levels in Spanish, art and business, pursued a degree in fashion. Now running her own online boutique, Oubinov, Sabrina opened her first physical shop on Gosforth High Street last year. She gave a live talk to the students about the expansion of her fashion business and the challenges she faced opening the shop just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Learning through play

This half-term, Nursery have been learning about Elmer and listening to lots of Elmer stories, such as 'Elmer and the Rainbow'. They created their own rainbows by painting, drawing or making them. They even used their mouse control skills to create one on Mini Mash. Other Elmer stories encouraged them to look for 2D shapes, play memory games, host a teddy-bear tea party and even bounce like a kangaroo!

They've also looked at the characters from Ten Town and completed number activities, story sequencing and answered comprehension questions.



BBC
YOUNG
REPORTER
FESTIVAL

This term saw pupils in the Senior Schools take part in the BBC Young Reporter Festival, an annual programme encouraging children to share and present news stories in their own way. The categories this year were 'Uplifting', 'Coronavirus' and 'Me and My World' and could be presented in whichever media the pupils preferred. For example, a traditional written article, a web-page or blog, a video report or a podcast.

All students in Years 7-9 worked tirelessly over the last half-term to create news reports to show what really matters to them. The students have been really engaged with the project, working independently or in small groups. We have been hugely impressed that students were able to work collaboratively despite restrictions and produce some really insightful pieces.

Baking Success

Year 7 DABS Elijah recently entered the national baking competition, Flipz Bakez. He made a chocolate cake in the shape of a giant pretzel covered with smashed Flipz (chocolate-covered pretzels) and melted chocolate. This delicious bake saw him finish in the Top 5 from across the country. Well done, Elijah!



Dance

We hope you enjoyed watching our Virtual House Dance competition this half-term. Well done to everyone who took part and, once again, congratulations to the winners. If you missed it via our social media, you'll find it on our YouTube channel - just search for Dame Allan's Schools.

Looking ahead to the summer term, the Leavers' Dance Show will be held on Wednesday 30th June.

DASPA

This half-term, the DASPA Committee successfully organised socially-distant uniform sales for both schools. A big thank you to the dozen DASPA members who have made this such a success sorting uniform requests at home, and thanks to all the parents who donated uniform. Donations are still being accepted at the Junior School shed or in the DASPA box at the main school reception.

The entries for the DASPA Decorated Egg Competition at the Junior School were fantastic and thank you to Mrs Needham for organising this competition.

This term we have also been supporting our fantastic sports departments at both the Junior and Senior Schools. The DASPA Junior sub-committee helped the Junior sports department to purchase

an expandable cricket net which will be used next term; at the Senior Schools, the DASPA Committee were pleased to support the sports department's fabulous quiz with some prizes.

The Parents' Business Directory has been expanded and we're pleased that parents are connecting to each other. Please also join us on our LinkedIn page.

We would normally hold our Family Ceilidh at this time of year, which is a celebration of the cultural diversity of the British Isles. To mark the occasion this year, the DASPA Committee have invited parents and teachers to a virtual quiz on the British Isles. The prize is a voucher for afternoon tea for four from Blackfriars. We are of course looking forward to having our regular in-person events soon!

And finally, at the end of term, we are preparing a virtual pet show, please look out for an email on this!

If you would like to know more about any of our activities or about DASPA in general, please email daspa@dameallans.co.uk Vanessa Morrell, chair of DASPA

Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Safety for our pupils whilst online remains a priority. There is much good advice in this video, produced by our safeguarding partners, Clennell's: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/IMwEX3zu3wrRD/>



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS
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