

DAME ALLAN'S Digest



FEBRUARY 2022



A welcome from the Principal

What a positive and productive January and February we have had! As the pandemic recedes in our everyday lives, the focus at school has increasingly been on making sure every pupil is thinking positively about how to get the best out of life at Dame Allan's, taking advantage of the myriad of opportunities to stretch themselves and explore in new directions as we continue to build our co-curricular sport and activities programme.

It was such a pleasure to welcome Vick Hope, Allnian (2007), to school last month. I can't think of a better person to open The Snug, our new pupil wellbeing centre, as a warm and eloquent ambassador for good mental health. Her messages were clear, moving and relevant about the importance of reaching out for help, and not suffering in silence. She is also a wonderful example of the power of modern languages (as a Cambridge linguist herself) to turbo-charge a career in many different possible directions, a super role model for our young people today.

And for those who haven't been near our Fenham site for a while, you will be struck by the rapid rise of our steel frame as the North End Development becomes a reality, not least in the imaginations of pupils excited by the pace of change on the build, and the new facilities to come.

May I wish you a very enjoyable half term break with your families.



Allnian and award-winning presenter Vick Hope returned to Dame Allan's to officially open The Snug - our new pastoral care facility where specialist support services such as counselling and Special Educational Needs are housed. (see inside)

Steelworks installed in next NED phase



With foundation works now completed on our North End Development, principal contractor Tolent has begun erecting the steel frame.

Progress is expected to increase rapidly with the new development beginning to take shape following the significant construction milestone and the demolition of the Bursar's

former office and former art block, art classrooms and changing rooms.

Glyn Pallister, Site Manager at Tolent, said: "It's great that there's definitely something to see now.

Once the steel frame is up, which we're manoeuvring into place with a mobile crane, we will be in a position to lay the concrete floor slabs which we expect to be in place by early March. Following that, the next significant milestone will see the construction of the new roof as we head into Spring."

Once complete, the new North End Development will create three new art rooms, exhibition space and sixth form accommodation within the design and technology department, as well as thirteen new classrooms, three science labs, and multiple office meeting rooms and changing rooms.

Will Scott, Principal at Dame Allan's School, said: "It's great to be seeing signs of real progress as the structure for the development goes up. Another exciting phase begins."

The Snug is... OPEN!



It was such a pleasure to welcome back Allanian and successful radio and television presenter Vick Hope to officially open our new wellbeing centre, The Snug.

Vick was a pupil here between 2000 and 2007, before going on to study modern languages at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, then making big waves in the world of broadcast.

She kindly returned, with her mum Adeline, to take a tour of the Schools' new pastoral care facilities, reconnect with teachers and present a 'Find Out Friday' Q&A session in the library.

She spent time talking to pupils and staff within The Snug, which has been created at our Senior School site to house support services and provide a dedicated place where students feel safe, heard and understood.

As co-host of the 'Life Hacks' and 'Life Hacks Wellbeing toolkit' shows on BBC Radio 1, Vick regularly invites experts on to help young listeners prioritise their mental health as they navigate life's challenges. She recognises the importance of implementing a caring support-structure within schools.

Vick said: "It's been important to me in my work to raise awareness, destigmatise and signpost resources dedicated to nurturing the psychological and emotional wellbeing of our young people, and I'm so proud that Dame Allan's is clearly doing this work so well too.

"The Snug will create a safe space for pupils at school to ensure they can find the peace and freedom they need when studies get overwhelming, to know they are not alone, that they can talk about anything they're thinking or feeling, and as a result thrive."

Vick is BBC Radio 1's Drivetime presenter and a published author of two children's books 'Shout Out: Use your voice, save the day' and 'Listen Up: Rule The Airwaves, Rule The School' to help encourage children to read, and to stand up for what they believe in.

She is also well known for appearing on the BAFTA winning 2018 series of Strictly Come Dancing, and shared some of her dance secrets with pupils when visiting the Schools' dance department with Mrs Turnbull.

Vick, a keen linguist while at Dame Allan's and fluent in French, Spanish and Portuguese, was also keen to learn about the new suite of modern language classrooms being created as part of the Schools' North End Development.

Reflecting on her school years, she said: "I loved my time at Dame Allan's; we had a brilliant support network and were encouraged to explore all facets of our abilities and creativity, with strong pastoral care always at the forefront.

"I'm very thankful for this, and truly believe this is why DAS produces such well-rounded young people who go on to do amazing things in so many different disciplines."



Heidi has pawstitive effect on pupils!

FRIENDLY therapy dog Heidi has joined Dame Allan's pastoral care team to boost pupils' confidence and enrich their emotional wellbeing.

Heidi spends one day a week in The Snug and has already been having a positive impact on students, particularly those who have been sitting their mock exams.

Learning support teacher and Heidi's owner, Mrs Lowery, said having a dog in a school is shown to help improve behaviour, attendance and academic confidence among pupils, while lowering levels

of anxiety, stabilising intense emotions and enhancing relationships. It also teaches pupils about responsibility, and develops key skills in empathy and nurturing.

She said: "Children take great enjoyment from interacting with Heidi; she is such a calming influence and helps create a friendly, happy and homely environment within The Snug.

"Students can feel incredibly anxious at exam time, particularly with the uncertainty created by the Covid pandemic, and Heidi has been a welcome distraction

and comfort to some who have felt overwhelmed.

"The feedback from parents has been hugely positive, they have already noticed the effect Heidi is having on their children just by being in the room."

Heidi, a five-year-old Maltichon, is undergoing continuous training and has already completed 12 weeks on The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme. Due to the fact she sheds very little hair, Heidi is hypoallergenic, and, true to breed, her character is affectionate, smart and sociable.

In conversation with.... Andy Forster, Network Manager



Tell us about your role:

I head the Schools' IT department and I manage a great team of technicians, consisting of Mr Gill, the Senior Network Technician, Mr Davidson, the A/V Technician and Mr Lines, an IT Technician.

Our primary aim is to ensure that the whole of Dame Allan's, across the Junior and Senior sites, has a functional network that not only supports and enhances learning, but is also a safe and secure environment. We look after and manage the Schools' PCs, Chromebooks, projectors, interactive screens, printers, servers, firewalls and switches. We also manage the many other systems that connect to a network or the internet - for example, building management systems, access control systems, photocopiers, CCTV and even the franking machine!

There is rarely a quiet moment in the office - be it resetting forgotten passwords, repairing Chromebooks, or planning the next upgrades to ensure Dame Allan's is at the forefront of IT advancements. On top of all that, we also manage stage sound and lighting, in support of the dance, drama and music departments, and provide photography and videography for many of the Schools' events.

Is IT always evolving?

Yes, and because of this the school has a dedicated IT strategy group that specifically looks at how to advance IT usage and ensure the Schools are bang up to date. For example, back in 2016 the group first discussed a 1:1 Chromebook scheme for the Senior School... by September 2017 the scheme was introduced. That decision helped the Schools enormously during lockdown, because it meant that every single pupil in Years 7-13 had a device and were already accustomed to using Google Classroom before the pandemic hit.

Did Covid present challenges to the department?

Thankfully, staff and senior pupils adjusted relatively quickly to online learning using new tools like Google Meet and Screencastify. However, it was slightly more challenging at the Junior School where pupils at home were using a wide mix of devices - phones, tablets, Macs - which we had no control over and each had their own Internet Service Provider.

We made the decision quite early on in the pandemic to open up our 'IT Helpdesk' to both students and parents, so they could email us with their problems or IT concerns. We were also able to provide individual laptops to the children of key workers within the Junior School.

When restrictions started to lift, and we came back to school with blended learning, we had to prepare the classrooms so each one was kitted out with webcams and Chromecasts, and we upgraded the WiFi system to cope with the extra traffic.

Did you always want to work in IT?

I have always had an interest in computers; the first I remember was a Sinclair ZX81. Throughout primary school my favourite part of the week was when the old BBC computer was wheeled into the classroom! It was in secondary school where I became interested in pursuing IT as a career. I went to Newcastle College to study computer programming and onto university to study computer science. I first came to Dame Allan's as an IT Technician in 2003 when a full school IT network was being installed. After 3 happy years, I left to expand my experience and knowledge, then returned in 2007 to my current role.

The highlight of my time here has been seeing the Junior School go from the planning and build stages to the success it is today - especially after spending 8 weeks kitting it out with all its IT equipment!

Oliver's space project captures attention of MoD



SPACE surveillance technology developed by Sixth Form student Oliver, with the British military in mind, has attracted the attention of the Ministry of Defence.

Oliver has created a low-Earth orbit (LEO) surveillance system that gathers intelligence to identify possible dangers

before they become critical, as part of his A Level work towards an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

His findings are now being examined by the MoD, and Oliver, who wants to study aerospace engineering at university, has discussed the system's capabilities with Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, a senior Royal Air Force officer who serves as the first commander of UK Space Command.

"I've developed a system that uses hyperspectral imaging - a technique that can be used to find objects and identify materials - and can be used for preventative intelligence gathering, in particular by the British military," explained Oliver. "I've invested well over 120 hours on the project, created 3D models and HD

renders to sit alongside my academic report."

Oliver, who is studying for A Levels in Maths, Physics and History, opted to take an EPQ - a qualification worth the equivalent of half an A Level - to explore ways to optimise LEO surveillance systems.

Students can choose to take an EPQ as their 'super-curriculum' option, alongside their minimum three A Levels, to broaden their studies. The qualification requires them to dedicate hours of research and analysis into any chosen field of interest, before writing an academic report and finally presenting the findings, and any developed 'artefact', to an audience.

Great start to 2022

It has been a particularly successful start to 2022 for our cross country runners, who have trained hard and competed exceptionally well, celebrating some of the best results the Schools have achieved at county level.

Some 32 runners reached the Northumberland County Cross Country Championships at Temple Park, South Shields, in January and each gave 100% effort on the course.

Annie and Poppy placed 1st and 2nd respectively in the Junior Girls run, while Jack and Albie finished 3rd and 15th among the Junior Boys. Marina finished 8th in the Inter Girls.

In the Senior categories, Will and Sam placed 8th and 15th respectively in the Boys, and Abi finished 11th in the Girls.

These runners qualified to compete in the Northern Schools Inter County Cross Country Championships at Stewart Park, Middlesbrough, on February 5, and again ran superbly. Annie, Poppy, Abi and Albie have been selected to run in the National Championships in Kent next month, competing against some of the best athletes in the country.

A special mention to Annie, in Year 9, who has also been selected for the North East u15 cross country team to run at the UK Inter Counties Championships in Loughborough in March.

At the Tyneside Senior Boys Cross Country, our Years 7 / 8 combined team and Years 9/10 combined team placed 2nd and 3rd in their respective races, while Junior School runner Nick won the u11 Boys HMC Cross Country at Barlborough Hall.



In other sport, the KS5 girls squash team won all three of their second-round matches at the England Squash National Schools Championships in Sheffield and qualified for the National Finals in Nottingham at the end of March.

In netball, the u10/11 team was unbeaten in the School Games Netball Competition and earned their place in the Newcastle City Finals. Meanwhile, the u16 girls squad placed 4th in the Regional Finals, having won 4 out of their 7 matches and shown excellent skill and determination throughout the competition.

In hockey, the Year 6 girls' team won four matches and drew one in the England Hockey Schools Tournament and qualified for the regional rounds in March. The Year 7 boys' team celebrated success at the National Schools Hockey Tournament in Yarm and secured a place in the North East Finals.

Congratulations to Junior Sports Captain Zara who has been selected to join the county cricket u11 Girls Development Programme; to Rebecca, Year 7, who won silver in the North of England's u13 indoor shot put with a PB of 8m 48; and to Martha, Year 9, who won gold in the North of England's u15 indoor pole vault, with new PB of 2m 70.

A final mention to accomplished showjumper Mollie, in Year 8, who represented Dame Allan's and did exceptionally well at the recent NSEA County Qualifier. She jumped a clear round on horse Spark Attack and placed 2nd at the event, with just 0.05 of a second between her and the 1st placed rider.



The Allanian Society



While enjoying Founder's Day and our lunch following the cathedral service, the Allanian Society recalls not only the generosity of Eleanor Allan, but also others whose gifts have sustained the schools.

Many have given generously of their time and talents, while others have supported financially like Mrs Mary Chisholm, who gave the equivalent of over £100,000 to the foundation in 1722. This tradition of generosity stretching back across the centuries has a special place in shaping the character of Dame Allan's and is a key part of the firm foundation which we will be celebrating at the Allanian Society Annual Dinner on

Saturday 2nd April. Our theme will be Strong Foundation: Strong Future and will provide an opportunity to reflect on the wholehearted service and generosity of the past, and hear more about the next exciting steps in the schools' development. Places at the dinner are limited so please do book your place early, via our website <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/event/allanian-dinner-2022>.

If you want to learn more before booking your place you can contact the Schools at development@dameallans.co.uk or call 0191 275 1500.

Stephen Davies,
Chairman of the Allanian Society

Save the dates - forthcoming reunions

Two reunions are being planned for later this year.

To find out more or to book your place call the Development Office on 0191 275 1500. Alternatively you can sign up via the Allanian website <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events> or by email to development@dameallans.co.uk

- Saturday 1st October 2022 - a reunion for those who left Dame Allan's Sixth Form in 1982, organised by David Martin DABS 1982
- Saturday 7th May 2022 - a reunion for those who left Dame Allan's Girls' School in 1971, organised by Pat Ford (Jennings). The plan is to meet at the Schools for a tour, tea and cake, perhaps followed by a lunch in town.

Whilst planning for both events is in the early stages, it would be helpful if you could register your interest via the Allanian website <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events> and we will be in touch with more details.

Spectacular performance

The whole school dance show at the end of January was a huge success - and thankfully, not even Covid could stop it this time!



The dance groups worked very hard in the run up to the show and must be applauded for their incredible performances, demonstrating a diverse range of styles, from traditional Indian dance to musical theatre.

Sadly, the Year 6 dancers were unable to take part on the day, but their films were shown to a wonderful audience at Dance City, and their live performance rescheduled to Friday 17th February at the Senior School.



DASPA



THE DASPA committee are really pleased to be able to start planning for the future once again! Tickets are now on sale for the DASPA ball, sponsored by Queensway Dental. The Black Tie and Diamond Ball - for our diamond schools - will take place on Saturday 18th June at St James' Park and promises to be a fantastic evening of great food and entertainment. Early bird tickets are priced at £60 and available by emailing daspa@dameallans.co.uk. Special thanks to our lead sponsor Queensway Dental and to Vertu Motors for their financial support.

We are also organising a family Ceilidh, with a professional caller and music by our wonderful school band, on Friday 4th March. For tickets, please email DASPA.

We were delighted to help fund the school calendar project. More than

130 colourful calendars, created by Junior pupils, were distributed to senior Allanians and older residents in the local community just before Christmas.

At the Junior School, following an amazing Year 5 party last term, we had a successful film night for KS1 and one is planned for KS2. We hope to continue to support important events and wish to thank Mrs Needham for her hard work and enthusiasm on these occasions.

We were also pleased to make a donation to The Snug and we will continue to keep you up-to-date on how money raised by DASPA helps the Schools.

If you have any spare uniform - especially for the Seniors - we would appreciate donations for our regular uniform sales.

FOUNDER'S DAY

The end of half term is marked with a special Founder's Day service in Newcastle Cathedral for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Each year we celebrate Dame Eleanor Allan and her vision to provide a 'proper education' for boys and girls in Newcastle. It was in February 1705 that Dame Allan founded the Charity School of St Nicholas by deed of gift. In 1877, it became known as Dame Allan's Schools.

SAFETY FIRST

The dynamic team at The Riot Act delivered a thought-provoking and informative workshop to Year 8 and 9 students on the importance of road safety this month. The fantastic session focused on pedestrians and the issues and consequences of irresponsible pedestrian behaviour. These key messages are so important to keep our pupils safe, as we encourage more walking, cycling and sustainable travel to school through our greener travel plan. A gentle reminder to all drivers who navigate the streets surrounding the Schools to be mindful of pupils on foot and bike.

Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Children's Mental Health Week was the 7-13th February. If you haven't had a chance to investigate this further, there are still lots of great resources for parents and children on the [place2be](http://place2be.org) site: www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

The theme for the week and beyond was 'Growing Together' - encouraging people to consider how they are growing emotionally, and how they can help others to grow. Challenges and setbacks can help us to grow and adapt, and trying new things can help us to move beyond our comfort zone into a new realm of possibility and

potential. However, emotional growth is often a gradual process that happens over time, and sometimes we might feel a bit 'stuck'.

Many of our older pupils have faced the challenges of trial exams over the past half term and their resilience and fortitude have been exceptional. We hope both pupils and parents recognise that keeping a positive balance of physical, recreational and academic activities is essential for wellbeing. Our co-curricular programme provides so many opportunities for the pupils to balance their activities and we hope every pupil takes full advantage of the offering.



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS
building the future