

# DAME ALLAN'S Digest



FEBRUARY 2018



## A welcome from the Principal

After yet another fantastic year in 2017, we look ahead to another exciting 12 months at Dame Allan's Schools.

While we are only one month into the new year, much has already happened in our Junior and Senior Schools and I hope this is a sign of things to come throughout 2018.

Our Sixth Form students and pupils in Year 11 have been working hard through their trial examinations, preparing for the summer as they look to continue Dame Allan's excellent success rate in public examinations, which I am fully confident they will do.

The league tables recently published by the Department for Education might appear to be a cast iron measure of that success, but the picture is much more complicated. As ever the tables do not recognise the Schools' chosen IGCSE qualifications in maths and English meaning that Dame Allan's position in a table measuring performance rates in GCSEs including maths and English is normally at the bottom, along

with some other independent schools who follow IGCSE courses. The results in this year's tables are even more complex as Dame Allan's figures do include the data for those students who came to us from Sunderland High School following its closure in summer 2016, as they were following GCSE courses in maths and English and continued to do so after they joined Dame Allan's. As a consequence, because a small minority of our school cohort did GCSE examinations, their results do appear in the league tables, leaving us with an even more misleading figure than usual which shows that only five per cent of Dame Allan's students achieved passes in five GCSEs including maths and English. This is no criticism of the students who joined us from Sunderland High; they worked hard in Dame Allan's, they showed real resilience in difficult circumstances and they were a credit throughout to themselves and their former school. It is, however, yet another reflection on the inadequacy of league tables as a real measure of school performance.

At A Level our results were again some of the best in the region

with the average point score coming out as a B grade, an improvement on last year. Well done to all pupils and staff for their hard work.

And of course, any measure of school success can and must look beyond academic results. It was pleasing to see so many pupils' achievements recognised in the recent Outdoor Learning Education (OLED) Awards for example.

The numerous certificates handed out are testament to the time and effort dedicated by our young people, frequently to serving others as well as developing their own skill sets. Similarly, we were proud of the success of our fantastic dance show at Newcastle's Dance City, with students from Year 6 to Year 13 bringing the house down with excellent performances.

This term brought us the sad news that our bursar Mrs Lant will be leaving us after four-and-a-half years. She has been a fantastic asset to Dame Allan's during that time and leaves the Schools in a considerably stronger position than they were on her arrival. We wish her all the very best as she undertakes an exciting new challenge in the coming weeks.



## Stars shine outdoors

More than 100 of our pupils took centre stage as they collected certificates and prizes during our recent Outdoor Learning Education (OLED) Awards ceremony in school.

The youngsters have achieved various awards out of school hours with their dedication and sense of adventure seeing them rewarded with Duke of Edinburgh, Mountain Skills and Hill Skills awards, as well as climbing and sailing awards.

While it is very rare for people so young to gain their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards, we were proud that four current Sixth Formers had already gained the coveted achievement, which takes a great deal of commitment over a 12-month spell.

The pupils and their parents were also inspired by an interesting presentation by Clive Gray, the chief executive of Blyth Tall Ships, who came into school to talk about his past adventures and upcoming voyages including an expedition to Antarctica. Year 13 pupil Anna left with the main prize of the Outstanding Contribution to Outdoor Education after gaining her Mountain Skills Award, going on the Schools' World Challenge trip to Costa Rica and Nicaragua and currently working towards her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.







A team of swimmers from Years 4, 5 and 6 headed to Leeds for the HMCJ (NE) swimming gala. Special congratulations to the Year 5 Girls, pictured with the Boys' team, who came second overall in their category while Emelia won gold in the individual front crawl.



The Under 11 hockey team.

## Sporting success for juniors

The Junior School's sports teams impressed in recent tournaments, doing Dame Allan's very proud indeed. The Year 6 netball team won the Newcastle heat of the School Games High 5 competition at the Walker

Activity Dome from a total of 10 teams, and will go on to represent the area at the Northumberland final. The Under 11 hockey team qualified for the North East round of the National Schools tournament after a string of

great performances in the county competition, and a team of swimmers from Years 4, 5 and 6 headed to Leeds for the HMCJ (NE) swimming gala and put in excellent performances throughout. A big well done to all involved.



The Year 6 netball team.

## Swimming stars reach new heights

Congratulations to two of our students who achieved personal goals in the swimming pool over the Christmas break. Year 9 pupil Anna realised a dream of hers when she competed in the Scottish National Swimming Gala in Edinburgh, while Year 11 pupil Robbie gained promotion to Newcastle Swim Team's Performance squad.

Anna qualified for the gala following successful regional rounds and took part in three swims; the 50 fly, 100 fly and 50 back. She set new personal bests in each race and came second in the 50 fly which is a huge achievement. Robbie, who wakes up at 4.45am most mornings to train before school, has impressed this year

and qualified for the North East Regional Championships in Sheffield which helped earn him selection into the region's top swimming club's elite squad.



## Dan leads the field



Congratulations to Year 11 pupil Daniel for being crowned champion of the Newcastle Schools' Cross-Country Championships in the intermediate boys' race for those in Years 10 and 11. Following his gold medal at the event, he and 18 other students from Dame Allan's qualified for the Northumberland event, held at Temple Park, South Shields. Dan was then joined by Will (Year 8), Kieron (Year 9) and Will (Year 12) at the inter-counties round, all four representing Northumberland against runners from across the North East and Cumbria.



# Rugby fund doubled

A grand total of £872 was raised for Marie Curie as two sets of old boys went head-to-head in the annual Richard Holmes Memorial rugby match at Kingston Park, the home of Newcastle Falcons. The game just before Christmas was switched to the Premiership club's stadium as the School's grass pitches were frozen. On the day, £436 was raised and that total was doubled when the school

received a matched donation. A team of over 25s went head-to-head with a group of players aged under 25 in memory of former pupil Richard whose passion for sport continues to inspire the event years after his death in 2013. Victory in a hard fought game was secured by the over 25s. Unfortunately, the old girls' hockey match scheduled for the same day was cancelled due to a frozen pitch!



## Pupils stay on piste

Forty pupils had the time of their lives as they joined staff on the Schools' skiing trip to Alpe D'Huez, in France, over the New Year period.

Skiing conditions were excellent throughout the seven-day stay, although one day's skiing was cancelled due to high winds and one shortened because of heavy rain.

This didn't dampen the children's spirits, though, and there was little time to rest in the evenings as they filled in their spare time by making the most of the full entertainment package, which included discos, laser tag, crazy golf and quizzes! The trip marked the final year as trip leader for Mr Benn, a role he has enjoyed since the mid 90s.



## Top marks Tom



A big well done to our former head boy Thomas Hudson who was top of the class when he achieved the highest mark worldwide in his ACA professional level Business Planning: Insurance exam. Thomas, who attended Dame Allan's for 10 years until 2012, scored 97 per cent in the exam, the highest mark recorded with students in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Cyprus also sitting the paper. After leaving Dame Allan's, Tom went on to study economics at the London School of Economics and now works as an auditor for PricewaterhouseCoopers.



## Allanian Society Dinner

The Allanian Society Dinner will be held in the Newsom Hall on Saturday, March 24, between 6.30pm and 10pm. This year's

dinner theme is Economics and Politics Today, with a panel of Allanians making a short presentation with a Q&A session

to follow. Tickets are priced at £27 (£20 for students in full time education) and are available from the Dame Allan's website.

## Dancers earn the applause

Over 100 of our pupils again dazzled as they took to the stage at Newcastle's Dance City for the annual whole school dance show. Children from Years 6 to 13 were part of the two shows which took place in the opening weekend of February.

All performers impressed throughout the production of 1960s inspired 'Space, Sound, Sculpture', with the audience appreciative of the talent on show. A huge well done to all involved.



## Recruitment drive

The Royal Marine Combined Cadet Force (CCF) contingent is now recruiting boys and girls from Year 9.

A taster session was held recently at school with around 30 pupils attending. Anybody who is interested in joining but was unable to attend the session

can contact Mr Wildsmith via the school office for an application pack or visit the Combined Cadet Force section on the Schools' website for more details.

The CCF continues to operate as a partnership alongside our friends at St Thomas More, in Blaydon.



## DASPA

After the success of the DASPA Christmas Fair, we are now very much looking forward to the next DASPA events on the calendar.

The first one is the ceilidh which is to be held on the evening of the 23 February in the Newsom Hall, in the senior school. More details will follow, but all pupils, family and friends will be most welcome at what we hope will be a fun family evening.

The next major fundraising event is the DASPA Spring Ball which will be held on 12 May. Tickets will be available in the very near future and we look forward to another fantastic evening.

Our first draw of the 50:50 club has just taken place. Congratulations to our winners and thank you very much to everyone who supported our initiative.

## DASPA Juniors

The Junior School Yurt which was provided by DASPA Junior fundraising is now in use and is an amazing enhancement to the outdoor education within Dame Allan's Schools.

This term, DASPA Junior will have two film nights and one party which all raise important funds for the school. Many thanks to all the staff who make these events possible.

Our main fundraising event is the annual School Summer Fair on Saturday 12 May, please note the change of date.

## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Did you know...there is a lot of good advice available through the Dame Allan's website on internet safety and other issues?

Go to the policies section of the website and click on Parents' Internet Safety Advice. This takes you to a number of sites, including CEOP, which are reliable and helpful. Did you also know... we are very proud to be

able to offer a comprehensive counselling service in school. We have two counsellors available for appointments within the school day. For further information please contact the school nurse via the Schools' office.

## Looking to the future...

**Thursday 8 February** – Term ends for Nursery to Year 5.

**Friday 9 February** – Founder's Day Service at St Nicholas Cathedral. 10am. Term ends after service for Year 6 – 13.

**Monday 19 February** – School resumes.

**Thursday 22 February** – Year 12 Parents' Evening, 4pm.

**Tuesday 27 February** – Year 9 DABS Parents' Evening, 4pm.

**Monday 5 March** – Year 9 DAGS Parents'

Evening, 4pm.

**Wednesday 14 March** – Science Lectures, 6.30pm.

**Thursday 15 – Saturday 17 March** – Grease (whole School musical), 7pm.

**Saturday 17 March** – Junior School open morning, 9.30am.

**Monday 19 March** – Year 8 DAGS Parents' Evening, 4pm.

**Tuesday 20 March** – Public Speaking Competition, 7pm.

**Friday 23 March** – Sports Awards Evening.

**Saturday 24 March** – Allanian Society Dinner.

**Tuesday 27 March** – Year 8 DABS Parents' Evening, 4pm.

**Tuesday 27 & Wednesday 28 March** – Junior School and Nursery Parents' Evening, 3.30pm.

**Wednesday 21st – Friday 23rd March** – Years 3, 4 & 5 Combined Arts Afternoon 'Matilda', 1.45pm.

**Thursday 29 March** – Term ends.



**DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS**

building the future

t: 0191 275 1500 e: news@dameallans.co.uk www.dameallans.co.uk

