

# Digest

DAME ALLAN'S

DECEMBER 2022



## Dame Allan's named North East Independent School of the Year in Sunday Times Parent Power Guide



Dame Allan's Schools has been named North East Independent School of the Year by The Sunday Times' Parent Power Guide. The annual publication which is in its 30th year identifies over 1,600 of the highest-achieving state and independent schools in the country. We caught up with Principal Will Scott, to find out why it's not only academic excellence that makes us a great school, it's our family ethos.

### Why do you think Dame Allan's has done so well in this year's Sunday Times Parent Power guide?

Our position of North East Independent School of the Year on the Sunday Times Parent Power Guide is a strong reflection of our overall school offering and our commitment to pupil achievement and wellbeing. This is something which has benefitted us greatly throughout the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to be a strong aspect of our school life. Throughout the past two years we have focused on minimising disruption to learning as much as possible and continuing to offer our excellent teaching and pastoral care through remote learning, the use of chromebooks and our distinctive diamond structure.

### What factors do you think contribute to the success of pupils at Dame Allan's?

Our pupils achieve academic and personal excellence through our range of educational and pastoral teaching, guidance and support. Not only do we have outstanding teaching across the subjects, we also offer a broad range of co-curricular activities and a focus on technology to keep pupils engaged with their learning. Each pupil has a chromebook which encourages independent learning and our unique diamond structure allows pupils to thrive academically in their single-sex lessons as well as socially in their mixed co-curricular activities.



### How does Dame Allan's pastoral provision contribute to student success?

Our strong pastoral team ensures each child gets the support they need to become resilient, confident pupils who can flourish academically and socially.

Our pastoral team includes a school nurse, art psychotherapist, counsellors and a therapy dog, most of whom are based in our purpose built wellbeing room, The Snug, a dedicated space where pupils can go to feel safe, heard and understood. Our recent appointment of a Director of Pupil Wellbeing ensures that pupil wellbeing is always kept on the agenda to contribute to pupils' resilience and to support their aspiration for excellence.

### What does the future hold for Dame Allan's?

At Dame Allan's the future looks bright. At the Senior Schools our new Jubilee building will continue to offer pupils excellent facilities to further their achievements, our lecture series will ignite ideas and provoke conversations, and I'm sure we will continue to see sporting and other co-curricular successes across 2023 and beyond. At the Junior School we're looking forward to seeing the development of the OPAL play and learning provision, the continuation of our outdoor learning and the enthusiasm and success of our pupils.

I'm delighted to see Dame Allan's listed as North East Independent School of the Year and it is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff, pupils and families. May I extend my thanks to all of you.



## A welcome from the Principal

This busy second half of term has seen our young people dive back into their studies and co-curricular activities with gusto.

Our GCSE and A Level pupils are calmly and confidently preparing for their mock exams in January and showing great commitment to their endeavours both in and out of the classroom. Over fifty of our sixth form students signed up for a peer mentor and listening skills course this year which reflects the empathy and compassion of our community.

This blend of academic attainment and focus on wellbeing is reflected in our position of North East Independent School of the Year in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide. Here at Dame Allan's, academic and pastoral provision go hand in hand to contribute to confident, resilient pupils who are an asset to the school.

The co-curricular activities this term, from nursery through to sixth form, have certainly been varied. From ukelele group and astronomy club, to Young Reporters and Allanian Adventurers, there is something for every pupil to enjoy here at Dame Allan's.

We also launched our new Lecture Series with Marcus Child and Roger Martin-Fagg and look forward to welcoming Sara Davies in February as part of our Dedication Week to celebrate our new Jubilee building.

The past month has seen our Junior nativity plays, Y7 Christmas Extravaganza, festive performances across our music, drama and dance departments, and even a surprise reindeer visit at our Junior School.

After a busy term, I hope your children have time to rest and reflect over the festive period, ready for a positive return to school in January.

May I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

## Stars shine bright in the Junior School nativity

Our Junior School Christmas productions were a roaring success again this year. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 performed with aplomb in the Christmas nativity play, while Reception performed their own nativity, and Nursery told the story of a very clumsy angel in 'Woopsy Daisy Angel'. All pupils rehearsed for several weeks beforehand a mixture of songs, dancing and acting - we are very proud of what they achieved. Well done to all star performers and support staff who worked hard to produce and rehearse these plays this year.



## THE LECTURES

DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS



**Pupils and parents thoroughly enjoyed the first two fascinating talks in our new lecture series... and excitement is mounting in anticipation of Dragons' Den star Sara Davies' visit next term.**

The Lectures launched in October with a motivational speech delivered by internationally-renowned speaker Marcus Child, who brought a tangible energy to the Newsom Hall as he discussed the importance of positive self-belief and setting goals.

Last month, leading behavioural economist and author Roger Martin-Fagg gave an in depth talk to a broad mix of pupils in Years 9 - 13 about the many factors influencing the economy, and highlighted the important influence that 'tech-savvy and innovative' younger generations will have on future economic growth.

The programme of inspirational talks will continue in the New Year, with BBC Dragon and former Strictly Come Dancing star Sara Davies MBE - a well-known entrepreneur who founded Crafter's Companion at just 21 years of age - booked to come in on February 16.

Allanian, professor Ruth Gregory, a notable mathematician and physicist who specialises in the field of cosmology, will come back to school to give her presentation on March 23.

The Lectures programme is backed by fellow Allanian Mark Dolder, who has chosen to 'give back' to Dame Allan's Schools and help inspire the next generation of business leaders, entrepreneurs and creative talent.

He said: "If anyone in the audience thinks bigger, aims higher, or exceeds the expectations they have set for themselves as a result of hearing our speakers, then the project will have been a roaring success!"

More information on The Lectures, and details on how to secure a free place for an upcoming talk, is available through the following link: [www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/thelectures?embed](http://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/thelectures?embed)



## National Youth Choir success for three Dame Allan's Boys



**The prestigious National Youth Choir of Great Britain (NYC) is lucky enough to have secured not one, but three Dame Allan's Boys within their choir.**

Savile (Y7), Dominic and Aaron (both Y10), attended an open day and taster session back in November which was organised by the NYC. The end of the session provided an opportunity for singers to audition. We're delighted to report all our boys were successful and have accepted a place in the National Youth Boys' Choir.

Spanning a varied vocal range, the boys sing from tenor to baritone to bass, and enjoy singing a variety of genres and styles. Dominic performed the song 'Oh how lovely was the evening' for his audition and Savile sang 'Be Prepared' from the Lion King, which he performed in last year.

The next step on this journey will be the NYC residential next summer in Harrogate which the boys are all looking forward to. This is the first step on a long journey that can often culminate in performances as part of BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall and international tours.

As well as excelling in their singing, the boys also have ambitions to pursue politics and forensic psychology! They are certainly boys of many talents and here at Dame Allan's we're very proud of their achievements.



# Sports round up

There has been some fantastic rugby played over recent weeks, most notably by our impressive u15s who have made it through to the last 16 of the Daily Mail National Vase competition. With 250 teams taking part from around the country, they should be very proud of their achievement to date and we wish them luck in the next round, in January.



Girls are enjoying rugby training and it was great to see our Year 7 players take part in the Schools' first female fixture against RGS. We plan to enter the County 7s in the New Year and host a girls' rugby festival, so watch this space!

Congratulations to Tom and Holly, in Year 12, who have both been selected to play in Northumberland County u18s squads, and well done to our u14s who made it to the last 32 of the Schools Cup.

There have also been some excellent games played on the hockey pitches. Well done to the u16s, who won the North East Sub Area T3 finals, and to the u15s, who reached the final of the Northumberland County Hockey

Tournament and drew 1-1 after shuffles against RGS. The u15s are also through to the last round of the ISHC Plate, while the u13 squad is through to the quarter finals in its age group. Congratulations to Poppy who has been selected onto England Hockey's Durham Talent Academy.

Runners have continued to impress this term, with our Inter Girls and Senior Girls teams both competing at the ESAA Cross Country Cup regional finals. Senior Girls finished 4th by four points, narrowly missing out on a place in the national finals, while Inter Girls finished 3rd and secured a place. The cup final took place earlier this month and the girls finished a very respectable 19th in the country.

In other sport, the u14 basketball team won their pool of the Tyneside Cup competition, beating both Ponteland High and St Cuthbert's, and will play Whickham in the final in the New Year. The u16 girls' netball team won the National Schools county rounds and will represent the North East in the regional finals in January.

Members of our popular Karate Club had their grading exams in November, with eleven students examined for Kyu grades. Well done to all who took part, particularly those six pupils who achieved a first class grading.



## Daniel's success

Congratulations to Daniel, in Year 10, who has been awarded a top grade 9 in his SCIP (School Certificate in Philosophy), for his impressive project work researching and writing about: 'Can suicide be morally justified?'

An SCIP is a Level 2 qualification (the equivalent to half a GCSE) that allows pupils to begin the study of philosophy as a subject at school. Year 9 pupils are taught the history of philosophy and debating theories in Religious and Philosophical Studies (RPS) lessons and given the opportunity to complete an SCIP project in Philosophy Club.

# In conversation with... Rebecca Miller, Head of Admissions and Communications.



Left to right: Lucy, Rebecca, Kate and Adam.

## **Tell us about your role and the wider department.**

We look after families from the moment they consider Dame Allan's Schools to the day they leave... and even beyond that, as we continue to celebrate and share their successes over the years.

There are four of us in the department, each with a different skill set and area of expertise. Kate is the Admissions Officer and, together, we look after all admissions, from nursery through to Sixth Form.

Adam Clark is the Marketing and Events Officer, and he works with me on the Schools' advertising campaigns, and the marketing of various events, including the all-important open mornings.

Lucy has recently joined us as Senior PR and Communications Officer, and her role will be to produce the Digest content, manage our social media accounts, and share all the good news stories from across the Schools and the wider Dame Allan's community.

## **In admissions, you must be the first person a parent encounters.**

Yes. Right from that initial enquiry, Kate and I are there to manage a family's application and assessment, and ensure they have all

the information they need. We know that choosing a new school can be a daunting experience, so we are on hand to guide and support parents through the process, and make it as stress-free as possible.

## **How do marketing and communications play a role?**

There are many stakeholders invested in the Schools - from prospective parents, current parents and pupils, to Governors, staff and Allanians - and we need to ensure we build and retain relationships with them all. It's important that we communicate efficiently and effectively, to help develop, support and fulfil the vision for the future of the Schools.

There are so many stories to tell, from the opening of the Jubilee Building to the reindeer visit at the Junior School, and we need to be able to talk about the wonderful things staff, pupils, and parents contribute to our community.

## **Are there challenges?**

Covid, of course, brought with it some difficulties. It was very hard not to be able to welcome families to the Schools face-to-face, so we had to change the way we worked. Our open mornings, for example, had to become virtual events, with live

Q&As online. While we couldn't give our usual warm welcome in school, we did post out packs of tea, coffee and biscuits to those who registered, so they could enjoy the event in the comfort of their own home!

The main challenge is the size of the role, and making sure everything across admissions, communications and marketing is coordinated. It's important that as a team, we know what is going on, who is working on what, and how we can support one another.

**It sounds busy:** Very! There's no such thing as a typical day here... we could be dealing with anything from open mornings and new parents' meetings, to arranging a photoshoot with our pupils for the latest advertising campaign or sharing a good news story with the press.

It's such a rewarding role though, from seeing the happy faces of new pupils on their first day of school, knowing they're starting their Dame Allan's journey, to watching them celebrate their A Level results, before moving onto their next adventures. Sharing those big days, and all the successes and achievements in between - having been the person there at the very start - is incredibly rewarding.



# Charity and Fundraising

Thank you for your ongoing generosity in support of the many varied and wonderful fundraising drives happening throughout the Schools. Halloween saw the Y7s raise £93.75 for Save the Children with a spooky themed bake sale. In November, we had a non-uniform day raising £796.75 for Smile for Life whilst the Junior School raised over £1,000 for Children in Need. December saw the start of our festive fundraising as we collected for West End Food Bank and our Y13s donated gifts for charity FAR, a community based charity in the heart of Fenham.



## The Allanian Society



**Hello, I'm Brian Adcock and I am very proud to have been elected Chair of the Allanian Society, and I would like to thank Stephen for his work and enthusiasm over the last few years.**

I attended the Schools from 1961 to 1969, and worked away from the North East post university. Since returning to the area over 40 years ago, I have been involved with the Allanian Society, and other aspects of life at Dame Allan's - as an Allanian first and foremost, but also as a parent and Governor. Like many other Allanians, the Schools are very important to me, and I believe the support we can give is crucial to the future. Support might be careers advice or mentoring, attending events, or financial. We also need the support of younger Allanians who are now out in the

workplace and indeed more recent leavers, and I would welcome suggestions from you if you think a particular event or initiative would help make new connections.

Please put the Annual Dinner date in your diary for next year - Saturday 11th February. It is earlier than usual and will coincide with Founder's Week, and there will be an opportunity to inspect the new Jubilee Building as well as meet old and new friends. The theme is 'Past, Present and Future'. Bryan Sanderson (our President) will highlight the past, the Head Girl and Boy will give us a taste of the present, and the Principal will look to the future in their speeches. Why not contact a few fellow Allanians and join us as a group? I look forward to seeing you and best wishes for 2023.

*Chairman of the Allanian Society, Brian Adcock.*

### November reunion

Reunion groups who left in years ranging from 1961 to 2010 met at Dame Allan's for afternoon tea in November. The next reunion date is set for 4th March 2023. Will this be a milestone year for you leaving school? Get in touch with Katherine in the Development Office if you would like help tracking down old friends for a reunion.



### Save the Date!

To book your place visit : <https://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events> or email: [development@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:development@dameallans.co.uk).

#### Allanian Coffee Morning

18 January 2023  
9:30am - 11:30am.

#### Allanian Dinner 2023

11 February 2023,  
6:30pm - 10.00pm

#### The Lectures - Sara Davies MBE

16 February 2023  
5:00pm - 7:00pm

#### Reunion Groups

##### Afternoon Tea

4 March 2023,  
11:30am - 3:00pm.

##### The Lectures -

Ruth Gregory  
23 March 2023.

##### London Drinks Reception

11 May 2023.

# DASPA



**This has been another busy term for DASPA, with uniform sales, the Year 8 Halloween Party and our Annual General Meeting. In the Junior School DASPA has helped increase the joy during this festive season with the Year 5 Christmas party, a reindeer visit and we even managed to ask Santa to pop in to see the children in Early Years. In addition, we have funded the prizes for the bauble competition, tree and new light decorations. Many thanks to Mrs Needham who facilitates DASPA's contributions to Christmas, organises the bauble competition, the calendars and cards. She is our very own Mrs Christmas.**

A huge thank you to everyone for supporting the DASPA Christmas Fair, we had a fantastic day and raised over £4,000 for DASPA which will support projects and funding requests. Charitable organisations who have links with the Schools raised an additional £700 for their good causes. The World Challenge and enterprise teams also raised money for their groups.

The fair was not only an early Christmas celebration with our wonderful choirs and a visit from Santa, it was also a reminder of our schools' rich history; our sixth form officers dressed in the traditional Dame Allan's uniform as our own Polly Bells. Truly Christmas at Dame Allan's!

DASPA are again coordinating the creation of a token of Christmas cheer, this year junior school pupils created pictures based on their

favourite outdoor activity. These pictures have become magnets, which will be sent by the Development Office to distribute to Allnians as a gift at Christmas. The standard of contributions was fantastic and choosing a winner from each class was a difficult task. Thank you so much to the teachers and pupils at the Junior School for supporting this activity which will bring festive cheer.

Our Annual General Meeting on 17 November was very effective with Vanessa Morrell and Laura Percy continuing as co-chairs and Wanwuri Akor remaining as secretary, in addition Vicky Pitt was elected as our new treasurer. Many of our trustees remain in post with two new additions with Alice Hall and Stephen Davies taking on new roles. We were sad to say farewell to Damian and Charlotte

Bell from our committee. We wish them all the best and thank them for over twenty combined years of volunteering with the DASPA Committee. We would also like to thank all those on the committee and those who assist at events for their support and effort.

This term DASPA has agreed to fund spiders for the biology department, a new digital piano for the music department, signage for the sports department, books and a lego model for the Latin department, micro:bit robots and monitors for computing and prizes for an inter house art competition. We look forward to supporting more new and exciting projects in 2023.

DASPA would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry festive season and a happy new year. We look forward to seeing many of you next year at school and DASPA events.

*The DASPA Committee.*



## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

Whilst the 2005 introduction of e-cigarettes in the UK was heralded as a positive harm reduction tool for smokers, a recent survey by the NHS (Sept 2022) highlights the unintended consequence of that invention: 9% of 11 to 15 year olds are currently using e-cigarettes. Zoe Shuttleworth, Director of 'It Happens Education' delivered an informative and thought provoking "Vaping Deep Dive" session to all pupils in Years 9-11, on November 18 as part of our PSHEE offering. Zoe explained that some of the most popular 'preloaded' vapes contain

as much nicotine as 20 cigarettes per day. Pupils learned of the highly addictive nature of nicotine and were warned that the long term health risks of vaping are still unknown: particularly that the chemical flavourings used to deliberately attract young people to vaping have not been tested for human consumption in this context. Pupils were reminded that UK law states it's illegal to sell any tobacco products including vapes, to someone under 18, a message reinforced by the prohibition of the use of 'vapes' on the Schools' premises, during an organised

school activity or whilst in school uniform. A key theme of the session was to support pupils in making informed decisions and to empower them to resist peer pressure. One suggestion was 'The X Plan' - a prearranged agreement with a family member where a child texts an 'X' or agreed emoji home, as a sign that they need to discreetly leave an event. This 'no questions asked' exit strategy helps the child to remove themselves from a difficult situation without losing social face, a concept that was well-received by the pupils.



**DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS**  
building the future

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