

# DAME ALLAN'S Digest

OCTOBER 2023



## A welcome from the Principal

Just like that, we have reached the first half term of our 23/24 academic year. These first two months have been a whirlwind of activity, as our newest pupils settled in and our returning pupils resumed their studies and co-curricular activities with an enthusiasm that is heartening to see.

We kicked things off in style in September with the return of our Speech Day event at the newly rebranded Sage Gateshead - now the Glasshouse International Centre for Music - celebrating excellence and talent from across our school community.

Our newest Senior School pupils in Year 7 enjoyed a fun-filled residential trip, braving new challenges and making friends. It is the first time that the Boys' School and Girls' School have been on a residential trip together, and we're pleased to say it was a great success. You can find some reflections from our pupils inside.

This half term we also had the pleasure of welcoming back Allanian Phoebe Walker, to share her debut novel and poetry with pupils and staff - including some of her former teachers. Other visitors have included distinguished painter and printmaker Alfons Bytautas, who led our Year 12 art students in a creative workshop.

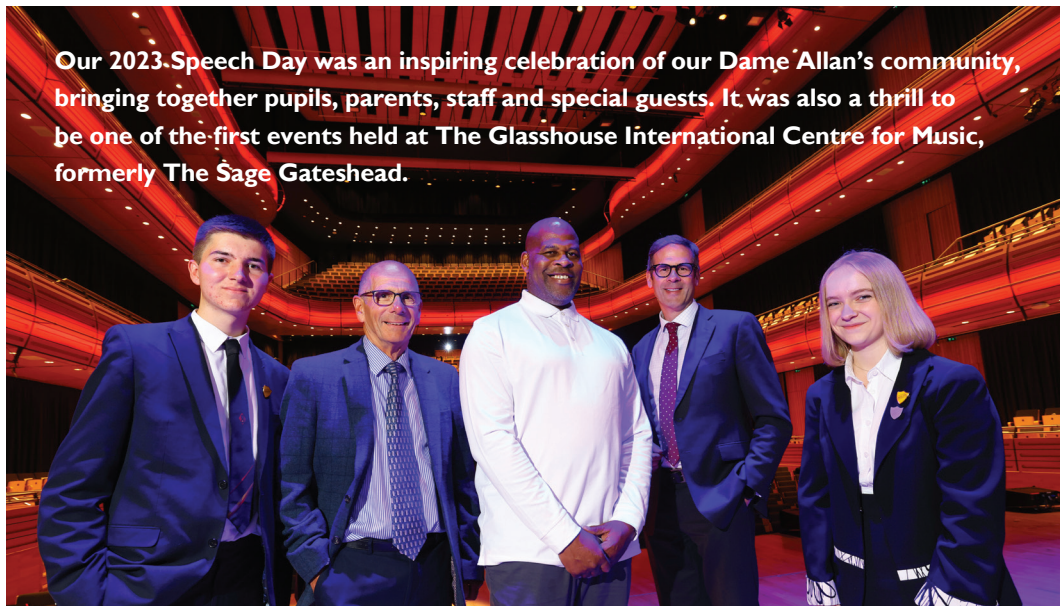
It has been a busy period of sport too, with our U14 girls hockey squad winning the County Tournament, lots of activity for netball, cross country, basketball and our football and rugby teams, plus a memorable celebration of World Fitness Day at our Junior School.

Finally, it has been great to see our parent's association, DASPA, continuing to support us this year, volunteering at our open mornings and preparing for their Winter Fair - you can read more about this event inside.

May I wish all of you a very enjoyable half term break.

## Speech Day Success

**Our 2023 Speech Day was an inspiring celebration of our Dame Allan's community, bringing together pupils, parents, staff and special guests. It was also a thrill to be one of the first events held at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, formerly The Sage Gateshead.**



Talented staff and pupils entertained the packed room with performances and talks, including our Symphony Orchestra, strings group, Vizavis dance troupe, Josh, Aidan, and our Head Boy and Girl, Ben and Imogen.

The abundance of prizes given out were a testament to the hard work, resilience and excellence of our pupils.

Special thanks to our guest speaker, former professional footballer turned performance coach Michael Duberry, who spoke passionately about his stellar sporting career and the importance of 'Raising your Game'.

**You can watch a highlight reel of the event here.**



## What a Result

### Celebrating A Level and GCSE Success



We were thrilled to see such wonderful results from pupils on both GCSE and A Level results days, they were a real testament to all of the hard work that our students put in.

More than 60 per cent of GCSE exams sat by our Year 11 pupils achieved grades 9 - 7 (A\* to A) while more than 40 per cent were 9 - 8 grades. Our A Level students also did us proud; almost half (46.4% per cent) of grades achieved by our Year 13 pupils were A\* and A grades, while 73.8 per cent of pupils were awarded A\* to B grades.

A huge well done to all! We look forward to seeing our GCSE pupils continue to excel in the Sixth Form and we wish our Y13 leavers all the best in their next steps.



# Year 7 Residential

For the first time, our Year 7 boys and Year 7 girls set off a joint residential trip to PGL Newby Wiske. The Year 7 residential is always a highlight for pupils who have just arrived (or moved up) to the Senior School, featuring activities including a giant swing, abseiling, canoeing and laser tag!

Nearly 140 girls and boys took part in the activities separately but had time to socialise together in the evenings. Supervised and encouraged by Dame Allan's staff members - as well as eight volunteer Sixth Form Officers, who kindly gave up their time to assist on the trip - pupils demonstrated amazing bravery

and teamwork as they took on all the challenges offered to them. Sixth Form Officer and Head Girl Imogen said: 'It's experiences like this that make being an Officer so rewarding, and the challenging moments all worthwhile. It'll be a trip which really sticks out in my memories of DAS. I can't remember the last time I laughed so much in the span of a few days, and it's been an absolute blast!'

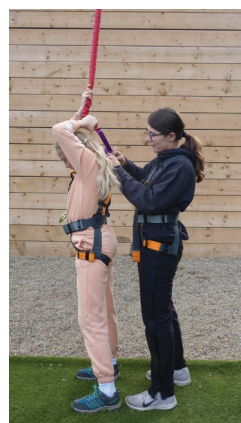


**“ I loved the quick flight because I had never done anything like it before. I also loved the giant swing because I was scared at first but I realised how fun it was. ”** Lola, Year 7

**“ I loved the giant swing because I got to go on with my friends and go really high. Quick flight was incredible too, it looked terrifying at first but then it was fun. ”**

Albie, Year 7

**“ I loved abseiling so much since we got to climb down the tower. ”** Beth, Year 7



## OLED Awards

We recently held our first ever OLED Awards night, celebrating the achievements of our Outdoor Leadership and Education programme. Hosted at Wylam Brewery, the event celebrated our successful climbers, those who took on the John Muir Award, our dedicated Duke of Edinburgh participants and more. Attendees also enjoyed inspirational talks from veterans Dan Smith (Outdoor Bootcamp, Northern Outdoor) and Matt Smith (S.O.E Expeditions) It was a fantastic event, a huge well done to the OLED team for making it such a success.



## Artist Visit

Alfons Bytautas



**Our Year 12 art students enjoyed a fantastic workshop this half term from artist Alfons Bytautas, a Scottish painter & printmaker, now based in Newcastle.**

An elected member of the Royal Scottish Academy, Alfons' work includes abstract paintings, drawings and prints. After a demonstration of his techniques and a fascinating sketchbook viewing, Alfons encouraged students to explore contrast in colour, shape, space and lines and create their own unique piece.

# In conversation with... Librarians Mrs Huck and Mr Naish

## Tell us a little about your role...

**S:** As Library Manager it is my job to make sure that Dame Allan's Schools' libraries run smoothly day-to-day. It means making sure that the libraries provide a welcoming, calm, peaceful, pleasant environment for pupils to work and read, where everyone feels welcome and valued. The libraries should feel like an oasis in what can be very busy schools. It is up to me to make sure that as far as possible we have something in the libraries to appeal to everyone, whether that is to help a Year 7 with their homework, to support a Year 12 doing their EPQ research or to keep Nursery children supplied with lots of colourful picture books.

**M:** As one of the School's Librarians I spend most of my week at the Junior School. From there I plan and teach library lessons for each year group as well as run our super popular lunchtime and break library sessions. Our school is full of busy readers, so I spend a lot of time looking after our stock of books and making sure there are exciting new reads arriving! On top of this I train our library monitors and organise events and trips!

## October is International School Library Month, what are your top tips for making the most of a school library?

**S:** Make friends with the librarian! We are fonts of knowledge about authors and books, we can find the answer to virtually any questions - or we know where to find a book or website which can answer it. Librarians are like Google only better - we don't just find an answer, we find the right answer.

Use the library regularly - take out books, magazines, learn where the subjects that really interest you are kept. If we don't have a book you want or need, ask us for it.

Library events are a great opportunity to make new friends with people with similar interests.

**M:** I agree, come talk to the librarians! Myself and Mrs Huck are always here and happy to help with anything from recommendations to research and whatever else you may need! Whether you are already a super confident reader or you're feeling a bit lost, we will always find time for a chat and will always do our best to point you in the right direction.



## What part of your job do you like the best?

**S:** Obviously, I love books, but my favourite part of the job is spending time with students, helping them to find just the right book. There is no better feeling than when you have recommended a book to someone and they come back to you and say they absolutely loved it and is there another one in the series or by the same author, please?

**M:** Organising trips and running competitions. I love the buzz it creates around the Library and it is great to see the enthusiasm building with pupils.

## Do you prefer 'real' books or books on a Kindle or other e-reader?

**S:** My husband gave me a Kindle for Christmas when they first came out, and I did try to love it, but I have to say I'm a fan of the feel and smell of real paper books. As a librarian I probably shouldn't be admitting this, but I am also quite careless with my own books, and they can end up covered in tea, coffee or sometimes melted chocolate... as well sometimes falling in the bath. It tends to be easier to dry out a physical book....

**M:** Personally, always a paper book, preferably with a broken spine as well.

## Which book do you recommend most to people?

**S:** As far as children's books go, I loved the Winnie the Pooh books and the Chronicles of Narnia which my mum read to me when I was little. I also love the Hairy Maclary books, which I read to my daughters when they were little. For young adults I loved the Lie Tree by Frances Hardinge - very atmospheric - and I couldn't put down the Knife of Never Letting Go (sorry!) by Patrick Ness. I read the entire Chaos Walking trilogy and was devastated when I finished it.

**M:** At work I always find myself pushing anything with Chris Riddell's name on it, the "Ottoline" series specifically.

## Mrs Huck, you're a newcomer to Dame Allan's this term, what has been your first impression of the Schools?

**S:** I have been blown away by how friendly and approachable everyone has been. There is a real sense of community, it feels almost like a family. The pupils have been so welcoming and keen to help. I have a brilliant team of library monitors who have helped me settle in and have provided valuable information about how the school runs.



# Sports Round Up

It has been another busy term for sport at Dame Allan's! Particular congratulations go to our U14 hockey squad for winning the county tournament; the girls scored 7 goals and conceded 2 in the whole event.



## World Fitness Day

This half term saw some very special visitors come to the Junior School to celebrate World Fitness Day. Mr and Mrs Motivator took over the playground to lead pupils of all ages - and staff! - in a fun-filled fitness session, along with some mood-boosting music. It was the perfect way to get some positive movement in the school day.



In rugby, the 1st XV have had a stellar start with some strong performances this season, in particular with the Vase run and Sedbergh away. They finished with an outstanding victory away at Mount St Mary's, 34-35.

In Senior School football, teams faced their first ever fixtures in the ISFA Cup, with both U13 and U15 progressing to round 2 of the

Vase. After winning the City of Newcastle U18s cup for the first time in the Schools' history in April, the U18s backed this up with another first, winning the City of Newcastle 7-a-side tournament hosted at Walbottle.

In basketball, we were delighted to welcome Marc Steutel (Great Britain and Newcastle

Eagles Head Coach) who ran a special training session for some of our players.

At the Junior School, there was success in football, hockey and rugby. The U8s enjoyed their first ever rugby fixture, a tag festival at Barnard Castle, whilst both boys and girls showed off their football skills at the ESFA Cup Night tournament.



## GNR

Congratulations to all of our staff and students who took on the Great North Run this year! Amongst the participants were Year 13 students Ellie, Katie, Rosie and Lauren, who all completed the epic half-marathon, with several of the girls raising money for charity too. Plus, Reception pupils Annabelle and Holly took on the Mini Run and earned their medals.

A big well done to our staff too who completed the run, including Dr Smith, Mr Lynch, Mrs Allonby, Mr Gardner, Miss Lucas, Mrs White, Miss Medway and Mr Strong.





# The Allanian Society

We were delighted to welcome back Phoebe Walker (class of 2010) to share her debut novel *Temper* with pupils and Dame Allan's staff - including some of her former teachers. Phoebe read an extract from her novel, a selection of her poetry, and held a Q&A session for budding writers in the room.



## Save the Date!

- **Autumn Coffee Morning** - Wednesday 22 November
- **Richard Holmes Memorial Rugby Match** - Saturday 16 December
- **Christmas Lunch** - Tuesday 19 December
- **Allanian Dinner 2024** - Saturday 23 March

To find out more and book your place visit our website: [theallaniansociety.co.uk/events](http://theallaniansociety.co.uk/events) or contact the development office at [development@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:development@dameallans.co.uk) or 0191 275 1500.

Our annual Richard Holmes Memorial Rugby Match returns on 16 December, it will be held at Cochrane Park, with an 11.00am kick off. All Allanians, parents and pupils are most welcome for refreshments and to spectate as we celebrate the life of Allanian Richard Holmes. There will also be a collection in aid of Marie Curie.

## School Trips



The first half term of the academic year has already been buzzing with school trips, including a Year 1 trip to the Laing Art Gallery, a Year 13 philosophy trip to Edinburgh, a trip to a local mosque for our Year 8 pupils, a crime and punishment museum trip to Ripon for our Year 10s, and a fun-filled trip to Kielder for our Year 4s.



## Charity

### Macmillan Coffee Morning

Staff whipped out their aprons and got baking for Macmillan this half term, raising a fantastic £221.25. Treats on offer included a flake cake, chocolate orange and cranberry brownies, meringues, coconut cake, chocolate and raspberry cheesecake and more - delicious!



### Harvest Festival



The annual Harvest Festival was marked with a school-wide collection of donations for Newcastle Foodbank. Organised by Sixth Form Charity Officers Mia and Aidan, it was incredibly inspiring to see the scale of generous donations received. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

# DASPA

**The DASPA Winter Fair will take place on 25 of November, from 10.00am-12.30pm at the Senior School. The success of our Fair relies on your generosity in terms of time and donations. We are seeking donations for our tombolas (including bottle and sweet tombolas), as well as toys and items for our food hamper, plus prizes for our raffle. We will be accepting donations the week prior to the Fair.**

This year we are also trialling the sale of OLED and skiing equipment. We are offering two options: either you can donate your items and we will sell them, with the profits going to DASPA, or you can choose to sell these items yourself. If you would like to book a stall, or for more information, please email [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk)

The Fair will include our Junior Choir, Santa, a uniform stall, lots of local craft stalls, refreshments and games stalls. We will also

be drawing the winners of our raffle. Raffle tickets will be available to buy on the day or via ParentPay in advance. Prizes include an overnight stay at Wooden Star Cottages, hampers, and gifts from all of our stall holders.

As you read this we will have just finished our Year 7 disco and Year 3 and 4 Halloween party, a big thank you for the support of all the staff who made these great events happen.

Our monthly Senior School uniform sales continue to be well attended, They rely on your kind donations, which we hope will continue. We take donations of Senior School uniform all year round so please leave any preloved donations at the Senior School reception. We are asking parents not to donate any Junior School uniform at the present time, however we are arranging a collection by a local charity later in the year and will provide you with details in the near future. The next Senior School uniform sale is on 7 November, with another sale at the Winter Fair. A sale of



Junior School uniform will also take place at the upcoming parents' evenings.

Our AGM will be held on 14 November at 6.00pm in the Senior School library. Everyone is welcome to attend and hear about what we have been doing and what we have planned in the future. We are always looking for volunteers too, of course we understand that individuals have limited time to volunteer, but any contribution you could make would be gratefully received.

Finally, a date for your diary is our ball on 22 June at the Biscuit Factory!

## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

As the inevitable tiredness of the new term begins to kick in, we once again turn our attention to wellbeing. This World Mental Health Day, 10 October 2023, was marked by Mrs Fiddaman and Mr Ridley giving a special assembly to Y11 using ITV's Britain Get Talking and YoungMinds' #HelloYellow. Pupils were invited to complete a homework task of talking about the hardest subjects on their minds with their parents or trusted adults: we hope that these important conversations continue to take place all year round.

This month also saw the launch of some new wellbeing projects in both the Junior and Senior Schools. Mrs Farren and Charlotte, our art psychotherapist, put some finishing touches on the new 'Cosy Snug', a designated meeting space and indoor counselling room for our junior

pupils, whilst our new pupil wellbeing site has also launched on the pupil portal. The site provides Senior School pupils with links and information on mental health, wellbeing and the different types of support available in school. It also contains information on our whole school PSHE programme and is accessible via Parent Portal by clicking on the PSHE tab in Key Information.

Next half term we will 'Make A Noise About Bullying' in recognition of Anti-Bullying Week. According to Ofcom research (2022), older children in the UK are more likely to experience bullying online than in person and the most common way for children to be bullied via technology is through text or messaging apps (56%), followed by social media (43%) or online games (30%). Appropriate monitoring,

filtering and supervision of children using electronic devices is crucial both in school and at home in safeguarding against bullying. All Chromebook usage is monitored using our internal system, Securly, and senior pupils in Years 7-11 should not use their own devices in school at all (except in exceptional circumstances, under close adult supervision). Junior School pupils are not permitted to use their own devices at any time whilst on School premises.

Please talk to your child about what they are doing online and consider your home filtering arrangements. Schoolsmobile.com offers a fee-based service with parental controls and threat protection on personal devices, whilst our pupil wellbeing site includes further information on online safety for pupils and parents alike.



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