



Desborough School

Difficulties yield to diligence

Newsletter

26th September 2009 No. 95

Head Teacher's Letter

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you had a pleasant summer and that your son has had a good start to the new Academic Year. Thank you for making your sons and daughters so ready for school at the start of term and for contributing to the smart way in which they are turned out. I have been very impressed with the behaviour, attitude and appearance of all the students and pupils so far this year. It is something upon which many visitors continue to comment very favourably.

I would like to extend a special welcome to new pupils joining Year 7, the four new students joining Year 12 and the relatively large number of students and pupils joining Years 8 to 11, many of whom are new to the Maidenhead area as their families have re-located here.

As you will be aware from the last newsletter in July 2009, few of the support or teaching staff left at the end of last year. I would like to welcome the following new members of staff:

Mr J Brooker (ICT Teacher)
Ms E El-Baghdadi (German Assistant)
Ms R Fassi (Italian Teacher)
Ms R George (Art Teacher)
Mr H Iqbal (Mathematics Teacher)
Ms A McDonald (Learning Support Assistant)
Mr A Ravetta (PE Teacher)
Ms E Stanton (Art Teacher)
Ms N Walker (Attendance Officer)

I hope all these new members of staff enjoy their time at Desborough School.

Nicola Walker is working every day until the early afternoon as Attendance Officer. She is monitoring attendance very closely in all year groups. Desborough has the highest attendance rate of any secondary school in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, but we need to keep making this a priority. The issue of punctuality is an area of comparative weakness and was picked up in our April OFSTED Report so this will be an area to which more attention is given. The legal position regarding attendance has been tightened up by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) so that fewer requests for absence will be deemed to be "authorised". We are working closely with the

Education Welfare Officer from the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Ms Jenny Hamar, who is assigned to this school. There will be more information about this coming out through the year.

At the first meeting of the school's full Governing Body on 17 September, Mrs Joy Jones was elected as Chair of Governors, Mr Nigel Cook as first Vice Chair and Mrs Maureen Kenney as second Vice Chair. Mrs Kenney has been the Chair of the Governing Body for four years (when there have been two full OFSTED Inspections) and is by far and away the longest serving member of the Governing Body (having been first appointed in September 1988). I am very grateful for all her hard work and am glad she will be around to support Joy Jones as she takes over this important role. Joy had, as you may be aware, previously been first Vice Chair.

There is a vacancy for a parent governor as Mr Keith West has, due to work commitments, decided to stand down. He has been a member of the Governing Body since April 2005 and has made a vital contribution on contracts and property matters. The School is organising a letter and information for parents and carers about the election of a new parent governor and this should soon be with you. I hope that you will consider helping the school in this role.

I would like to congratulate the older students about their performance in public examinations in summer 2009. The School has continued the upward trend with regard to GCSE results. 69.1% of pupils achieved 5+ GCSEs at Grades A*/C (62.9% in 2008) and 55.1% of pupils achieved 5+ Grades at A*/C including English and mathematics (54.3% in 2008). The average points score was 50.4 (48.2 in 2008) which is the highest score for the School in recent years. At A2 Level the overall pass rate was 95.9% (95% in 2008) and the average points score 234 (241 in 2008). In value added terms, the ALPS system judged the progress of the students to be "very good". At AS Level, the results were more impressive than at A2 in absolute terms. The overall pass rate was 88.3% and 33.2% of results were at Grades A& B. ALPS judged value added progress at A2 level to be "outstanding".

I would like to congratulate all students and pupils for their hard work which has been recognised by such impressive public examination results. In particular, I would like to congratulate Matthew Shaw on securing a place to study Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge and Atif Haque for securing a place at Imperial College to study medicine.

Much work has been done on improving the premises in the summer. The major work has been in the Maudsley Building, totally refitting the Sixth Form Common Room and developing a pupil referral unit on the ground floor (called the Focus Centre). There are a significantly higher number of students in the sixth form this year, including for the first time some girls, and the common room is a much more appropriate and pleasant area in which they can be based. Please encourage your son or daughter to respect the property and the newly renovated areas, particularly the new toilets.

Finally, I would like to appeal to parents and carers not to drive onto the school site at the start or end of the school day to deliver or collect pupils. This causes the site to be very hazardous for the pupils as they leave and it is simply not possible to accommodate cars at this time. I would like to suggest that parents and carers talk to pupils and arrange a convenient place to meet further away from the school site where safe parking is possible. I would like to thank you in anticipation for your help with this issue.

Thank you for your continuing support of the work of the School. I hope your son or daughter has a very successful school year.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Linnell
Headteacher

To all Year 11 students

I would like to formally welcome Year 11 back to school. This is an important year for my cohort of students and I know that they have the potential to do extremely well.

I have been continually impressed with the efforts of the boys in this year group since becoming their Head of Year in 2006 and I look forward to them achieving outstanding results in the public examinations in July 2010. Boys, you must remember to aim high, have confidence in yourselves, submit work of your very best ability and ensure that you revise well for all tests and examinations.

I look forward to working with the boys in Year 11 over the next five terms and with their parents and carers to achieve the very best from them.

Good luck!

Mr A Lennon
Head of Year 11

Peer Mentoring in Year 7

We thought it would be useful to write to parents and carers of Year 7 to tell you about the peer mentoring that takes place for all of our year 7 pupils in order to help them settle in to Desborough School.

We appreciate that joining a new environment can be scary and concerning and that it can be helpful to have someone to talk to as you settle in. Clearly, all boys can talk to any of the staff in school and in particular their form tutor, who is the first port of call for them and you as parents/carers. However, sometimes boys have questions that they would prefer to ask an older student; these students can give a different perspective on things and will normally have experienced life at Desborough School in years 7-11.

In order to support our year 7 boys we introduced a new peer mentoring programme last year whereby all Year 7 boys are mentored by senior students from year 12. This takes place in form time and en masse, thus no curriculum time is lost. Our year 12 students are trained by Mrs Walden who works in the Focus Centre and Mr Lennon, Head of Year 11. Mentoring generally takes place on a Wednesday morning and there will be ten sessions over the academic year. Topics will range from settling in, extra-curricular activities, study skills and preparation for year 7 exams at the end of the year.

We very much hope that your son enjoys the sessions and finds them helpful. If you would like any further information, please contact Mrs Walden or Mr Lennon at school.

Mr A Lennon

Golf Report

The 35th competition for the Brooks' Cup was held at Maidenhead Golf Club on the 27th July in fine but somewhat windy conditions. Six boys took part and competed alongside ten Old Maidonians in what proved to be a very close competition. John Weavers (Old Maids) and Ryan Akehurst (Year 11) tied at the top of the field on 36 stableford points but John was awarded the trophy by applying the countback rule to the first six holes of the back nine. Henry Oldershaw (Year 11) also played well and finished 4th playing off a 24 handicap.

Our thanks go to Colin Cutler of the Old Maidonians Association for organising the event and to Maidenhead Golf Club for their hospitality. The next school event will now take place during the Easter holiday in 2010 when boys take on the Old maids in our annual match.

Mr S Reed

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Invasion of Arran.....

.....by 6th form geologists!



At the end of last term the A-level Geologists went to the Isle of Arran for a week to explore the rich variety of geological features found on the island. The weather was great, the midges stayed away and we had a brilliant "rugged" tutor introducing us to all the different rock types and structures found around the island. We stayed at the PGL Loch Ranza field studies centre which doubles up as a family activity centre in the summer holidays. Whilst there, we completed some of the coursework requirements for A2, testing our ability to interpret what we saw in the field. We met students from other schools staying at the centre doing different subjects, enjoyed the beautiful scenery around the island and had close encounters with the very tame deer who wandered around the centre. There was lots of walking, some interesting bus journeys, an impressive 125 mph train ride from London to Glasgow and a ferry journey during which we saw a shark and jellyfish swimming alongside. A great field trip!



The Sixth form Geologists

Sickness

If your son has been sick either before school or during the school day, please keep him away from school for at least 24 hours. This will also apply if he has an upset stomach.

Thank you

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IT GENERATES
INCOME FOR US

News from the LRC

Welcome back and an especially warm welcome to our new Y7 pupils, the first full-time female students at Desborough and others coming from different schools or countries. Can I congratulate all those who got results in the summer, and hope they were pleased with the grades they obtained. Our new Year 12 students have made a very good first impression as 6th formers and are approaching their studies in the LRC quietly, with enthusiasm and dedication.

NEW YEAR 7s

The new pupils have already started their fortnightly Library Skills lessons and are being brought up by their English tutors on a regular basis. There are a LOT of keen readers in this year group and we have had some very enjoyable discussions about their favourite authors and what they have been reading recently. They have settled quickly into the new routine and they are remembering their manners, so a lovely start to the new year for them – and us!

BOOKED UP BOOKS

The DCSF is once again paying for every Y7 pupil in England to have their own new book to enjoy and our Y7s are busy making their own selections, based on the booklet the DCSF produced. If the lads would like to see the books for real we now have a display in the LRC of the books on offer. I hope to have the books distributed to the boys by the 2nd or 3rd week in October.

TIMES 'BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS' VOUCHERS

The Times is again running this promotion and I would be grateful for any vouchers from the Times, the Sunday Times or First News. Vouchers can be brought to the LRC, or given in at reception. The more vouchers – the more free new books for the LRC, so please remember to cut them out and hand them in. Thank you.



PUPIL LIBRARIANS

In the LRC we rely on the help of a dedicated team of pupil librarians to run the desk and help with other tasks on a day-to-day basis. As we have lost a high number of our older helpers this year, due to work commitments, I would be very pleased to see some new volunteers who are interested in helping with community service.

I hope everyone has a healthy, happy and productive year

Mrs Leedale
School Librarian

Desborough boys try their hand at being language teachers!



The Language College has again delivered another Modern Foreign Language Workshop at a local primary school. Desborough boys joined Year 5 & 6 pupils from St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School last term for an afternoon workshop. The session was spent speaking French in a variety of scenarios including playing bingo, a mock café and making “holiday” baskets.

Activities were designed to let the older pupils assist the younger ones with their language skills and the Desborough boys certainly enjoyed the responsibility of being “the teacher” for the session. It was lovely to see the younger children listening to instructions in French and trying new vocabulary when ordering their juice and pastries when visiting the café.

Our thanks go to the boys involved – Nick Henderson, Louis Basson, Simret Mangat, Greg McHugh, Chris Kemple and Paul McGill - who were all great ambassadors for the school. Well done!

Offsite Educational Visits

The Desborough School calendar is already looking very busy with regards to offsite educational visits; the first major visit being the German Exchange to Duisburg in conjunction with Newlands School. We are very proud of the visits we organise at Desborough School and hope that all students will have an opportunity to be involved at some point during their time with us.

In order to run successful visits I would like to ask for your support in completing and returning the Offsite Medical Consent Form (OA4) for this academic year. We must have this document duly completed before we are permitted to involve any student in any activity which takes place away from the school site; this includes sports fixtures.

OA4 documents must be completed annually and the generic document I have recently sent home can be used for all non-residential domestic visits. If students partake in a residential or overseas visit another OA4 specific to that visit is required by law. If the details on the form change during the academic year, please contact the school office for a new form.

Some of the exciting visits we have lined up for 2009-2010 are:

Science visit to Reading University, German Exchange with Newlands School to Duisburg Germany, A Level Mathematics visit to Thorpe Park, BBC School Report, Visit to Christmas Market in Aachen Germany, Christmas Concert, French Rugby Tour to the south of France, Key Stage 4 visit to Krakow/Berlin, Geography Fieldtrip to Slapton, French Exchange to Paris with Newlands School, History visit to Georgia/Alabama USA, Ski Trip to Austria, History visit to Seville Spain, French visit to Le Touquet France and the World Challenge expedition to Tanzania.

I hope everyone engaged in these and other visits has a thoroughly rewarding time!

Mr A Lennon
Educational Visits Coordinator

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Extra Curricular Sports Clubs and Practices
Autumn Term 1 - 2009

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
LUNCH 12.20pm to 1.00pm	BASKETBALL FOR YRS 10 & 11 Sports Hall - Mr Reilly Miss Mc Queen	INDOOR HOCKEY FOR YRS 11, 12 & 13 Sports Hall - Mr Parnis	BASKETBALL FOR YRS 7, 8 & 9 Sports Hall - Mr Ravetta	INDOOR HOCKEY FOR YRS 11, 12 & 13 Sports Hall - Mr Parnis	BADMINTON FOR YRS 7, 8, 9,10 & 11 Sports Hall - Mr Hamilton
AFTER SCHOOL 3.25pm to 4.45pm	RUGBY FOR YRS 11, 12 & 13 - Mr Lee/Mr Jones YR 10 - Mr Hamilton/ Mr Terrington YR 9 - Mr Reilly YR 8 - Mr Parnis	GCSE BOOSTER SESSIONS YR 11 3.30 - 4.30 in E2 CRICKET FOR YR 7 - Joe Heaton	RUGBY FOR YR 8 - Mr Parnis YR 7 - Mr Bielby/Mr Ravetta	RUGBY FOR YRS 11, 12 & 13 - Mr Lee/Mr Jones YR 10 - Mr Hamilton/ Mr Terrington YR 9 - Mr Reilly	RUGBY FOR YR 7 - Mr Bielby/Mr Ravetta PE DETENTION 3.10-4.10

RUGBY FIXTURES 2009

		NJL	NJL/TJH	TJH	JRR	DXP	NNB/AXR
TRAINING	TRAINING:	1st XV MON/THR	2nd XV MON/THR	U.15 XV MON/THR	U.14 XV MON/THR	U.13 XV MON/WED	U.12 - 12s WED/FRI
9/5/2009	Saturday						
9/6/2009	Sunday						
9/7/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	NO FIXTURES
9/8/2009	Tuesday						NO FIXTURES
9/9/2009	Wednesday	LVS (A) - 2.30	LVS (H) - 2.30			TRAINING	TRAINING
9/10/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING		NO FIXTURES
9/11/2009	Friday						TRAINING
9/12/2009	Saturday	RCM - minibus out	16s Reading (A) - 10.00	Reading (H) - 10.00	Reading (A) - 10.00	Reading (H) - 10.00	NO FIXTURES
9/13/2009	Sunday						
9/14/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	NO FIXTURES
9/15/2009	Tuesday				Furze P (A) - 4.00		NO FIXTURES
9/16/2009	Wednesday	Henley (A) 2.30		DM R1- Burnham (H) 4.00		Furze P (H) - 4.00	TRAINING
9/17/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING		NO FIXTURES
9/18/2009	Friday		MOUThGUARDS - OPRO IN				TRAINING
9/19/2009	Saturday					DXP 9.30-12.30 Course	NO FIXTURES
9/20/2009	Sunday						
9/21/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	
9/22/2009	Tuesday						
9/23/2009	Wednesday	Shiplake (A) - 2.30	Shiplake (A) - 2.30			TRAINING	TRAINING
9/24/2009	Thursday	Spartan Visit 9am	TRAINING	TRAINING	Borlase (H) - 4.00	Borlase (H) - 4.00	
9/25/2009	Friday						TRAINING
9/26/2009	Saturday			Park House (A) - 10.00	Park House (H) - 10.00	Park House (H) - 10.00	Park House A & B (A) - 10.00
9/27/2009	Sunday						
9/28/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	Borlase (A) - 4.00	TRAINING	TRAINING	
9/29/2009	Tuesday						Borlase 12s (A) - 4.00
9/30/2009	Wednesday	DM R2 - LVS (H)		DM R2/VASE R1		TRAINING	TRAINING
10/1/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	16s Borlase (H) - 4.00	TRAINING	TRAINING		
10/2/2009	Friday						TRAINING
10/3/2009	Saturday						
10/4/2009	Sunday						
10/5/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	Burnham GS (H) - 4.00	Burnham GS 12s (A) - 4.00
10/6/2009	Tuesday						
10/7/2009	Wednesday		Henely C (A) - 2.30			TRAINING	TRAINING
10/8/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING		
10/9/2009	Friday						TRAINING
10/10/2009	Saturday						
10/11/2009	Sunday						
10/12/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	
10/13/2009	Tuesday				JHGS (H) - 4.00		JHGS (A) - 4.00
10/14/2009	Wednesday	JHGS (A) - 2.30/ DM3 or V2		DM R3/VASE R2		JHGS (H) - 4.00	TRAINING
10/15/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	TRAINING	JHGS (H) - 4.00	TRAINING		
10/16/2009	Friday						TRAINING
10/17/2009	Saturday			Forest (A) - 10.00	Forest (H) 10.00	Forest (H) 10.00	Forest (A) 10.00 A & B
10/18/2009	Sunday						
10/19/2009	Monday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	
10/20/2009	Tuesday			Burnham GS (A) - 4.00	Burnham GS (H) - .400		
10/21/2009	Wednesday	Forest (A) - 2.30	Forest (H) - 2.30			TRAINING	TRAINING
10/22/2009	Thursday	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING	TRAINING		
10/23/2009	Friday						TRAINING
10/24/2009	Saturday						