

DAME ALLAN'S Digest

DECEMBER 2021



On to the next phase!

Demolition work has been completed on the North End Development with our contractors, Tolent, looking to install the steel works in the New Year.

Tolent's team has been hard at work over the past few months demolishing the Bursar's former office and former art block, art classrooms and changing rooms.

The demolition will make way for an exciting next step in the future of the Schools, which includes creating three new art rooms and a central art exhibition space, and a new sixth form space within art and design and technology. The 16 classrooms being built will comprise six additional classrooms and three new science labs.

Glynn Pallister, site manager for Tolent, said the next stage for the development was carrying out bulk earth works where the site would be dug out to a certain depth and re-laid with solid stone. It would be followed by another ground stabilisation process before the foundations would be put in.



A welcome from the Principal

This term's been a huge bounce back from our experience over the course of the pandemic. Vaccinations and an end to bubbles have meant a far more normal term for everyone.

It has been lovely for me to meet a good number of you in person and I've picked up a few themes from our conversations.

Firstly, you expect your children to make good academic progress, but you're also clear about the need for school to mean more than exam results.

You know your children enjoy opportunities to compete, but want it to be within a supportive environment.

And you want your children to grow into confident young adults, but with high levels of self-awareness and empathy for others.

At Dame Allan's we've long believed in the central importance of children benefitting from a broad range of positive experiences at school. And if we've learned one thing from this pandemic, it is that children need direct contact with others.

Our focus will be on building our co-curriculum and ensuring that every pupil is inspired and challenged to engage in a real breadth of activities. These should include things they already enjoy, but also trying new ones and stepping out beyond comfort zones and friendship groups.

How can you help? This New Year, challenge your child to seek breadth in their life and we promise to do the same.

May I wish you all a very happy Christmas.



Cracking return to Christmas productions

It was wonderful to see the return of audiences clapping, cheering and enjoying our Junior School Christmas productions again this year.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were fantastic in retelling the much-loved classic tale of the Nutcracker, with lots of dancing and drama, while the Early Years children delighted us with their performance of the traditional Nativity.

Well done to all star performers and to teachers and support staff, who worked hard to ensure the safe return of live plays on stage this Christmas.



Sporting success on the pitches, courts and running courses



It has been an action-packed half term of sport, with some fantastic team results and personal achievements among the students.

In running, the inter girls did exceptionally well to reach the National Cross Country Cup Finals and travelled to Newquay at the start of the month to compete against 27 other qualifying schools. Despite extreme weather conditions and a tough course, they put in 100% effort and placed 15th overall. Congratulations to Annie who finished 19th against 150 runners in total.

The girls have also had success on the courts and pitches. The u16 netball squad qualified for the North East regional finals, while both the u14 and u16 hockey

teams are through to the North East and Yorkshire finals. The u15 girls hockey team became county champions, beating RGS in a fantastic 2-1 final.

In squash, the u16 girls qualified for the next round of the National Schools Championships, while both the u18 girls and boys teams also qualified for the regional rounds having finished in 1st and 2nd positions respectively in their groups.

The boys have continued to enjoy rugby. At the Northumberland Rugby County Festival, the u16 squad shared the winning

title after a 12-12 draw in the final against RGS, while the u18's remained unbeaten with five wins and one draw.

Ten Year 9 boys have been selected to play within the Northumberland Rugby Developing Player Pathway Programme, while Year 11 pupil Charlie has been invited to train with the Newcastle Falcons u18 squad alongside Year 13 pupils Charlie and Will.

Individual congratulations to Charlotte, in Year 11, who has secured a place on the England Hockey u16 girls' team, and to Ahmed, who following trials has been selected onto the ISFA u13 football squad.



Fundraising Round-up

Thank you for your ongoing generosity in support of the many varied and wonderful fundraising drives happening throughout the Schools.

- The Junior School raised an incredible £1,146.75 for Children in Need, with pupils dressing up, lots of games and activities, and a 'bring and buy' sale.
- Year 8 boys collected £87.50 in support of the Royal British Legion through the sale of delicious cupcakes and baked treats on Remembrance Day.
- Year 10 raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support by charging students to throw wet sponges and buckets of water at games teacher Mr Hudson and other 'unfortunate' members of staff! It was a popular fundraiser that generated £150.35 for the charity.
- Year 12 students Melissa, Amy, Beth and Jonny organised a collection of sensory books, shakers and toys for North-East children's charity Heel & Toe, which provides a range of therapies to children with physical and complex disabilities. Thanks to the overwhelming response, they delivered more than 500 gifts to the charity's fundraising executive Natalie Harker earlier this month.

Christmas Fair

The Christmas Fair at Dame Allan's Junior School proved a huge success, with many bracing the stormy weather to attend and over £5,000 raised on the day.

More than £3,800 of funds will help support DASPA and their great work to enhance student life and provide additional resources at the Schools.

Other money raised will support Daft as a Brush, The Children's Liver Disease Foundation, Romanian orphans, The Allanian Society and DAS World Challenge teams.

Year 12 student Roan helped raise funds for ABF The Soldiers Charity with the sale of chromebook cases. He said: "Despite the unfriendly arrival of storm Arwen, the Christmas Fair was a great success and we sold many cases. Not only did that raise money for a great charity, but the Fair also gave us an opportunity to demonstrate our communication skills when handling customers' requests."

In conversation with... Vicki McDonald, Bursar and Clerk to the Governors



Tell us about your varied role here:

I am responsible for all the support staff functions throughout the Schools - finance, HR, marketing and communications, development, estates, IT, catering, health and safety and compliance - essentially anything that isn't teaching! As Clerk to the Governors, I also ensure the governance process works effectively.

I'm a Chartered Accountant by profession so the finance side of things comes more naturally to me, but I rely heavily on a vast team of over 80 support staff who are experts in their field to cover all functions. The school just couldn't operate without support staff - teachers are only able to do their jobs and provide the excellent education they do because of the support network around them.

Before I moved to the education sector I worked for Deloitte, UNW, Kaplan and HMRC. At Dame Allan's I love to see the work I do making a difference on a daily basis - everything I do has the school at heart and every action I take has the chance to benefit the school.

Can you expand on the bursary aspect?

The bursary function includes everyone working in finance, HR and compliance. Finance includes financial planning and modelling for the future of the Schools,

as well as dealing with the day-to-day finances of collecting fees and other income, and dealing with all expenditure. As a company, and a charity, the finances can get quite complex and we have many rules to comply with.

We're heavily involved in the bursary programme - assessing applicants for bursaries based on their family income and performance in the entrance exams, and allocating and administering bursaries to the right people.

I really enjoy the charitable element, awarding bursaries to children who otherwise wouldn't have been able to attend, and helping people through hardship, which has been particularly relevant in light of Covid-19. In this role I feel like everything matters so much more.

It can't be without its challenges though - particularly during the pandemic?

The main challenge is the size of the job and the sheer number of stakeholders - governors, the Principal, staff, parents and pupils - plus, juggling the day-to-day compliance aspect of my role, which is important when trying to remain forward-looking and progressive, while helping to develop, support and fulfil the vision for the future of the Schools.

I've had two additional challenges recently - the North End Development and Covid. The NED has been many years in the planning and I am the key liaison between the contractors and the Schools' stakeholders. I have regular meetings on progress, which are really exciting, but take up a huge chunk of time!

As for Covid, responding to the pandemic, and managing its many and varied implications, has been really challenging. The intensity has lessened slightly thanks to vaccinations and the change in isolation rules, but there is still a lot of work in risk assessment, remaining up-to-date with ever-changing guidance, tracking infections and keeping everyone informed.

So, your role requires you to be very approachable, particularly to parents?

I have a multi-layered relationship with parents due to the diverse nature of my job. One moment I can be supporting people with bursaries and awards, the next keeping them abreast of regulations, and at times trying to ensure everyone complies. As a parent myself I try to see both sides, but the Schools' operations are so complex it can often be an impossible task! I try to just be open and approachable with parents as much as possible.

You were a pupil yourself in the 90s, tell us about that:

Yes, I was here in 1991-1998, as were my sisters in the 80's, and we were all on partial Government Assisted Place - a scheme that the Schools replaced with their own bursary fund when it was scrapped in 1997. It afforded me a huge opportunity, one I've always felt privileged to have been given, and I made the most of my time here.

Much has changed of course. In my day the Boys' and Girls' Schools operated as two very separate entities, whereas now they are more integrated, and students are encouraged to mix in certain extra-curricular activities, giving the best of both worlds. In the 1990s, while I was studying home economics my male counterparts were doing woodwork, whereas now all pupils study food technology and DT in our state-of-the-art workshops, which makes for a much more well-rounded education.

Yet, despite these changes and the huge improvements in the facilities, it still has the same lovely feel as before. I often find myself transported back to my teenage years by a certain room or smell! So, while things have progressed considerably, the essence of the school I loved is still there and now my own children are fortunate enough to be part of the Dame Allan's family.

Polite Reminder

We have received complaints from our neighbours regarding parking in and around the local area. Please could we remind parents to park safely and considerately and not to leave engines running when they are waiting at pick up, as this is causing some distress to residents.

The new term starts on Thursday 6th January, and, as per guidance, senior schools will carry out a lateral flow test onsite for all pupils. Further information has been sent out.

News round-up

From Teaching to Triathlon

Congratulations to our Assistant Head of Sixth Form Mr Salisbury who represented Great Britain in the World Triathlon Para Cup, in Alhandra, Portugal.

Mr Salisbury placed 5th overall in the PTS5 paratriathlon classification and ran the fastest time across all ambulant categories at the event on the 30th October.

He was selected to compete having previously won gold at both the British Paratriathlon Championships and the British Triathlon Grand Final within his classification in the summer.



Business at Beamish

Year 13 Business students had an excellent trip to Beamish open air museum last month. They attended an in-depth talk by the head of marketing to learn about the strategic plans for the museum and the innovative ways Beamish has coped with COVID-19. It was a great opportunity to get out of the classroom and students even managed to squeeze in a trip to the fish & chip and sweet shops!

Debating Success

Congratulations to our debating team Andrew, Imogen and Denny who were successful in the first round of the ESU Schools' Mace - the oldest and largest debating competition for schools nationwide - and qualified for Round 2 in January.



Thanks Neville!

Talented students in our senior dance company Vizavis have been working hard with internationally renowned choreographer and teacher Neville Campbell in preparation for the Schools' dance show, scheduled to take place at Dance City on the 22nd and 23rd of January.

Vizavis has also worked with Carly Woodhouse for a show-piece based on Newsies the Musical.



Volunteering Success

Students in the Sixth Form gain work experience and can 'give back' to the community through our extra-curricular volunteering and community service programme.

History A-level student Alex is supporting her studies and enriching her love of the subject by volunteering at English Heritage site Belsay Hall, a grand country house estate in Northumberland.

Alex, who is in Year 12, now supports the conservation and upkeep of the Hall, having worked over the summer as a

'young heritage volunteer' both in the gift shop and on public tours.

The school works with a number of partners including care homes and primary schools, although students are encouraged to arrange their own placements in an environment that suits their interests.

Alex said: "Volunteering is so important because it feels good to give back to the community and to help other people.

"My placement allows me to become a more proactive and helpful individual, while also helping to develop my people skills."

Farewell Mr Hudson

AFTER 34 years of teaching Games and PE, and accompanying students on countless sports trips throughout the country and across the globe, Mr Hudson is to retire from Dame Allan's Schools.

Mr Hudson was just 26-years-old when he joined us in 1987 and has gone on to enjoy a long, rewarding and successful career within the Schools, where his enthusiasm and dedication mean he is loved and respected by students and staff alike.

His involvement in sport, particularly as master in charge of rugby, has seen him take teams on tours all around the world, including South Africa and Australia. He also ran the Schools' ski trips across Europe and to the USA and Canada for many years.

Closer to home, Mr Hudson has taken countless teams, in all major and minor sports, to local, regional and national competitions and became particularly focused on developing the Schools' athletics and cross-country squads.

A keen fisherman and birdwatcher, he now intends to enjoy the great outdoors in retirement and take in plenty of sailing, cycling and walking. He and wife Jane also plan to travel.

Mr Hudson told us: "Retirement will be a huge change for me. I know I will miss the structure that school life brings, the buzz of teaching a great lesson and the competitive excitement of a sports fixture, but I feel incredibly proud and privileged to have been here for so many years.



"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to take on new interests and travel outside of the school holidays! I will, of course, be sad to say goodbye though. My lasting memories of the Schools will be of the warmth and friendships that have enriched my life here."



A Fond Farewell

After 22 loyal years as 'PA to the Principal' Mrs Stephenson has retired. She joined Dame Allan's in December 1999 and has worked alongside three Principals - Mr Welsh until 2004, Dr Hind, and most recently Mr Scott.

Away from busy school life, Mrs Stephenson intends to volunteer in the community, continue teaching crochet and travel to Poland to visit family.

She said: "I have enjoyed my time at DAS very much. The students, staff and the three lovely Principals I have worked for have been amazing and made my time so much more enjoyable. DAS is very much a family and everyone has been so lovely. The highlight of my time here was meeting the Queen when she opened the Queen's Building - I will treasure this for ever."

Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

The issue of pupil safety on tiktok has been raised again with a number of accounts being public and showing many personal details including names, school, clubs and friends. Please ensure that any account your child has is private and remains so. This advice goes for any social media platforms that your children use including online games. Please chat to your children about how fully they understand safety online and how they can keep themselves and their details secure.

An excellent source of helpful advice is available from <https://www.internetmatters.org>.

We have had a video shared with us by the Newcastle City Council PREVENT Education Officer which is for parents to view on the subject of safety online and we will be sending the link to this separately.



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS
building the future