



**DOWNSEND  
SCHOOL**



Proud to be nominated in the  
**Independent Schools of  
the Year 2019 Awards**

# DOWNSEND TIMES

**28 February 2020**

## A Message from the Headmaster



I hope you had a restful half-term break, during which time the improvement work to the A24 was completed, meaning no more flooding outside the school. The current weather has certainly been sent to test those improvements; thankfully, they are holding firm. Thank you for all your help in bringing enough pressure to bear to prompt remedial action. No such pressure is required with the Arts Centre building, which continues to progress at pace, as you will see from the pictures above. We are aware that a project such as this brings

logistical issues and disruption, but this is being kept to a minimum, for which we are very grateful. Of course, as we solve one problem, another invariably arises and the Corona virus is clearly the biggest external challenge that faces us. With the collective experience of 70 odd schools worldwide behind us, we are receiving terrific support from Cognita in dealing with this challenge. We will continue to take a cautionary, but responsible approach, based on the guidance issued from Public Health Education and will provide updates 2-3 times a week, but only as the situation changes – the latest of these will be sent later today. Hand sanitisers are in evidence around the school and using these regularly is as important a barrier as we have at this point. Please encourage everyone to wash their hands thoroughly at home and we will be making any spread less likely.

On the issue of collective wisdom, we spent Monday and Tuesday looking at pupil tracking across our four sites, with all of our Head of Schools in attendance. It was wonderful to see experience and best practice being shared so widely, all of which will benefit our pupils young and old. I look forward to seeing many of you at the DPA Quiz Night tonight, where competition will be stiff with record numbers attending. We'll announce the winners in next week's Downsend Times – good luck, all!

*Ian Thorpe, Headmaster*

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## Lower School Update

After an extremely wet and windy half term break, it was straight back to life at 100 miles per hour in the Lower School this week. On Monday and Tuesday, Mr Newland, myself and other key staff spent time with James Carroll, Downsend's Director of Education from Cognita. He was thrilled to see the huge progress made by children across the school and enjoyed seeing work on Pobble, evidence of progress over time in children's books and the school's STEAM ethos in action. I felt extremely proud to be able to talk about our children with him and to share some of their wonderful achievements.

Next week promises to be just as busy with the delights of Book Week 2020. We are looking forward to a really exciting week and are welcoming Mrs Temlett's Scholastic Book Fair to the Lower School Library all week, Openbox Theatre Company's larger than life Kenn and Iain for a production to the Lower School and Pre-Preps on Wednesday and dressing up for the day with the rest of the country on Thursday. I would like to correct previous correspondence and confirm that there will be no donation required to dress up on Thursday. We really are looking forward to a fabulous, literary week.

I have given some unusual congratulations this week from celebrating Sophie M's (5AG) 'Voice for Life' red award, to Olivia Diprose's (3ST) Bronze Chief Scouts award – it is wonderful to see the exciting and diverse range of activities our children excel in, well done! Congratulations too to Freddie C (3VB), Freyja BW (5LC), Sophie M (5AG) and Horatio (5PM) for their fantastic work in RAISE Maths – that was some extremely tricky problem solving you got your teeth into.



For those parents dropping off before 8am, please can I remind you about our Early Bird provision that runs daily in the Dining Room from 7.30. This is where any children arriving in school before 8am must be dropped off. Children must not be dropped off and left unaccompanied outside the Turret as this is unsupervised and unsafe. Any children left unaccompanied outside the closed doors of the turret will be taken into Early Birds and the small charge for this service will be applied to parents' accounts. Our wonderful Mr Ward, who mans the car park, will not be responsible for any unattended children.

Finally, good luck to Year 5 as they head off to PGL in Osmington Bay next week – I have no doubt at all that not only will the children have the most wonderful time, that they will learn a huge amount, challenge their sense of adventure and represent the school brilliantly. Have a super week!

*Clare Kirkham, Head of Lower School*

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## Upper School Update

I must start my report with a huge thank you to all the parents and pupils who sent their best wishes to me whilst I was off school before half-term (with Chicken Pox of all things!). I was so touched by your kind thoughts and missed everybody enormously. I would also like to say a massive thank you to all my colleagues who stepped in to teach my lessons, cover duties, oversee lunch in the Dining Hall and run parents evenings; in particular the brilliant Mr Silva who ran the Upper School so brilliantly in my absence!

As the week started the Upper School pupils returned from half-term refreshed recharged and full of enthusiasm and, as usual this week the Year 8 pupils have sat their mid-year exams and CE papers, and they have impressed all the academic staff with their focus and determination.

I'm sure their results will be impressive, whilst setting some target areas for development for the summer exams. In addition, the Year 8 pupils sitting scholarship exams or all-rounder awards have been visiting senior schools to demonstrate their talents, and we all look forwards to hearing about their outcomes in the days to come.

I am delighted to report that, following outstanding first round results Jacob S (Yr 8) and Alex B (Yr 6) sat the second round of the National Townsend Warner History competition on Monday; just reaching this stage is an amazing performance, so good luck with your results boys.

In my assembly on Monday I flagged up our forthcoming book week and I would like to thank, in advance, Mr Duffield, Mrs Temlett and the rest of the English dept for organising such a brilliant programme for the week; we have paired reading with Lower School pupils, teachers sharing their favourite stories and House Book Quizzes and this can only assist our pupils in developing their love of reading and literacy skills moving forwards. Please do remember, it is MUFTI on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>, World Book Day itself, and pupils are asked to come dressed as their favourite character from a book!

Good luck to our Upper School public speaking team; Joseph C, Arya K and Aiden M, who have reached the next round of the regional competition Public Speaking competition being held this Saturday morning, and they will be presenting on the impact of Video games on children's behaviour.

Finally, I mentioned how popular breakfast club has been since its introduction before half term, and thank you to those pupils who have been storing their property more neatly as they enter the Dining Hall to avoid any trip hazards. In addition, for parents who need to drop off early we also have our 'Early Birds' option from 7:40am. However, this week we have had large numbers of pupils outside the turret, some of whom without a warm coat on, from 7:45am onwards. This represents a clear safeguarding issue, so please do make use of the alternative early morning option if you want to drop off your child before 8am, or we will be obliged to sign them in to the Early Birds supervised session to ensure their safety.

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*Karl Newland, Head of Upper School*

## Pancake Day Charity Fundraiser



The Downsend children braved the cold for a flipping good time this week to raise funds for our school charity, Love Me Love My Mind, with a sponsored flipping and pancake races. There were some impressive techniques on show and great camaraderie in the house races. A relay to "build the pancake" saw children darting across the tennis courts to collect the pancake ingredients before challenging themselves to flip a pancake as many times as possible in 60 seconds.

**Please could Lower School children bring in their sponsorship money by Monday 2nd March so we can tot up the proceeds.**

Many thanks to all the participants, sponsors and teachers for making the event so successful.

Mrs Day and Mrs Ludlam

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## Dr Aric Sigmund - 'Screen Time and Well Being'



Wednesday evening this week saw some parents attend a fascinating talk given by Dr Aric Sigman entitled 'Screen Time and Parenting'. There were some alarming studies and statistics brought up on the matter of the growing screen 'addiction' amongst today's children, right from a very early age. However, Aric's message was not to scare parents into action over their child's screen time, but to open communication with them and maybe set some boundaries in order to improve both health (physical and mental) as well as improved sleep patterns.

Screen 'addiction' is a term increasingly being used by doctors to describe the growing number of children engaging in screen activities in a dependent manner. Whether it's social media, the internet or computer games, screen time is no longer merely a cultural issue about how children spend their leisure time, nor is it limited to the concern over the educational value or appropriate/inappropriate content. It has become a *medical* issue. Dr Sigman has published a number of peer-reviewed medical papers on this subject and is the author of the book 'Remotely Controlled'

Here at Downsend, we appreciate how busy our children are with all their sporting, musical, dramatic and extra-curricular activities. It is vitally important that they have 'downtime' in order to combat any stress built up over exam periods for example. This may involve some screen time, be it watching the TV, gaming or going on social media. In moderation this is fine! However, we believe that in order to create the best

environment and habits for the children to lead healthy lives both physically and mentally, it is paramount that we work with you, the parents, to develop some guidelines and boundaries over the children's screen time.

Anyone wishing to have a copy of the guidelines which Dr Sigman left, please follow [this link](#).

*Mrs Vanstone*

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## Languages Week

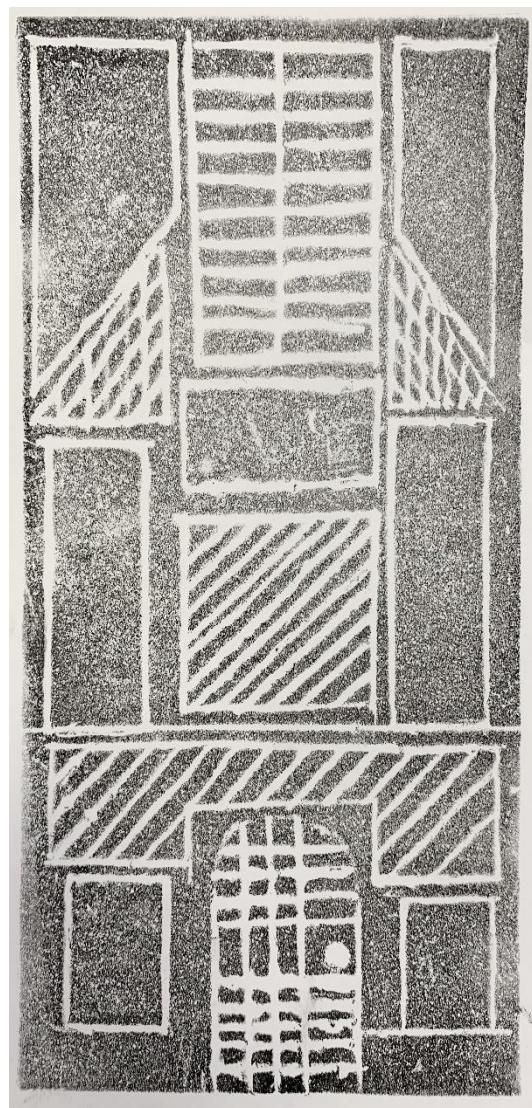
This week we have been looking across the school at the idea that words can be borrowed and donated between languages. Did you know that according to most experts approximately 80% of words in English are loan words from other languages? This was the main theme of my assembly to the whole school this morning, in which we looked at words that have been borrowed including ketchup, sofa, bungalow and robot, to name but a few. The pupils in 8S, fresh from their exams earlier in the week, regaled us with the nonsense stories that they had created using a wide variety of borrowed words. We finished by thinking about the nature of language as a means of communication and that words shared between languages represent the cultural and human interaction that has taken place over the centuries, and which allows us to share ideas and something of our own culture with people from other nations – something which has never been more important in today's world, and something which we, as a school which is part of a Global partnership, seek to instill in our pupils.

Massive congratulations to those pupils who embraced the British Council Great Languages Challenge. We have been delighted to see their efforts and those pupils have been rewarded with Superstar awards and Subject commendations, depending on their section. If there are any more challenges still taking place, please let us hear about them!

Martin Skitt, Head of Languages

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## Artist Of The Week



This week's Artist of the Week is Matys in 4EF for his great work in Young Architects club. Inspired by a housing project in Amsterdam, Matys created a fantastic design for his house before developing it into a polyblock print and taking a series of prints. Well done!

*Julia Aylen*

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## House Results Headley Remain Triumphant!



Lower School	Position	Top Achiever
Ranmore	1st	Thomas A – Y2
Wisley	2nd	Lucie C – Y2
Headley	3rd	Dina A-R – Y2
Norbury	4th	Rebecca L – Y2

Upper School	Position	Top Achiever
Headley	1 <sup>st</sup>	Darius G-P
Norbury	4th	Ryan H
Wisley	3rd	Mia K
Ranmore	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jasmine C

Whole School	Position
	1 <sup>st</sup>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	4 <sup>th</sup>

Congratulations once again to Headley who have won the second House collection of the term. In the Lower School all the pupils have been working incredibly hard since the last collection and have been inspired by Miss Black's idea of a fresh start for the second half of the term; previous minuses that may have been

collected have now been removed! I agree this was a lovely idea and it was unanimously well received during assembly this week. As you can see by the results, in the Lower School, Ranmore were the leaders of this collection, followed closely behind by Wisley! In the Upper School the Headley Hero's continue to excel and prove stubborn to knock off top spot. With the Upper School Ranmore pupils unfortunately bringing up the rear, although Headley only managed 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Lower School, the overall averages enabled them to secure the collection win once again. The message of consistency along with collaboration was highlighted in assembly, which followed on nicely from a great assembly about the importance of languages and the way they have evolved over the centuries.

Well done to all the pupils and particularly the Top Achievers!

Mr Albert Assistant Head

Miss Black Deputy Head of Lower School

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## Safety and Traffic Flow in Car Park

Despite previous reminders, there are still a number of parents stopping on the zebra crossing outside the school building to drop off their children in the morning. This not only causes disruption but prevents a smooth flow of traffic passing through the car park at this busy time and heightens the risk of injury to pedestrians using the crossing. Please use one of the marked parking bays or the drop off zone if you intend to remain for a short period of time in the upper car park rather than stopping your car on the zebra crossing.

I am sure we can rely on full co-operation to keep everyone safe at Downsend. Thank you.

Craig Simmons, Business Manager

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## Music News

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Some members of our Chamber Choir attended a Choral Day at Wellington College this week.



It was an intense and very rewarding experience. We were one of seventeen schools in a choir of approximately 400! The repertoire was varied and the concert at the end of the day was great fun.

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## Instrumental Lessons at Downsend

### We Have Vacancies!!

If your child would like to learn an instrument at Downsend with one of our tutors then please email the Head of Music at [nicole.allison@downsend.co.uk](mailto:nicole.allison@downsend.co.uk)

We have tutors for the following instruments:

Flute, Recorder, Oboe, Clarinet, Cello, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn, Tuba, Electric Guitar,

Acoustic Guitar, Mandolin, Bass Guitar, Drum Kit, Percussion, Ukulele, Violin, Viola, Cello, Piano and Voice.

If your child would like to play an instrument that is not listed above, please let me know and I will try to source a tutor for you.

*Nicole Allison*

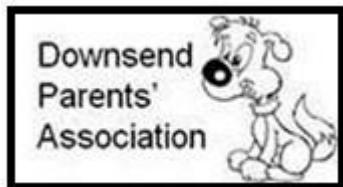
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## Downsend Plus Holiday Club Availability



As always we have an action-packed schedule of activities planned for the Easter & May School holidays. Downsend Plus Booking Forms and information on courses are available on the website. If you need further details, please contact Rebecca Peek on 01372 385403.

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## DPA Summer Ball - Saturday 20 June Early Bird tickets available from Monday 02 March!



The DPA are really excited to announce that Early Bird tickets for the Summer Ball at Denbies Wine Estate, will go on sale this coming Monday 02 March via ClassList. The event, which is open to our full school

community from pre prep through to Upper School, promises to bring lots of fun and laughter, in a wonderful setting, and raise a little money for good causes too.

So, if that hasn't convinced you to join us, perhaps this will.....

We are pleased to confirm that the Early Bird price will remain the same as last year at **£55 per person** including a welcome drink and three course meal. This discounted price **is only available until 7pm on Friday 27 March**, where the ticket price will revert to the full price of £65 per person.

To avoid disappointment, please book your individual or full price tickets via Class List as soon as possible once the booking site is open. Last year we sold out very early on

Look out for an alert on Monday 02 March from Class List Events, click on the link and the rest is easy!

We will release more detailed information over the coming weeks, but if you have any questions please get in touch with the DPA Summer Ball team at [downsendPA@gmail.com](mailto:downsendPA@gmail.com).

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## **INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS**

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