



**DOWNSEND
SCHOOL**



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

DOWNSEND TIMES

06 March 2020

A Message from the Headmaster

We are all acutely aware of the impact of the COVID-19 virus on daily life currently. The Downsend community has responded wonderfully to this challenge, acting responsibly in terms of travel plans, temperature checking and the regular washing of hands, which remains our greatest defence to any outbreak. Thank you for all that you are doing to react so calmly; we will keep providing you with regular updates as and when the situation changes. As you know, the skills of critical-thinking, collaboration and resilience are hugely important to us all, and it is heart-warming to see these being reflected in our actions. I have been able to discuss these skills, and our commitment to a future-skills based education, at two Senior Schools Exhibitions at local feeder schools in the past week, as well as at a busy Open Morning today. As usual, the feedback was inspiring and our Year 8 pupils proved to be the perfect embodiment of a Downsend education. Well done, all!

You will see from the accompanying photos that the footprint of our Creative Arts Centre is starting to take shape. Considering we are less than two months into the project, we are delighted with the progress thus far. It will not be too long until the walls become visible over the top of the hoardings! With many of the sporting tournaments having been cancelled tomorrow, the weekend promises to be a quieter one, with the exception of the 'Youth Speaks' team, who will be participating in the District Final tomorrow having won their semi-final round in Oxted last Saturday. Good luck, team, we will have our fingers crossed for you!





Ian Thorpe, Headmaster

Lower School Update



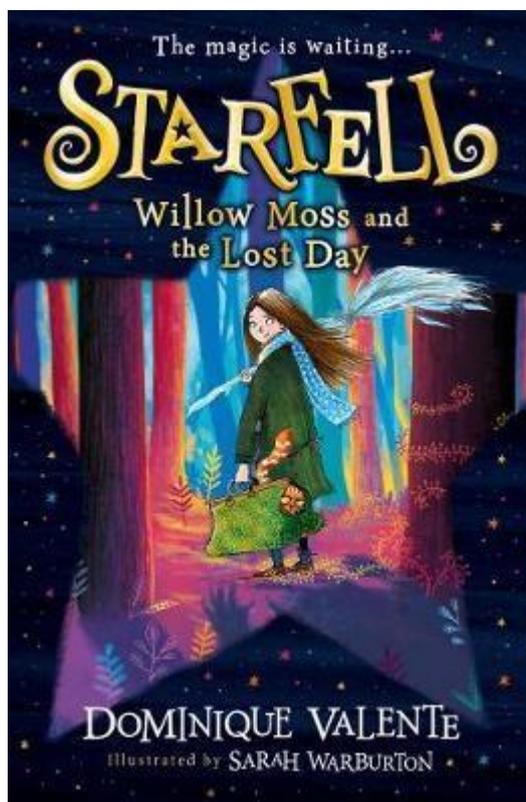


Books! Books! Books! The Lower School has shared them, talked about the process of writing them, bought them at Mrs Temlett's Book Fair, been inspired by them and generally immersed themselves in books and reading this week - it has been totally fantastic! We have strived to bring literature to life this week for the children - in keeping with our 'Inspiring Young Minds' mission - starting with Openbox Theatre Company's premier of their new show on Wednesday to the Lower School and Pre-Preps, where the children enjoyed a wonderful new adventure with the larger than life Kenn and Iain; firm favourites of the children and staff alike. On Thursday, as well as dressing up as an enormous variety of literary figures, we were lucky enough to meet author Mark Drewery, who spoke to us about his inspiration and process of writing books. The children were thoroughly inspired by what he had to say and I'm sure that there will be a fair few converted to genre of science fiction now. A big thank you to Miss Coates and the Lower School team for all their hard work in making this week such an enjoyable and inspiring one for the children, and an equally huge thank you to the parents for providing such wonderful costumes for your children which brought joy, fun and great conversation about books into school.

On Tuesday of this week, Year 5 embarked on their residential trip to PGL, Osmington Bay. This is the first residential Mrs Driscoll has taken with Downend and, in talking to her about it over the course of the week, I am proud to report that she says that Year 5 have been a joy to be with and an excellent group to take away. Mrs Driscoll felt that the inclement weather certainly tested the resilience of the group and that the outdoor learning provided a great opportunity for them to revise and consolidate topics covered in class. Unsurprisingly, all of the children have been great ambassadors for Downsend throughout the week and have had impeccable manners. I would like to say a huge thank you to the teaching team on this trip who have put their own lives and families on hold for a few days to give such wonderful opportunities to the Year 5 children.

Last Friday, during assembly time, the whole school Eco Committee met for the second time. This is a group of children, representing all year groups, who have a focus on ecology, sustainability and environment within school. The discussions coming from this group of children are outstandingly inciteful and forward-thinking and Mrs Ludlam, Dr Kirby and I are all excited about the initiatives and projects that will shortly be coming out from this group – watch this space.

Finally, if you are keen on building on the literary focus in school this week, the Waterstones Children's Book of the Month for March is [Starfell: Willow Moss and the Lost Day](#). Waterstones say, 'If you loved the magical mayhem of [Nevermoor](#) and the cliffhanging adventure of [The Wizards of Once](#), then let *Starfell: Willow Moss and the Lost Day* weave its enchanting, hilarious spell over you. Willow is the youngest witch in her family, very likeable and kind but still stuck at the basic magic level. So when the fate of Starfell – a magical home to cloud dragons, bashful trolls and broomsticks with a mind of their own – rests upon her shoulders, Willow will need all her pluck and resourcefulness to, quite literally, save the day. With ringing endorsements from the likes of [Robin Stevens](#) and [Michelle Harrison](#), *Starfell: Willow Moss and the Lost Day* kicks off a fantastical new series in sublime style.' This certainly sounds like an adventure that many of our children would enjoy!



Have a super weekend.

Clare Kirkham, Head of Lower School

Upper School Update

For my Downsend Times report this week, I would like to 'laterally invert', and start with the end, as I write this following an uplifting Open Morning, where our Year 8 pupils simply shone with knowledge and pride as they showed around a large number of visiting parents. They say 'the sun shines on the righteous' and

in wonderful sunshine both the school and our pupils were highly impressive! What consistently 'shines' through is how happy, engaged and balanced our pupils are, in addition to the broad range of interests and achievements that they all have; what a fantastic testament to the investment you all make as parents and in the opportunities on offer here at Downsend.

As I look back over the week, clearly it has been defined by World Book Day, and huge congratulations must go to Mr Duffield, Mrs Temlett, Mrs Vanstone, Mrs Haylett and Mrs Hayward for running such a fantastic literacy-based week of activities. As Mrs Kirkham commented, it has been a joy to see paired reading across the school with our Senior pupils guiding our younger pupils brilliantly, teachers sharing passages from books that have inspired them or enriched their lives, along with House Book Quizzes, book sales as well as some amazing costumes on Thursday for WBD itself! On the day itself I spoke to the Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, Gandalf the Grey, Billionaire Boy, Snow White and the Wicked Witch from the West, and my favourite staff outfit was 'Dennice the Menace' (see if you can guess who that was!). Thank you to all our parents for their support (and needlework in some cases) to make this such a well supported week.

Last week I wished the Public Speaking team the best of luck in round two of the Rotary Public Speaking competition and I am delighted to report that, after a stunning performance, Arya K, Aiden M and Joseph C did brilliantly to win that event and are now through to the final stages of the District competition, which will be held at Haslemere School tomorrow! Good luck boys!

Following last week's internal mid-year assessments, the Year 7 & 8 pupils have been receiving their assessment marks, which largely paint a very positive picture of progress made since last term. All of our Upper School parents will be receiving written reports this term, along with some 'next steps' targets to focus the pupils' attention in advance of end of Year Exams. I am also delighted that my Class Charts analysis tells me that a number of classes in the Upper School have been completely debit free this week, which reflects the excellent manners and behaviour I have seen around the school, despite the foul weather and a number of indoor breaks!

As usual, this afternoon our Upper School pupils are looking forwards to their 'Stretch' afternoon of enrichment activities, one of the most popular of which has been 'Science in a Box', brilliantly run by Mrs Ayling and Mrs Clark of Pfizer pharmaceuticals. In line with that theme, next week heralds the start of British Science week, and Dr Kirby and Mrs Sehgal have organised poster competitions, science literacy challenges and are running clubs preparing for the Nancy Rothwell Award. What a fabulous week to look forward to, so I thought I would finish with a joke that links the foci of the two weeks; when I asked one of our keenest science pupils this week what book she was reading, she told me "I'm reading a great book on anti-gravity, I can't put it down"!

Have a lovely, and hopefully dry, weekend everyone!

Karl Newland, Head of Upper School

Youth Debates - Third Round



Saturday saw our Year 7 boys, Arya K, Aiden M and Joseph C travel to Oxted School for the second round and semi-final of the district inaugural 'Youth Debates'. Having been drawn first to go in the first round we were surprised when this order was repeated and again the boys led the way! There were four schools debating a range of topics from Downsend's 'Video Games make People more Violent in Reality' to 'The Creative Arts should be banned in Senior School'. All teams put on an excellent performance and we were disappointed that the boys didn't pick up any individual awards as their delivery was exceptional. However, the disappointment didn't last long as Downsend were announced as the team winners and therefore claimed a place in the third round which is the district final to be held at The Royal School, Haslemere next Saturday. Needless to say there is great excitement and we wish the boys every success at this final. Whatever the result, they should all be very proud of their achievements to date. I know I am very proud as are their parents!

Dee Vanstone

Music News

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

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

Downsend Plus Holiday Club



We are pleased to announce the dates of our summer tennis courses. A discounted rate for these courses is available for bookings made and paid for in full by Thursday 9 April.

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.

Further to the successful launch of our Healthy breakfast menu during term time we are pleased to introduce this facility during Downsend Plus. Breakfast will be available to all children booking early start and will be available from 8am – 8.25am. Breakfast does not need to be pre booked and payment will be by cash on the day.



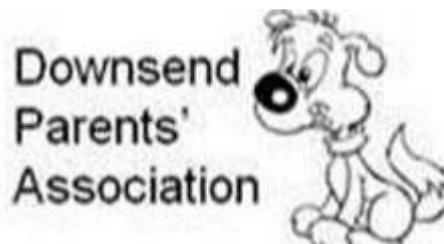
DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Breakfast Menu

Cereal Selection (low sugar)	60p
Potato Waffle with Baked Beans	60p
Toast (with Jam, Cheese or Marmite)	30p
Yoghurt with Granola	60p
Exotic Fruit Selection (5 pieces)	75p
Omelette (made to order):	
Plain	80p
Cheese	£1.00
Ham	£1.00

SERVED IN THE DINING HALL FROM 8:00 - 8:25AM

DPA News



DPA Summer Ball tickets - booking system is open!



Since we opened the Summer Ball booking system on Monday we have had a very encouraging response with approx. 50 early bird tickets sold already.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to benefit from the early bird ticket price of £55, which will end on Friday 27 March at 7pm where the ticket price will revert to the full price of £65.

If you would like to book a ticket as an individual, or full table, please go onto: Class List > Events and sign up ASAP.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the team at downsendPA@gmail.com.

INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS

Copyright © Downsend School 2015, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Downsend School
1 Leatherhead Road
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT22 8TJ
