



**DOWNSEND**  
SCHOOL



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

# DOWNSEND TIMES

**27 March 2020**

## A Message from the Headmaster

It has been another remarkable week, culminating with an emotional show of solidarity and support for NHS workers during last night's 'Clap for Carers'. We are hugely grateful for what this amazing group of people is doing to protect us all and are very proud of our parents who are doing their bit on the front line. Whilst the majority of our pupils are engaged in remote learning this week, we have remained open in support of our Key Workers and hope that this service has, in small part, been helpful in supporting NHS staff. I hope that you are all beginning to adjust to this new 'normality', where our lives are being played out from the protected confines of our homes. All of the evidence from our schools in Asia suggests that the challenges of first fortnight of remote and online learning can be the most testing, as everyone struggles to adapt to the new routines and ways of working. Being realistic with expectations is key, and the good news is that this does settle down and become increasingly fluid once those new routines are established. We will start to increase the amount of face to face learning from this point and will send a protocol to you shortly to help you and your children make the most of this new phase of learning.

On Thursday 2 April, my PA, Colette Allen, will officially be leaving Downsend. When she announced this to me in January, neither of us could have imagined that her 19 year career at Downsend would end in such circumstances. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on Colette's successes at our school over the best part of two decades. Initially appointed as Office Manager, Colette has successfully juggled a second role as Head's PA over the second half of her time at Downsend. In this capacity, she has been a particular support to me, organising busy schedules, giving timely reminders and ringing my electronic tag whilst I have been somewhere in the school that wasn't expected! Whatever the task, she has always done so with good humour and a healthy supply of patience, both of which have been hugely appreciated. For the parents, Colette has often been the first port of call when required to solve a problem and I know how much the DPA has appreciated her support. The children who enter the Office have gravitated to Colette for advice and those early bird staff have tended to start their day with breakfast with her. As Colette looks to spending more of her time travelling, we will reflect on a job well done over the past 19 years. Thank you,

Colette, and please take our love and best wishes with you in the next, exciting phase of your life!

*Ian Thorpe, Headmaster*

---

## Lower School Update

Whilst learning from home has been very new for all of us this week, I have been thrilled to see the resilience, flexibility and creativity in all of our children, staff and parents! This is not an easy time for anyone and whilst parents juggle their own jobs with their children now at home, staff have been working tirelessly on providing the curriculum the children would normally have had in a new way and on a new platform from Monday. We have all felt extremely grateful for the support we have received, not just via e-mail, but from wonderful messages from the children and in response to the work set already.

From Monday, learning in all classes will be on Seesaw and those children who have been already been using it this week – owing to a few glitches with Firefly – have already loved it! I am a member of every class, and to be able to see the wonderful learning that is still going on 'in school' is really a pleasure. I spent time this week talking to Andy Perryer, Cognita's Digital Learning Adviser, about how to engage our children face to face in the future and would like to reassure you all that in the same way that Downsend does not stand still when the building is open, we will not stand still now that the building is closed. We will continue to evolve and develop new ways to engage the children over the coming weeks. Whilst each school in the area will invariably doing things a little differently, please know that we are developing in the way we think will best suit our children – and parents – at this challenging time.

There has been some outstanding work online this week. Stanley D (4MP) did some practical Food Tech this week and I loved seeing the video of him making an omelette for his mum! Jamie H (5CD) has done some fantastic creative writing this week, paying close attention to starting each new speaker on a new line. There was also some great work on fractions and decimals from Emeline (4EF) and some 'suberbe' spoken French from Alex (4RD). Seeing some enrichment activities has also been a joy, well done to Baylen (4RD) for finding a stick almost as large as him during his hour of exercise, and to Mary (3ST) for making a 'Winter Cake' linked to her weather project set for this week. I will continue to look at your work with great interest and award my gold stars for super work as usual. If you have been mentioned today I have added 5 housepoints to Trackit Lights for you, as teachers will continue to award housepoints as usual, despite the building being closed.

I am certain that everyone is continuing to read widely and often, however, with bookshops closed this could be trickier than usual. One of the wonderful magazines that Mrs Temlett stocks in the Junior Library is 'Storytime'. This is a lovely publication and, through schools, they are currently offering a reduced cover price for home delivery of just £2 per month. This includes the magazine and a free pack of home learning resources. If this is of interest to you, you can subscribe here

<https://www.storytimemagazine.com/subscription/home-learning-monthly/>

I hope that everyone continues to stay healthy and well during the next week. The teachers are all missing 'their' children dreadfully and we all send everyone our love. Please keep in touch!

*Mrs. Kirkham, Head of Lower School*

---

## Upper School Update

This has been an unprecedented week for all those involved in Education, and particularly for school leadership teams. As both pupils and parents have begun to adjust to the new way of living and working imposed upon us all by the social distancing measures recommended to us all by Public Health England, I have been heartened by how adaptable our Upper School pupils and staff have been. Obviously, the huge pressure was on online servers early in the week caused a number of learning platforms to crash, yet our staff, parents and pupils all reacted positively and moved to email as the mode of delivery, despite the challenges that brought to all concerned. Pleasingly, the latter part of the week has run far more smoothly, and there have been some delightful tutor discussions and fun videos to enjoy, not least of all of Mrs Day's new puppy, Oreo, who appears to have been adopted as the new Year 7 mascot! Parents, it is important that your children load up their year group Firefly pages each morning to retain that sense of community and collaboration so, whilst we expect our Upper School pupils to show an increasing level of independence in this new online learning paradigm, please do encourage them to stay involved with their communities via these pastoral message pages.

Yesterday, I published details of the Week 2 Online Timetable, which now includes the wider curriculum, so pupils will now have tasks set in the Humanities, Drama, PSHE, Art, Music and Technology, in addition to the core subjects and Languages. Beyond the 'classroom' we would love to hear more stories of how individuals and families are recording their experiences and creative ideas at home, perhaps through the medium of a digital diary that we can all reflect upon, share and enjoy. Mr Lawrence and his team have been setting some interesting and creative Physical challenges for the pupils to enjoy in their down time, and again we love to see/hear from you on how you are doing with those fun activities.

Finally, I wanted to raise the issue of balance and wellbeing. We are acutely aware that parents are also working at this time, and will be facing huge challenges in your own working lives. We want/would expect the pupils to balance their studies with enrichment activities such as reading, playing a musical instrument and being artistic in their spare time. We also know the huge importance of exercise and a healthy diet on Mental Health, and all of this could be jeopardised by too much Screen Time during this online phase of learning. On Monday this week I led the Key Worker childcare provision at main site, where we all joined in with Joe Wicks' exercise class first thing in the morning! Keeping in mind the challenges that we will all be facing in this regard, there are a number of online resources available to provide interesting and supportive advice during what could be a stressful time for some, one of which is 'Mind' for better mental health, the link is here:- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> If any of our families or pupils feel the need to reach out to us for support, please do so, either through academic staff for teaching and learning issues, or through your tutor teams for pastoral support,



## Year 2 pupils working from home

Our children have shown great initiative and creativity, whilst working diligently from home. We are inspired by our wonderful children who have adapted so well. Your teachers are extremely proud of you!

### *The Year 2 Team*



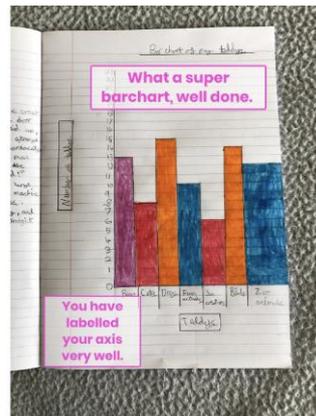
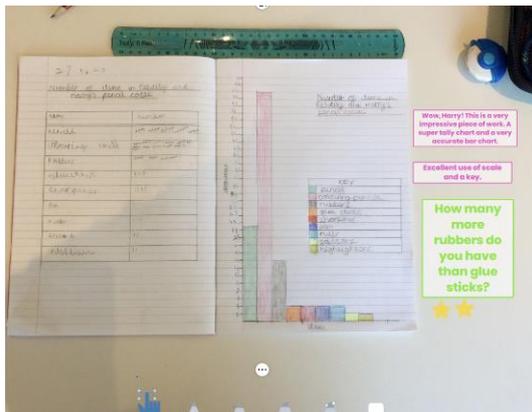
---

## News from Year 3

Here are a couple of pictures of some work from Harry and Mary in 3ST that were submitted this morning. They had to collect data and draw their own bar charts.

What fantastic work. I can't believe how many teddies Mary owns!

*Mrs. Temlett, Acting Head of Year 3*



How many more dogs than cats do you have? ★

---

## Year 4 News

Wow! We have been absolutely blown away by how positively Year 4 have responded to the first week of remote learning. We have had so many messages of joy and positivity, as well as being inundated with fantastic images and photos of all the work Year 4 have chosen to do this week. There are too many wonderful pieces of work and excellent activities going on in Year 4 households to name them all, but we would like to mention a few names this week: Rory, Roya, Harriet, Michael, Gregor, Grace - you've impressed Mr Popham with your Maths and Sam, Samuel and Harrison produced some super English work. George G has produced a really well researched Powerpoint and George D wrote a wonderful postcard to send to a lonely person via 52 Lives. Euan, your comic strip was fantastic! Henry, Hughie, Oliver, Esme and Jasmine have been incredibly engaged with their learning every day and have sent many super pieces of work. Countless children in the year group have also been cooking, exercising, reading, playing music and creating wonderful artwork too. Huge well done Year 4!

*Mrs Newberry, Mr Popham, Mrs Davies, Mrs Sutton and Miss Friend*



Tayla S



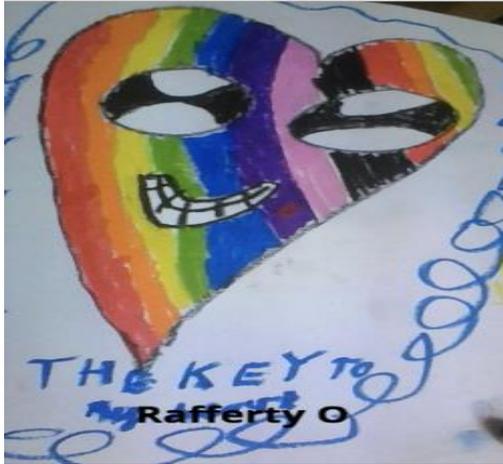
Izzy E



Annabel E



Lily C



---

## The Year 7 Play

This week should have seen the Year 7 Play, “The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza” by Dan Zolidis, but circumstances got in the way.

Until we know when the current international situation will end, we do not know when or even if we will be able to stage this play, but I wanted to thank all those who worked so hard on the play in rehearsals – those who knew their lines and did their best to make their scenes and characters memorable.

Maybe Downsend audiences will never get to see the Trojans dancing to YMCA...or Menelaus’s strange resemblance to a certain politician...or Castor transforming into a bucket of water...or the Titans going to marriage counselling...

Thanks also to the backstage volunteers and to the staff who helped out at rehearsals – and to parents who supported their children.

Even if we don’t get to share this work, be proud of it anyway!

*Chris Bryant, Head of Drama*



---

## PE Department News

The PE department have been busy this week recording a number of 'sports challenge' videos for the Downsend community (pupils, parents & staff) to have a go at. After Easter, each day a video will be uploaded with a different theme for you to have a go at - Mindfulness Monday, Technique Tuesday, Workout Wednesday, Time-Trial Thursday & Fun Friday.

All we ask you to do is film your attempt and send it to us. Feedback will be given for Technique Tuesday and house points will be awarded for all good attempts.

Stay safe everyone and we look forward to seeing your videos.

Mr Lawrence

*Grant Lawrence, Director of Sport*

---

## Stage Manager

In preparation for next academic year, I recently invited applications (from all of Year 7 and Year 8 who will be staying at Downsend next year) for the post of stage manager, taking over from Thomas Underwood, who has done excellent work this year.

Of those who chose to apply, I am delighted to announce the appointment of Hassaan Ansari from Year 7 as the new Downsend Stage Manager. He will be working in this capacity beginning with the next play we do.

Thank you to those who applied and congratulations to Hassaan.

*Chris Bryant, Head of Drama*

---

## **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)

---

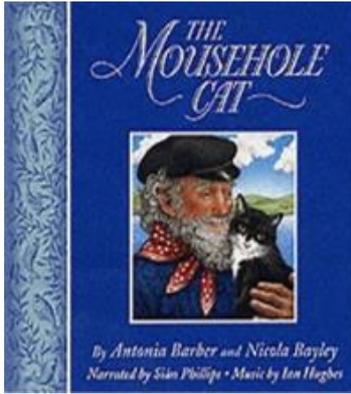
## **Library News**

Dear Parents,

Encouraging your child to read for just 20 minutes a day will make a huge difference to their developing vocabulary but, more importantly, escaping into a good story is a great way for children to cope with their worries. I have selected a few books that allow their imaginations to take them to new places.

*Robyn Temlett, School Librarian*

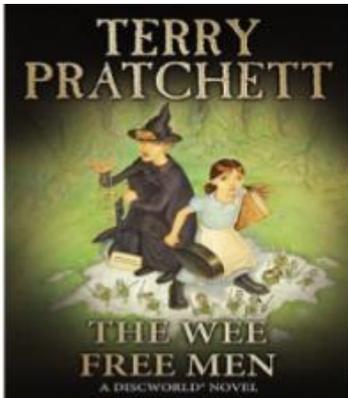
Books of the week in the Lower School Library:



A picture book for the younger ones: The Mousehole Cat by Antonia Barber

A cat who saves the day when her community is threatened. There is lots to talk about with this book as it touches on the concepts of scarcity and sacrifice and has beautiful illustrations throughout. <http://www.lovelybooks.co.uk/> Love My Books is specially designed to engage young children's interest and help you to talk about books with them.

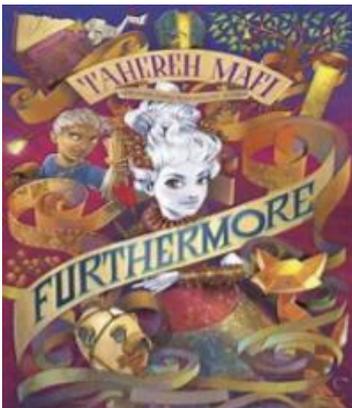
<http://www.lovelybooks.co.uk/> Love My Books is specially designed to engage young children's interest and help you to talk about books with them.



A reading book for the older ones: The Wee Free Men by Terry Pratchett

Any Pratchett Discworld novel would be the perfect opportunity to escape. This one is a riot of a read where the hero Tiffany takes on the full force of Fairyland armed with just a frying pan!

Book of the week in the LRC:



Furthermore by Tahereh Mafi

Inspired by books like The Secret Garden and The Chronicles of Narnia, Furthermore is a world where colour is currency, adventure is inevitable, and friendship is found in the most unexpected places.

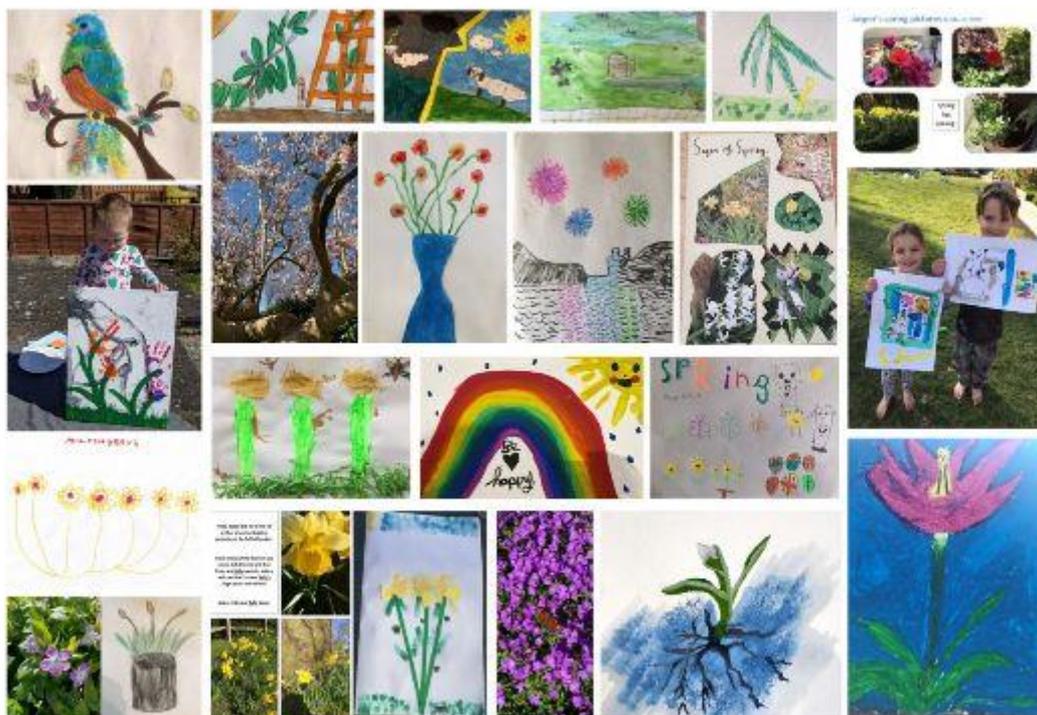
The following link: <https://worldbook.kitaboo.com/reader/worldbook/index.html>... sends you to a fantastic resource of different levelled e-reading books. All for free!

---

**Artist of The Week**

This week there are so many Artists of the Week, as I have been inundated with responses to our Spring Challenge. I've been so impressed with your drawings, paintings, photographs and collages... they have certainly boosted my spirits! There will be plenty more creative inspiration and ideas to keep developing your artistic talents coming your way next week!

*Julia Aylen, Head of Art*



## Message to Parents:

We would like to keep in touch with all of you, we will be active on all our social media channels and would love you to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Here are the links:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

While at home please send images of your children learning, exploring and creating, over the

coming weeks.

Please send your content to [editor@downsend.co.uk](mailto:editor@downsend.co.uk).



## DPA News



---

## Au Revoir to Collette

As Collette Allen prepares to head off on her new adventure, all at the DPA and in the parent community would like to wish her well for her new journey. Collette has been an amazing partner to the DPA over the years and we are going to miss her enormously but are very confident we will see her supporting DPA events such as the quiz again in the future!

Thanks to all parents who donated to Colette's collection, the DPA delivered a card and cheque to her on Thursday along with all our love.

---

Downsend+

Further to the closure of Downsend school on Friday the 20 March it has been decided that both Downsend+ and Early Years+ will not be open during the Easter holidays. Parents who have already made bookings will be contacted over the next few days regarding any necessary transfers or refunds.

If you have any queries please contact Rebecca Peek on 07909 861 280 or email

**[downsendplus@downsend.co.uk](mailto:downsendplus@downsend.co.uk)**

*Rebecca Peek*

---

**INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS**

---

*Copyright © Downsend School 2015, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

Downsend School  
1 Leatherhead Road  
Leatherhead  
Surrey  
KT22 8TJ

---