

Parent/Carer Monthly Update Sheet

November 2020

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November Update

Firstly, can we thank all our staff, students and parents/carers for their support over the last few weeks. Our return to school in September although different and not without its challenges has, however, been successful. Lots of our usual information evenings have now taken place remotely and are on our website for parents/carers and students to watch in the comfort of their own home.

Our 'Virtual' Open Evening took place on Thursday 15 October 2020 which you can find out more about later in our update sheet. This key event in the school's calendar was all presented virtually this year but we do hope that any of our prospective Year 6 parents/carers have looked at the information that is now available on our website to gain an insight into life at Dormston.

Can we please remind parents/carers of the importance of sending students to school with a mask. With cases on the rise nationally we have to do all we can to prevent unnecessary transmission. **As you may already be aware the wearing of masks in corridors and social areas is now mandatory. We have now provided every student with a face mask.**

The nights are now drawing in so please also speak to your child about walking home safely.

Don't forget that school is closed for INSET on Friday 27 November and Monday 30 November 2020.



“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better”

by Maya Angelou

Favourite Quote Mrs Mes-cam, Assistant Head Teacher



Learner of the Month - September & October 2020

Our Learner of the Month for September 2020 was awarded to **Joe Gowen - 10AY** and our Learner of the Month for October 2020 was awarded to **Aaron Tonks - 9AX**. Nominations were also received for the following students:

- Luke Payton - 8SX;
- Isabella Hignell - 10TX;
- Hermonie Harding - 11DY;
- Matthew Cox - 9DX;
- Ethan Harper - 10TY;
- Lily Marsh - 8AY.

Congratulations go to all students who received a nomination for September & October 2020.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Open Evening 2020

Due to the current situation our Open Evening 2020 happened in a very different format. Although different, we do still hope that the information we have provided will give you a good flavour of the school so that you can make the right choice for your child's future. Below is the range of options that are accessible on our website under Open Evening 2020 to parents/carers and prospective new students who want to find out more about life at Dormston.

Promotional Video

You will now find a promotional video on our website which will give you a good idea of how we work at Dormston on a day to day basis. The video will provide an insight into our vision, mission and values and demonstrate how the 5 year journey through Dormston School might look for each student. This video is available on our website under Open Evening 2020.

Virtual Open Evening

Prospective parents/carers are now able to access our Virtual Open Evening where Mr Dixon, Head Teacher talks about the school and provides information on all the topics and issues you might want to find out about including; attendance, behaviour, progress and attainment, rewards, extra-curricular, parental communication and safeguarding. There is also the opportunity to hear from all of our Curriculum Leaders in a video message about their subject. We strongly recommend that you sit down together as a family to watch this very special evening from the comfort of your own home. These videos are available on our website under Open Evening 2020.

Mrs Bassan also took the time to visit our main feeder primary schools that are allowing visitors in order to talk to your child about life at Dormston. All our main feeder Primary Schools have also received copies of our prospectus for each Year 6 student. This prospectus will have been quarantined for 72 hours before being passed on to the following Primary Schools; Alder Coppice Primary, Cotwall End Primary, Hill Avenue Primary, Hurst Hill Primary, Manor Primary, Queen Victoria Primary and Roberts Primary.

If you require a prospectus and your child's school is not listed above please contact the school so that we can arrange for one to be sent out in the post or alternatively you can look on our website where an on-line version of the prospectus can be found.



WHAT HAPPENED?

Virtual School Tours

Unfortunately, as it stands at the moment Dudley LA are not allowing any School Tours to take place in ANY schools so we are not able to offer this opportunity.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us on 01384 816395. Please note that all our admissions are handled by Dudley Admissions Team.

If any parents/carers want any advice on distances or the application process then please call Dudley Admissions on 0300 555 2345; Option 5; then Option 6 or alternatively email admissions.cs@dudley.gov.uk

Post 16 Evening

During recent PSHE, Year 11 have been looking in detail at all the pathways available to them when they leave Dormston in July 2021 including the new T Level qualifications. They will also be given advice and guidance on college open days and applications. This year our Year 11 Post 16 Evening was held virtually on 20 October 2020. There will be a dedicated folder on our school website which will provide links and videos to all Post 16 providers including local colleges, universities, employers and apprenticeship providers. On this evening we also held a live webinar on apprenticeships.

Year 7 Parent/Carer Tutor Evening

At the start of Year 7 we usually hold a Year 7 Parent/Carer & Tutor Evening for some selected Year 7 students as part of the transition process just so we can make sure they are settling in to life at Dormston. This year, these meetings have taken place in two different ways. A small number of parents/carers were invited in for face-to-face meetings with their child's Heads of House whilst other parents/carers were invited to take part in a consultation via telephone with their child's Form Tutors. Please note that these face-to-face meetings/telephone consultations were only for selected students.



What's Happening

Drop Everything & Read - Wednesday 4 November 2020

Just to let you know that we held a Drop Everything and Read Session on Wednesday 4 November 2020 - Period 3. Subject teachers provide subject specific reading material for your child to read during this time.

Parent and Pupil Reading Group - 'Unstoppable'

Following the success of our Parent and Pupil Reading Group, we are again delighted to invite parents and students to take part in the scheme – this year by reading the excellent novel 'Unstoppable' by Dan Freeman (Winner of the 2019 Dudley Children's Book Awards). Reading 'Unstoppable' will be a fantastic, and enjoyable opportunity – it is an amazing read! Just 20 minutes reading per day can have a massive impact on your child's progress, attainment and vocabulary.

This is an exciting opportunity to read the book alongside your child and we would love all parents and carers to be reading role models and sign up to the reading group. We think 'Unstoppable' will be enjoyed by both parents and students – we will also be encouraging staff to take part, read the novel, and join in the discussions and events as well. Copies of suggested questions, and discussion ideas will be provided to use during the reading.

The launch event will take place via a recorded video which will be available on the school website from Tuesday 19th January 2021. Copies of the book will be available to borrow from the PLC for students and parents to read.

You may however wish to purchase your own copy from Waterstones, W.H.Smith, or Amazon. The book then needs to be read by Tuesday 16th March 2021 when we will have a post-reading discussion – this will be held via Microsoft Teams unless we are able to hold it in school in the PLC.

If you would like to take part in this event please register your interest by emailing PLC Manager Sally Ellsmore – sellsmore@dormston.dudley.sch.uk.



What's Happening

Remembrance Day - Wednesday 11 November 2020

Each year as a school we take the time to remember and recognise the sacrifice made by so many by holding a special and poignant Whole School Remembrance Assembly.

This year however, due to current restrictions, we plan to commemorate this important event via a virtual assembly. Over the next couple of weeks, Mr Hayward our Acting Head of History will be recording a short assembly video in which he will ask two Year 7 students to recite some poetry and will also share what Remembrance means for us today.

He will also be asking four students who went on the Battlefields trip last year to discuss what they saw and how their ideas of Remembrance have been changed as a result. We will then close the assembly with the 'last post' recorded by our very own and very talented James Lockley and Stephen Ward in Year 11. COVID-19 might be trying to stop us in our tracks but we will always find ways to ensure we remember what is important at Dormston.

Year 11 Parents' Evening - Thursday 19 November 2020

Our Year 11 Parents' Evening will take place 'virtually' this year. Details of how this will work will be shared with parents/carers very shortly.

INSET Day - Friday 27 & Monday 30 November 2020

Just a reminder that school will be closed for INSET on Friday 27 November 2020 and Monday 30 November 2020. Students should return to School on Tuesday 1 December 2020 to a Week 1 Timetable.





Scouting Success - Samuel Firmstone - 9TX

We know it's been a strange few months but Sam Firmstone in 9TX hasn't let this stop him. He's hiked to the Moon; virtually camped; completed RAF challenges and attended on-line meetings. Despite Covid-19 and lockdown, Sam has carried on and has successfully gained the top award in Scouting - The Chief Scout's Gold Award. This is amazing and you are certainly demonstrating many of our core values. Well done Sam!



Strictly Come Dancing Star - Lucy Jones - 7AX

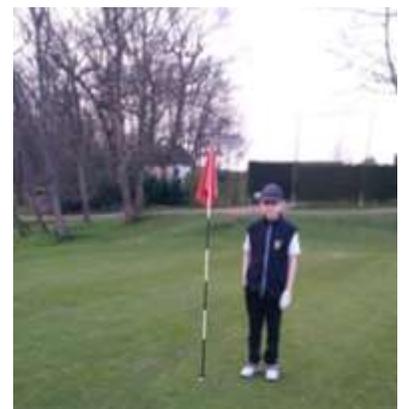
For all the Strictly Coming Dancing Fans out there we just wanted to share this lovely news. Lucy Jones in 7AX (also a massive Strictly Come Dancing fan) entered an online competition to be on the Strictly Come Dancing Movie week special. Lucy dressed up as a minion and performed Kevin and Stacey's jive. Lucy was briefly featured on the show and then her professional dance teacher Amy Dowden uploaded the whole clip to the AIM (Art In Motion Dance Academy) social media page for everyone to see and enjoy. [To see the clip please click here.](#) We hope this makes you smile. Congratulations Lucy! Could this be the start of things to come? I think we will have to watch this space.



Lucy Jones - 7AX

James Ilsley - 10TY

Some of you may remember hearing about James Ilsley in 10TY and his golfing success in a previous Monthly Update Sheet. We are now pleased to share that James was invited to try out for Under 18's England Golf recently at Bromsgrove Golf Club and he has since been informed that he's been asked to play in the England Under 18's Regional Squad. Only 6 boys were picked out of 18 which is not bad for a 14 year old. We don't know how many of the Dormston Community have tried swinging a golf club but if you haven't, it is an incredibly hard skill to master and takes years to perfect. James's natural talent and dedication to his sport is certainly paying off. Well done James this is an outstanding achievement!



James Ilsley - 10TY



Grade 8 RockSchool Exam - Max Pearce - 10SX

From around the age of 7 Max's parents introduced him to playing the guitar, buying him a junior acoustic.

It took just 6 months for his Dad to teach him how to play many famous riffs such as Crazy Train (Ozzy Osbourne), Back in Black (AC/DC, Aint Talkin' 'Bout Love (Van Halen) Hall of the Mountain King (more commonly known as the Alton Towers theme), Star Wars theme tune and many more. Amongst all this he was taught to play basic chords, scales and little tricks such as bending the neck of the guitar (not recommended as a rule), finger picking and string bends. Initially Max wanted to play the drums but as his Dad had limited knowledge in this area he promised Max that he would buy him a drum kit if he did well on the guitar.

So Max began having guitar lessons from his Dad with some additional guidance from a friend of his Dad's who lectures music at universities. The choice of style Max plumped for was rock/pop as he had a liking of AC/DC just like a few of his friends. His parents invested in a good guitar and amplifier to aid him in his progression. As Max had already shown a natural flare and was already very adept, it was decided he would head straight for Grade 3 of the Rockschoo criteria, which is quite demanding as he was only around 8 years old at the time! It took him about 12 months to get to the point of sitting his exam which he found to be very nerve racking. Despite this, he managed to come out with a distinction.

From there on Max just got better and better. He had numerous experiences outside of his lessons such as playing alongside a professional drummer in a rehearsal studio and was taken to see live bands by his parents to get an idea of what live music is like. Over the next several years Max chipped away at improving his skills on the guitar managing to get a Merit for Grades 4 and 5 and a distinction for Grade 6. Along the way learning music outside his grade such as Welcome to the Jungle (Guns 'n' Roses), Highway to Hell (AC/DC) playing the whole songs including the guitar solo's. Following this, he spent around a year and half where his Dad guided him through the Rockschoo grades 7/8 books.

It was around this time Max started playing some music with his friend who plays the drums. At this point Max started to write his own riffs and his friend would write the drum sections to them whilst jamming together. They gradually got better at playing together and decided to enter the school arts/talent competition in which they both won an award for their performance. It was after much hard work and hours of practice that it was decided he should go straight for the 'big one'; Grade 8 Rockschoo. As before, Max was very nervous during the process but he had no need to be as he came out with a merit, which at the age of 14 is amazing as this is classed as an A level. Max continues to play guitar, advancing his knowledge, and ability and makes his parents really proud.