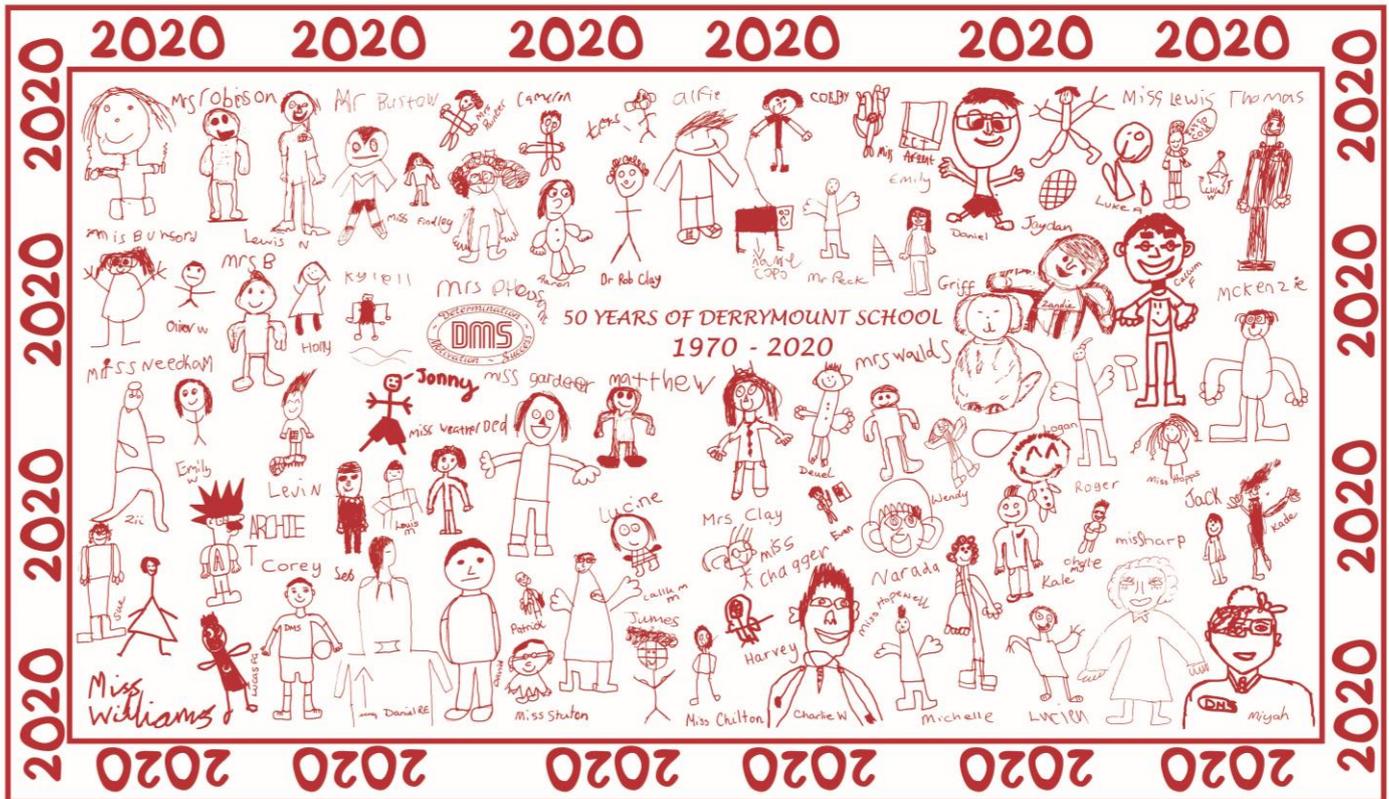


Newsletter

October 2020



It has been fantastic to see our pupils back again in September. I am really impressed with how quickly everyone has settled back into school life again even though there are so many changes to how we can do things. Well done all of you!

You can see what we have been up to in the rest of this newsletter. This year it is Derrymount's 50th birthday and although we couldn't have a party, we have designed a lovely tea towel to mark the occasion. They are £5 each and money raised will go towards our swing fund (one for each site) which pupils have asked for. Contact the office to order them.

Just a reminder to wrap up warm when you come back after half term as we still need to keep windows open. Have a lovely and safe half term and -

Well done all of you!!!!!!

Mrs C Clay

School Council

It has been great to see a lot of students keen to be on the School Council. The voting took place at the lower site and we now have a representative for each class, and we are happy to welcome some new pupils joining us for the first time.

Our first meeting will now take place in the hall to allow us to maintain social distancing and only the representatives will attend the first meeting.

Don't forget to discuss what changes you would like to make at Derrymount or things we are happy or unhappy with in class, record and bring along your ideas.

Look forward to seeing everyone at the first meeting.

Miss Hopps.

Horse Riding

It has been a lovely start to the autumn term this year as we are back enjoying horse riding lessons with our year 8 pupils. We have had two sessions inside the indoor horse arena and today we went out for a leisurely ride in the woods. Today the pupils rode Tola, Badger, Odjit and Blue, we hope to see you all soon have a lovely half term.



I would just like to thank everyone for the way they have adapted to the strange and limiting conditions at the start of this new school year. We have new members of staff, lots of new pupils, walls knocked down, staff and students moving on without us being able to say a proper good bye and restrictions to our school life yet there is a positive atmosphere around both sites and loads of work being done. We are learning how to adapt to keep safe and are planning on an interesting and enjoyable lead up to Christmas. Thank you for all your hard work and considerate contributions to make this first half term work so well.



Mrs C Painter

Stay safe!

We want all our students to remain safe and well during October half term.

Whilst they may spend more time at home, some students may miss the routine of school - even more so after an extended period of time away from us. Help and advice for issues such as loneliness, arguments at home with siblings and other problems, can be found on the Childline website and can be accessed by children as well as parents and carers. For more information, please visit

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/seasonal-events/summer-holidays/>

Class news!

Beech

Hi Everyone!
We are so pleased to all be back at school together again. We have enjoyed developing our 'Reading Retreat' and promoting reading for enjoyment.
Watch this space for our outdoor 'Reading Retreat' coming soon.....
Mrs Birkin



Maple

The students in Maple have settled in really well to their new class. We have one new pupil who seems to be enjoying their time at Derrymount so far.

We are limited to the amount of games we can play together as a class at the minute, but we have lots of different activities to do instead. The class enjoy having their own pack of Lego to play with, they also enjoy using chalk out on senior yard and we have also treated them to their own bubble wands.

We started a new project last week which enabled us to join with the other class from our bubble. We are using recycled equipment to make a building of their choice which they all seem to be enjoying a lot.

M1

Well done to all M1 students, we have had a great start to the year! You have all settled in really well, and we are super proud of the progress you have made so far. We have come back to school during a very unusual time which has been difficult for us all, so well done for adapting to the new normality.

We look forward to having a fun filled 2nd term! Have a lovely break, see you soon.

Miss Chaggar, Miss Staton, Miss Hopps

M2

We would like to welcome the new M2 class this year. In just a few short weeks it's been a roller coaster of emotions with many highs and many laughs. It's going to be a great year with many things to learn as we look forward to working with each and every one of you.

M2 We can do this!

Miss Needham, Miss Tatham, Mr Rayson

M3

Students in M3 have settled in well upon their return to school after so long away. Teachers have been cracking the whip and introducing them to the concept of child labour during the Industrial Revolution, by getting them to have a go at carding wool by hand. Don't worry; no child was harmed during their history lessons!

A few Year 8 students have also enjoyed horse riding sessions – a welcome return to some normality in an afternoon.



M4

M4 have returned with a positive attitude to being back in class and are working really hard we have had some beautiful work from them on the book Holes displayed in class.

Well done M4 keep it up!

U1

What a brilliant start to the term from U1'ers. In what really is the most bizarre of terms, these fantastic lads have transitioned into the upper school and have settled in so well. We can see them maturing all the time into the young adults they will become. Our main focus has been on making sure they are safe, comfortable and confident in being back at school.

We as a staff team are Tracy (Mrs Findlay) who they know and we are so glad has come up with the class from the lower school, myself Marianne (Mrs Burford) their tutor and who taught them science last year and Mo (Mr Singh) who is fast becoming an integral part of our team.

We have caught up on our numeracy skills, challenged ourselves with spellings and started reading a new book 'Skellig' in English. I know they have loved, loved, loved having more science this year covering atoms in chemistry, reproduction in biology and distance and time in physics. (After all I am a science teacher!) We added in studying crime and punishment in history, making 'pop art' in art and the structure of the earth in geography. They have enjoyed playing football, golf in PE and at lunchtimes, and we have made the most of the sunshine with some outdoor lessons.

All in all, we are really proud of the way U1 are getting used to being in school again and they all deserve a lovely half-term of rest and relaxation ready to start again.

U3

Wow! What an unusual start to the new school year! Sitting in the classroom, 2 metres apart with windows wide open and coats on!

It has been a very challenging time for us in school, but we want to say a big WELL DONE to you all for the way you have handled things! We don't have quite a full class yet but we are looking forward to this being the case soon.

Lessons have been a bit strange, but we have learned to get used to being together all the time and are making the best of a bad situation!

We have been getting back to the basics in maths looking at times tables and column addition and have been sharing the life of Mr and Mrs Twit in English. We have had some fabulous art lessons creating Pop art lettering in the style of Leitchenstein and are learning to sew basic stitches in textiles. In PFA we have been thinking about what we might do as a career and the goals to set to work towards achieving that and in PE we are becoming experts in badminton – watch out team GB!

We have also enjoyed some time in our Adventure school area where we have been making our own fire, trying to keep it alight and chilling out in the hammocks! Hopefully we will be toasting marshmallows next!

Well done to you all!

U3 team.

U2

OFF TO A GOOD START!

The new U2 class has made a positive start to a rather 'unusual' and challenging 2020 Autumn term without the benefit of the normal transition period.

Social distancing, wearing masks and not being able to freely mix with their friends could have made life very difficult, but U2 have done brilliantly so far!

In class and in maths we are battling with the dreaded decimals...some staff included! However, perseverance has been the keyword and we have all done our best to get to grips with them.

In English, we are studying 'Stormbreaker' by Anthony Horowitz, a fascinating story of spies, intrigue and murder. This seems to be 'going down a storm' with the majority of the group who have been busy devising fiendish gadgets to enable spies to outwit their opponents.

Geography is taking the class to previously uncharted territories..... we are looking in depth at volcanoes with some spectacular videos to accompany the learning.

The three science subjects are covering a multitude of different areas. Biology is concentrating on genes, inherited features, and reproduction..... which always ensures that everyone is concentrating and provides a few (embarrassed) laughs along the way!

In chemistry it's the mysterious Periodic Table, and in physics drawing a graph to illustrate the time taken to travel a measured distance.

Our history lessons are giving us an insight into 'The Roaring Twenties' and how life was changing at a very rapid pace.

In art, we have had some experience with clay, making small clay noughts and crosses games. More recently we have painted designs on stones which will be incorporated into a feature to be installed in the quad garden area. We are aiming to study the work of artist Paul Klee after half-term with some factual and practical work based on his paintings.

The more academic subjects are interspersed with what are called 'Recovery periods' (not the staff having a nap!), which aim to slowly help the pupils reconnect with school life and their friends after the unexpected 6 month break.

They are also an opportunity to catch up with any work that may have been missed or that pupils need help with.

We also have Social studies and PHSE lessons in which we study religion, the community and wider world and associated problems, as well as considering preparing for adulthood.

We have recently taken delivery of a new mini sewing-machine which one of the students has bravely agreed to road-test for us on Friday afternoons. She did a great job with it on its first outing, managing to make a face mask and avoiding sewing her fingers together!

The boys have been playing football in the mornings and break times (and whenever they get the chance!) in preparation for when we are able to play fixtures again.

Fortunately, we have also been able to attend Swimming lessons on Fridays. The students have made progress in a variety of strokes and completed hundreds of laps between them!

U4

Since returning to school, pupils in U4 have been using their mornings to catch up on work for the core subjects of English and Maths. English lessons have allowed pupils to progress with their understanding of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson. This has included reading and appreciating the story in other media, and class discussions on the gothic nature of the book. In Maths, pupils have been working through a unit concerning fractions, decimals, percentages and probability.

Enrichment lessons have been an enjoyable way of catching the class up with some humanities topics. In Geography, we have been studying Global Tectonics, including formation of the Earth, Vulcanism and studying rock types. History lessons have focussed on the various revolutions that occurred in UK society during the 1960s. Religious Studies looking at the way that fringe belief systems work has been enlightening, particularly when studying how cults can be used to exploit the public.

Our afternoon recovery sessions have been used to get pupils interacting with each other in a social manner and exploring their creativity whilst helping to maintain a healthy body, lifestyle and mental attitude. These areas have been encouraged by participating in group roleplaying sessions, studying approaches to good mental health, painting and playing badminton.

U5

Students in U5 have been working on individual work in mathematics; from strengthening their numeracy skills, to working out the beginnings of algebra and fractions.

In English they have been investigating the strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. We have also been reading our own choice of books.

We have been playing badminton and improving our skills in PE. We have also gained access to some remote-control cars and are working toward students' directions to blindfolded drivers.

We are revising the human body in science and are reinforcing our knowledge of the names and functions of the varying parts.

In Humanities we have been looking at the British Isles and identifying locations on maps.

U6

By all measures it has been a peculiar yet wonderful return to school for our newly anointed Year 11s here in U6! Alongside wrapping our heads around the new Covid guidelines, regulations and limitations, we've had a lovely new cosy classroom to contend with! Maintaining our distance (as well as our sanity) has not always been easy but we are doing well.

However, the overall mature approach towards, what is fair to say, unpopular adaptations like the substitution of exam tables at the expense of regular classroom tables, for instance, has been impressive. This approach is reflected in their understanding of the importance of regular participation in English and Maths lessons, curriculum catch up programmes every morning and exploring new ways of learning in Google Classrooms.

What binds the group together in what could have been a monotonous trudge of work and handwashing in our bubble has been the comradery, flexibility and general affability of every one of our young people who have thoroughly enjoyed the company of one another. Socialising, playing Covid secure sports as well as virtual games has been a welcome and well-earned release valve for our group. In short, it's been a great start back. Well done U6!

P16

Things are going well in P16, with the students getting back into the swing of doing some work! Actually, the same can be said by the staff too. One of the key changes to the way we work in P16 is that we are using Google Classroom quite a lot to assign and feedback on work, particularly in English. This has been an important way of working to get to grips with as it means learning can continue in this way should there be an interruption to attendance due to Covid 19. Work in maths has also included an element of online working.



In the afternoons, we have been spending a lot of time outdoors in Adventure School and the Quad. The students have enjoyed making improvements to the new Adventure School shelter (lining and insulating it) and the cooking area, as well as enjoying social and relaxation time in the hammocks. When we have not been working in Adventure School (on maintenance tasks or the Adventure School Skills award), the students have been getting the quad tidied up and ready for an exciting enterprise project we hope to initiate shortly.

In other news, we are recycling crisp packets, cans and pens, and collecting plastic bottles (used in insulating the shelter). Gryff is slowly getting used to Covid-School (and everyone having sanitized hands – ooh, the smell), Rendel is helping to keep the grass level down, and Trevor popped in to make a VIP visit – bless him.

Let's hope we can get to a more normal timetable as soon as is possible, and begin our climbing, outdoor adventures and DofE activities. It's P16 Jim, but not as we know it. (but we are coping well, never-the-less).

Well done all the P16 Bambinos.