

Welcome to the...

DMS

29th November 2024



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Dear DMS families,

Thank you so much for your kind words following the birth of my son, Elijah. He was born at a very healthy seven pounds and five ounces entering the world with a fine pair of lungs on him! My two weeks on paternity leave have been very special and I feel very blessed to have been able to spend that time building a strong bond with him already!

Thank you also to all of you who provided a response to our first parent survey of the academic year. In total, 175 responses were received!

I really value all feedback that we receive as we strengthen the quality of education at DMS. I know there remains much work to be undertaken but one particular headline which I believe reflects our work to date was the question as to whether parents would recommend the school to other parents. At the last inspection in 2023, this was 56% who responded positively to this question. In the parent survey for 2024, it has improved to 78%.

Specific themes that parents were positive about included: improvements in the ethos and feel of the school; a better range of clubs; improved communication; a better curriculum; teachers who are kind and knowledgeable; a clearer behaviour policy and better visibility around social media which has provided a real insight into the work of the school.

Rest assured we will continue to build upon this feedback and thank you again for all of your comments and insights. It is great to be back and I look forward to working with our pupils in the run up to the excitement of Christmas.

Mr Webb

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Important dates for your diary

9th December	Gabrieli Roar concert - Exeter (Choir group)
11th December	Pupils' Christmas dinner - please book up to the week before
11th December	Carol singing at Tescos (after school - Choir group)
11th December	Year 6 - end of term assembly at THS - 1.15-3.15pm
12th December	Open Morning for new Y5 Parents (September 2025) 9-11am
12th December	Years 5 and 6 - songs around the Christmas tree - Playground from 2.30pm
13th December	PTFA Disco - KS2 5-6pm and KS3 6.30-7.30pm
16th December	Year 5 - end of term assembly at THS - 1.15-3.15pm
18th December	Carol Service - Dorford centre - 7pm
19th December	Choir visit to YMCA - Carol singing
19th December (last day of term), children invited to wear a Christmas jumper instead of their DMS jumper/cardigan if they wish to, no donations required!	

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Introducing this week...

Mr Will Hoddinott - Cover Supervisor

Mr Hoddinott has recently joined us as Cover Supervisor. He covers lessons for our teachers at DMS, this can be any subject and any class! He grew up in Dorchester, before moving away to study at the University of Leeds; he also lived in Canada for a year and studied at the University of Montreal. Mr Hoddinott graduated this year with a degree in International Relations & French and is aiming to train as a teacher one day in the future. Mr Hoddinott lives in Dorchester with his lovely family and their rescue cocker spaniel Lola. He loves travelling, hiking, cycling, meeting friends, and playing the drums! Mr Hoddinott really enjoys being part of the DMS school community.



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Parent Question of the Week

“If I missed the opportunity to respond to the parent survey, will I get another chance this academic year?”

Yes, the parent survey is issued termly and therefore all parents and carers are able to provide feedback throughout the year. Our next survey will open in the Spring Term and Mrs King will write to let you know when the link is live again.

Pupil Question of the Week

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“Will pupils continue to be asked their opinions as to how the school can improve?”

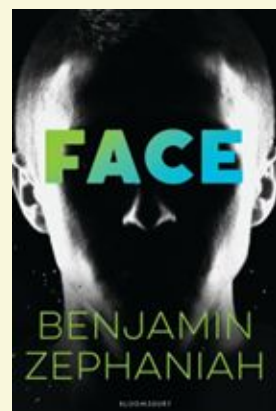
Yes, you are the most importantly group of people in our journey of improvement. As with parents and carers, you will undertake a survey every term, each academic year, to ensure that we capture the key issues that most impact on your educational experience and continue to improve them.

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Reading News - Mrs Jeffery & Mrs James

It's been a pleasure to visit some of our afternoon homebase reading sessions over the past fortnight and listen to the current class book being read. I was lucky enough to visit 7CWT when they were selecting their next class book using the 'DMS Book Selector tool' for their year group. By looking at the cover, reading the blurb and reading an extract, 7CWT shortlisted a selection of books before deciding on 'Face' - which is a fast-moving, gritty and realistic novel by the late Benjamin Zephaniah.

The pupils loved listening to the first chapter read by Mrs Whiting and are eager to get stuck into their new class read. Thank you Mrs Whiting and 7CWT for being such enthusiastic readers and listeners.



As you will all be aware, the school received its first monitoring visit this week and the inspector focused on all four areas for improvement that were identified in the last OFSTED report dated June 2023.

I was delighted with the manner in which pupils and staff demonstrated the very best of the school and whilst I am not able to confirm the outcome until I receive the inspector's report, I am very pleased with how the monitoring inspection went. Once I have received the report, which should be within the next couple of weeks, I will of course share it with you and it will be published on the OFSTED website.

I also really appreciated so many of you contributing to our Parent View even though you have only recently completed our school survey. 83% of parents would now recommend the school which was even higher than our own internal survey a couple of weeks previously which I referred to on the front page of this newsletter.

We are likely to have our next graded inspection in the autumn term of the next academic year and rest assured the whole team will be working hard to continue to raise standards, expand opportunities and strengthen further the sense of belonging that we want all pupils to have at Dorchester Middle School.

Mr Webb



Celebrations

Our pupil Leo in 6MHR, competed at the British National Championships at Blackpool Winter Gardens at the weekend, and is now one of the top 5 juvenile British dancers in the UK!! He came 4th in the ballroom and 5th in the Latin. Very well done Leo (and your dancing partner) you are amazing!!

Mr Critchell shared the fantastic news of our KS3 pupils' impressive performance at the recent Cross-Country fixture held at Budmouth Academy. Despite the challenging muddy conditions, every single pupil demonstrated incredible determination, resilience, and sportsmanship. Their hard work and commitment truly paid off, with remarkable results: 6 of our athletes achieved top 10 finishes and all of them finished in the top 30, an incredible achievement given that some races featured up to 50 participants. We are so proud of them for their outstanding efforts and representing our school with such pride. They have not only achieved brilliant results but also showcased the core values we strive for every day at DMS.



Another one of our super talented pupils, Alfie in 5MW, won the 'coaches' award' for his swimming at West Dorset Swimming Club, over the last year (in the pre-competitive 1 squad!). Alfie has worked really hard this year putting in some strong dedication into his swimming which is fantastic to see in our pupils.



We are very proud of them all!!!!

PTFA News

Our amazing PTFA continues to work behind the scenes to organise engaging family orientated events for our DMS families and children. Don't forget that the next event is the **PTFA End of Term Disco** on Friday 13th December: KS2 from 5 to 6pm and KS3 from 6.30 to 7.30pm.

Also Friday December 13th, is the deadline to return your Dorchester Casterbridge Rotary Christmas Draw tickets' stubs and monies to participate in the draw. We still have some spare tickets in the school office if you want to collect a few extra, each ticket costs £1. Every penny from the DMS ticket sales of the Rotary draw will be returned to the DMS PTFA together with a bonus from the Rotary Club sales, which has been 15% for the last 2 years. So for every ticket you buy/sell you can be assured that the money is directly benefiting DMS.

Donations to Charities

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Throughout the year we support a lot of charities thanks to the generosity of our parents/carers, pupils and members of staff.

We have proudly contributed with the following amounts in the recent months:

Dorset Mind - £236.16
Children in Need - £303.44
Poppy appeal - £270.94

What's happening in our community?

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Wraparound Care - Before and after school hours

Just a reminder that our wraparound care provision continues to be open for bookings and we are looking forward to carrying out festive activities between now and the end of term. Bookings and payment need to be made via the parent pay app but we are also able to take payment via childcare vouchers. Please do get in touch with the school office if you need assistance with booking or would like the opportunity to pay utilising the tax free childcare voucher scheme.

Christmas Lunch

If you would like to order a Christmas Dinner lunch for your child for Wednesday 11th December, the last day for placing your order on the Local Food Links website is Wednesday 4th December .

Unfortunately orders will not be able to be placed after this date.

Young Carers' support - MYTIME

This week we have welcomed Jo from 'MyTime' young carers who shared 4 facts around what a young carer is. We listened to scenarios and decided who was a young carer. If you know that your child is a young carer in your family - please do get in touch with us as there's lots of support on offer for your young carer here at school and at the weekends.

DMS Facebook page

If you are not following us on Facebook yet, please do so!! We share our day to day activities, achievements and news and you might be able to see a video of our choir in practice!!

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And finally...

If you would like to be part of our parent voice group and contribute further to our work, please do contact Mrs King cking@dmsschool.co.uk. Our next parent voice meeting is on 13th February at 5pm and we will be discussing further aspects of the parent survey for your further thoughts and insights.

Best wishes,

Mr Webb