

NEWSLETTER

Della Jones Mile

Every July The Blandford School holds the annual Della Jones Mile. Sadly this year the event could not go ahead as usual, but even though most students were working at home, the small group of staff and key worker students decided the 42nd run should still go ahead. Although not the 500 participants that usually take to the course, they did Della Jones and TBS proud.

Results were as follows:

1st position and fastest boy = Rannan Dewi with a time of 5:51.

Fastest girl = Mary Hayball

Fastest staff member = Mrs Smith

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 3 September - Staff Training Day

Friday 4 September - Staff Training Day

Monday 7 September - Year 7 & 12 staggered start

Tuesday 8 September - All students in

Thursday 24 September - Open Evening 6.00 – 8.30 pm TBC

Friday 25 September - Staff Training Day

Dear Students/Parents and Carers

I have been really impressed with the way students and staff have adapted to working remotely and would like to thank parents and carers for your support of our young people. I would also like to commend those students who have joined us in school over lockdown both in the keyworker area and in the face-to-face lessons, they have been an absolute pleasure to work with. I remember the first day of year 10 and 12 returning when they were very generous in their conversations with us, checking we were fine when we were more worried about them! Our values of respect, effort, attitude and perseverance (REAP), have shone through.

In addition, there have been so many good and great things which have occurred during lockdown which we must celebrate. This newsletter includes lots of positive stories about students, all youngsters should be very proud of any positive contribution they have made to their families and the community.

I must also say at this point how proud I am of our staff team who have delivered remote teaching and support for the first time in their professional careers, many of them doing this alongside home schooling their own children. We have all been learning and your feedback to us during lockdown has been invaluable in terms of our planning (the recent parent survey which was very positive will also be very helpful to us, thank you to those of you who responded and commented). In addition, 34 chapters of Treasure Island have been filmed by colleagues and shared with all students and year 6; over 500 face shields have been made by the design team for a variety of organisations including care homes and hospitals. Other colleagues designed and produced scrub bags and face masks in their own time, approximately 150 of the former and 100 of the latter. Staff and governors came together as a team and collected items for the Blandford Foodbank as well as raising £756 for the same cause; we are also part of their 'holiday hunger' programme which is helping families with food parcels over the summer.

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know about the support we have had as a school from the local community. Williams Williams, Blandford Rotary and the Blandford Forum Almshouse Charity have donated £14k for the purchase of student laptops and I am enormously grateful to them for this; the Town Council have also supported us with our plans for reopening, their offer of help was very much appreciated Bryanston School has been magnificent by supporting us with laptops in the early part of lockdown; providing more first aiders so we were able to open safely for the children of key workers and even supplying Easter eggs for the same children!

The Full Governing Board chaired by Mr Mario Roncaglia have been extremely proactive during lockdown. Meetings have continued virtually and there have been 14 (socially distanced) visits to the school by the Board to meet students and staff and check how things are going. I am very grateful to them for their contribution.

A letter is being sent to all parents/carers regarding plans for September. Please do not hesitate to contact the school with any questions you may have.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer and I very much look forward to seeing you all in September.

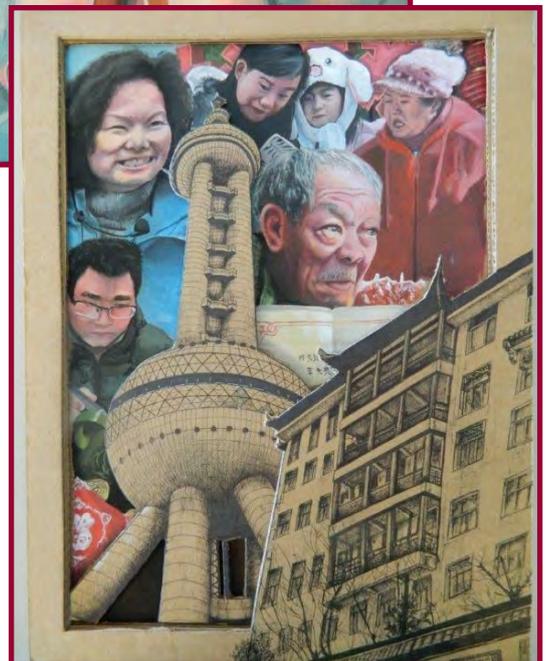
Mrs Wilson
Headteacher





This photo was taken by Year 9 Student Laila for the 'HOLD STILL@ national Portrait Gallery Competition. Art teacher, Mrs Amey said " a stunning shot that shows great depth and contrast. We are really pleased with the submission .

Below is a selection of some other amazing art produced by TBS students during lockdown.



TBS Lockdown Heroes



Year 11 students Paige Bryant and Eve Masters, walked a marathon (26.2 miles) on June 22nd, to raise money for a local care home. Castleman House in Blandford, of which Paiges Great Grandmother is a resident.



Castleman House have been unable to hold their annual fete this year due to COVID 19,

which pays for their amenities. The amenities fund allows entertainment to come into the care home and gives residents the opportunity to go on trips out which will be great when they can finally go out again.

They raised a massive £1400.



Year 12 students Aislinn Lewis Smith and Annice Platt Y12 volunteered at Dorchester hospital, throughout lockdown. They were sorting PPE and donations and taking them around the wards.



Year 10 student Aiden Oxlee was involved with a local group of volunteers who were picking up prescriptions and shopping for the elderly and vulnerable members of the community.



Year 7 Student William Yorukoglu (see photo) made Scrub bags with St Johns Cadet group.



Year 8 Student Bill Cainhas made face masks for family and friends, after downloading a pattern from the internet

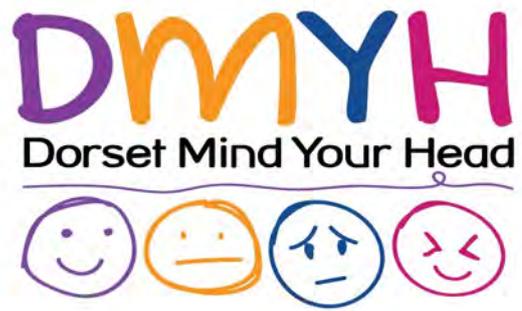


Year 7 student Max Hopkins was due to run the Poole Half Marathon on Sunday 7th June, sadly the event was cancelled, but not wanting the training to go to waste Max ran it anyway.



WELLBEING CHECK-IN SERVICE

Dorset Mind Your Head, the children and young people department of Dorset Mind, has launched a new FREE service to provide support for young people (age 11-25) to help improve their emotional wellbeing.



The 1-2-1 support is delivered by trained volunteers as a weekly (or fortnightly) telephone or online session via Zoom. All staff and volunteers involved with the service are experienced at working with Children and Young People (CYP) and are fully trained, supervised and DBS checked. They will primarily be providing a non-judgemental listening service, helping young people express themselves and feel heard. They will also help them set meaningful, achievable goals and learn effective coping strategies.

The online/telephone meetings with the young person will carry on for a maximum period of six months and each session will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

It is important to point out the sessions are not counselling or advice but rather trained volunteers offering emotional support to help the young person to find their own goals, coping strategies and solutions.

Any (self) referrals can be directed to dmyh@dorsetmind.uk

Please provide contact details for both the prospective client (name, DOB) and, if need be, primary contact (parent/caregiver). A member of staff will be in contact at the earliest opportunity.

Some of the other services provided by Dorset Mind Your Head (www.dorsetmindyourhead.co.uk) include:

Support groups running online throughout the summer

Our Dorchester Connected Minds group will be starting a brand-new online summer programme starting on Tuesday 14th July at 10:00-11:00am and running for a total of 6 weeks through the summer for young people aged 9-13. This group will be supporting the young people's mental wellbeing over the summer, as well as helping them to prepare for returning to school in September.

Our Blandford Connected Minds group is also welcoming new members aged 11-18. If your young person is interested in joining either group, email dmyh@dorsetmind.uk to find out more.

1-2-1 Services for young people

- **Counselling** – 6 sessions free (online and face to face)

Our 1:1 counselling can support young people aged 11-25 with 1-hour sessions every week for a maximum of 6 weeks. Normally face to face, but currently this service is run online via Zoom and other means

- **Big Umbrella** – 5 free sessions (online and face to face)

Offers 1:1 support for young people aged 10 and above through a series of 40-minute sessions once a week for 5 weeks.

If you would like to refer a young person to this service, please contact dmyh@dorsetmind.uk for a referral form. The appropriate 1-2-1 support will be discussed once a referral has been received.

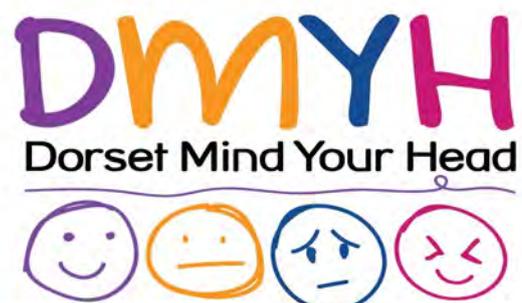
Parent Community Facebook Group

Our new Facebook group is a space designed for parents looking to support their young person's mental health. Here you can find more information on our services, read tips and advice on supporting young peoples' mental wellbeing, and connect with other parents in the local area. Just search 'Dorset Mind Your Head Facebook Community' to join.

New! Young People Focus Group (11-25 years) – Recruiting Now!

We are excited to inform you that we are now launching a brand-new Young People Focus Group. This group has been designed so that we, as a children and young people service, are listening to the needs of young people, and aligning our services accordingly in order to provide the best possible support. The Young People Focus Group will meet online once a month to discuss the current mental health needs of children and young people, how Dorset Mind Your Head can support these needs, and also to explore the services we currently have available and what we can do to improve them.

If you know any young people who would be interested in getting involved, email dmyh@dorsetmind.uk for more information.



Young Ambassadors – Recruiting Now!

Our Young Ambassadors are a team of young people aged 16-25 who work closely with us to help us to promote everything we do. They are advocates for our campaigns and help us to challenge, educate and promote wellbeing by organising events and fundraising.

More important news from Dorset Mind

Dorset Mind not only offers educational wellbeing programmes in schools throughout Dorset Mind Your Head but we offer this in workplaces for employers and employees and on an individual basis too.

Do you know any organisations who might benefit from our services AND can help support us financially?

The Charity Partnerships we form help fund Dorset Mind Your Head - which means we can give our services to your school for FREE.

Dorset Mind offer companies support, education and help raise awareness within their workplaces through fundraising and training. Our training covers Mental Health Awareness, Courageous Conversations, Managing Grief, Loss and Big Change. We have just introduced informative workshops for Grief and Loss; Anxiety and Panic Attacks; and Anger too.

If you need help for yourself or someone you know, we also run a number of adult support groups, counselling and an accredited befriending service across Dorset. These services help people regain social skills, confidence and self-esteem. There are also plenty of volunteering opportunities within Dorset Mind, if you want to get involved and help us help people with their mental health.

For more information, please follow the link: <https://dorsetmind.uk/>

As always, please get in touch with us with any enquiries. Stay safe and have a wonderful summer!

The Dorset Mind Your Head Team.



Headteacher Sally Wilson was interviewed by Independent Education Today for an article on state/private school partnerships. Along with Mark Mortimer, headmaster at Bryanston she talked about the strengthening bond of the Blandford Schools' Network during the C19 pandemic. Please find the article below.



The great unifier

The coronavirus pandemic has prompted great acts of unity between state and independent schools. James Higgins finds out more →

In the months since the coronavirus pandemic struck, journalists have developed a new lockdown lexicon to report – and interpret – these exceptional times. Whether recalling ‘unprecedented’ events or pondering ‘the new normal’, the stories that have emerged from the coronavirus pandemic are dotted with these sombre terms.

But there is one phrase that sticks out: ‘the great leveller’. We know that no two children or two schools are the same – and we know the effects of the pandemic have served to highlight society’s inequalities, not diminish them.

But, equally, as one headteacher of an independent school told me, state and private schools are held apart in political discourse. He grumpily recalled for me a story of a journalist who told him that state and independent schools are “worlds apart from each other”. That headteacher, Bryanston’s Mark Mortimer, believes recent months have proved quite the opposite.

“We’re not worlds apart; we’re

all schools on a small island and we all believe in children.”

If there’s a story to tell about collaboration between state and independent schools, “I don’t think it is about independent schools handing out lots of resources,” he continues.

“Yes, we’re providing some resources. But from my experience it’s more than that. It’s about staff working together. It’s about relationships.”

Bryanston School, near Blandford Forum, has dispatched some spare laptops to nearby state providers to support them with distance learning, but it’s through a local schools’ association that Mortimer feels the cooperation between sectors can be witnessed best.

The Blandford Schools’ Network (BSN) comprises the heads of 11 primary and secondary schools from the independent and state sectors.

Since school closures were announced, their meetings have become more frequent – from twice a term, to once a week.

Mortimer stresses the common challenges

he shares with the heads of the other schools: “The clothes that the problem is dressed in may be slightly different, but the issues we face are exactly the same.”

Sally Wilson, head of The Blandford School, says the state school she runs has enjoyed a strong relationship with Bryanston for a long time, but the virtual BSN meetings have “strengthened further” the camaraderie between the leaders. “The more you hear about other leader’s approaches really helps you reflect and make good decisions,” she adds.

Although the debate around reopening classrooms rages on, Mortimer and Wilson report that they, and the other members of the BSN, are quietly, diligently discussing how that might be achieved when the directive comes. With the support of Dorset Council – which Mortimer repeatedly credits for their professionalism – the schools are coordinating what would be needed and what could be shared, from thermometers to cleaners.

In the interim, as Bryanston remains





“The clothes that the problem is dressed in may be slightly different, but the issues we face are exactly the same”

largely empty, staff and cleaners have visited BSN member schools that are open for the children of key workers in order to teach and pitch in.

But most of all, both heads credit the moral support they've offered each other.

Mortimer adds that in the early days of his career, cooperation between state and independent schools was “not a relationship of equals” and was characterised by loaning out facilities, like swimming pools and games fields, for an afternoon. “It’s about more than that now, the cooperation is about development, training, values, pedagogy and sharing of best practice.

“We at Bryanston can learn as much from the smallest state primary in the BSN network as, hopefully, they can learn from us.”

Wilson adds: “Subject leaders from our schools have linked up to support each other. I do honestly believe that that is the way forward. There’s such an enormous amount of crossover and so many ways that we can help each other.”

CALL FOR CREATIVITY

Sharing resources is one dimension of the work between schools.

Support staff at the City of London School for Girls have packed up 43 laptops to send to Highbury Fields School, a local state school. Others are choosing to offer support in the form of time and expertise.

Two year 12 pupils at St Augustine’s Priory have shown their aptitude for website design by creating a new online learning resource platform for primary school pupils. Jasmine and Angela together designed the site, Priory Purpose: Creativity Counts,

because the pair were worried under 11s may miss out on their creative education as schools slim down their teaching.

Guided by the school’s deputy head for co-curriculum, community and development, Faith Haggerty, the industrious duo uploaded website links to activities, puzzles and quizzes onto the platform to guide study in art, drama, creative thinking, digital arts, languages and music. With the help of the school’s subject teachers, who contributed new resources and adapted existing materials from the junior school, Jasmine and Angela launched their platform in April.

Collaborative projects have sprung from several state-independent school partnerships. The Abingdon Science Partnership (ASP) – a STEM project led by Jeremy Thomas at Abingdon School in Oxfordshire – has long-helped develop learning opportunities for state pupils in the county, but self-isolation prompted a re-think.

Thomas worked with Holly Irving, a year two teacher and science coordinator at Caldecott Primary School, and Ruth Barnett, a year one/two teacher and science co-ordinator at Sunningwell Primary School, to produce remote learning resources for use both in schools supporting key worker children and for parents and children at home.

The ASP came into contact with Oundle School’s OPEN Learning Partnership via the Schools Together campaign. OPEN’s Steve Adams has developed home science resources for local state and private schools with partners at Imperial College and is now using the ASP webpage to help increase their availability for a wider audience. →





“Those relationships create opportunities to talk about partnerships. What better way is there to strengthen these bonds in the post-Covid era?”

“We may not be able to offer any hands-on workshops or activities,” Thomas says, “but we are determined that all the valuable work and expertise built up over the past five years is instantly put to use in supporting anything science-related that we can do remotely with our partners.” He extended special thanks to Holly, Ruth and Steve, four teachers from the state and independent sectors that he credited as “true partners in science education”.

STRENGTHENING BONDS

Julie Robinson, chief executive of the Independent Schools Council (ISC), says the ease of which online resources can be shared has helped school partnerships quickly scale up accessibility. Another state-independent schools partnership, East Kent Schools Together, is collating resources for its seven member institutions. The website also features useful safeguarding information and professional development guidance for teachers. The resources include general and subject-specific materials, as well as free virtual museum tours and educational challenges.

Based on the conversations she’s having with ISC heads, Robinson predicts what she describes as “a cascading of expertise” across the sectors – she singles out one school in London, West Lodge School in Sidcup, that is sharing its IT teacher with neighbouring Orchard Primary, with the aim to install a home learning system at the state school that all children can access. West Lodge has committed to providing two hours help a day for every year group for as long as schools are closed. Another independent

school has discussed with Robinson its plan for a summer catch-up programme, with places for local students from state schools.

Although returning to the normal routine might be some months away yet, Robinson says schools would be wise to start sharing what they’ve learned “in case of future pandemics”.

She says the return to classrooms could well be staggered, with year groups gradually returned to school grounds one by one. Considering the practicalities of social

distancing, timetables and staff shortfalls could well demand new ways of working – all challenges that the ISC chief says schools could be well placed to consider together.

The best mutual relationships spring out of necessity, Robinson continues, but there is one area she is particularly keen to promote – particularly as it is an area that often flies beneath the radar. “We know that nationally there’s a requirement for more school governors. Independent school governors can also be state school governors and vice versa. I’m a governor in a state school and an independent school in London.

“In fact, on my independent school governance body, we have a principal from a local state school. Those relationships create opportunities to talk about partnerships. What better way is there to strengthen these bonds in the post-Covid era?”

As well as serving as head of Blandford School, Sally Wilson is also a governor at Clayesmore School, a nearby independent prep. One of Wilson’s governors is a retired teacher from Bryanston. This shows the links between state and independent schools often run deep – despite what the political discourse might infer.

Bryanston’s head says he hopes the recent weeks have “sped up massively” relationships between the BSN schools. “It’s not just about independent schools necessarily having more stuff that we can give. It’s about people giving their time, sharing ideas and offering moral support. We need to look out for one another.” ■

