

School Development Plan Update June 2025

A reminder that our school strategic priorities can be found here:

<https://www.dhsb.org/school-strategic-priorities>

An overview of our current school development plan and updates on previous plans can be found here:

<https://www.dhsb.org/sdp-update>

1 Students achieve their highest academic potential

Expectations for excellence in the classroom and outside the classroom

Excellent Work

We continue to publish Excellent Work in the Head's Blog each week to show the diversity and excellence of what students are doing. The example below is from March.

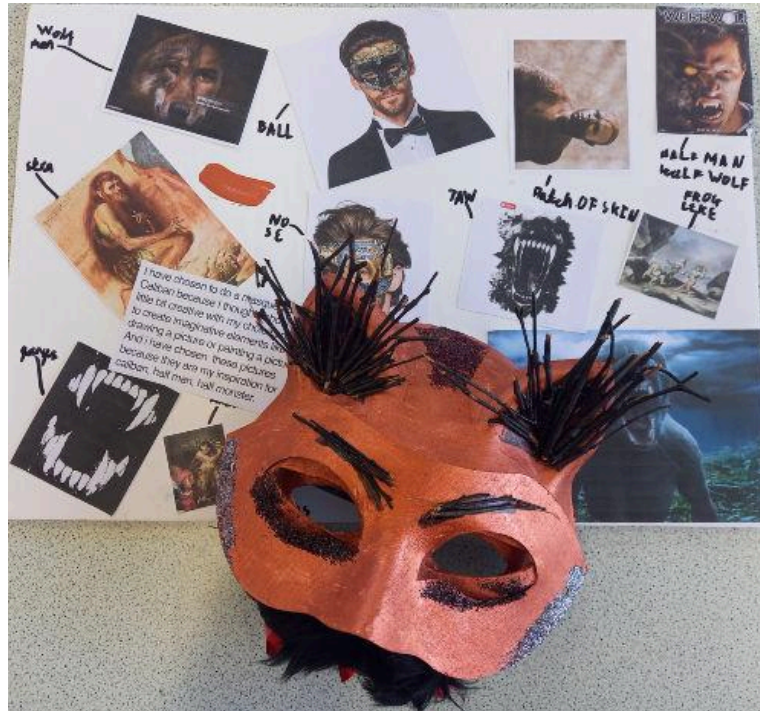
Year 7 English

Thank you to Mrs McConnell for sharing these examples of Excellent Work from her Year 7 class.

She said, "This work was produced by students in 7A in response to the creative homework menu tasks based on Shakespeare's play 'The Tempest'.

High levels of creativity and engagement with the play were shown in the work completed.





[Descriptive Writing by Oliver](#)

3 Embracing inclusion and diversity

DHSB Achieves Rail Safe Friendly Gold Award

We are proud to announce that DHSB has been awarded the Rail Safe Friendly Gold Award in recognition of our commitment to rail safety education. This achievement follows a year of focused efforts to raise awareness among our students, staff, and wider community about the dangers and responsibilities associated with railway travel.

With so many of our students commuting by train or living near railway lines, rail safety became a top priority for our PSHE curriculum this year. Inspired by Harrison's Story - a powerful video highlighting the real-life consequences of unsafe behaviour around trains - our entire school community came together to reinforce the message of staying safe on and around the railways.

As part of our efforts, we introduced a brand-new Year 8 PSHE unit dedicated to rail safety, ensuring that all students are equipped with the knowledge they need to make safe and responsible decisions. Additionally, our students played an active role in spreading awareness by creating a rail safety video, which we shared on our social media platforms to extend the message beyond the classroom and into the wider community.

Receiving the Gold Award is a testament to our school's dedication to student safety and responsible travel. We are grateful for the support from Rail Safe Friendly and remain committed to promoting railway safety for years to come.



4 Leadership and communities

All students get diverse cultural experiences

VE Day Celebrations

DHSB celebrated VE Day and commemorated 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe.

On 8 May 1945, people in Britain and across the world celebrated VE Day, which marked the unconditional surrender of Germany. Winston Churchill, Statesman and war time Prime Minister, declared the 8 May 1945 a public holiday and villages, towns, and cities were decorated with flags and bunting, parties were held on the streets and servicemen, servicewomen and civilians celebrated together in a day of unity.

To begin the day's events, during morning registration, students watched Winston Churchill's 1945 address to the Country. Bunting was strung, picnic benches were decorated, cakes were sold which raised £194.80 for Royal British Legion, and our talented DHSB musicians played 1940's music for students to enjoy at lunchtime. Students who are members of the cadets wore their uniform with pride and a special slideshow of community stories was shared on the screens around the school.

Thank you Miss Cunningham, for putting together this special event and thank you to the students and their families, who embraced the opportunity to participate by creating bunting, baking cakes, playing music, sharing their family stories, wearing their military uniforms and joining in the celebrations.

Please follow this [link](#) to view the DHSB Community Stories slideshow and look out for a special VE Day edition of the student magazine, the Spectator, which Dr Downes is busy editing.



Our Y7 students all created a bunting flag and their tutor groups' efforts were judged by our Head of History, Mrs Mintoft. The results were:

1st Place: Scott

2nd Place: Turing

3rd Place: Windsor

A special mention must also go to Harrison Ashmore 8A and Henry Stevenson 8T who produced some outstanding bunting in their own time. Well done boys!



Create a DHSB Arts Award to encourage engagement with extra capacity for creative performance and clubs

Whole School Musical

Described as 'amazing' and 'magical' we're delighted to share photos from our musical theatre production of Into the Woods, staged in the Edgcumbe Theatre.

A huge well done to all staff and students involved in the cast, crew, stage band and technical team, led by Mrs Luing-Holmes.



Summer Recital

On Thursday, we were treated to a wonderful evening of music at St Pancras Church. The event, organised by Mrs Luing-Holmes, featured prestigious performances from our higher level classical and musical instrumentalists, our Brass Group, Choir and Tiny Orchestra supported by Kathryn Goode, who

accompanied a few of the students on the piano, Tony Hollick who supported the brass group and Dawn Ashby and Mark Stokesbury supported by playing in the ensembles with students.

Stoke Damerel Church was a beautiful setting and the performances were moving, uplifting and a joy to watch. The talent and confidence shown by the students from Years 7 to 13 was really lovely to see.

Our GCSE catering students served fabulous canapes and nibbles which they had made during the day under the guidance of Mrs Ware and Mrs Dean. These were enjoyed whilst listening to a delightful acoustic set from our A level Musicians.

One member of the audience said "The ambience of Stoke Damerel Church along with the debonair students made this a memorable occasion. The solo performers, choir, groups, orchestra and singers were all superbly talented and their musical renditions made the evening special. There was certainly a lot of toe-tapping and applause from the audience in appreciation of all the performances... Congratulations DHSB on another great evening of entertainment".



Embedding and enhancing the extensive leadership opportunities for students with a focus on raising the ambition of younger students to become active citizens and problem solvers

Youth Parliament

We are incredibly proud to announce that Year 9 student William (Bill) Higginson has been elected as a Member of the UK Youth Parliament (MYP) for Plymouth.

Bill won the 2025 election, securing his place as a representative for young people across the city.

This year's election saw 22 schools take part, with an impressive 8,067 ballots cast - highlighting the strong engagement of Plymouth's students in shaping their future. Bill's campaign focused on reducing homework levels, particularly in light of its impact on mental health, a topic that clearly resonated with young voters.

As an MYP, Bill will have the opportunity to work alongside other youth representatives, speaking on key issues and advocating for change at both local and national levels. We look forward to seeing the positive impact he will make. Congratulations Bill!



Ten Tors

Congratulations are extended to all students who took part in the Ten Tors challenge last weekend. Five DHSB Ten Tors teams took part in the challenge, walking routes of either 35, 45 or 55 miles across Dartmoor, contending with both hot temperatures and rain throughout their expedition.

Ten Tors training takes place on Dartmoor, rain, wind or shine, commencing with the Abbots' Way Walk in October. The training includes navigation, contending with the British weather and expedition skills, as well as learning how to work as a team, how to keep going in adverse conditions and excellent organisational skills.

The Ten Tors event is the culmination of this training and DHSB this year entered five teams: two 35-mile, one 45-mile and one of only two establishments to enter two 55-mile teams. After [a spectacular display from the Red Devils parachute display](#) team and an inspiring speech from the UK Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Roland Walker, the starting gun fired at 0700 and 2,500 young people poured down open moorland to begin their journeys. News of the teams on Ten Tors arrives in the form of a sporadically updated grid of time updates, so nervous waits for news are par for the course for those anxiously waiting.

It soon became clear that the DHSB teams were putting their fitness, navigation training and route planning to good use, several leading all other teams on their routes, with one team dealing superbly with the extra challenge of giving aid to a team member who was ailing in the hot conditions. By Saturday night, anxious Team Managers and parents alike were thrilled to see that our teams had all reached their planned checkpoints. The atmosphere at the finish line on Sunday was not dampened by the showers, with a group of excited parents and staff sharing binoculars in an effort to spot the first teams appearing on the horizon. All five teams arrived - possibly in a DHSB first? - with smiles on their faces as they crossed the finish line at Antony Stile.

You can follow the progress of the teams at these links:

DHSB 35A: [Route A](#)

DHSB 35B: [Route B](#)

DHSB 45: [Route W](#)

DHSB 55A: [Route Y](#)

DHSB 55B: [Route X](#)

Further to the DHSB teams, we are aware of students participating in teams with organisations away from the school, including the Scouts, Cadets, Dartmoor Plodders and Tavistock Outdoor Education Forum. All of these organisations are run by volunteers and our thanks are extended to those who have committed so much of their time to supporting these young people. The DHSB Ten Tors team managers would like to express their gratitude to all who have volunteered their time this year, including parents, current and former staff members, former participants and friends of the school.

Ten Tors is not a race, it is a challenge to complete as a team. All who trained for Ten Tors 2025 can be proud to have been part of an often competitive process, to have extended their comfort zones and to have performed outstandingly in the process. Every completion is a huge achievement and is testament to the effort put in by these wonderful young people over the months of training. Memories of this event, and the friendship, skills and resilience forged along the way, stay with you for life.

Follow [@armytentors](#) and [@dhsboutdoor](#) on Instagram for more information, photos and videos.



Magistrates Mock Trial Competition

Our Year 9 team took part in the Magistrates Court Mock Trial Competition in Truro. Students took the roles of lawyers, witnesses, court officials and magistrates and performed all their roles admirably. This was a new competition for us, and although we didn't win, we learned some very valuable lessons for next year. And, as this was Cornwall, we also learnt from almost every speaker that it was jam first!

I have to compliment the organisers of the Cornwall heat, who made this a wonderful learning opportunity as well as a competition. This started with entering the court where everyone was searched as would happen on a normal court day. We were given a complete tour of the courts and were even taken down to the cells which were grim to say the least. And at the end, there was a question-and-answer session with magistrates, judges and a representative from the Court service in Cornwall. The High Sheriff of Cornwall in full dress uniform was there all day and made sure that he spoke to everyone who took part. And we were joined at the end by the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall. Unfortunately, security meant that no photos could be taken in the court buildings.

Competitions such as this are a marvellous way for students to get a taste of what a legal career might be like and look great on university applications. As always, I came away feeling exceptionally proud of our students. By Mr Riggs

House Assemblies

Miss Cunningham, Head of Houses and Community, shared that this week, "our seven house teams delivered a fantastic series of assemblies around the theme "Tech Tools for Teamwork: Collaborating in a

Digital Age." Each House Captain and Vice Captain took to the stage to share insights into how digital tools can support better communication, organisation, and collaboration—skills that are essential both in and beyond the classroom.

Although some began the year with understandable nerves with regard to public speaking, it was wonderful to see them grow in confidence as they spoke; delivering clear, engaging presentations full of useful and relevant ideas that students can take away and apply in their own group work.

I was especially proud of the resilience several students showed in stepping up to this challenge and adapting to obstacles and changes at short notice, and of the commitment each captain demonstrated to their house. These assemblies were a true celebration of student leadership, teamwork, and the positive role technology can play in helping us work better together."



Duke of Edinburgh update

On Friday 9 May, Mr Coombes attended the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award Celebration and reported that "The celebration event hosted in Buckingham Palace Gardens took place on 9 May which was a glorious sunny May day. A number of interesting guest speakers shared their experiences - resilience being the main theme. There was an opportunity to explore the beautiful Palace gardens and there were cakes!

The Duke of Edinburgh was assisted by Hannah Hampton, Chelsea goalkeeper and Ved, Young person ambassador in speaking to the assembled parents and Award completers.

There were seven former students in attendance on the day:

Dominic Ambler, Murray Brown, Kristyna Cade, Jacob Hawkins, Barney Hunt, Laurence Jenkins and Charlotte Nordmann.

Many congratulations to them on their significant achievement!"



Charities

Red Nose Day Bake Sale

The Colonnade was buzzing with excitement, despite the unpredictable weather as students and staff alike flocked to the laden tables, eager to sample the impressive array of baked goods. The House Captains, who spearheaded the event, were overwhelmed by the level of support and the sheer volume of delicious treats donated. Everyone really got into the spirit of things! In addition, Johnson House resurrected their very popular Hot Chocolate stand which generated an eager queue in anticipation!

The atmosphere was lively and cheerful, with students enjoying the opportunity to indulge in some treats while contributing to a good cause. The bake sale was a huge success with £205 raised for Comic Relief.

A huge thank you to everyone who baked, bought, and supported this fantastic event! The Devonport High community truly came together to make a difference.



Increase and revitalise the extracurricular offer and trips/experiences.

DHSB Physics Society

Pictured is Nick Hennessy from Babcock speaking to DHSB Physics Society about the Southwest Regional Hub of employers who are working together to address the nuclear workforce crisis. He picked our students' brains on what forms of outreach to students and staff could assist our students in accessing employment in the civil and military nuclear industries.

The audience today gained understanding of the range of opportunities that are opening up to contribute to nuclear skills and skills for nuclear energy in this sector, including the destinationnuclear.com website.



Maths Feast

Students enjoyed participating in the Maths Feast at the end of March. Mr Bee said “I had the privilege to take Year 10 students Arley, Daniel, Neel and Zach to the Met Office to take part in the AMSP Maths Feast competition. This involved taking part in four problem solving rounds which tested their individual mathematical ability as well as their ability to work as part of a team.” The team did brilliantly and won two of the four rounds and finished third overall, two points from winning. After the competition the students were able to have a look at parts of the site and were given a presentation of different roles available at the Met Office.



Industrial Cadets

The Industrial Cadets Bronze Award teams presented their final assessments at the end of March. They promoted a potential sustainable theme park at Gunnislake and a green garden at Plymouth Airport. 12 weeks in and the students have done an amazing job!



Rugby

Rosslyn Park 2025 Review

Three teams travelled to South West London for the annual Rosslyn Park National Schools 7's event. The seven a side tournament is the largest schools 7s competition in the world with teams from Dubai, Canada and Africa taking part in the week long event.

Our U14s kick started our campaign with a game against Box Hill School which took place on the showcase pitch and was streamed live on YouTube. This meant that many staff and students were able to watch the game and support the team from the school. DHSB lost 7-5 in a game they really should have won. They then played two very strong teams, Millfield and Beechen Cliff School, and lost quite heavily in both.

The U16s played next and were scheduled to appear on the showcase pitch, enabling students and staff to enjoy the game which was shown live on YouTube. The team played exceptionally well and were disappointed to draw with Exeter School 19-19. They then lost 35-5 to a strong Durham Cathedral School and 42-21 to Langley.

Last to make an appearance were the U13s who played very well and won all five of their games. Four games were against independent schools and a comprehensive from Wales. Their results were:

DHSB 30 - 5 Wisbech Grammar School

DHSB 30 - 15 Newcastle Under Lyme School

DHSB 25 - 15 Yarm School

DHSB 35 - 15 Royal Grammar School Guildford

DHSB 30 - 20 Ysgol Calon Cymru

The event saw a mix of results but it was a great experience for all of the students.



Year 7 Rugby team triumphs in the Cunningham Cup

On Friday 28 March, the Year 7 rugby team showcased their skill and determination at the prestigious Cunningham Cup Rugby Festival. Now in its 35th year, this historic event marks a fitting conclusion to the rugby season, bringing together nine schools from across the city for a day of intense competition.

The DHSB team, who train every Wednesday after school, delivered an outstanding performance—winning seven of their eight matches and drawing the other. Their performance on the field secured them the Cup outright for the second consecutive year.

At the end of a challenging but exhilarating day, the squad was awarded the trophy and their well-earned winner's medals. A truly fantastic way to cap off an enjoyable season!



We're in the Top 200 sporting schools of 2024

The School Sport magazine has created a top sports schools list. The list, which includes state schools and independent establishments from all over the country, rates performance above everything else with results compiled from more than 20 different sports and more than 120 different events. DHSB is number 88 on the list. Well done! To read more, please follow this [link](#).

School Ski Trip

During the Easter break 42 students across Year 7 to 12, accompanied by members of staff, travelled by coach to Pila, Italy for a week of fun on the slopes. The students learned how to ski with lessons based on their ability and all grew in confidence and progressed to skiing on the slopes, even those students who had never skied before. Experienced skiers were able to ski on the more challenging slopes.

The evenings were spent enjoying snow-tubing, hot chocolate, pizzas (where a mammoth 74 pizzas were consumed), a cable car trip to Aosta and a presentation evening.

They enjoyed amazing weather and lovely slope conditions. Mr Weymouth who accompanied the group said "the students have been superb, both on the slopes and in the hotel! In fact they were praised by the staff from another school."



Turing Tour - USA

The Turing Scheme offers grant funding to education providers to support their students or apprentices to pursue study and work placements around the world.

Funding is open to UK and British overseas territories organisations from across the education and training sector, including schools and further and higher education providers.

This funding allows education providers to:

- give their students the chance to develop new skills
- gain international experience
- boost their employability

On their tour, the students attended Fenway Park to watch the Red Sox play the Mariners, saw the Eugene Emeralds play and met the team, the mascot Sluggo bear, and the amazing Emeralds staff. They took a guided walking tour following the Freedom Trail through Boston, visited the coastal town of Plymouth, Massachusetts, which is the site of the first Pilgrim settlement, founded in 1620. They saw Plymouth Rock which marks the place where settlers are thought to have landed on shore and went on a 1:1 scale replica of the original Mayflower that carried the Pilgrims across the Atlantic, the Mayflower II. The students travelled to Cambridge and spent time at Harvard University and their art museum, visited the University of Oregon where they discussed admissions and had the opportunity to meet student athletes and visit the Hayward Field museum.

I believe the students have had an amazing time and it has been an experience that they will never forget!



Geography Field Work

Our recent Year 12 A-Level Geography fieldwork provided an intensive and rewarding exploration of diverse geographical concepts, spanning both physical and human environments. This experience allowed students to engage directly with real-world examples, deepening their understanding and honing essential geographical skills in preparation for their Non-Examined Assessment (Coursework!).

Our journey began at Braunton Burrows, a dynamic coastal dune system in North Devon. Here, we investigated psammosere succession, observing the progressive stages of plant colonisation from the

mobile foredunes to the more stable dune slacks. This firsthand examination provided invaluable insight into ecological processes and the delicate balance of coastal ecosystems.

Next, we ventured to the starkly beautiful landscapes of Dartmoor National Park. Our focus here shifted to peatlands, critically examining their formation, unique characteristics, and vital role as carbon sinks. Students engaged in practical techniques to assess peat depth and composition, furthering their understanding of this globally significant environmental asset.

Transitioning to human geography, we explored the urban fabric of Stoke, Plymouth, to delve into the concept of placemaking. Through observation, mapping, and qualitative data collection, students analysed how different groups contribute to and interact with the identity of this distinct neighbourhood. This practical application allowed for a nuanced understanding of social and cultural geographies.

Our final stop took us to the vibrant and ever-evolving district of King's Cross, London. Here, we investigated "Changing Places," critically analysing the forces of regeneration, gentrification, and shifting identities within this iconic urban area. This provided a compelling case study of large-scale urban transformation and its impacts on diverse communities.

To conclude our academically rich fieldwork, we immersed ourselves in the cultural tapestry of Brick Lane, enjoying a well-deserved curry! This provided a reflective opportunity to discuss the day's learning and appreciate the diverse cultural landscapes that shape our understanding of place.

Miss Green
Head of Geography





6. Creative spirit and innovative thinking

PTFA - Alton Towers

Mrs Kinsella shared "We have been very busy this last week! Saturday saw 8 coaches, carrying nearly 500, go to Alton Towers for our annual fundraising day trip! The excitement at Milehouse Park & Ride at 4.45am was palpable! Thank you to everyone who has left comments on social media or sent lovely emails - we do appreciate it. A big thank you to Joanna for leading the trip, Melanie for ensuring your child was on a coach with their friends and all our volunteers - we can't run this trip without you. It has been running for approximately 30 years now and children of the original children are coming on the trip now!





Improvements in Refuel

Championing DHSB School Food

This year Mrs Parkes has been leading on the Bite Back campaign, here is an update on the progress they have made:

I have had the pleasure of helping a small team of 'school food champions' who have been working with Bite Back for schools; a charity that helps improve the school food dining experience.

We are lucky at DHSB that as our canteen is already following all of the school food standards, the team has not been focusing on banning unhealthy foods, but has instead surveyed all of our students to find out what they wanted or what parts of the dining experience they weren't happy with.

The team identified that the menu could have improved visibility and also that many students were not aware of the fantastic home cooked food being produced by our great team of chefs. Students also wanted more choice of pudding, so we had a meeting with the chef team and found out some interesting facts and points to consider:

- All of our meals are made fresh every day using British ingredients
- Mr Austin makes all his own bread and as the guidelines state most sauces, like ketchup, are unhealthy - he makes his own!
- As salt is not allowed, Mr Austin works hard on adding herbs and spices to make the food extra tasty
- The introduction of a salad bar has proved very popular with students and can help Refuel focus on ensuring zero food goes to waste.

The students were really fascinated with the intricacies of running a catering service with overhead costs such as staff and packaging, and balancing it all with what they feel might sell every day and the constraints of the DfE guidelines.

We are hopeful to continue our work into next year, but for now we will leave you with some of the outcomes that our team are putting in place:

- A no churn home made ice-cream with 50% fruit to be added to the menu
- Menus to be printed and displayed in windows and made available on chromebooks for students to check for daily specials appearing on tutor notices
- More advertising to promote the amazing canteen we have and the different options available, whilst working to the DfE guidelines

Mrs Parkes

Director of Learning Commons & Initial Teacher Training



Executive Chef - Lee Austin