



JULY 2026 | ISSUE 13

NEWSLETTER

Official newsletter of Devonport High School for Girls

HEAD LINES

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome to the Summer newsletter.

Along with the heatwaves over the past month, much has been happening here. The exam season for Years 11 and 13 recently concluded and we wish them all the very best with their summer results. I know recently students have enjoyed Enrichment Week and the many activities/trips that were on offer. We concluded the year with our wonderful Speech Day where we recognised the hard work of our students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support of the school throughout this year. Due to tightening government funding, we have had to seek additional contributions to help fund a number of events and activities, ensuring they could continue to take place. Your generosity has been truly remarkable and has enabled us to maintain many opportunities for our students that might otherwise have been lost. These include, for example, Speech Day and the Year 11 and Year 13 celebration events. We have also been able to replace a mini bus, which will be delivered in September for us to use for student trips. Thank you once again for your ongoing commitment to our school community.

This year, we say farewell to Mrs Tribe (Head of Technology). Mrs Tribe is retiring after many years of teaching service, at both Devonport High School for Girls and other schools. She has dedicated her whole career to teaching and she will be missed. We wish her all the very best in her retirement.

END OF TERM ARRANGEMENTS



Last day of term: Friday 17 July.
Students should wear mufti or PE Kit.
There is a suggested donation of £1 for support with School Fund.

Early finish time of 1pm. Contract buses are arranged shortly after this time. Other students relying on public transport should check times and make alternative arrangements accordingly.

AUTUMN TERM ARRANGEMENTS



Friday 4 September – New Year 7 and Year 12 students only. Start time of 8.50am.

Monday 7 September – All students return at usual start time of 8.50am.



Also, I wish to share some sad news with you. Liz Evans passed away peacefully on Friday 20th March aged 93. She was headmistress of Devonport High School from 1985 to 1991 and always talked fondly of her time there. We thank Miss Evans for all the work she did for the school.

We are fully staffed for September and I look forward to writing to you at the start of term to introduce these new members of staff.



Lee Sargeant
Head Teacher

A yellow background with a grid pattern. At the top, a white banner with a purple star on the left and a yellow smiley face on the right contains the text "Follow Us On Tiktok!". Below this, on the left, is a blue-bordered box containing a white card with the school crest, "DHSG 6th Form", a QR code with eyes, and the text "Scan QR code to follow account" and the TikTok logo. To the right of this box is a white speech bubble containing a red heart. Below the blue box, the text "Scan QR Code" is written in large black letters, with a pink thumbs-up icon to the left. On the right side, a white box with a purple header contains the text "@ dhsg _6th" and a list of bullet points: "• Study Tips", "• Days in the Life", "• Student Takeovers", "• Answering Your Questions", "• Meet the Staff", and "• And more!".

Follow Us On Tiktok!

DHSG 6th Form

Scan QR code to follow account

TikTok

Scan QR Code

@ dhsg _6th

- Study Tips
- Days in the Life
- Student Takeovers
- Answering Your Questions
- Meet the Staff
- And more!

LETTER FROM MR THOMAS

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you of a change to our mobile device expectations from September 2026.

For a number of years, Devonport High School for Girls has successfully operated a "See it, Hear it, Lose it" approach. Students in Years 7-11 have been expected to keep mobile devices switched off and out of sight throughout the school day, with any device that is seen or heard being confiscated. This has helped us maintain calm, purposeful classrooms and a positive learning environment.

In June 2026, the Department for Education published new statutory guidance which states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default throughout the school day. The guidance applies to all schools in England from September 2026 and makes clear that schools should remove the use of mobile phones or similar technology during the school day.

In line with this guidance, and following a review of our current arrangements, we will no longer permit students in Years 7-11 to use personal mobile devices during lessons, including where this may previously have been allowed at a teacher's discretion.

In practice, very little will change for most students. Personal mobile devices must remain switched off and out of sight from arrival on site until the end of the school day at 3.35pm.

For the purposes of this policy, "mobile devices" include:

- Mobile phones and smartphones
- Smartwatches or fitness watches that can connect to a phone, send or receive notifications, messages or calls
- Personal tablets and iPads
- Personal laptops and similar internet-enabled personal devices

We appreciate that technology has an important role to play in education. However, we believe that personal devices are rarely necessary during the school day and can be a distraction from learning, relationships and participation in school life.

To support this change:

- Students will continue to access homework and other information through EdulinkOne outside school hours.
- Students who need to access EdulinkOne during the school day will be able to do so using school computers at break or lunchtime.
- All students will be provided with a hard copy of their timetable which will be attached to the reverse of a mini whiteboard, ensuring they always have easy access to lesson information without needing a personal device.
- Staff will continue to use school-owned Chromebooks, computer suites and other school technology where appropriate as part of planned learning activities.
- Where a student has an identified additional need, the SEND department will continue to provide school owned and managed devices where this forms part of their support package. We recognise that some students require access to technology for medical reasons. Where a mobile device or smart device forms part of an agreed medical plan, for example to support the monitoring or management of diabetes, appropriate arrangements will continue to be made. These students and their families do not need to take any additional action at this time.

This change is also part of our wider commitment to helping young people develop healthy habits around technology use. Schools have an important role in creating opportunities for students to learn, collaborate, socialise and participate without the distraction of notifications and screens.

We are grateful for the support of parents and carers in helping us maintain high expectations and a calm, focused environment in which all students can thrive.

We would be very grateful if parents and carers could help by reminding their children before the start of the school day that mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal connected devices should be switched off and put away before they enter the school site. A consistent message from both home and school will help ensure a smooth start to the new academic year.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, have a lovely summer break.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Thomas
Deputy Head Teacher



CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

As parents, understanding the curriculum is crucial to support your child's learning and development. However, it can be challenging to keep up with what your child is learning and what the key areas of the curriculum are at each stage, leading to questions about assessment, content, and what constitutes a broad and balanced curriculum.

To help bridge this gap, we will regularly publish articles in our school newsletter that explain the curriculum and direct you to where you can find more information about your child's curriculum offer.

Our website has been recently updated with curriculum plans and information, so please do take a look for more information: www.dhsg.co.uk and click on the curriculum tab at the top of the page.

So, what do we mean by the curriculum?

Our curriculum is divided into three phases: lower years (7, 8 and 9), middle years (10-11), and upper years (12 and 13). Each phase has many components including academic, pastoral, extra-curricular, physical and mental health and social and emotional elements.

We aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to progress and thrive in the next phase of their education or training. To achieve this the curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. As students progress, they become more scholarly by developing competency in knowledge and skills. They acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter and the ability to apply that knowledge to solve problems and think critically. Additionally, they develop essential skills such as research, writing, and communication, which are vital for success in their chosen careers.

This progression prepares students for the challenges they will face in their future careers, including the demands of the workplace, engagement in lifelong learning, and making meaningful contributions to society.

Extracurricular clubs and activities offer students additional opportunities to develop skills that complement their academic pursuits. These activities help students build leadership skills, develop teamwork, make a positive contribution to their community, and expand their social networks. They can also allow students to pursue their interests, explore new areas of knowledge, and cultivate a passion for learning beyond the classroom.

Overall, the combination of academic progression and extracurricular engagement is our measure of a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares students for success in their future endeavours.

If you want to learn more about our curriculum, you can visit the curriculum pages of our website. Here, you will find a clear idea of the subjects studied, how the work is sequenced in each phase, as well as details about assessment and examination boards. If you have any queries about the curriculum, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of House or Head of Sixth Form.

In each article, we will focus on a specific aspect of the curriculum, and this term's spotlight is on the new Politics A Level Course running from September.



POLITICS

Statement of Intent

Politics at DHSG will allow students to leave the sixth form with an enriched understanding of their national and global society and the structure and methods of political systems that underpin them. They will also develop an awareness of the differences between key political ideologies, considering their historical context and current attraction within 21st century life.

The curriculum design will ensure students are confident in the governmental institutions in both the UK and USA, before exploring the fluid politics that applies to them. Regular case study analysis will allow students to spot clear historical change and continuity alongside contemporary similarities and differences between systems.

They will also be provided with opportunities to experience politics in a real-world setting. The key skills our students develop will include a high level of literacy and critical thinking, the ability to research and interpret data, communication skills such as debating and presenting reasoned arguments.

The course is designed to offer students the opportunity to explore British politics in depth, with the USA module being used as a lens through which students can compare to the UK system.

Within their studies on British and American politics, students will explore the Constitutions as well as the roles of elected bodies, leaders and judiciaries. British politics will then consider the role of devolution, whilst American studies will consider the challenges of a federal system. Students will subsequently explore political patterns in democratic participation, as well as undertake investigation of the differing political parties and pressure groups.

Students will also explore the ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, socialism and nationalism. Within each ideology, students will explore the ideology's view on society, individuals, the role of the state and economics, as well as any factional differences within the supporters of the ideologies.



THE POLITICS CURRICULUM IN UPPER YEARS

Year	Cycle	Content
Year 12	Cycle 1	Paper 1: UK Constitution: • Nature and sources comprising the uncodified constitution • Issues and debates about constitutional change including debates about extent of rights in the UK • Impact of post1997 changes to decentralisation of power, elections, parliament, judiciary and participation. Role of Parliament: • Roles and influence of MPs and peers • Parliamentary debate and the legislative process • Different theories of representation • Scrutiny of the executive and how effective scrutiny of the executive is in practice • Work of committees • Role of the opposition • Extent of Parliament's influence on government decisions Prime Minister and Cabinet: • How policy is made • Relationship between Prime Minister and cabinet
	Cycle 2	Paper 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet: • Relationship between Prime Minister and cabinet • The difference between individual and collective ministerial responsibility • Power of the Prime Minister and cabinet Devolution: • Roles, powers and responsibilities of the different devolved bodies in the UK • Existing devolution and impact • Debates surrounding devolution European Union: • EU institutions • Aims of the EU and the extent to which they have been achieved • Impact of the EU on UK politics and policy making



THE POLITICS CURRICULUM IN UPPER YEARS

Year	Cycle	Content
Year 12	Cycle 2	Paper 2: US Legislative – Congress: • Debates concerning the importance of the US Constitution to the working of contemporary US government • Protection of civil liberties and rights under the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Supreme Court rulings • Representative role of senators and representatives • Relative strengths of House of Representatives and Senate • Relationship of Congress to the executive branch of government and the Supreme Court US Executive – President: • Sources of presidential power • Difference between formal and informal powers • Constraints on President's ability to exercise their powers • Relationship between the President and Vice President, cabinet, Executive Office of the President, federal bureaucracy and federal agencies • Evidence of waxing and waning power • Debate on 'Imperial v. Imperilled' Presidency
	Cycle 3	Paper 3: Liberalism and Socialism to be studied separately. Within each case study, students explore: • Origins of ideology and views on human nature • Key thinkers • Views on the economy and the state • Key strands Paper 3: Conservatism and Nationalism to be studied separately. Within each case study, students explore: • Origins of ideology and views on human nature • Key thinkers • Views on the economy and the state • Key strands



THE POLITICS CURRICULUM IN UPPER YEARS

Year	Cycle	Content
Year 13	Cycle 1	Paper 1: UK Judiciary: • Composition of the judiciary and appointment process • Role of the Supreme Court • Importance of ultra vires, judicial review and the Supreme Court's interactions with and influence over the legislative and policy making processes. Democracy and Participation: • Nature of democracy • Different types of democracy, including direct democracy and representative government • Patterns of participation and different forms of participation Elections and Referendums: • Electoral systems and the party system • Voting behaviour • Impact on the outcome of elections of media/policy/manifestos/campaigns/leadership • Results of referendums • Why did the UK vote for Brexit? Paper 2: Electoral Process and Direct Democracy: • Electoral systems • Main characteristics of presidential and congressional elections and campaigns • Candidate selections and nominations • Debates concerning the workings, outcome and impact of the electoral college system on campaigns • Factors determining electoral outcomes • Debates about campaign finance • Direct democracy at state level: referenda, initiatives, propositions, recall elections and debates concerning their use • Voting behaviour and the main variables affecting the way people vote in the USA • Links between parties and their core voting coalitions • Recent factors in voting behaviour • Splitticket voting and high levels of abstention in US elections Political Parties: • The ideologies, values, policies, traditions and party organisation of the Republican and Democrat parties • Ideological change in two main parties • Factionalism and internal division within parties • Debates concerning party decline and renewal • Two-party dominance • Significance of 3rd party and independent candidates



THE POLITICS CURRICULUM IN UPPER YEARS

Year	Cycle	Content
Year 13	Cycle 2	Paper 1: Political Parties: • Origins, ideas and development of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties and how these have helped shape their current policies • Party structures and functions • Issues and debates around party funding • Policies of minor parties and their impact on political debates and political agenda • Development towards a multiparty system and its impact on government and policy Pressure Groups: • Typologies and methods used by different pressure groups • Factors likely to affect the political influence of different groups • Influences on government and Parliament of think tanks, lobbyists, corporations and the media Paper 2: Pressure Groups: • Extent of political pluralism in the USA • Typologies of pressure groups • Methods and tactics of pressure groups • Pressure group funding in elections • Debates on power of pressure groups • Role and significance of Political Action Committees and Super PAC's regarding electoral finance Civil Rights: • Protection of civil rights under the Constitution, Bill of Rights, amendments and Supreme Court rulings • Role of pressure groups in supporting civil rights Impact of political issues concerning civil rights and liberties on US politics in relation to race.



MEET THE STAFF

Mrs Tayla Westlake-Brown

SENDCo



When did you join first DHSG and what attracted you to the school?

I joined DHSG on the 1st June 2026 as SENDCo and have had the best half term of my career to date (although I am missing teaching history and can't wait to be doing some of that in September!).

Before joining DHSG, I had been working at another secondary school in Plymouth for three years, where I worked as Literacy Lead and a teacher of history. During that time, I developed a real passion for ensuring every young person has the support they need to thrive regardless of barriers they may face. The core values and beliefs at DHSG matched so closely to mine that when a

SENDCo job came up it felt like fate! And, I have been able to bring these previous skills into my role as SENDCo, where my focus is putting the young person at the centre of every decision we make.

As SENDCo, I work very closely with the young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, their families, teachers, and external agencies to ensure they receive the right support to succeed.

No two days are the same for me and that is great! My work involves overseeing the nurture provision in place, working collaboratively with the inclusion team, coordinating support alongside parents and carers to ensure every student's journey is as positive and inclusive as possible. Building strong relationships is central to my role and probably my favourite bit because working together is key to every young person reaching their potential.

What is your favourite thing about DHSG?

That is a difficult question because there is so much to choose from! If I had to pick the most notable thing, it would be the kindness that seems to radiate through every corner of the school. It is evident in every classroom, every member of staff and, most importantly, every student.

Joining a new school in the final half term of the academic year could have been incredibly daunting, but from day one I have been welcomed so openly by all. I have been surrounded by an exceptionally talented, supportive and generous team who have patiently answered every question, shared their expertise, listened to every query and always done so with a smile. There is a genuine sense that everyone is working towards the same goal: helping every student feel valued, supported and able to achieve their very best. It is a wonderful community to be part of, and I already feel incredibly proud to say I work at DHSG.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love being busy! I have always been a bit of a not-so-secret lover of the performing arts and still attend adult dance classes a few times a week. I love getting to concerts (I am a big Swiftie), seeing a show, or visiting



something historical. And for down time, if I am not catching up with my friends over a matcha or coffee, you'll often find me exploring the beautiful Devon beaches with my dog, Thunder, who is small but mighty. At home, you'll find me snuggling with my very clingy savannah cat, Obi. Above all, I love spending quality time with my family and whenever I get the chance, travelling and exploring new places with them. Whether it's discovering somewhere completely new or revisiting a favourite destination, I always enjoy experiencing different cultures, trying new foods and making fun memories.

What book are you reading at the at the moment?

I love many genres but find myself falling into the typical thriller loving book worm if not reading something historically guided. I recently read 'It's not what you think' by Claire Mackintosh and loved it because it was centred around some of the more controversial and somewhat political topics that we are facing in the UK at the moment... including the challenging of our British Values. These subtopics made it even more of a thriller as it felt quite close to our truth in places! It left me with lots of questions about how we can continue to build up tolerance and respect, always.

Who inspires you?

I am inspired by my family, my partner, and most proudly my parents. My mum and dad are the most loving, thoughtful, and hardworking people that I know. They have taught me so much but have above all, always taught me that kindness is that most important trait a person can carry. Aside this, they have provided me and my siblings many special and unique opportunities whilst teaching us how to be fair, calm, and quietly driven. They have worked through complex times and always put us first and I can't wait to continue working hard myself to make them proud.

What would you most like to do in the future, that you haven't had chance to do yet?

I would like to do so many things! In my career, I would like to continue to work to become a 'fountain of knowledge' SENDCo that can help any young person achieve to their fullest whilst working collaboratively within an environment that has such robust inclusive structures that every student feels truly nurtured and catered for. I would love to work within the senior Leadership Team that works to go from strength to strength to give opportunities to every young person we work with that may not get them otherwise. Within my personal life, I would like to travel to the Philippines, continue building my dream home, and maybe one day start a family!



SCHOOL FUND

Devonport High School for Girls would operate a School Fund to assist with paying for the exciting opportunities we offer our students. We endeavour to create an exciting learning environment and provide enriching opportunities for the students, and the School Fund is essential to this. School budgets, as you are aware, are tight and being increasingly squeezed and put under financial pressure. The School Fund is vital for income generation and enables us to support activities for our students that cannot otherwise be funded from public funds. It enables us to provide an inspirational education for the students beyond the fundamental curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities, including a variety of trips, sporting activities and competitions, cookery competitions, the Carol Concert, Celebration Days for Year 11 and 13, and our annual Speech Day. We would like to take this opportunity to invite parents, carers and friends to make a voluntary contribution to our School Fund.

What will your donation be used for?

We are sure that you would like to know where your contribution is going. Devonport High School for Girls is fortunate enough to be increasing in size, growing by 32 students each September over the next few years. We are ambitious in the plans that we have to upgrade our facilities in school – such as upgrading and improving our Sports' facilities and Science laboratories. We want to upgrade our dining facilities to provide more seating areas for students to enjoy all year round. The School Fund will continue to be used to help with whole school celebrations that will celebrate the success of your children. This all forms part of the enriched curriculum which brings our children's learning to life.

A gift to the school can make such a difference and if you are a UK tax payer and can donate under the Gift Aid scheme, the contributions increase considerably. We cannot emphasise strongly enough how important such contributions are to Devonport High School for Girls, allowing us to continue our journey to provide exceptional opportunities for our students. We ask for a small contribution of £5 per month, but of course you can donate more if you wish. To donate you can either:

- Use the direct debit form below (print, sign and return to the School Office or via email dhsg@dhsg.co.uk). If you do not have a printer at home, then please let us know and we can post one to you. When you return this, please indicate if you wish to donate more than £5 and we will amend the Direct Debit.
- Set up a standing order using these bank details: DHSG School Fund,
 - Sort Code: 308037
 - Account No: 64417862

For parents/carers with a child at the school, as a thank you for your support, any student that sets up the standing order for the monthly donation to our School Fund will receive a special pack in their house colour – this includes various school branded stationery items and a re-usable cutlery set to support our continued drive to be eco-friendly.

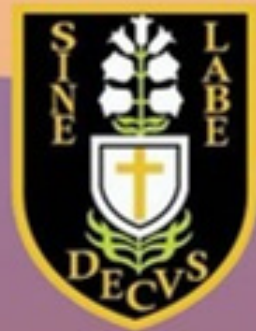
The pack includes a Pencil, Rubber, Cutlery Set, Flower Highlighter, Hague Notebook and Pen and a Flexible Ruler.



<https://www.dhsg.co.uk/page/?title=Finance+and+payments&pid=111>



SUMMER READING CHALLENGE



Get a house point for reading as little as one book, or go for the full six!

Bring your completed card to the library 7th - 18th September and tell us about your books. Every book you read gives you an entry in the prize draw!

Teachers can earn points for their house too so encourage them to join in!

DEBATE CLUB

We are delighted to share that the DHSG Debating Society travelled to London last Saturday, accompanied by Mr Lockley, to compete in the prestigious annual GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) Debating Competition.

Representing the school, four DHSG teams competed across three highly competitive rounds against some of the country's leading independent schools. Our students demonstrated exceptional skill, confidence, and intellectual rigour throughout the day, showcasing the strength and depth of debating at DHSG.

All four teams performed admirably, displaying excellent teamwork, resilience, and adaptability in a highly challenging competitive environment. Their thoughtful arguments and confident delivery were a credit to the school and contributed significantly to DHSG's success at the event.

A particularly outstanding achievement came from Lola Davies (9K), who was awarded Top Novice Speaker in a field of more than 50 competitors – a remarkable achievement that reflects her talent and dedication.

In addition, Isabella Chiang and Hannah Ryder (9K) delivered an exceptional performance, progressing to the Open Gold Final and securing an impressive second-place finish.

We are immensely proud of all our debaters for their commitment, perseverance, and excellence. Their success is a testament to the hard work they have invested in developing their advocacy, critical thinking, and public speaking skills, and further cements DHSG's growing reputation on the debating circuit.



YEAR 7/8 PHYSICS CHALLENGE

Outstanding Achievement in the Year 7/8 Physics Challenge!

A huge congratulations to our students who participated in the British Physics Olympiad's Year 7/8 Physics Challenge.

Their exceptional performance earned them 22 Gold, 50 Silver, and 1 Bronze awards.

This international competition saw participation from students worldwide, including those from China, Singapore, and India.

Our students' success highlights their commitment to excellence in physics.

GREEN COMMUNITIES BIODIVERSITY WORKSHOP

At the start of the summer term, students in Years 7 and 8 took part in an inspiring biodiversity workshop led by the Green Communities Team from Plymouth City Council.

Working outdoors, students explored the wildlife and habitats around the site and discussed practical ways to make the area even more welcoming for pollinators and other local species. The session helped students develop their understanding of biodiversity, conservation and the important role that everyone can play in protecting the natural environment.

Students engaged thoughtfully throughout the workshop and shared very positive feedback about the experience, demonstrating great enthusiasm for caring for their local environment. Despite the occasional blustery conditions, it was a highly successful and enjoyable learning opportunity.



Devonport High School for Girls

Advertise with us



The DHSG Termly Newsletter is shared with over 8000 people (parents, carers, alumni, friends of DHSG) and widely online on our Facebook, X and LinkedIn pages. The newsletter is also placed on our website that is visited, on average, by 180 people everyday.

The newsletter has an impressive reach of over 10,000 individuals in the Plymouth and East Cornwall region, thanks to strategically targeted promotional advertising.

Your business has the opportunity to be featured in this publication. If you're interested in including an advertisement, please contact Claire our Print & Design Assistant at crigby@dhsg.co.uk for further discussion.



Devonport High School for Girls

Price:

Quarter page: £100

Half page: £150

Full page: £200

Double page spread: £380



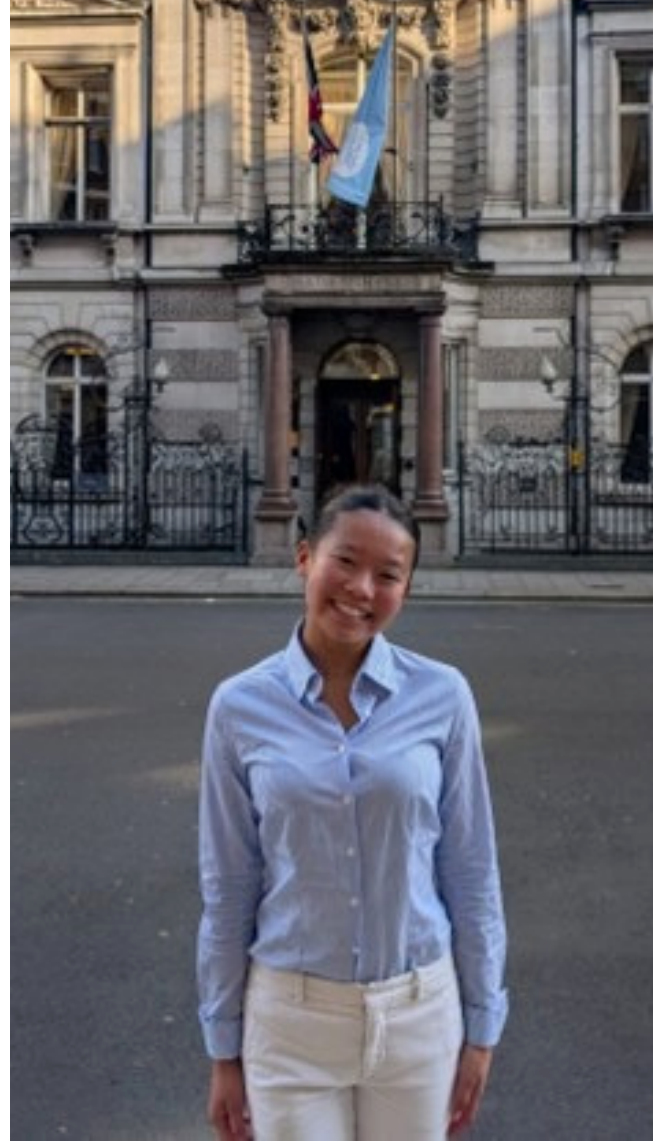
SUCCESS IN NATIONAL DEBATE COMPETITION

In April, we were delighted to learn that Isabella in Year 9 had been selected for the Debate England Development Squad 2026 following a highly competitive national selection process. Chosen as one of just 12 students from more than 100 applicants across the country, Isabella has been taking part in elite coaching sessions led by Team England, developing her debating skills alongside some of the most talented young speakers in the nation.

As part of this opportunity, Isabella was also invited to participate in an exhibition debate at the prestigious English-Speaking Union in London, where she met fellow debaters and coaches from across the Debate England programme.

We are incredibly proud of Isabella's achievement and her commitment to developing this valuable skill. She is passionate about encouraging other students at DHSG to get involved in debating and discover the confidence, communication and critical thinking skills it can help to build.

Congratulations, Isabella, on this outstanding achievement. We look forward to following your continued success.



YEAR 13 CELEBRATION DAY

Our Year 13 students marked an important milestone as they celebrated the end of their time at DHSG.

For some students, this reflected on two years in the Sixth Form, while for many it marked the culmination of seven years as part of our school community. The day provided an opportunity to share memories, celebrate friendships and reflect on the experiences that have shaped them during their time at school.

As students prepared for their A Level examinations and the next stage of their journeys, the occasion served as a meaningful moment to recognise all that they have achieved. We are incredibly proud of their hard work, resilience and contribution to school life, and we have every confidence that they will go on to achieve great things in the future.

Although they will always be part of the DHSG family, we look forward to hearing about their successes and welcoming many of them back to visit in the years ahead.



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE GERMAN SPELLING BEE

Three of our students represented DHSG at the regional final of the German Spelling Bee, competing against students from across the region.

All three students performed exceptionally well and secured places in the national final in Cambridge—a remarkable achievement that reflects their dedication, resilience and enthusiasm for language learning.

Particular congratulations go to:

- Emma, who achieved 1st place
- Helena, who finished in 3rd place
- Eve, who secured 4th place

We are incredibly proud of all three students for their success.

Their achievements are a testament to the hard work they have invested in developing their language skills and the confidence they have shown in competition.

We wish them every success as they continue their preparation for the national final and look forward to hearing about their future achievements.



YEAR 11 CELEBRATION DAY

Our Year 11 students enjoyed a memorable Celebration Day, marking the end of an important chapter in their DHSG journey.

The day was filled with fun, laughter and lasting memories as students took part in activities including zorbing, inflatables and the much-loved tradition of shirt signing. Their colourful shirts, covered in messages from friends and staff, were a wonderful reflection of the friendships, achievements and shared experiences that have shaped the past five years.

Students also enjoyed a special celebration lunch in a beautifully decorated hall, made possible through the generosity of parents and

the hard work of staff. A surprise visit from former member of staff Mrs Scott added to the excitement and made the occasion even more memorable. The day concluded with an emotional final assembly, featuring musical performances from our talented students, reflections from tutor groups and an inspiring address from former DHSG student Rachel Adkins. Students and staff alike took the opportunity to look back on five fantastic years of learning, growth and friendship, with a heartfelt message from Mr Sargeant bringing the celebrations to a close.

We are incredibly proud of the way our Year 11 students conducted themselves throughout the day. They were a credit to the school, embracing the occasion with warmth, respect and genuine appreciation for one another. We wish them every success as they continue their studies and look forward to celebrating their future achievements.





SUCCESS IN NATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION

Maya in Year 8 achieved outstanding success when her poem was shortlisted for the Never Such Innocence war poetry competition.

Inspired by her study of Dulce et Decorum Est, Maya's poem, Battle to Battle, explores the remarkable transformation of chlorine gas from a devastating weapon used in warfare to its role in modern cancer treatments. Through thoughtful and creative writing, Maya reflected on the ways in which scientific knowledge can be used both to harm and to heal.

This impressive achievement demonstrates Maya's ability to combine her understanding of literature, history and science to create a powerful and original piece of work.

We are incredibly proud of Maya's accomplishment and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

SUCCESS IN NATIONAL MANDARIN SPEAKING COMPETITION

Merryn in Year 8 achieved an outstanding result in the Chinese Bridge Mandarin Speaking Competition, reaching the national final held in London.

Competing against talented students from across the UK, Merryn demonstrated impressive language skills, confidence and dedication, finishing 8th in the country. This remarkable achievement reflects the hard work and commitment she has shown in developing her Mandarin language skills.

We are also grateful to Xinran for her support and encouragement throughout Merryn's journey in the competition.

Learning a language opens doors to new cultures, perspectives and opportunities, and Merryn's success is a wonderful example of what can be achieved through determination and enthusiasm for learning. Congratulations, Merryn, on this fantastic accomplishment. We look forward to seeing what you achieve next.



TEN TORS 2026

AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Our students took part in the Ten Tors Challenge, completing an extraordinary journey that reflected months of dedication, resilience and teamwork.

For eight months, students committed themselves to a demanding training programme, developing their navigation skills, physical endurance and confidence while experiencing everything Dartmoor could throw at them. From bright sunshine to torrential rain and strong winds, our students demonstrated remarkable determination and perseverance throughout their preparation.

The Ten Tors Challenge is a unique test of teamwork and self-reliance. Once on the moor, students navigate independently between checkpoints, drawing on the skills, experience and resilience developed throughout their training. This year's event presented particularly challenging conditions, making the achievements of all those involved even more impressive.

We are incredibly proud of every student who took part, whether representing DHSG directly or participating with local Scout, Guide and Cadet groups. Their commitment, courage and positive attitude were evident throughout both the training programme and the challenge itself. Their participation is a reminder of just how popular Ten Tors remains and how fortunate we are to have Dartmoor on our doorstep, providing such a unique opportunity for young people. We are also grateful to the British Army, whose dedication has enabled this remarkable event to run each year for generations of participants.

One student deserving of special recognition is Alex in the Sixth Form, who successfully completed the demanding 55-mile route with the Deg Karn Explorers Scout team. Despite battling some very painful blisters, Alex showed exceptional determination to reach the finish line and was even interviewed by BBC Spotlight during the event. To return to school immediately afterwards was a testament to his resilience, commitment and character. We are incredibly proud of his achievement.

A huge thank you must also go to our dedicated staff and volunteers, who generously gave their time over many months to support, encourage and train our students. Their expertise, enthusiasm and commitment made these achievements possible.

For many students, Ten Tors is about far more than completing a challenge. It is about building confidence, developing lifelong skills, creating lasting friendships and making memories that will stay with them for years to come. We congratulate all involved on a truly outstanding achievement.



INTERNATIONAL DEBATING SUCCESS AT THE OXFORD UNION



Isabella and Hannah, both in Year 9, represented DHSG at the International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD) held at the prestigious Oxford Union.

Competing against some of the most talented young debaters from around the world, both students demonstrated outstanding courage, resilience and determination throughout the competition. Participating at this level provided a valuable opportunity to refine their debating skills, challenge their thinking and gain experience on an international stage.

The experience has further inspired Isabella to encourage greater participation in debating at DHSG, with plans to support more students in entering debate competitions during the next academic year.

Debating offers students the opportunity to develop confidence, critical thinking, public speaking and teamwork skills, and we are proud of the enthusiasm and commitment shown by both Isabella and Hannah.

Congratulations to them both on representing the school so admirably and making the most of this exceptional opportunity.

OUTSTANDING MUSICAL ACHIEVEMENT

We were delighted to celebrate the exceptional musical success of Natalie in Year 13, who has achieved an impressive series of piano examination results through both ABRSM and Trinity College London.

Natalie's achievements include:

- Grade 5 Music Theory – Distinction
- Grade 6 Piano – Merit
- Grade 7 Piano – Distinction
- Associate of the Royal Schools of Music (ARSM) – Distinction



These outstanding results are a testament to many years of commitment, perseverance and hard work. Achieving success at this level requires not only considerable technical skill but also dedication, discipline and a genuine passion for music. We are incredibly proud of Natalie's accomplishments and congratulate her on reaching such a high standard of performance. She is a wonderful example of what can be achieved through determination and a love of learning.

Congratulations, Natalie, on this fantastic achievement.



EUROSCOLA FRANCE TRIP

Year 12 students from DHSG took part in an unforgettable educational visit to France as part of our involvement in the European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS) programme.

A highlight of the trip was attending Euroscola at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, where students joined young people from across Europe to discuss important issues, ask thoughtful questions and contribute confidently to debates and discussions. Their enthusiasm, maturity and engagement throughout the event were a credit to the school.

The visit also provided students with the opportunity to experience French culture firsthand. In Paris, students explored some of the city's most iconic locations while developing their language skills in authentic settings. Further time was spent in the beautiful cities of Strasbourg and Colmar, where students immersed themselves in local culture, explored historic streets and enjoyed a guided boat tour through Strasbourg.

The trip offered a valuable combination of cultural enrichment, language learning and international understanding, helping students develop confidence, independence and a broader perspective on the world around them.

We are incredibly proud of the way our students represented DHSG throughout the visit and are grateful to the staff who supported this memorable experience. The trip provided lasting memories and learning opportunities that will stay with students for many years to come.



RSC SCHOOLS' ANALYST COMPETITION

Year 12 chemists took part in the Royal Society of Chemistry Schools' Analyst Competition, an exciting national event designed to develop students' practical and analytical science skills through real-world problem solving.

Working in teams, students took on the role of analytical chemists and were challenged to solve a complex forensic investigation. Using a range of laboratory techniques, including gravimetric analysis, titrations and thin-layer chromatography, they examined evidence, identified unknown substances and applied their scientific knowledge to interpret the results.

The competition required students to think critically, work collaboratively and tackle demanding analytical tasks, including a particularly challenging calculation to determine whether unusually high levels of caffeine may have contributed to a fictional criminal investigation. Throughout the day, students demonstrated impressive resilience, teamwork and scientific aptitude as they worked through each stage of the investigation.

The experience provided an excellent opportunity to apply A Level Chemistry knowledge in a practical context while gaining an insight into the work of analytical scientists and forensic investigators.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, skill and professionalism shown by our students and look forward to hearing how they fare in the national competition. We would also like to thank the Royal Society of Chemistry, Northumbria University and our fantastic laboratory technicians for making this valuable experience possible.



THE PARENT TEACHER AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

The Parent Teacher and Friends Association has been in existence for many years and works hard to support the students and staff. The PTFA is very active and successful at raising money for the school.

Fundraising activities include:

- Second-hand uniform 'shop'
- Quiz night
- Christmas Shopping Trip
- Christmas Disco
- Selling refreshments at Parents' Evenings and events
- 11+ Practice

Recently the PTFA have raised funds in order to pay for:

- E-Book subscription for the School Library
- Delivery fee for the specialist transportation of a Piano for the Music department
- Specialist equipment for the Food Technology room
- Recycling bins for the School site
- Amazon vouchers for Mathematics Champions
- Railway sleepers for the Gardening Club
- A specialist Visualiser camera for the Geography department
- LED Par Can Lighting for the Drama department

There is a small but active committee headed up by a Chair, Secretary, Events Organiser and Treasurer. Meetings are held half-termly at 7.00 pm in the Sixth Form Centre. These meetings are open to all parents/carers and new faces are very welcome.

Please do get involved: we are here to help fund opportunities for our children and without volunteers this would be difficult. Please be assured that there is no pressure for regular commitment as we are happy for any help offered. If you can help in other ways, by perhaps supplying raffle prizes or selling tickets, please let us know.

Help us to achieve our aims, by helping us to support our students, the Head Teacher and his staff.

Please contact the PTFA at DHSG ptfa@dhsg.co.uk – we need and value your help and support. Thank you,

The PTFA



DHSGPTFA

A Registered Charity No. 1130637



CRICKET SUCCESS ACROSS THE SCHOOL

Both our U13 and U15 cricket teams enjoyed outstanding success in the West Devon Tournaments. Demonstrating excellent teamwork, skill and determination, both teams won all of their matches to secure progression to the next stage of the competition.

The success continued for our U13 team, who went on to represent the school at the National Finals in Telford. Competing against some of the strongest school teams in the country, the students performed superbly throughout the tournament. After narrowly missing out on a place in the first and second place play-offs, they responded brilliantly to win the third and fourth place play-off, securing 3rd place nationally in the Plate Competition.

This achievement is a testament to the students' hard work, commitment and sporting excellence. The team were also praised by other schools at the event as being "a credit to the school", a reflection not only of their sporting ability but also of the way they conducted themselves throughout the competition.

Special congratulations go to Faye, who was recognised with a Player of the Match award for her outstanding performance.

We would also like to thank Dr Parry and Mrs James for their dedication and support in accompanying the students on the 450-mile journey and helping to make this fantastic experience possible.

We are incredibly proud of all our cricketers and look forward to seeing their continued success in the future.



INCLUSIVE SPORTS FESTIVAL

DHSG students played a key role in the PSSP Inclusive Sports Festival, welcoming students from six local schools to take part in a range of inclusive sporting activities.

Our Sports Leaders led sessions in Boccia, New Age Kurling and seated volleyball with confidence, enthusiasm and encouragement, helping participants develop new skills and enjoy the experience. It was wonderful to see so many smiles, new friendships and a genuine spirit of inclusion throughout the day.

We are incredibly proud of our Sports Leaders for representing the school so positively and helping to make the festival such a success.



DISC GOLF CLUB TAKES OFF

During the summer term, DHSG launched a new Disc Golf Club, giving students the opportunity to develop their skills in this fast-growing sport while enjoying the outdoors.

Although still in its early stages, the club has already become a fantastic success, with students showing great enthusiasm, supporting one another and growing in confidence week by week. Their positive attitude and willingness to learn have made them a credit to the school.

A special congratulations goes to Mahi in Year 8, whose outstanding long-distance putt on the eighth basket was a highlight of the term and celebrated by everyone at the club.

We look forward to seeing the club continue to grow and develop next year.



PLYMOUTH HALF MARATHON

Hania and Lola from DHSG were among a number of students and staff that successfully finished Plymouth half marathon last weekend.



To complete an outstanding period of success, Eleanor made an excellent start to her National League tennis career, winning both her singles and doubles matches on her debut.

We are incredibly proud of Eleanor's achievements and the commitment she has shown to her sport. We look forward to following her continued success and wish her every luck in the next stage of her tennis journey.

OUTSTANDING TENNIS SUCCESS

Eleanor in Year 7 achieved a series of impressive tennis successes, demonstrating exceptional talent, dedication and determination.

Eleanor finished as runner-up in the Play Your Way to Wimbledon competition, earning qualification for the area finals at Avon Vale Tennis Club and the opportunity to compete on grass courts as part of the Wimbledon pathway programme.

She also secured 3rd place in the Under-16 Atlantic Racquet Centre Summer Open in Bideford, a remarkable achievement given that she was the youngest player in the tournament.



CRICKETING SUCCESS FOR WILLOW

Willow in Year 7 celebrated a fantastic achievement in club cricket while representing Tavistock Cricket Club Under 13s in both the hardball and softball teams.

Now in her third year with the club, Willow was one of the founding members who helped establish the girls' team at Tavistock in 2024. Her commitment to the sport was rewarded with a remarkable performance during a recent match, where she achieved the rare feat of taking three wickets in three consecutive balls—an accomplishment many cricketers can only dream of achieving.

Willow's success reflects not only her skill and determination but also her dedication to developing her cricket over several years. We are incredibly proud of her achievement and look forward to hearing about her future successes both on and off the cricket field.



FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS AVAILABLE @ DHSG

Reusable products
available upon request
Menstrual Cups
Re-useable Pads
Period Pants



ACCESS TO PERIOD PRODUCTS

Our students have access to free disposable and reusable period products whilst at DHSG.

If any student would like any products to take home for the Christmas Holiday, please contact Miss Uttley or pop into the Heads of House office or the Nurture Base. You can take any period products you need for the 2 weeks at home.

If you have any feedback about that period products available in school or would like to help support/improve the initiative next year, please let Miss Crowther know.

PERIOD PRODUCT SCHEME

With thanks to the Period Product Scheme for Schools, DHSG is pleased that we can offer a wide range of sanitary products to all students which can be used in school or at home.

We have disposable period products available in toilets across the school, but ahead of the summer holidays we want to remind all parents and carers that students are welcome to stock up and take whatever products they will need at home for the break.

We also have a range of sustainable products available for students and their families including menstrual cups, reusable pads and period pants in a variety of sizes.

Students can access whatever they need for the holidays a couple of different ways;

- Drop by the Heads of House office
- Email Miss Crowther or Miss Uttley
- Order products using this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/CiVNRcz6jJ>

Please don't hesitate to use this service – we want to ensure none of our students experience concerns or anxieties around their periods.



YEAR 10 GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK IN EXETER

Year 10 Geography students visited Exeter City Centre to carry out primary data collection as part of their GCSE Non-Examination Assessment (NEA).

The fieldwork gave students the opportunity to apply their classroom learning in a real-world setting, gathering and analysing data to investigate geographical questions. Throughout the visit, students demonstrated excellent teamwork, enthusiasm and professionalism, approaching the tasks with maturity and purpose.

Experiences such as these are an important part of GCSE Geography, helping students develop valuable research, data analysis and enquiry skills while deepening their understanding of geographical processes and places.

Well done to all of our Year 10 geographers for representing the school so positively and making the most of this important learning opportunity.



SUCCESS IN NATIONAL DANCE COMPETITION

Jessica in Year 10 achieved outstanding success at the National Association of Teachers of Dancing (NATD) Theatrical Scholarship South West Heats.

Jessica was crowned Senior Ballet South West Heat Winner and also earned medals in both the Senior Modern and Senior Contemporary categories, demonstrating her versatility, talent and dedication across multiple dance disciplines.

These excellent results have secured Jessica a place at the NATD National Theatrical Scholarship Finals, which will take place in Wilmslow later this year. Reaching the national finals is a significant achievement and reflects the hard work, commitment and perseverance that Jessica has invested in her dance training.

We are incredibly proud of Jessica's success and wish her every success as she prepares to represent the South West at the national finals.

Congratulations, Jessica, on this fantastic achievement.



TRANSLATION BEE SUCCESS

Natalia and Isabella in Year 8 represented DHSG at the South of England Regional Final of the Translation Bee, competing against some of the strongest young linguists from across the region.

Both students performed exceptionally well in a highly competitive field, demonstrating impressive language skills, confidence and composure throughout the event. Their dedication to language learning and willingness to challenge themselves was evident throughout the competition.

We are particularly delighted to celebrate Natalia's achievement in securing 4th place, earning qualification for the National Final in Cambridge. Reaching the national stage is an outstanding accomplishment and reflects the hard work and commitment she has shown in developing her language skills.

We are incredibly proud of both students for representing the school so well and wish Natalia every success as she prepares for the national final.



ATHLETICS SUCCESS FOR SADIE



Sadie in Year 7 achieved an outstanding result at the Devon Schools Athletics Championships.

After winning her 200-metre heat, Sadie went on to produce a personal best performance in the final, securing the gold medal against strong competition. This achievement is a testament to her hard work, dedication and commitment to athletics.

Competing at this level requires determination, resilience and a willingness to continually strive for improvement, and Sadie demonstrated all of these qualities throughout the championships.

We are incredibly proud of Sadie's achievement and congratulate her on this well-deserved success. We look forward to following her future sporting accomplishments.



ATHLETICS SUCCESS FOR CHARLOTTE



Charlotte in Year 8 achieved outstanding success at the Devon Schools Athletics Championships, delivering exceptional performances in both the hammer and discus events.

Competing in the Junior Girls category, Charlotte claimed first place in both the hammer and discus, achieving new personal bests in each event. She threw 36.76 metres in the 3kg hammer and 22.54 metres in the 1kg discus, demonstrating the results of her hard work, dedication and commitment to athletics.

Charlotte trains with Tavistock Athletics Club and her achievements have earned her selection to represent the region at the South West Schools Championships, an excellent recognition of her talent and potential.

We are incredibly proud of Charlotte's accomplishments and wish her every success as she competes at the next stage of the competition. Congratulations on a fantastic achievement.

SUCCESS ON THE NATIONAL MUSICAL THEATRE STAGE

Olive in Year 7 achieved a remarkable success after being selected for the British Youth Musical Theatre (BYMT) production Sea Change.

Following a highly competitive audition process involving more than 1,000 applicants from across the UK, Olive secured one of just 250 places available. She will now perform in the award-winning production at the Birmingham Hippodrome later this year.

This outstanding achievement reflects Olive's talent, dedication and commitment to developing her performance skills. Alongside preparing for the production, she is also continuing to work towards her Grade 8 qualification, demonstrating exceptional determination and enthusiasm for the performing arts.

We are incredibly proud of Olive's achievement and wish her every success as she takes part in this exciting opportunity. Congratulations, Olive, on this well-deserved accomplishment.



STREET DANCE SUCCESS FOR WILLOW



Willow in Year 7 achieved excellent success at the UDO South West Street Dance Championships.

Competing as part of her dance team, Willow helped secure an outstanding two first-place finishes, demonstrating skill, teamwork and dedication throughout the competition.

In addition to her team success, Willow also took the opportunity to compete in her first dance battles, stepping outside her comfort zone and embracing a new challenge with confidence and determination. Taking part in this aspect of the competition required considerable courage and reflects her willingness to continue developing as a performer.

We are incredibly proud of Willow's achievements and the commitment she shows to her dancing. Congratulations on a fantastic performance and a well-deserved success.

NETBALL SUCCESS FOR ISLA

Isla in Year 7 received special recognition at the Plymouth & District Junior Netball presentation evening, where she was named Most Voted Player in the Under 12 League.

This is an outstanding achievement in itself, made even more remarkable by the fact that Isla only began playing netball in September 2025. In a relatively short period of time, she has demonstrated exceptional commitment, enthusiasm and determination, earning the respect and recognition of those involved in the league.

Isla's success is a testament to the hard work she has invested in developing her skills and to the positive attitude she brings to both training and competition.

We are incredibly proud of Isla's achievement and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition. We look forward to following her continued success in the sport.



PLYMOUTH SCHOOLS U13 SQUAD SELECTION



Grace (Year 7) and Millie (Year 7) achieved a significant sporting milestone by being selected for next year's Plymouth Schools Under 13 Girls' Squad.

This is only the second year that a girls' squad has been established, and Grace and Millie are the first DHSG students to earn selection, making their achievement particularly special. With close to 60 students attending the trials, competition for places was exceptionally strong, highlighting the scale of their accomplishment.

We would also like to recognise Eve (Year 7), who performed extremely well throughout the selection process and progressed to the final round of trials, demonstrating great skill, determination and potential.

All three students should be proud of their efforts. Their success reflects the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm they have shown in developing their sporting talents.

Congratulations to Grace, Millie and Eve on this excellent achievement.

CHALKE VALLEY HISTORY FESTIVAL

Year 10 and Year 12 History students had the opportunity to attend the Chalke Valley History Festival for Schools, one of the UK's leading history festivals.

Throughout the day, students attended a range of talks linked to their GCSE and A Level studies, listened to expert historians and explored historical topics beyond the classroom curriculum. They also visited living-history encampments and took part in interactive activities spanning thousands of years of history, bringing the subject to life in an engaging and memorable way.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity for students to deepen their historical understanding, broaden their perspectives and gain insight into new areas of historical enquiry. Despite the exceptionally warm weather, students remained enthusiastic, inquisitive and fully engaged throughout the day.

We are incredibly proud of the way our students represented the school and embraced this enriching educational experience.



NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC THINKING CHALLENGE

73 DHSG students chose to take part in the National Scientific Thinking Challenge, a demanding competition designed to test scientific reasoning, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

We are delighted that 67% of participants achieved a certificate, reflecting both the enthusiasm and commitment of our students and their willingness to embrace academic challenge.

Particular congratulations go to our Gold Award winners, who placed in the top 10% nationally:

Abbie, Elizabeth, Elowen, Francesca, Rosanna, Ruby and Susannah. In addition, our students achieved:

- 21 Silver Certificates (top 25% nationally)
- 21 Bronze Certificates (top 40% nationally)

These results are particularly impressive given the challenging nature of the competition. The national average score was 52%, while a Gold Award required students to achieve 78% or above. The organisers themselves noted the high level of difficulty presented by the questions.

We are incredibly proud of all students who took part. Their achievements demonstrate curiosity, resilience and a willingness to engage with challenging scientific problems—qualities that are at the heart of successful scientific thinking.



GDST DEBATING COMPETITION SUCCESS

Members of the DHSG Debating Society travelled to London to compete in the prestigious Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) Debating Competition.

Four DHSG teams competed against students from leading independent schools, demonstrating impressive confidence, analytical thinking and public speaking skills across three challenging rounds of debate. Throughout the competition, our students showcased the intellectual curiosity, resilience and teamwork that are at the heart of successful debating.

A special congratulations goes to Lola in Year 9, who was recognised as Top Novice Speaker from a field of more than 50 competitors—an outstanding individual achievement. We also celebrate the success of Isabella and Hannah in Year 9, who secured an excellent second place in the Open Gold Final.

These achievements reflect the dedication and hard work of our students, as well as their willingness to challenge themselves on a highly competitive stage. We are incredibly proud of all those who took part and represented DHSG with such distinction, continuing to strengthen the school's growing reputation for debating excellence.



SWAT CHALLENGE CUP SUCCESS

In June, our SWAT Challenge Ambassadors achieved outstanding success by winning first prize at the annual SWAT Challenge Cup, held at the University of Exeter.

Over several months, the team worked collaboratively to research, develop and present their response to this year's challenge: "What does the perfect school of the future look like?" Their work required creativity, critical thinking and careful consideration of how education may evolve in the years ahead.

Competing against teams from eight grammar schools across the South West, our students delivered a compelling ten-minute presentation to an audience of fellow competitors, teachers and a panel of experienced judges from the education sector. They rose to the challenge magnificently, presenting their ideas with confidence, professionalism and enthusiasm.

Their success is thoroughly deserved and reflects the commitment, teamwork and dedication they demonstrated throughout the project. We are incredibly proud of their achievement and of the way they represented DHSG throughout the competition.

Congratulations to all members of the team and to Mrs Tribe for her guidance and support in helping them achieve this excellent result.





Chemistry Olympiad 2026 Results

Delighted to share the results from the RSC Chemistry Olympiad 2026; a national competition for Year 13 students designed to challenge and inspire, a unique opportunity for our students to push themselves further and excel in the chemistry field.

13 entries this year: 5 Silver awards and 8 Bronze awards, top 25% and 36% in the country respectively with 17 241 entries.



These budding chemists used their critical problem-solving skills, thought more creatively and tested their knowledge and application in new, real-world situations; this year's questions centred around Michael Phelps famous quote "Everybody pees in the pool!", isocyanides - organic molecules with extremely unpleasant aromas, the compounds in henna tattoos and celebrating pilaf, the national dish of Uzbekistan, the host nation for the 2026 International Chemistry Olympiad final.

We are all very proud of your determination, resilience, enthusiasm and success.

DHSG was very lucky again to have been one of the 400 schools selected at random to take part in the 2026 Schools' Analyst Competition run in conjunction with The Analytical Chemistry Trust Fund, Royal Society of Chemistry, The Analytical Science Community and delivered by Northumbria University. Our chemists had a great



ANALYTICAL
SCIENCE COMMUNITY



Schools' Analyst Competition 2026

day participating in the competition, enabling them to demonstrate and expand upon their existing chemistry knowledge, skills and aptitude for analytical science through practical experiments based on relevant problems.

This challenge enabled Yr12 students to demonstrate and expand on their existing chemistry knowledge, skills and aptitude for analytical science through practical analytical experiments based on relevant societal or industrial problems. The competition had some practical tasks that were relatively familiar to our students, such as a back titration and then others which were completely unfamiliar techniques: thin layer chromatography and gravimetric analysis.

They worked in teams acting as analytical chemists for the day, assisting the police, via a combination of forensic, cosmetic and analytical science techniques. The teams extracted samples from crime scene evidence, attempted to



identify unknown substances and carried out an incredibly challenging back titration calculation to determine whether the amount of caffeine in a cup of coffee had been tampered with, being excessively high leading to the victims heart attack!

Our DHSG winners are as follows:

1st place: Alex, Joseph and Karl

2nd place: Fiacre, Shayla and Fatima

3rd place: Annabelle, Ava and Finn



Massive thanks go to RSC Analytical Science Community and Northumbria University: Newcastle for organising such a super event again and to our DHSG technicians for supporting the practical requirements.

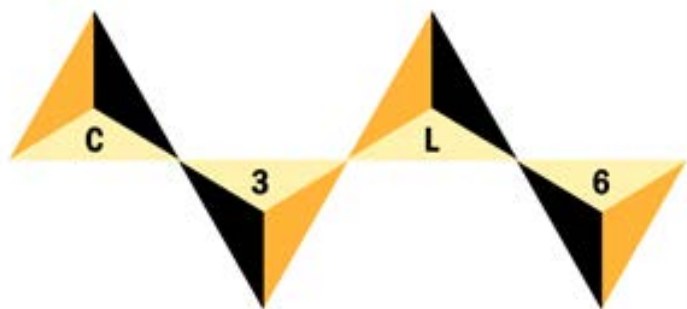


A huge congratulations to the 73 DHSG Yr10 students who volunteered to take part in the 2026 National Scientific Thinking Challenge. Our students were placed in the top 10%, 25% and 40% of the 16,174 from 249 schools.

An amazing achievement, as in the words of the organisers "some of the questions were REALLY hard!".

The challenge aims to encourage and assess students' ability to apply scientific principles to unfamiliar situations and interpret data, rather than simply recalling factual knowledge. It emphasizes critical thinking skills like analysis, deduction, and hypothesis formation. By encouraging our students to critically think about scientific information, current scientific research and development, the challenge contributes to a more scientifically literate population and provides a glimpse into how scientific thinking is used in various fields. Ultimately, the challenge seeks to foster a deeper appreciation for the practical applications of science and its relevance to the world of work.





Cambridge Chemistry Challenge Lower 6th

June 2026

Another record-breaking participation in the annual Yr12 Cambridge Chemistry Challenge; a competition that aims to stretch and challenge students interested in Chemistry and being an excellent opportunity to take students significantly beyond the A level syllabus to encourage them to think about science in the way they would at university.

Congratulations to everyone who took part demonstrating great strength of character and resilience 😊.

This year there were questions about the “unusual oxides of potassium super oxide and potassium ozonide” and the analytical technique of IR spectroscopy.

I AM EXPECTING RESULTS ANY DAY!



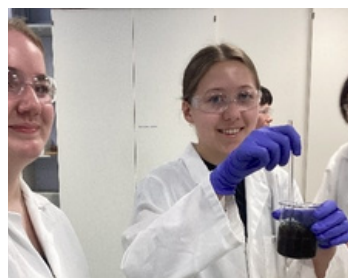
Yr12 Chemists had an amazing experience in June when they attended the first A level Chemistry Day at Plymouth University.

They got their lab coats and goggles on, with an exciting opportunity working in a university laboratory, during soaring temperatures.

Historically, natural indigo was extracted from plants, mainly grown in India. As rich, lasting blue dyes were incredibly rare in the ancient world, indigo was known as “blue gold” and was one of the driving forces behind major global trade routes. In 1887, Adolf von Baeyer developed a way to synthesise indigo in a lab, taking 14 years to figure out a route and then an additional 4 years to determine the chemical structure, going on to win the Noble Prize in Chemistry in 1905.

Our Yr12 chemists showed great skills individually synthesising indigo dye from scratch using the very same reaction as Baeyer.

Once synthesised they continued to extract and purify their indigo before running a bench-scale “vat dye” experiment, dying a piece of fabric which they all got to take home 😊



Students were then treated to a tour of the Chemistry department; a highlight involved being some of the first visitors to the brand-new Radioisotope and Advanced Materials Suite which has made Plymouth a unique national hub for analysing radioactive advanced materials, one specific project is looking at full lifecycle approaches to graphite in nuclear reactors. Another was seeing the Earth Smart programme, with sensors, drones and robots! Here practical approaches are being used to co-create sustainable land management strategies via agri-tech and sensor technology providing rapid real-world data. This was especially interesting for some of our students seeing how different STEM disciplines are linking together.

We were then fortunate to have a demonstration lecture around combustion and saw some digestive biscuits burning in air and then when oxygen isn't limited!

Followed by an interesting lecture entitled "Nitrogen – the wicked element!" which again highlighted the links between biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, medicine, pharmacology and beyond!

A super day for everyone involved which we hope will become an annual event 😊



We continue to be part of the Duracell Big Battery Hunt, a nationwide recycling challenge inspiring our students to power change across our school and community.

Did you know that it is estimated that only 27% of batteries are recycled in the UK and that we throw away approximately 600 million batteries every year! Laid end-to-end that would reach from the UK to Australia and back again!

We have collected 2029 batteries this year, which is a lot but unfortunately still isn't enough to be collected by Duracell this year, so please keep hunting!



TERM DATES - 2026/27

Term 1	Friday 4th September 2026 Year 7 & 12 Students only Monday 7th September 2026 to Friday 16th October 2026
Holiday	Monday 19th October 2026 to Friday 30th October 2026
Term 2	Monday 2nd November 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026
Holiday	Monday 21st December 2025 to Tuesday 5th January 2027
Term 3	Wednesday 6th January 2027 to Friday 12th February 2027
Holiday	Monday 15th February 2027 to Friday 19th February 2027
Term 4	Monday 22nd February 2027 to Thursday 25th March 2027
Holiday	Friday 26th March 2027 to Friday 9th April 2026
Term 5	Monday 12th April 2027 to Friday 28th May 2027
Holiday	Monday 31st May 2027 to Friday 4th June 2027
Term 6	Monday 7th June 2027 to Friday 16th July 2027

Bank Holidays	Friday 25th December, Monday 28th December, Thursday 1st January, Friday 26th March, Monday 29th March, Monday 3rd May, Monday 31st May and Monday 30th August
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