



**DISS HIGH SCHOOL**  
**END OF HALF TERM NEWSLETTER – Feb 2024**

*The DHS Way – ‘Work Hard, Be Kind’.*

**Update from the Headteacher**

Dear Parents & Carers,

Another busy half-term flies by! The Spring Term is slightly uneven this year with seven weeks having gone by since the New Year but then we only have four and a half weeks on the other side of the half-term break in the run-up to Easter.

I'd like to thank parents for all you've done to promote our good news stories on social media. Re-engaging with the local community was a big priority of ours this year and our DHS Facebook page has been viewed thousands of times with many posts being shared. I'm very grateful to Mrs Vernon for all she has done to promote the many good news stories we've had so far this year (some of which are of course also feature in this newsletter).

Some personal highlights for me were my five minutes of fame on Diss Park Radio just before Christmas – I still haven't found anyone who heard my slot (and maybe I never will!) but it was good to have the chance to meet the presenter and find out a bit more about the local community radio station. It was also fantastic to visit the Corn Hall (what a great venue to have in the town) and see some of the great work from our students being displayed there. I am very grateful to Mrs Marshall, our Head of Art, for all the effort she put into curating this exhibition. Most of our students have been taken to see it and I hope a few of you have seen it too. My third shoutout goes to the De Lucy retirement home. Mrs Ryder took some Sixth Formers there last week to visit the residents and this is a partnership I'd like to develop. I know from working in a previous school how much mutual benefit there is to be gained when elderly residents have the chance to engage with the younger generation.

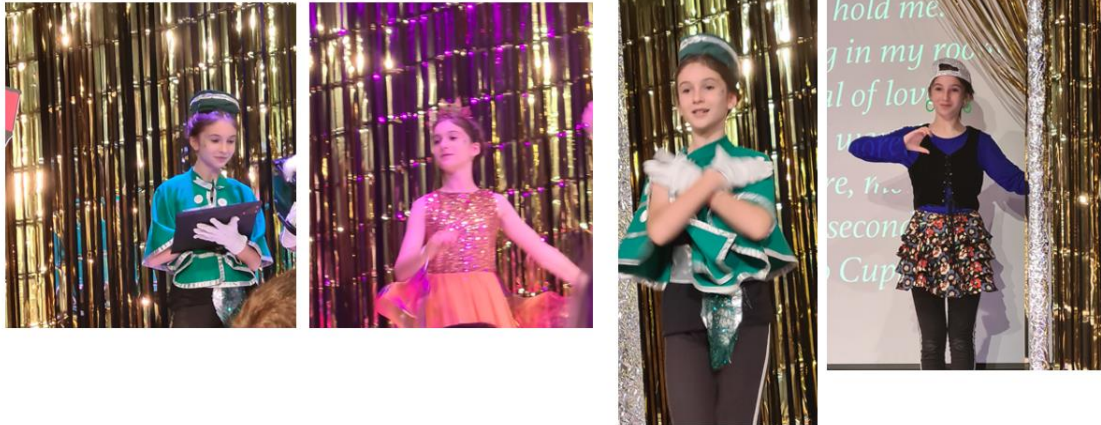
My final message is on the theme of attendance. The senior team have looked at a breakdown of grades from the 2023 summer results and how they linked to attendance. It might surprise you to learn that the students who were in the 95-100% attendance bracket gained, on average, over a whole grade more across *all* of their subjects than the students in the 90-95% attendance bracket. It's strange to think (because 90% in most areas of life is pretty good) but having attendance at 90% or below is likely to lead to significant underachievement if allowed to persist. 90% attendance represents one day of missed learning every fortnight and so we encourage all students to aim for 95% as a target because this gives them the best chance of good outcomes and even better life chances in the future.

A massive well done to all the students featured in this newsletter and, whatever you are doing this half-term, I hope you and your family and friends get a chance to rest and spend some quality time together.

Sam Stopps, Headteacher.

### **Christmas Panto!**

Before we start off 2024 here is a look back at some photos from December, we have had sent in from Kaitlyn P's family. It looked like it was an amazing show! Kaitlyn did 14 shows and loved every minute of it! Well done Kaitlyn and anyone else who was involved 😊



### **Charity Band Night**

Also ending our festive fundraising week in December where amazing funds were raised, the sixth formers and other students put on a brilliant show with the Band Night. – the hall was rocking! Well done to everyone involved and those shown below – Haydn, Katy, Jacob, Keiran, Robin, Jess and Charlotte. Photo credits - George Selby.



### **Charity Cheque Handover**

As a result of the many events which took place for the fantastic 'Festive Fundraiser' the Sixth Form Committee were delighted to hand over a cheque for £2500 to Ellie from the charity EACH. Ellie was able to tell the Sixth Form about EACH's funding and the wonderful work they do. In addition, another donation of just over £1000 will be made to the charity Mind. Elizabeth Hughes – Deputy Director of Sixth Form.



### **Olivia in National Gymnastics Competition!**

We are very proud of our Year 8 student, Olivia G. She recently competed in the National Gymnastics Finals where she came 6<sup>th</sup> on the bars and 14<sup>th</sup> overall - an incredible achievement. This year Olivia will be competing as an elite British gymnast and is the only gymnast in Norfolk competing at Espoir level. Olivia is a real inspiration - juggling hours of intense practise and her schoolwork, and always with a smile on her face. We wish Olivia the very best of luck for the English Championships coming up in March! Photos supplied.

Beth Barrett & Emma Bensley – Heads of Year 8



### **Norwich City Football Academy**

Thank you for the photos supplied below by Mrs Dubiel where her son Miki is part of this Academy where he attended a youth trip to Latvia, and they won the cup!



### **Physical Education**

Thank you to James Kemp, head of PE for sharing in real time all things happening in PE – these are shared via our private Instagram channel @disshighpe.

### **Drama & English Trip – Woman in Black**

On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January, the Drama and English departments took pupils from Years 9, 10 and 11 to see the spine-tingling production of the Woman in Black at Norwich Theatre. It was fair to say we heard a few screams in the second act of the performance. A superbly spooky start to 2024!

Amy Bishop – Head of Drama



### Geography Competition update

Back in September a competition was launched to design a flag that would go to Antarctica to celebrate Antarctica day. Congratulations to Mabrouk for creating the winning flag which has now travelled to the Antarctic with drilling engineer James Veale! They sent these photos to us which look amazing!

Vicky Nolan – Head of Geography



## Critical Writing Competition

### Celebrating Writing Success

This half term, we have had lots of good news on the creative writing front. Tadiwanashe M in Year 11 won first prize in the prestigious Laurie Herring Prize for Critical Response with her review of Hamilton. Tadi was invited to an awards ceremony at the National Centre for Writing, where she was presented with her prize by journalist and writer Jay Rayner.

Also, Alice D, in Year 8 has been announced as the runner-up in the Murray Edwards College Daisy Goodwin Flash Fiction Competition and has won £50! Alice will go to Cambridge to collect her prize.

Congratulations to both students.

From Mikela Bond, Deputy Director of English.



## Explore Maths Day

Well done to our Year 10 Further Maths students for their superb conduct, curiosity and endeavour during our Explore Maths Day at UEA in January. They came home talking about how some of the magic tricks were "mind boggling", that they had a "fun and amusing day" with some "thought provoking ideas about the origin of numbers". In addition to all of this, there was also lots of information about the maths they can study after their GCSEs to further encourage and enthuse them. Particular congratulations go to Sam P, Charlie B and Sam R for winning prizes for their correct answers to the challenge questions on the day.

Stephen Archer  
Maths Teacher

Photo below of James T, James G, Rohan B-C, George H & Thomas G.



### Art Exhibition

Diss High School's exhibition 'Bring into Focus' 2024 showcases the work of over 500 students displayed in The Corn Hall. The exhibition explores the relationship between art and nature through a variety of different starting points.

Students observed and responded to themes within nature including insects, marine life, botanical illustration and natural forms. They produced work in a range of disciplines from drawing and printing to sculpture and photography. All students involved have had the opportunity to view the exhibition, walking to and from the Corn Hall during their Art lessons. The Corn Hall have been thrilled with the number of visitors to the exhibition and the many encouraging comments in the visitors' book. The students involved have produced work of great quality and we are very proud of their efforts.

Donna Marshall – Head of Art



### Library News & National Puzzle Day!

It has been a busy term here in the library with many students visiting during breaks and lunches. My library assistants were keen to mark National Puzzle Day, so we celebrated by having a lunch time dedicated to puzzles, word searches, spot the differences and a Where's Wally hunt. The students who attended had a great time puzzling so much so that the puzzles have continued to be constructed in subsequent lunch breaks. The globe has proven to be a particularly enjoyable challenge. We would gratefully accept donations of 100 -500-piece puzzles or puzzle mats!

Emma Goddard – Library & Teaching Assistant

Pictured below are Logan H, Ethan M, Sam T, Erin S, Beth C, Olivia K, Maya P, Calypso R, Mabrouk A, Liam H, Hetty H, Eddie C, Grace R and Savannah M.



We have also been having fun with displays; a collaboration between my library assistants and Su Nichols' Art club led to some wonderful origami hearts and this lovely month of love display.



### Health and Social Care

The Year 12 health and social care class visited the residents of De Lucy House Care Home. They enjoyed joining in with the pampering sessions, parachute games and card making. A great time was had by all, and we would like to thank the staff and residents for making us feel so welcome. We can't wait for the next visit!

Sarah Ryder -Teacher of Health and Social Care, Sixth Form.

Pictured below are Henry B, Ruby O, Lola W, Rosie S, Grace P, Sophie S, Annie T, Louise F, Heather J & Abbie B.



### English Update

On February 1st, A Level English students were lucky enough to work with award winning writer Louis de Bernieres, author of Captain Corelli's Mandolin and countless other novels and poems. He ran a workshop on unseen poetry in which Louis encouraged the students to consider sounds, key images and structure in Elizabeth Barret Browning's Sonnet 43. The session was insightful and a great opportunity to hear from a famous author! Mikela Bond.



### **Geography Field Trip**

#### **Y10 Geography fieldtrip to Norwich**

Just over sixty Y10 Geographers visited Norwich to investigate how successful attempts have been to improve the quality of life in inner-city Norwich, as part of their topic on urban environments. Students visited four sites – Riverside, King Street, Westlegate and Goldsmith Street, collecting data on environmental quality, noise and footfall as well as listening to a talk from Debbie Gould from Norwich City Council on the recent development of social housing in the city. They also interviewed members of the public in the city centre to find out their opinions on quality of life in the city and how it could be improved. The students were well behaved and polite, demonstrating good geographical knowledge. A great trip was had by all, and many finished the day with a visit to McDonalds and Primark!

Vicky Nolan – Head of Geography.



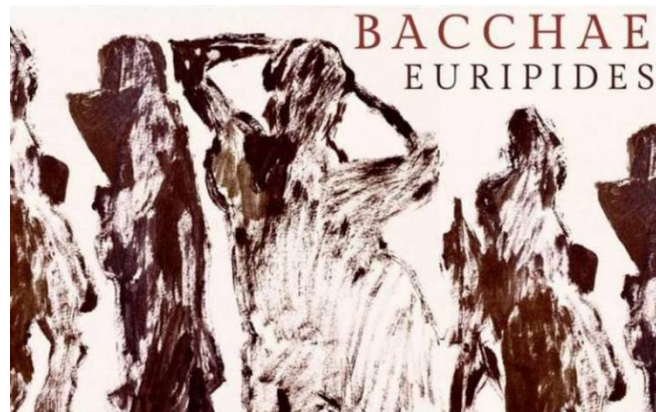
### **History Trip – Hitler on Trial**

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 46 Year 10 and 11 History students visited the Madder Market Theatre in Norwich to watch a production of 'Hitler on Trial'. After an informative exam busting session that gave students top tips as to how they can achieve high marks in exam questions, students witnessed an imagining of what may have happened if Hitler had survived WWII and was put on trial for crimes against peace by deliberately plunging the world in a second World War. This was achieved by listening to a range of contemporary witnesses who were asked questions about life in Germany before and after Hitler came to power, and who were questioned by their defence and the prosecutor. The highlight was when Hitler himself gave his evidence and explained why he acted the way he did in the context of the time. Students had the chance to give their verdict after listening to all evidence, and a majority thought Hitler was indeed guilty for starting WWII. The visit was enjoyable and informative, and students were impeccable in their attitude and behaviour.

Mark McPhail – Head of History



### Bloomsbury Theatre Trip – London



Students of Classical Civilisation visited London on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 to go to the British Museum and watch UCL's performance of the 2500yr old Greek play 'The Bacchae' by Euripedes. Regardless of the wet and grey day, much fun was had by all enveloping ourselves in the weird and wonderful world of ancient Greece!

Emma Bensley – Head of Year 8 & history teacher.

### A level Drama Theatre Trip

On Wednesday 14th February 2024, the A Level Drama and Theatre students went to London to see Frantic Assembly's 'Metamorphosis' - an adaptation of Franz Kafka's 1912 novella. The Valentine's Day visit started with a 'Gal-entines' day brunch on the train. On arrival at London Liverpool Street, we had a look around Spitalfields Market before travelling to Hammersmith, changing at Paddington so we could have a ride on the 'space-age' Elizabeth Line.

The production was simply phenomenal and an outstanding example of how all creatives work together to make meaning for an audience. The story of the overworked and overburdened Gregor who, one day, finds himself transformed into 'monstrous vermin' was adapted by poet Lemn Sissay, which gave the dialogue a lyrical richness. The lighting, sound and set gave the production a 'nightmarish' quality, which, when combined with Frantic's trademark physical theatre, created some stunning visual images.

An enjoyable day was had by all. Amy Bishop – Head of Drama



### **TERM DATES for pupils 2024**

#### **Spring term**

- Thursday 4 January - Friday 16 February 2024
- *Half-term holiday: Monday 19 - Friday 23 February 2024*
- Monday 26 February - Wednesday 27 March 2024
- *Easter holiday: Thursday 28 March - Friday 12 April 2024*

#### **Summer term**

- Monday 15 April - Friday 24 May 2024 (Monday 6 May is a Bank Holiday)
  - *Half-term holiday: Monday 27 - Friday 31 May 2024*
    - Monday 3 June - Friday 19 July 2024

We all wish you a very pleasant half term break.