



Downend School

Downend School Newsletter 3

December 2011

Dear Parents and Carers

I wanted to send you a newsletter before the end of term to update you on what has been happening at Downend School and to wish you all a very Happy Christmas, I hope you have a restful break.

Mr Roberts
Headteacher

Kingswood Partnership

From next September, all our Year 12 courses will be taught at Downend; this means that we will no longer be sharing courses with the Kingswood Partnership.

By teaching Year 12 courses at Downend, we will be able to provide a tailored offer of courses that will meet the needs of our students. At the same time, we will continue to offer excellent breadth of provision.

Downend Post-16 students achieve considerable academic success across a range of qualifications. In 2011, our A-level Average Total Points Score was the 3rd highest in the Local Authority. It is our aim to continue to improve and ensure that all students follow courses that will enable them to access the career or further education of their choice.

Year 11 interviews for Post-16 places at Downend are currently taking place. If your son or daughter has already been interviewed, we will write to them welcoming them to Downend Sixth Form in September following their success in their GCSE examinations.

Students in Year 12 and Year 13, currently following courses through the Kingswood Partnership will not be affected by this change, and all courses for current Year 12 students will continue into Year 13.

Friday 16 December

Students will be finishing school at 12.25pm on Friday 16 December.

Children in Need

A non-uniform day was arranged to raise money for this worthwhile charity. All students contributed to wear non-uniform. Year 8 students raised almost £1000 particularly through their sponsored silence which raised over £700 and the wet sponge/stocks. Post 16 students attended in fancy dress and the whole school together raised a record breaking £2000

Aachen Trip

A group of Year 8 students departed for Aachen on Thursday 1 December to visit the Christmas markets. The students had a wonderful experience and were a real credit to our school. Thank you to Mrs Russell, Mr Rolle and Mr Dansault who took the students.

Year 11 Good news

Bethan Monahan, Isabelle Mullens and Billie Whewell completed a successful work experience week with Aviva at the end of Year 10 and received a visit and corporate gifts from representatives of Aviva. The students made such a positive impression and were fantastic ambassadors for our school that Aviva requested to thank the students in person at Downend School.

Governors News

The governors have been very busy these last two terms and have attended a number of training courses to improve their effectiveness and understanding of governance and their strategic role within the school. These courses have included attendance, data, exclusions, finance and governor roles and responsibilities.

We are very pleased that Ms Szwaba has been reappointed as staff governor for a further term of 4 years.

Since Mr Roberts joined the school the governing body has been working closely with him planning the immediate and long term strategic direction of the school.

Mrs Sue Sheath, Chair of Governors

Contact Details

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we would like to improve the way we communicate with you in the future by contacting you by email. This will enable us to send you important information as quickly and efficiently as possible.

All students should have received a letter requesting the email address that you wish to be contacted on. Please complete this letter and return to the school.

Exams

Exams will run from Monday 9 January through until Friday 3 February. All students have now received their timetables from their tutors. Please ensure students arrive fully prepared, on time and with the correct equipment.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PTA

Our Craft Fair was a huge success raising over £1300 which will provide vital extra funding for the school. We are planning to hold a quiz night in the new year and a plant sale in the Spring.

Future meeting dates are as follows:

Monday 12 December

Monday 16 January

Monday 12 March

Monday 16 April

All meetings are in the LRC and start at 6.30pm

Everyone is welcome.

Mrs Jen Clark, Chair of PTA

Author Visit

Downend School is delighted to announce that the children's author Jason Wallace will be visiting the school on Wednesday 14th December.

Jason will be talking about his award winning book 'Out Of Shadows' and some of our students will have the opportunity to meet him and participate in his literacy workshop. During this event Jason will also be talking to the members of the Reading and Writing Club (*RAW Talent*) and *BBC Young Reporters*.

Bikeability

Bikeability is 'Cycle Proficiency' for the 21st Century, designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads.

Certificates and shiny luminous badges for each level (level 1 and 2) are awarded to children who successfully complete each course. During **Level 1** Bikeability training, you learn to control and master your bike. The training takes place in an environment away from cars or traffic – usually in a playground or quiet road. During **Level 2** Bikeability training you will get out on the roads! Level 2 gives you a real cycling experience so that you are able to deal with traffic on short journeys such as cycling to school.

An assembly will be held on Monday 9 January to promote the scheme and the Bikeability team will come into school on Thursday 12 January during lunch to encourage students to sign up. The sessions will be held on the following days:

19 & 26 January & 2 February 9.00-11.00am.

Important diary dates

Wednesday 14 December – Christmas Concert – 6.30pm

Thursday 15 December – Year 13 Parent consultation evening

Thursday 15 December - Year 7 Pantomime – Period 5, Year 7 Disco – 3.15pm – 5.00pm, Year 8 Disco – 7.00pm – 9.30pm

Friday 16 December – End of Term 2 – School closes at 12.25pm for students

Tuesday 3 January – Term 3 begins

Monday 16 January – PTA meeting 6.30pm in the LRC

Thursday 26 January – Year 11 Parent Consultation Evening

Thursday 9 February – Year 9 Options Evening

Friday 10 February – End of Term 3