



Portsmouth
High School

G D S T
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Update Newsletter 16 March 2108

From the Headmistress

In an extract published in last week's Sunday Times from Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore's new book *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* published later this month she quotes Socrates "The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise". The point being that for quite literally thousands of years people have noticed and written about adolescents showing a change in behaviour as they navigate the tricky "teen" years.

As someone who has taught young people for decades and experienced first-hand through my own three children the challenges of growing-up I have noticed a difference in attitude and risk taking as children hit puberty. Studies suggest that adolescents are greater risk takers and there are many reasons why this should be the case and much more complicated than just because they are young people wishing to challenge authority. Peer pressure has a role to play and how they look to their peers. This latter point may influence children in the classroom and whilst they are risk-takers in other aspects of their life and ignore warnings about drug taking, smoking and dangerous acts, for example, teenagers are not always prepared to be bold in lessons. This stems perhaps from a fear of looking either stupid or too clever. Teachers would agree that pupils who participate in the lesson by asking and answering questions often show and develop a deeper level of understanding than their contemporaries who remain passive. Educators need to encourage student engagement. In a single-sex school it is my belief that children possess a greater self-confidence and are much more likely to take risks with their thinking. They are less worried about what their classmates think or feel and potentially less likely to suffer from worrying about how others see them.

In schools thinking skills lessons quite literally encourage pupils to think outside of the norm and examine less common responses to a problem or issue. Our year 7 have just completed a project which asked whether they thought one person could change the world. Their efforts have amazed us all with almost endless possibilities as answers and even the response that one person can change the world for the poorer whilst one person cannot change it for the better. The way they chose to present their work was ingenious too. It was pleasing to see them taking intellectual risks and developing their curiosity.

Jane Prescott
Headmistress

Prep and Pre-School

Dear Parents

As I am in the progress of completing my final preparations for the school ski trip tomorrow I have been thinking about the opportunities within the Girls' Day School Trust for collaboration. This trip is a prime example of relationships within the organisation, with eight schools from across the country teaming up to give the girls an unforgettable experience. In all there are one hundred and seventy-five girls spending the week on the slopes and, with that, the opportunity for new friendships and challenges.

It is far from the only time the girls can team up with others from around the Trust. We have already sent small teams to a mathematics conference in Oxford and the annual 'Techathon' held at South Hampstead. During next term another group will be attending the science conference and taking part in some exciting hands-on experiments.

Sporting opportunities are plentiful for our strong performers, with huge inter-school rallies a regular part of the landscape. I wrote in an earlier Update about the success our girls had by finishing third in netball. Since then there have been further chances to shine in cross-country, swimming and gymnastics with more to come in the summer.

Staff are also able to collaborate with colleagues from across the GDST. I often check in to the computing forum to keep up to date with latest developments and I meet with all of the other junior heads at least once per term. There is nowhere else in the education sector where I would get to share expertise with so many other professionals in the same role as me. All of the teachers and support staff get the chance to go on at least one training course per year and it is there that they can network with people who have similar interests.

All of this allows us to stay on the cusp of educational progress and to be able to evaluate new initiatives effectively. Our girls get opportunities that go beyond those that could be offered by a standalone school and through taking them can develop new friendships.

Paul Marshallsay
Headmaster of Portsmouth High Prep School

Pre-School and Reception Class

Pre-School

We have been busy exploring ice in Pre-School this week, finding out about what makes it melt and how to make it melt faster. The children have also had fun investigating cars rolling down slopes and measuring how far the cars travel down slopes of differing gradients. Our phonics sound for the week was 'l'. We have enjoyed measuring leaves using multilink cubes to find out how long they are.

Reception

This week, as part of their traditional tales unit, the girls have been concentrating on the story of *The Ugly Duckling*. They have been thinking about what it means to be special and how we are all different but just as important as each other.

In mathematics the girls have been busy weighing fruit and vegetables and looking at different types of scales.

Wednesday was trip day and we went to Fort Nelson. The girls took part in several activities exploring the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, in particular the use of different building materials. The girls really enjoyed the whole day, especially the exploring the tunnels with their torches and seeing a historic field gun being fired.

The importance of outdoor learning

FORGOTTEN YOUR WATERPROOFS? is an article written by Mr Paul Marshallsay, Headmaster of Portsmouth High Prep School, with contributions from Forest School leader Mrs Joan West. The article was recently published in the online publication *Schooldays* magazine.com

In this article Mr Marshallsay and Mrs West stress the importance of outdoor exploring and learning and the effects of this to the wellbeing of children.

"There are so many scientific reasons why it is beneficial to spend time outside. Research proves that children have increased concentration, more self-confidence, healthier self-esteem, less anxiety, better balance and gross motor skills and improved overall fitness. Becoming a Forest School teacher, for me, is all about implementing fun and balanced risk opportunities for children to work and play in a safe and stimulating outside environment.'

To read the full article visit <http://www.schooldaysmagazine.com/forgotten-your-waterproofs.html>

Eddie the Penguin saves the world

The Years 3 and 4 production of *Eddie the Penguin* this week had a strong environmental message. When Eddie noticed his iceberg melting he decided to move up to the North Pole in search of more ice. However, he soon realised that it was fast disappearing there too.

On a mission to stop the ice melting any further, Eddie travelled the globe to tell all the humans just how they could help. Eddie and his family, including Grandpa with his Zimmer frame, travelled on a whale around the world learning what they could do to save the planet. The play was filled with superb acting, dance from around the world and songs portraying the message loud and clear. Well done to all of Years 3 and 4.

Senior School

Science Week

The week beginning 12 March is British National Science Week. This week the pupils have had the opportunity to take part in some fun activities to raise the awareness of science and to generally have fun.

On Monday, the girls had the opportunity to make their own hovercraft. Tuesday saw pupils turning milk into a type of plastic – yucky but great fun. On Wednesday we investigated how mammals keep warm in the ocean by making our very own 'blubber gloves.' Thursday was the annual house science quiz which was both tricky and entertaining. We finished the week on Friday with colourful chemistry in lab 5.

You can search social media with the hashtag #BSW18 to see what we and other schools have been getting up to.

Designers of the future...

Many congratulations to Nayab Ahmed, Year 9, who was among the winners in a national competition to encourage and recognise designers of the future. Design and Technology teacher Wendy Craig attended an awards ceremony at Thinktank, Birmingham last week to receive the prize, on Nayab's behalf, in the Alu D&T Challenge, a competition for 11-14 year olds.

Nayab was the runner up for the packaging design concept, and won an expert magnetic robotic kit and a mini Mambo drone for the school's Design and Technology Department, plus £75 worth of vouchers. Well done to Nayab.

Free talk by a sleep expert

Sleep expert, Evelyn Stewart, from Sleep Soundly is coming into school to talk about sleep on Tuesday 17th April from 4.00-5.00pm.

Sleep is a vital indicator of overall health and well-being. Lack of sleep can make it harder for your child to behave well, regulate emotions, pay attention and do well at school, and get along with others. National trends show that sleep deprivation in teens is more prevalent and comes with greater consequences and it is certainly one of the most common problems reported in both the junior and senior school.

Evelyn Stewart is a sleep practitioner who, until recently, worked for the Children's Sleep Disorder Service at The Children's Hospital in Southampton, UK. She is also a member of The British Sleep Society and the International Paediatric Sleep Association. Evelyn has worked with families and will share the importance of sleep for the brain and strategies for improvement as she is fully aware of the impact that sleep disturbance has on a household, rarely is it ever just the child who is affected.

If you would like to attend, please contact the senior school via receptionist@por.gdst.net

For more information on sleep visit Sleep Soundly at <http://www.sleep-soundly.co.uk/>