



Välkomna! to the latest edition of the Specialism Lowdown. It's been a long term with lots going on across the Languages, Maths and Science Departments. With half term already behind us the summer holidays seem like a mere distant memory and it won't be long until Christmas is upon us!

BA Flag Award

Well done to those pupils who achieved their BA Flag Award! The pupils who have achieved them so far are:

Rob - Spanish & French
Simon - Spanish
Ellie - Spanish
Jack - German
Jeff - German & French
Will - German
George - German & French
Clarissa - German
George - German
Tom - German
Sam - German
Conrad - German

Also 6th formers achieved their award last year:

Katy - German
Kathryne - German
Steph - German

Spanish Exchange

As many of you are aware we ran the Spanish Exchange this year with 19 of our students from years 9 & 10. We visited Jerez De La Fronter in September. Prior to that our Spanish partner school visited The Downs in June 2010. It has been a great experience. The following quotes from parents and students sums up what a success it was. Here's what some of our parents and students thought.

Parent quotes:

"The young people really engaged with each other, and with a foreign culture and a foreign language; and this experience will make their lives richer"

"How wonderful the exchange experience was for us!"

"I think it was a very positive experience and she is very much looking forward to her return visit to Spain"

"It was good fun, everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves"

Student quotes during exchange:

"Spain is amazing, I don't want to go home to England!"



This year the Language Department has welcomed a new edition to their team, along with the arrival of the new language assistants.

Guten Tag,

Mein Name ist David Lenzian. Ich bin 24 Jahre alt und komme aus Essen, einer Stadt im Westen Deutschlands. Ich werde die nächsten 8 Monate an der Downs School sein um die Lehrer und Schüler beim Unterrichten und Lernen der Deutschen Sprache zu unterstützen. Ich freue mich sehr auf diese Erfahrung.

I live in Essen, a relatively big city in North-Rhine Westphalia in the West of Germany. At home I am studying English, French and Geography with the final goal to become a teacher for secondary schools.

I applied for this Assistance Teacher program for several reasons: on the one hand I hope that I will be able to give helpful instructions and advices to the students and can contribute something positive to their final language exams. On the other hand I am very ambitious in improving both my English language and my teaching skills.

I really have had a very good start in Compton by now. The school, the students and the teachers welcomed me friendly. All this let me hope to have a very good time here.

David Lenzian



My name is Ying Chen. I am from southeast China. The city is called Qu Zhou. I study English in Hang Zhou Normal University and become an English teacher in Quzhou High School. I will be your Mandarin teacher in the coming three terms. I am really happy to be at the Downs School. I'm impressed by the friendly atmosphere here and students here, who are nice and enthusiastic. This is my first time to go abroad and visit England. I am very interested in knowing more about the British educational system and gaining better experience in teaching students. On the other hand, I am glad that I get the chance to serve as a mediator of the Chinese language and culture. Hope you will enjoy my lesson!

Ying Chen





¡Hola a todos! Soy Laura y estoy encantada de encontrarme con vosotros .Creo que esto va a ser una experiencia inolvidable para mí. En el tiempo que he estado aquí ya he encontrado varias diferencias con respecto a España, como los horarios, el tiempo y la comida. También me he dado cuenta de que la gente de aquí es muy agradable y educada, lo cual me ha ayudado a adaptarme a este país con mayor facilidad. Espero aprender mucho con vosotros y que al mismo tiempo mi estancia aquí os ayude a conocer un poco más nuestra lengua y nuestra cultura. ¡Un saludo a todos!

Hola!

My name is Laura. I am the new Spanish Language Assistant and I live in Madrid, the capital of Spain. I am looking forward to helping the students in achieving good marks in their final language exams. I am also convinced that my 8-month-long stay in England will offer me a great insight into the British Culture and the way of life, too.

Laura Rodriguez



Bonjour !

My name is Noémie and I'm the French assistant. I'm 20 years old and I come from Normandy, in the north-west of France. I live in Montmartin-en-Graignes, a little village, in the countryside near Utah Beach, one of the landing beaches. So it was quite easy and quick to come in Newbury for me. I have 2 sisters, Marion who is 17 and Manuella who is 11. I'm here this year because I'd like to improve my English level, to get some teaching experience (because I'd like to be an English teacher in France) and because I love the English culture! Dans la vie, j'aime la danse, la musique, sortir avec mes amis et ma famille, le cinéma et la natation.

Noemie Remilly





! Showtime !



Students following the Mathematics Study Plus programme have been learning all about the Royal Albert Hall and the people who work there, using a new resource called "Showtime!".



They have watched video clips featuring members of the Albert Hall staff going about their work. These films show how what is learned in the classroom is actually applied in the workplace. Students then undertake tasks to help the staff carry out various aspects of their work. They learn about people involved in marketing, the box office, programming, IT, and about lighting and sound technicians.

And as a reward for all their hard work, the students enjoyed a few snippets from this year's "Last Night of the Proms" and the "Dr. Who Prom".

MyMaths.co.uk

We continue to be subscribed to MyMaths as a school. This website is improving and expanding all the time and all of our students are able to log on and use it for revision and practice. It goes up to A Level standard and includes some booster exercises for improving GCSE grades. Students will be set some maths homework online, about once a term; they will receive login details from their class teacher in order to access this.

Any extra work practising maths outside of lessons and in addition to homework is a valuable way to improve understanding and numeracy skills. MyMaths is very interactive and visual, and perfect for encouraging independent learning skills at home.



Year 8 and 9 students of German attend a lecture for children at the Reading University

On the 5th October I took a group of 21 students of German to the University of Reading for a lecture for children on the division of Germany after the 2nd World War. This was organised by the Goethe Institute in London and Ute Woelfel a German professor working at and for the Universities of Reading, Cambridge and Berlin. We first started with the lecture; we then had lunch and then finished off with a tour round the Campus.

Instead of me stating what the students have learned and whether it was successful, here a few of the statements written by the students as feedback:

Today I learned that when the wall was built that there (were) families split apart and couldn't see each other, they couldn't even cross

I learned that Germany got split into 4 for the countries Russia, England, France, America

I learned that West Germany was a lot richer than East Germany because it was a free country.

I learned that the east side of Germany was only allowed a few things.

A new thing I've learnt today is the difference between socialism and capitalism: socialism → everything is state-owned; capitalism → if you have the money you can buy anything

In 1990 the Berlin Wall that split the two halves got knocked down

They (Germany) united on my birthday

I enjoyed today because we got to learn about the German culture after the war and the university

I enjoyed the tour round the university

I think that it (the University) would be a good place to go ... If you have children you can send them to nursery (on campus).

I loved Reading Uni ... I would love to go again

The Uni in Reading is cool

There are 17,500 students at the University and over 1 million books in the library.

I thought it was very good and I learned a lot.

Thanks again I enjoyed it.

I think the trip was very fun because I learned things that I did not know

Mrs Forster



Children' s Day at Reading University

The first item on the program that day was a lecture dealing focussing on “German childhood in the 1980s – differences between East and West Germany” given by a German professor of the university. The children, who already had great historical knowledge about the split Germany of the past, was given a very authentic impression of what being a child was like both in the West and in the East. They got to know typical toys for each side of the Berlin Wall for example. The lecturer did it well to impart historically important facts to the children by catching their interests.

The lecture was completed by giving around an original piece of the Berlin Wall, which was brought by one of our students. That was a great non-theoretical finish for the students.

After this, all pupils had lunch together, they were shown round by a student from Reading University. They got to know different buildings and institutions of the university.

The invention of the Children' s Day is a good method to show young children rudimentarily what studying and spending time in universities is like. Also the children' s feedback leads to the impression that this day was a complete success and should be repeated next year.

David– German Assistant



The Downs School takes part in a language-project-pilot

From the 13th September to the 8th October 2010 the Downs School has been so privileged to invite a teacher student from the University of Leipzig in Germany to teach our Year 9, 10, 12 and 13 German groups some Chemistry lessons – but all in German. This was part of a CLIL-project-pilot brought into life by the Willink School, the Goethe Institut and the University of Leipzig. CLIL stands for “Content and Language Integrated Learning” or put more simply a subject topic such as in our case “Global Warming” taught through a foreign language. This is a more hands-on and realistic way of using a foreign language and helps most students to almost forget that they are still learning a foreign language as they get stuck into the concepts of the other subject.

Our student teacher was Sascha Froemert who studies English and Chemistry to become a teacher in Germany. He first observed a few lessons to get an idea of how languages are taught at our school and then had between 2 and 4 lessons with our groups in which he taught our students the causes and effects of Global Warming, the CO₂-cycle, a few chemical equations including CO₂ and much more which most students mastered brilliantly and found out how little I know about Chemistry. The content was always tailored to each group and the tasks therefore ranged from group work, worksheets, partner work and mind-mapping to original scientific texts and chemical equations. And just to stress it again: everything in German!

During the project and especially during the Post-Project-Conference which Mrs Preece, I and representatives of all other involved school in Berkshire attended, it has become once more evident how enthusiastic our students are for new projects and ways of learning things. Every single one of our students took part in the lessons and persevered when it got a bit more difficult and they all followed my plea at the start of the project just to “go with it and have fun”.

Comments on the post-project-questionnaire:

*Year 9: I think we should learn more science in German
Do it again!*

*Year 10: The teacher needs to speak more German
I think it was an interesting way of learning German
I would like to have more time on each project*

What's next?

The Languages Department has been already been moving towards more project-based Schemes of Work across all Year Groups and is very keen to explore the ideas of CLIL in our daily teaching. We have already and will be devising other similar projects throughout the year inside and outside MFL lessons; e.g. PDP lessons in Year 8 in French, Year 7 and Year 9 Cross-Curricular Days, Languages Conferences; and of course we will try our hardest to continue this project next year.



Mrs Forster



Figure 2 Sascha Froemert presenting some tasks during the post-project-conference

Figure 1 student teachers and professor from Leipzig University, representatives from Goethe-Instituts, school mentors



The Downs receives the Full International School Award

We are delighted to inform you that The Downs School has just been awarded the prestigious *full International School Award* in recognition of its work to bring the wider world into the classroom.

The International School Award is an accreditation scheme run by The British Council for the Department of Education and Skills in the UK. The scheme recognizes and rewards excellent practice in adding an international dimension to the school curriculum.

At The Downs School we want to make a difference to our students and equip them with the knowledge and skills required to operate in the global climate of the 21st Century. We also want to provide a curriculum that motivates and engages students and enables them to communicate competently with people from other countries and with different cultural outlooks.

The *International School Award* provides a platform for all of the above and establishes a framework for developing international work for a 'whole school' commitment. It helps our students to recognize their contribution and responsibilities as citizens of the global community. It helps to equip them with the skills to make informed decisions and to make positive changes to the wider world. Our lasting partnerships with schools overseas is an invaluable way to enrich school life, share expertise and excite our students and staff about global issues.

The award was earned by submitting a huge portfolio of evidence of all the international activities that take place here at The Downs. The activities highlighted include links with our partnership school Araniko, in Nepal; the development of the teaching of Mandarin Chinese, the international aspects of cross curricular days – 'mini Olympics' day and talking Japanese; the successful exchange programmes with France, Spain and Germany, the international curriculum taught at the school and finally all our community language and cultural activities in connection with the Education Business Partnership which schools from all over West Berkshire attend.

The International School Award is a fantastic accolade for the school and recognizes all the staff and students' hard work and involvement to obtain the award. We look forward to building on our success and communicating to you, on our website or by letter, our year round curriculum based international activities.



Year 8 trip to Boulogne

On the 18th of September, like every year, we took 45 Year 8 students on a day trip to Boulogne, on the North coast of France. We had to be at school for a 5 am departure! Getting up was probably the most challenging part of the day!

We travelled by coach and Eurotunnel and we tried to see the fish during the crossing but none made an appearance! 😊

In Boulogne, the students visited the weekly market and had to buy their lunch: they all had a go at using their French for that purpose. We then went up to the old part of Boulogne where we had a great view from the top of the Remparts. We observed the start of a French wedding by the Mairie (Town Hall) but didn't get to see the bride!



All students were very impressed when we visited the cathedral with its awe-inspiring 100 metres high dome, the second biggest in Europe! The crypt of the Cathedral was also a highlight of the day.

Finally, we went to do some supermarket research and bought some French essentials!

We arrived back at school at 8 pm, tired but pleased with the day we spent in France. The students clearly had a great day and from the staff's point of view, we were impressed by the politeness of every single member of the group who thanked their teachers for the trip that was organised for them.





The Downs School has made an appearance in the first GSP Nepal Newsletter! Below you can see the article on our link with Araniko School.

Araniko Higher Secondary School and The Downs School

Recipient of Reciprocal Visit Grant



Getting Started

To enrich teaching and learning through an authentic global dimension, to exchange knowledge about teaching techniques and learn from each others' experience and to develop bilateral relationship for cultural, social and educational exchanges were the underlying objectives of starting this partnership. From what started as an opportunity to know each other better, the partnership today has completed various curricular projects on Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Social Justice and Equity.

The Benefits

Students and staff at both schools learn more real details about being global citizens from individual students and staff at the partner school. The personal contacts are so informative and exciting. The visits have really opened the eyes of both students and staff to the realities of living in very different cultures and education systems. Students have improved their English and communication skills through letter and poetry writing. Students and staff have thought more about cross curricular work, synthesising and extending what they do in individual subject lessons. We have gained a mutual respect for, and better understanding of, the challenges we face in our education systems.

"It is great to see that students have been challenged to consider issues such as "are the results of development always positive?" There is nothing like being there, meeting and discussing with people. We think this is one of the best ways to be global citizens." – Christine Frankum, The Downs School

"GSP is an interesting way to motivate students to ask questions and have an enquiring mind. They enjoy learning through these projects and understand the importance of being global citizens." – Prem Bahadur Khadka, Araniko H S School



The Driving Force

A belief that education is more than what happens in the classroom and that people around the world need to understand each other and so work together for a better world is what motivates students and staff from both schools to move ahead!



Maths Award

In year 7 April and in year 8 Libby, have both been awarded a Yellow Maths Award this term. Maths award is a scheme for students who wish to study maths beyond the curriculum. Students can see any member of the maths department to find out how to earn their maths colours.

Senior Maths Challenge

The senior maths challenge will take place on Thursday 4th November and will involve students in the sixth form on the A Level maths courses. Good luck!!!!

Watch this space for the results!!!

T Speare *Head of Maths*



Leicester Space

Up at the crack of dawn, some bleary-eyed Year 8s and their tutors journeyed up to the Leicester Space Centre on 21st October. Despite the early start, the students and staff had a great time in participating in workshops and learning all there is to know about space. Below 8PR share some of the best bits!

“I liked the life sized space capsule. It was great fun flicking switches and pushing buttons.” - *Laura*

“I enjoyed the Space Centre because it was interesting. You could interact with things as well as learn. I think the best thing was the video in the 3D dome, ‘We are Astronomers’ as it was a fun way to learn.”

“I enjoyed the day out to the Space Centre. The ‘We are Astronomers’ was interesting. All the activities were fun.”



“I mostly liked all the hands-on activities which helped me learn things.”

“I really enjoyed the workshop about astronauts.”

8PR



The Maths Department encourages students to enter **THE NATIONAL CIPHER CHALLENGE**

Could your name be on the Leader Board?

Might you win a prize?



What is the National Cipher Challenge?

It's a web-based code-breaking competition which runs from October to January.

Who can enter?

Any student from the age of 10 to 18.

Why do I want to enter?

It's fun and you can win money and prizes for yourself and your school.

What do I have to do?

Battle the forces of evil as they try to unite the Koh-i-Noor twins and enslave the world.

How does it work?

The challenges are published at www.cipher.maths.soton.ac.uk at 3.15 p.m. each Thursday.

Solutions then have to be submitted by midnight the following Wednesday.

Each challenge comes in two parts.

- Part A consists of letters and notes sent between Harry and his friends as they try to save civilisation (lightly encrypted at first, but as security is tightened the ciphers will become harder to crack.)
- Part B consists of intercepted messages between the conspirators. Since they have so much to hide, these messages will often be much more securely encrypted.
- You can submit solutions to either Part A or Part B, or to both of them.



How do I get involved?

Register your team (which could be just yourself) on the web site.

You might also like to read through the teachers' pack, which gives you some ideas on how to break codes.

What happens next?

The first challenge will appear on the web site on Thursday 7th October.

When you think you have solved a challenge, you need to "submit your solution" on the web site.

You will get email feedback on how you have done, and your name might appear on the "Leader Board" of the web site.

Your overall performance in the competition depends on how well you tackle the Part B challenges, but there will be small prizes for your efforts on the easier Part A challenges.

What if I don't have access to the web or want some help?

Come and see Mrs. Sims in GT18.

We have been practicing codebreaking and trying our hand at some of the challenges in Maths Club.



www.cipher.maths.soton.ac.uk



Science Day

Thursday 21st October was our main Science specialism event of the year, Science Day!

All pupils were off timetable for the day following a specially prepared curriculum focussing on personal learning and thinking skills. There was a great atmosphere around the school and a strong competitive element in some year groups.



7R with their presentation for Saturn

Year 7 spent the day creating presentations to promote their planet as a new holiday destination for earthlings. The creativity shown by all tutor groups was exceptional, from the creation of new languages to national anthems and flags. Winners will be announced shortly!

Year 8 had an early start in the dark to set out for Leicester Space Centre. Staff and students had an excellent time finding out about the effects of gravity on other planets and what it takes to be an astronaut. They also completed some workshops which focussed on teamwork and improving their communications skills.



Launching the winning rocket for 9Ma

Year 9 were looking at the flight of rockets and how they would promote the new Virgin Galactic flights to space. They ended the day with a team competition to launch their rocket the highest and their glider the furthest. 9Ma were the worthy winners after launching their glider twice the distance of most others.



Science day continued...



Year 10 students with their tempered chocolate

Year 10 had a day centred around making chocolate. They got to experiment with tempering chocolate and finding how it is made so smooth. Each tutor group also had to work as a team to decide on a new chocolate to be launched, creating everything from the name and flavour to the advert.

Year 11 were on a journey of discovery to find their strengths and weaknesses when working in a team. Here is a description of the day by Emily and Charlotte.

'For our year 11 Science day we had a mixture of activities to do that linked in with the film, Angels & Demons. These activities were; code breaking, a timed treasure hunt, science in the media and science vs. Religion. For code breaking we were given a piece of text to decode and to follow was to create our own piece of writing in the code. In the timed treasure hunt we were given a letter and a photo and had to work out where the different letters were around the school, spelling out the words 'Large Hadron Collider'.



Year 11s trying their hand at code breaking.

This activity got particularly competitive between forms! Another part of the day was to discuss the argument of Science vs. Religion. We had to collect as much information for both sides of the argument and then see if we could come to a conclusion. It was more different than we first thought! For the last activity we had to do 'Science in the headlines'. We had to make our own news reports to present to another form. At parts we were holding our sides with laughter when we were talking about Willy Wonka's three course bubble gum! In all I think it was fun and exciting and we still got to learn without reading from a textbook.'

The main task of the day for years 12 and 13 was to decide which person from the 20th Century had the most influence over the way they live their lives in the 21st Century. The highlight of the day had to be the John Logie Baird rap, however this wasn't enough to win and Emmeline Pankhurst was voted as the most influential by year 12.

Miss Gaster