



THE BADGER



THE DOWNS
MALVERN

PART OF THE MALVERN COLLEGE
FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

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Year 8 Leavers' Gift to TDM, painting by Antony Bridge: www.antonybridge.co.uk

Welcome from the Head

Welcome to the 2026 Summer Edition of The Badger, celebrating another memorable year at The Downs Malvern and the people, achievements and experiences that have made it so special.

I am sure that, like me, you find it hard to imagine that yet another academic year has flown by, as the adage goes, 'Time flies when you are having fun', and there has certainly been plenty of enjoyment over the course of the year, which may explain why the months have gone by so quickly! ▶





Welcome from the Head continued...

The Autumn Term saw record numbers of parents attending our Open Day, the reputation of the school having grown in the local area with word of mouth spreading positive news about the TDM education in many quarters. The Year 7 and 8 pupils enjoyed a fantastic sports and history tour to Holland where they played football and hockey as well as visiting the final resting place of Old Malvernians who paid the ultimate price for our freedom during the Second World War, on the battlefields of Arnhem.

The Spring Term was a resounding success with yet another superb haul of scholarships being awarded to the Year 8 cohort. With no fewer than 33 Scholarships and Exhibitions being won across the academic, sporting and creative disciplines, the pupils certainly stepped up to the mark in terms of accepting the challenge and demonstrating the continued pedigree of the all-round nature of the TDM education.

The final term saw the anticipation ratchet up to new levels as the impending ISI and Ofsted inspections became even more overdue, finally, the sword of

Damocles eventually fell and the call came in early June with the DfE having co-ordinated the two inspection regimes into a joint inspection visit, a real double whammy! Remaining undaunted and consummately professional, the staff team went about their business with confidence and clarity, ensuring both inspection teams had a positive experience of the school. The outcome was nothing short of excellent, and in the final report, the pupils' behaviour was also recognised as being 'exemplary' (we'd expect nothing less at The Downs!).

The Summer Term also saw the school endure a heatwave during June when the mercury topped 37 degrees and staff and pupils alike sought the shade, fans and the pockets of air conditioning around the school. The resilience and community spirit shown by our school community demonstrated the sense of collective responsibility and resourcefulness which is so often evident. In the final week of term, we enjoyed a wonderful Summer Celebration on Brock Meadow, with the steam trains providing families with rides, fantastic entertainment, games and refreshments for all. The Pre-Prep wowed us with their confidence and stage presence during the Summer Soirée and the final Summer Concert became a fitting tribute to our retiring Head of Music, Lesley Hunter, who was suitably surprised at the staff flashmob'-style rendition of a Hunter-themed sea shanty which had been rehearsed in secret for weeks preceding the concert.

As we draw the academic year to a close, there is time to reflect on what has been another extremely successful year in the history of our small but determinedly focussed school and we are looking forward to building on our successes in the new academic year.



Andy Nuttall
Headmaster



Two Years Young

How Mini Malvern Found Its Feet.

Two years after opening its doors, Mini Malvern has quickly established itself as a thriving part of both The Downs Malvern and the wider local community.

To mark the occasion, we spoke to Nursery Manager Sandy Munden about the original vision for Mini Malvern, how it has grown over the past two years, and what makes her most excited for the future.

When you recall the early days of Mini Malvern, what was the original vision for it?

Our main goal was to support the local community by offering high-quality nursery provision for younger children, as options in Colwall were few and far between. We set out to create an outstanding and distinctive nursery setting that would give children the very best start, while helping to make the next step into school feel as natural and familiar as possible.

In what ways has Mini Malvern developed most significantly over the past two years?

One of the biggest developments has simply been the number of children now attending! The fact that we have such a strong waiting list is a great indicator of the quality we offer and how positively Mini Malvern has been received by families, and I'm thrilled by that. Families speak very positively about Mini Malvern, and we often hear lovely comments when we are out in the community with the children.

There have also been lots of practical developments along the way, including changes in government funding, adapting our fee structures and completing our recent Ofsted inspection. All of those steps have helped Mini Malvern continue to evolve. ▶





Two Years Young continued...

How has the Nursery environment and approach developed as Mini Malvern has become more established?

As Mini Malvern has settled, the routines have become much more established, and it has been lovely to see the staff grow in confidence. That has a real impact on the children too. When the staff are confident, consistent and calm in their approach, the children pick up on that and feel secure in their environment.

Adapting what we do to suit each child has always been central to our approach. Every child is unique, so we need to be flexible, making sure they have opportunities that support their learning and development. In the Moment Planning really helps with this, and by linking more closely with the EYFS and Reception planning, we are helping the children build the foundations they will need as they continue their journey through the school.

What impact do you feel Mini Malvern is having on children as they move into Pre-Prep?

One of the most positive things we see is how confidently the children move into Pre-Prep. They are already familiar with the environment, the routines and the staff within the department, so that next step feels much less daunting for them.

There is a real family feeling here, and that helps the children feel secure, settled and ready for the next stage.

What has been your most memorable or rewarding moment from the last two years?

One was certainly our Christmas stay-and-play activity session with parents. There was such a lovely atmosphere, and it was wonderful to see the children feeling proud to work alongside their parents. The feedback from families was so positive, and it has encouraged us to plan more opportunities for families to come in and share special moments with the children throughout the year.

What are you most excited about for the future?

I am excited to see Mini Malvern continue to grow and evolve. We want to keep building on the positive start we have made by welcoming more children and families, developing our team and continuing to make Mini Malvern a happy and nurturing place for the children. It has been a wonderful two years so far, and we're only just getting started!

“ The fact that we have such a strong waiting list is a great indicator of the quality we offer and how positively Mini Malvern has been received by families. ”



Pre-Prep

As my first year at TDM draws to a close, it is wonderful to look back and reflect on some of the highlights of the year.

The Autumn Term kicked off with Year 1 & 2 learning about space in their 'Blast Off' topic. The children impressed Mrs Hardinges and me with how quickly they learnt the names of the planets and their features, and we marvelled together with the children at the International Space Station. We were very grateful to Mr Hnatek, parent, governor and science teacher at Malvern College, for his support during this topic: first visiting by day to share images and information about space telescopes and galaxies and then later in the term, once night had fallen, giving the children an opportunity to stargaze themselves. Dressed in their pyjamas, the children enjoyed supper and bedtime stories as well as spotting the moon and a number of stars through the telescope. A very memorable evening!

Other highlights of the Autumn Term include the visit to Colwall Apple Orchard where the children had a hands-on experience of making their own apple juice. As a reward for their hard work, they enjoyed sampling their handiwork. Delicious! Reception took off on their reading and writing journey in this term, quickly becoming confident readers and writers, a favourite moment being when they discovered 'magic' writing! ▶





Pre-Prep continued...

Christmas was a suitably sparkly and festive season with a visit to The Roses Theatre in Tewkesbury for their pantomime, 'Jack and the Beanstalk', and a fun Christmas party with a visit from Father Christmas himself! Amongst all the fun, we found time to rehearse and perform 'The Angel Who Nearly Missed It All' and I was proud of the children for delivering lines, singing solos and most of all for their growing confidence. The beautiful Carol Service, held at Malvern College Chapel, was a delightful end to the term and I was proud of all the Pre-Prep children for singing so beautifully.

The Spring Term held more highlights with pancake races in the Sports Hall and our Mothers Day assembly where the children sang and performed to celebrate all those who care for us. There were more than a few glistening eyes as the children shared what they love about their mothers and a 'recipe for a super mum'. The Spring Term also saw the start of our 'Year 2 Assembly' series. The children in Year 2 took wonderful pride in preparing and delivering their very own assemblies on a topic of their choice and we learnt from the children about dragons, Leonardo the tortoise, the Pony Club mascot and the beautiful island of Tresco, just to name a few! Thank you to all of Year

2 for entering into this with such gusto. I know that the upcoming Year 2 class are looking forward to it being their turn!

The Summer Term was filled with so many special events and moments which really celebrated the breadth of opportunity for the children at TDM. Sports Day gave our athletes a chance to shine and everyone had an opportunity to participate in fun races such as the infamous 'quoit' and 'three-legged' races. Year 2 enjoyed joining Years 3 & 4 for an extended Forest School camping extravaganza, which was the perfect opportunity to support their transition across the road into the Prep School. They helped put up tents, cooked s'mores and played with their friends in the trees. The hard work that is poured into Drama and Music lessons was on display in our 'Year 1 & 2 Performing Arts Showcase' which was a treat for all and Year 2 Junior Choir members can be proud of themselves for their super performances in the end-of-year Summer Concert. We all survived the heatwave with early playtimes in the shade, foot spas and perhaps an ice lolly treat or two! We explored our local area with a walk at the end of term. Year 1 and 2 made it to the top of the Malvern Hills where they were rewarded with beautiful views.

Oaks and Reception discovered a stream which we followed, bravely hopping across the stones before returning to Forest School for our picnic lunch.

The real highlight for me was 'Croak', our Pre-Prep Soirée. The children delivered their lines clearly and confidently, sang beautifully and performed with such a wonderful energy to their proud families. It was an opportunity for me to see how much the children have grown in their abilities and their confidence during the year. The Soirée took the audience on a journey into a beautiful summer garden, where Speedy the tadpole and his insect and animal friends reminded us that we can do great things when we are brave enough to try. What better message to end the year on!

Between these headline moments lay the daily rhythm that truly makes a school year: the first brave jump into the swimming pool, the letter formation finally mastered, the kindness offered without being asked. As we close the book on this year, the pages feel full of so many memories but, most importantly, the pages are full of children who are a little taller in every way that matters, curious, kind, and ready for what comes next.

Emily Willetts



Boarding

Life in the Boarding House has continued to be busy, action-packed and vibrant.

Our full boarding community, made up of girls and boys from Year 3 to Year 8 and representing several countries around the world, has been the heartbeat of the school, living and learning here seven days a week. Our flexi boarders have brought lots of energy and dynamism, especially on our themed fun nights, and it is wonderful that around three quarters of the Prep School have boarded at some stage this academic year. Some stay regularly each week and some more sporadically, and whether it is to spend time with friends, reduce the time spent travelling to and from school or perhaps to help wider family logistics, our flexi boarding provision is a very important part of TDM life.

In addition to our wonderful on-site facilities, our Sunday trips have been a varied and enriching element of our boarding provision. Our trips and activities have included a hike in the Malvern hills; a trip to Drayton Manor theme park; playing conkers and carving pumpkins; a trip to the cinema and Flip Out trampoline park; ice skating; escape rooms, and the Autumn Term concluded with a Christmas shopping expedition to Worcester. The Spring Term kicked off with our annual Olympiad, followed by climbing in Gloucester; a creative day painting mugs; a shopping trip and a treasure hunt around the grounds. The Summer Term was equally thrilling with a trip to the Herefordshire Raceway to go-karting; a hike up British Camp; mountain biking at the Forest of Dean; aquatic fun at the Aztec water park, rounded off with the final weekend which began with the fantastic Summer Celebration on the Saturday evening! In amongst all that, the children enjoyed various BBQs and special weekend menus as part of Boarders' Choice, and lots of well-deserved time on site enjoying our grounds and facilities, in the sports hall, on Brock Meadow playing in dens or just relaxing at the end of a very busy week at school. There were also many opportunities to get the water pistols out in the final couple of weeks of term, with all the sun and soaring temperatures that we enjoyed and endured in equal measure.



There were also many opportunities to get the water pistols out in the final couple of weeks of term, with all the sun and soaring temperatures that we enjoyed and endured in equal measure.

Our Fun Nights have been a popular addition to the calendar, and it has been wonderful to welcome so many children into the House for these occasions. Some were for the younger years; some were aimed at Years 7 and 8 and some were open to all. In all, we enjoyed Downsfest with live music from senior musicians at Malvern College; Nerf wars; sushi making; Spotlight: Breakout!; spa night; the annual House Talent Show; slip 'n' slide; a campfire and finally the Cricket Big Bash.

Running through all of these amazing events and opportunities are our core values that underpin our boarding community: kindness and consideration towards others; the importance of empathy and being a good friend; respect (which can be towards another child, their personal space and needs, and towards staff and their expectations); and showing courage when, inevitably, there are tricky moments to overcome socially or academically.

We say goodbye to our leavers who move on with our very best wishes. Particular mention goes to **Hasleena**, who has been an outstanding leader and Head of House, and to all of Year 8 who have been an excellent cohort, full of enthusiasm for boarding life. We also say a heartfelt thank you and best wishes to Mr Phill Griffiths, who has been a stalwart member of the boarding community for ten years. The children have benefitted enormously from his kind and consistent care, his enthusiasm for pumpkin carving, Nerf wars and all the other activities he throws himself wholeheartedly into, and his unwavering dedication to boarding at TDM.

As we look forward to the year ahead, welcoming pupils and staff will mark the beginning of a fresh chapter and we know it will be filled with fun and laughter, friendship and myriad opportunities for growth and learning: boarding at The Downs is very special indeed.

John Warlow



Creative Arts

Music

As another academic year draws to a close, it gives us time to once again reflect on the past year and everything the Music Department has been up to.

During the course of the year, the following children have successfully passed their ABRSM or Trinity exams:

- » **Esmé A** (Grade 2 Violin)
- » **Tobias B** (Grade 2 Piano)
- » **George B** (Grade 5 Trumpet & Grade 7 Piano)
- » **Leo C** (Grade 1 Jazz Saxophone)
- » **Anna-Jean E** (Grade 2 Piano)
- » **Jem G** (Grade 3 Piano)
- » **Cressida G** (Grade 5 Piano)
- » **Peggy H** (Grade 1 Musical Theatre)
- » **James H** (Grade 2 Jazz Clarinet)
- » **Woody J** (Grade 1 Drum Kit)
- » **Blake de L** (Grade 1 Piano)
- » **Martha M** (G1 Singing)
- » **Chloe M** (Grade 1 Timpani)
- » **Ava N** (Grade 4 Singing)
- » **Alfie N** (Grade 3 Piano)
- » **Annabelle S** (Initial Violin)
- » **Erin W** (Grade 3 Singing)

We congratulate all our young performers on their fantastic achievements. However, I feel it is fitting to highlight one pupil in particular: **George B**, for gaining a very high distinction in his Grade 7 piano exam. We are so proud of all our budding young musicians, they are an inspiration to us all.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate **George B** and **Cressida G** on both being awarded Music Scholarships to Malvern College early in the Spring Term. I was absolutely thrilled for them both on this wonderful achievement.

I am delighted that in this, my final year, we have been able to join forces with the Malvern College Music Department on several occasions. Our children had the opportunity to take part in a Creative Day in September and a Curiosity Day in June. Both occasions gave our pupils the chance to work with Malvern College staff and experience the wonderful facilities the college has to offer.

It was also our pleasure to join with the College Music Department to support a number of their concerts. Two jazz evenings gave some of our young players an opportunity to practise their improvisation skills. Then, the Michaelmas Concert in November gave us our first glimpse of Christmas, where the Senior Choir sang beautifully amidst a very varied programme featuring some notable musicians. In March, we joined forces once more to sing at the Spring Concert in Malvern Priory. The acoustics there are magnificent, and performing in such a large space was truly awe-inspiring. Looking forward, I do hope to see more of these joint ventures; it is such a wonderful experience for our pupils to stand and perform alongside pupils and staff from the College. Our thanks go to James Ramm for providing all these fantastic opportunities.

Back on home ground, our young musicians have delighted us with their wonderful performances during Friday morning assemblies, informal concerts, chapel services, the Pre-Prep Christmas Nativity, the Summer Soirée, the House Singing Competition, Grandparents' Day, and, of course, the end-of-year Summer Concert.

The Summer Concert is, for me, always one of the great highlights. This grand celebration features every pupil from Year 3 to Year 8, giving them all the opportunity to showcase their musical prowess. The concert included solo performances from our scholarship pupils and was intended to end with a rousing rendition of The Beatles' 'Here Comes the Sun' for everyone to sing. However, my wonderful colleagues and friends had other ideas.



Unbeknownst to me, they had secretly been rehearsing a beautiful song to conclude my teaching career. Words written by Mrs Reid and Mrs Richardson and sung to the tune from the Wellerman sea shanty, I was, and still am, completely humbled and deeply honoured by the tribute they paid me. Thank you!

So finally, from me: It has been an absolute honour and privilege to do the job I love so much, in such a wonderful school, surrounded by a community that truly values music and the arts. I am immensely proud of everything our children and staff have achieved

throughout the years, and I wish each and every one of you all the very best for the future. As for me, I don't know what comes next. For once, I don't have a timetable or a detailed programme, but I do know it's time for a new chapter.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for letting me be a part of your lives. I leave with a lifetime of happy memories, wonderful performances, and dear friends.

Lesley Hunter



Creative Arts continued...

Art

During the Autumn Term, a large oil painting from the school's heritage Art collection depicting Kangchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world, was loaned to a series of exhibitions to celebrate the life of famous mountaineer, medical missionary, and artist T. Howard Somervell. 'Before and After Everest' was staged at the Alpine Club, and then at John Mitchell Fine Art in London, before transferring to the Archive Gallery, Grasmere in the Lake District. On its return, the painting was displayed in the Memo Hall for all to admire and the fascinating legacy of the man behind the picture was explored in a recent school assembly.



'Kangchenjunga seen from Darjeeling, India' by T.H.Somervell - oils on board, 1939

There will be an opportunity to further reflect on the school's rich artistic heritage through an exhibition of paintings by E. Maurice Feild (artist and teacher at The Downs 1928-1954) alongside examples of work by former pupils, such as Lawrence Gowing, Andrew Forge, Patrick George, Francis Hoyland, Anthony Fry, and Kenneth Rowntree. This is planned for the end of 2027 at the Forge/Lynch Gallery, Pall Mall, London. Significant works will be loaned to the exhibition, the first of its kind since 2013, when the school last staged a major retrospective of the influential teacher.



*Summer Art Competition winners: **Cressida**, **Anna-Jean**, and **Olivia**.*

Last year's Art Competition on the theme of 'Wild and Wilderness', linked appropriately to the loan of T. H. Somervell's painting of the Himalayas, was fantastically well supported with over seventy entries submitted. As always, many examples of different media and processes were used: pencils, charcoal, paint, printing inks, clay, papier-mâché, textiles, photography, collage, and found objects. All submissions received stars or merits, a certificate, and a slice of Kendal Mint Cake! Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to summit Mount Everest, carried the snack in his rucksack. Thank you to our adjudicator, Mr James, who had trekked to the Everest Base Camp himself – so perfect qualifications! Winners: 1st – **Anna Jean E** (Year 7), 2nd – **Cressida G** (Year 8), 3rd – **Olivia W** (Year 4).

Congratulations to the following for gaining 13+ Art awards to Malvern College: **Cressida G** (Art Scholarship), **Erin W** (Art Scholarship), **Michael R** (Art Scholarship), **James H** (Photography Scholarship), **Robert C** (Art Exhibition). We are proud of all their achievements!

It has been a very good year for awarding Senior Art Colours to recognise continued effort and progress within the Visual Arts. **Morgan C**, **Robert C**, **Fleur D-D**, **Cressida G**, **Lucy H**, **James H**, **Ava N**, **Michael R**, **Hugo S**, and **Erin W** received their badges in assembly.



*'Silver Birches in the Snow' by **Ida B** (Year 7), watercolours*

Nature was the theme of the Colwall Rotary Club Art Competition in November. **Beatrice D** (Year 4) won the Key Stage 2 category for her 'Wildflowers' acrylic painting and **Ida B** (Year 7) won the Key Stage 3 category for her 'Silver Birches in the Snow' watercolour. The competition attracted over a hundred and twenty entries from local school children and was judged by a panel of Rotary Club members and local artists. **Joshua M** (Year 4), **Lottie S** (Year 5), **Felix W** (Year 6), and **Anna-Jean E** (Year 7) also gained Highly Commended. Thank you to everyone who supported this worthwhile competition.



*Rotary Club and Three Counties Art Competition winners: **Lottie**, **Joshua**, **Ida**, **Bea**, **Anna-Jean**, **Bella** and **Felix**.*



*'Coastal breeze' by **Michael** (Year 8), oils on canvas.*

In the Three Counties Christmas Card Competition, **Arabella S** (Year 6) won the junior age category, and her design was printed as the official Three Counties Agricultural Society Christmas Card for 2025. This was a fantastic achievement for a competition that was promoted across Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. ▶



Creative Arts continued...

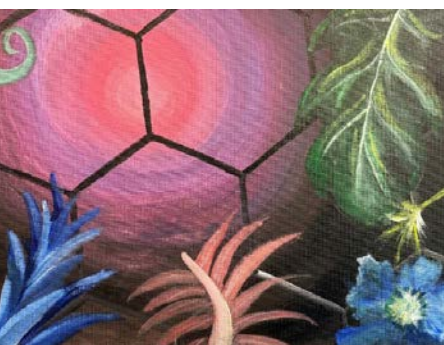
Art continued...



'Stag beetle' by **Esmé A**
(Year 6), acrylics on board



'Rock arch, Cornwall' by
Cressida G (Year 8), acrylics
on board



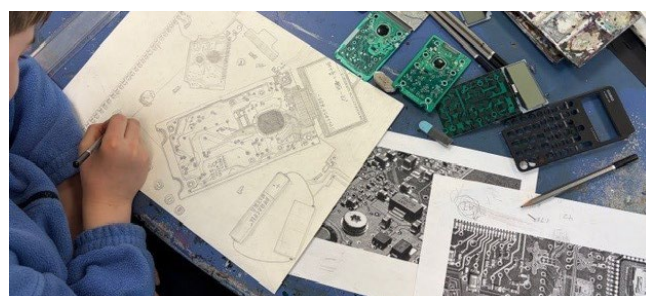
'Inspired by Eden' by **Erin W**
(Year 8), acrylics on board



'Perspective lines' by **James H**
(Year 8), colour photograph



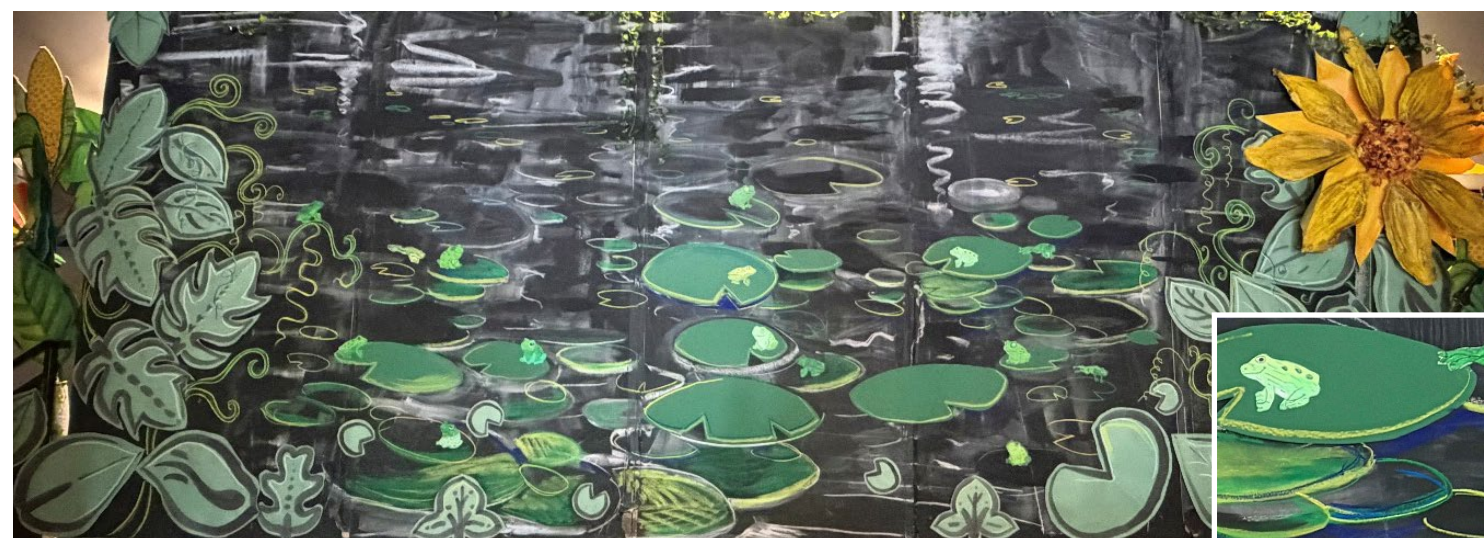
Some ammonite fossil prints
by pupils in Year 5



Morgan, Lucy, Cressida, and Erin developing
independent work during Senior Art Activity.

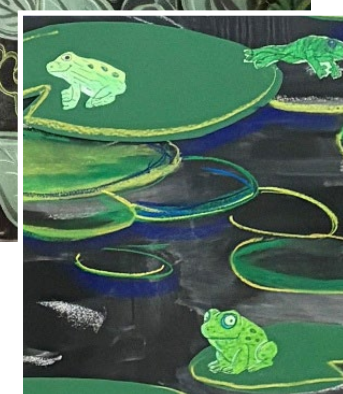


Hugo with his sketchbook in Cornwall,
'Bedruthan Steps' drawing and painting
by **Alvaro**, coastal landscape by **Fleur**



Spot the frog! How many frogs can you spot?
Year 3 created 15 frogs for the Pre-Prep Summer Soirée backdrop.

Simon Mellor





Creative Arts continued...

Drama

Drama has flourished this year at The Downs, with an extravaganza of theatrical performances and an abundance of opportunities for our pupils to get involved. Whether operating the lights, creating props, designing costumes or organising the running order, pupils have played a part in all aspects of staging shows.

We kicked off with our senior production, a visually stunning stage adaptation of Philip Pullman's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*. Our Senior cast of Years 7 and 8 were lucky to have the opportunity to perform on stage at the Rogers Theatre at Malvern College, which was exciting and elevates the entire ensemble experience, giving pupils access to professional-level facilities including dressing rooms, wardrobe, and a green room! We are extremely fortunate at The Downs to have multi-talented staff who can lend their expertise on productions, and for this show, our giant willow elephant puppet 'Hamlet' was designed and made by our very own Mrs Belgard, who was happy to revisit her background in theatre design. The show was challenging and joyous in equal measure, as the cast got to grips with the exotic, magical story setting 'east of the jungle and south of the mountains' as well as the emotional range expected of them in this rite-of-passage adventure. Leanne Cook put them through their paces with some challenging choreography set to a suitably uplifting, Asian-inspired soundtrack. There are no hiding places in dialogue-heavy straight plays, and I am so proud of each cast member for their tenacity and hard-work in meeting me at the level I knew they could reach. The rollercoaster of rehearsals is always worth it when you hear the audience applause and feel those magic, ephemeral moments that only live theatre can provide. The amusing image of **Toby C** in vintage lederhosen as Herr Puffenflach, directing his giant prawn firework as

it twanged, pinged, and fizzed to the tune of 'Beer Barrel Polka' will long stay in my memory!

We moved on apace with our Intermediate production of E. Nesbit's *Five Children & It*, amusingly adapted by Marietta Kirkbride. I must admit I have wanted to direct this story for a long time and have never forgotten being read it as a child with wide eyes, full of wonder. The whimsical adventures of the children and the humorous yet insightful lessons they learn from the Psammead proved irresistible to our precociously talented cast, and they took to the script with glee! We had such a lot of fun in rehearsals for this show, which is fast-paced and demands a good degree of actor-discipline for a young cast. It is a true ensemble show, with each actor working together live on stage to transform locations before the audiences' eyes. The cast shone brightly in performance, embracing the fantastical series of adventures which featured gold treasure, flying children, babies turning into embarrassing adults and even a siege at a castle! **Evie F-F** and **Hattie B** sharing the lead as the purple, fluffy and very grumpy sand fairy 'IT' provided so many laugh-out-loud moments, while **Martha M**, **Arabella S**, **Esmé A** and **Sofia S** were simply wonderful at bringing their young characters to life. I would like to leave you with one abiding memory of **Lochie L-D** as the grown-up baby Hillary, scooting off theatrically in despair and disgust with the line "enjoy your tiny pointless lives... I'm going to the only place where a man has any hope of getting along...Soho!" Thank you, dear children, for the joy and the heart each of you put into the show.

Not wanting to be outdone, the Juniors then brought us a rousing musical adaptation from the National Theatre, *Emil and the Detectives*. I was delighted with the effort, commitment, and creativity of our youngest actors, for whom this was a first stage performance in a leading role and they did not disappoint. The story follows young Emil, played by **Ethan H** and **Ottillie T**, set in a Weimar Republic Berlin, as he bravely bands together



with other youngsters to track down the bowler-hatted thief Mr Snow and recover his grandmother's money. The cast were amazed and delighted to see Mr Mellor's distorted monochrome set, echoing Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, which brilliantly added to the sense of brooding threat and chaos of the crowded city streets. We were able to procure a vintage streetlamp from the RSC which further enhanced the atmosphere for our excited cast. **Ben S** played the shady Mr Snow with suitable shiftiness and an edge of danger, though one of my favourite moments of the show was when one of the children shouted "look he's getting away" while Ben was still on stage, and the moment of recognition on his face as he quickly scooted off the stage was just hilarious!

Speech & Drama is going from strength to strength at The Downs, as our LAMDA students established with their stellar set of results this year: 97% Distinctions! After exams, we start working on our Showcase, which this year was based on the theme of Journeys. The pupils delighted their audience

with an hilarious range of scenes, sketches, songs from the musicals and prose passages, each one chosen or devised to highlight the strengths of the individual and allow each pupil to find their spark. The Showcase functions rather like a scratch performance, with the LAMDA ensemble coming together on the day of the performance and collaborating to bring each piece to life with cameos or choral sound effects. It was such a treat to see them all shine so brightly this year, and I will never forget **Hugo S** and **Rory A**'s Taylor Swift epic, in slow motion to the tune of DJ Snake and Lil Jon!

Two of our talented pupils earned drama accolades this year, with Erin W receiving a Drama scholarship, and Hasleena H an Exhibition, to Malvern College.

Thank you to all our 'Dramaramas' at The Downs for spreading such joy and laughter and I am looking forward to next year's productions already.

Sally Whitaker



Design Technology

Life in the DT department has been full of energy, enthusiasm and creativity this year.

The curriculum is broad and varied, with the children engaged in a variety of projects throughout the year. Some are traditional in scope, using resistant materials and practical skills; some focus on the design process and prototype modelling, and others are technical and focus on IT and coding. Pupils work on their own, in pairs or in small groups depending on the project: the collaborative elements are very important in the pursuit of developing the children's communication skills and teamwork and are very much part of the school's values.

The year started with a very impressive range of entries for the DT Summer Holiday Marble Run Competition. With constructions from Years 1–8 adorning the Memo Hall in September, Mr Stokes, Head of DT at Malvern College, had the opportunity to see the pupils' creativity and initiative first-hand while judging the entries. Many congratulations to **Emelia S**, who won the Year 1 & 2 group with a beautiful sea-themed tower; **Eddie G** made the judges giggle with his Flushed Away creation in Year 3 & 4; and brothers **Felix** and **Hugo**, made a brilliant Out of This World space-inspired marble run, which also recorded the longest roll time of 1 minute and 31 seconds!

Year 5 enjoyed a broad curriculum as an introduction to DT in the Prep School. They started the year designing and making clocks out of MDF and acrylic. Next, they had a brief to design a 100 m² playground in pairs with set parameters; they then had to build a 3D scale model of their design and critically review how well they had responded to the brief. Finally, they had an introduction to LEGO robotics, using iPads to send code instructions, with a focus on accuracy and improvement.

Year 6's major project was making an automaton (a moving wooden toy) using cams and traditional skills of measuring, sawing and gluing. They also developed their robotics skills and focused on product design by reinventing an everyday classroom object (pencil case, water bottle, rucksack). They had a series of cooking lessons, learning different methods and techniques, and finished the year with some speed design lessons, having one hour to come up with a design for a range of briefs, including a discreet walking stick for James Bond, full of gadgets.

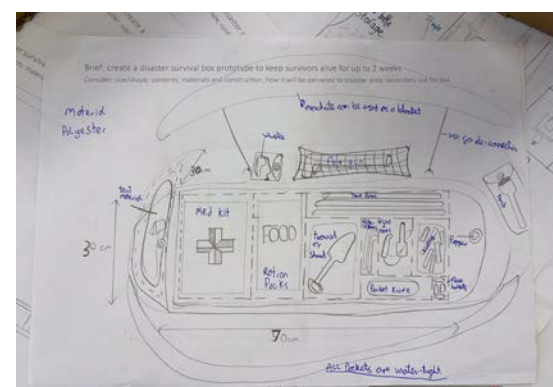
Year 7 had fun making and testing their wooden gravity-powered dragster cars in the first term. They then undertook a very interesting team challenge: to design a survival box which could be delivered to a community which has suffered a natural disaster, such as a tsunami or earthquake. Teamwork was essential here in researching the necessary contents as well as developing a practical design: how could this box be delivered if road access is impossible? What would this community need to stay alive? What second use for the box could they come up with? Their ideas, together with a 3D scale prototype, were presented to the class, with some truly impressive responses recognised.

Finally, Year 8 had an in-depth focus on robotics, culminating in a series of Robot Wars competitions. The focus then turned to engineering, using some impressive Dyson kit to learn about the many different engineering roles needed in today's society, followed by a product design project to come up with a new product which serves a specific purpose in society. Their final project was terrifically popular and successful: to design and make a new chocolate bar, including the brand, wrapper, recipe and shape. The children made formers from MDF, which were used to vacuum-form moulds ready for the melted chocolate and other ingredients.

The Saturday TinkerLab Hobby was also very popular. At the start of the term, pupils came up with their own project: what they wanted to make and how they would do it. Having discussed their designs and the practicalities involved, the children showed great independence and initiative, coming up with some wonderful finished work including various toys and games, a model treehouse and a trebuchet which

took part in the Great Egg Launch! Finally, huge congratulations go to **Otto**, who was awarded a DT Exhibition to Malvern College for his shell-inspired wooden stool, and an honourable mention to **Robert S** for his entry, a recycled table, which, alongside his creative ability over the past two years, earned him the Senior DT Prize.

John Warlow





The Downs Malvern Equestrian Team

From Celebration Assemblies to social media posts, we take tremendous pride in celebrating the success of our pupils both in and out of school. However, if there's one theme that has been particularly notable over the past 12 months, it is the success of our young equestrians, who have achieved a plethora of rosettes, trophies and accolades.

Congratulations to all our TDM Riders who have competed in local, national and international events over the past academic year: **Henry D, Tobias B, Flora A, Thomas B, Jemima J, Hugo A, Cece G, Fleur D-D** and, in particular, **Amelia D**. Amelia was recently selected with a direct reserve place to represent Great Britain at the European Championships, an outstanding achievement. We look forward to following their continued success and to welcoming many more riders to the TDM Team next academic year!



Academic Report

Academic provision continues to go from strength to strength at The Downs Malvern. Never content to rest on our laurels, we have looked to make further improvements in our teaching and learning this year.

September saw the introduction of what we have termed our Fab 5 – five features of an outstanding lesson. The first of these was the First Five: what happens in those first five minutes in a classroom. Children need to switch from one lesson to the next and be ready to hit the ground running, so our 'Do Nows' are now well established. How teachers use these is very much down to the individual department, although the overarching premise is to stimulate pupils' thinking from the moment they come into the room. Sometimes they may be used to check for understanding of a previous lesson, tackling the forgetting curve and reviewing knowledge, whilst at other times they are used to assess current knowledge in order to pitch the lesson correctly and ensure pupils get the most out of it.

This Fab 5 initiative has also allowed teachers to further develop their teaching practice through the sharing of best practice and resources. Peer lesson observations are now becoming normalised and the overall effect is an increasingly consistent approach to the structure of lessons across the school, whilst allowing essential space for the all-important individual personality and flair to shine through.

To embed all of this, INSETs have been jointly led by Steve Thomas, Deputy Head Academic at TDM, and Rebecca Roberts-Gawen, Director of Education Development, Malvern College International. In the Summer Term's INSET, teachers focused on the use of adaptive teaching, using 'hinge' questions to identify moments where a lesson may need to take a different direction based on pupils' demonstrated knowledge and understanding. This approach has helped teachers develop an improved understanding of the need for, and processes involved in, assessment for learning and how this can support all learners within their lessons. ▶





Academic Report continued...

The resulting discussions amongst colleagues demonstrated what a wonderful and ambitious staff body we have, one that contributes to the ever-improving standards of teaching and learning across the school.

In Years 7 and 8, the TDM Baccalaureate is now well established and continues to encompass everything The Downs stands for. Academic excellence is at its core, but there is also significant recognition for what we call Personal Development – how pupils perform in Sport, Creative Arts, Design and Technology and the Hobbies Programme. Children have wide-ranging strengths and this award continues to send the message that, if you keep on trying across the full range of opportunities available, something will stand out and you can run with it.

All too often, pupils are constrained too early by a school’s curricular offering, and the TDM Baccalaureate is the perfect antidote to such an approach. Whilst academia is always going to be at the core, individual strengths, enjoyment and future opportunities can be found in many different areas of life. We at TDM celebrate that!

Metacognition has been well and truly embedded, with all Prep School pupils now completing our reflective Progress Checker sheets across all subjects. These are proving valuable not only in helping pupils reflect on their learning progress but also in motivating them as they see just how much they have achieved over the course of a topic or term. The activity also provides opportunities to hear the pupil voice, as teachers receive pupil feedback on topics, helping them to reflect on and often improve their provision.

The Science Department has hosted science mornings for local primary schools. The children were wowed by the science laboratories and hands-on experiences, using Bunsen burners to identify different metal salts and using acids and metals to produce and test for hydrogen gas. Who doesn’t like the ‘squeaky pop’ test! That, together with some hair-raising activities based on static electricity using our Van de Graaff generator, showcased

our excellent facilities and inspirational teaching, and all children went away feeling excited about what science can be like given the right environment.

The Science Department hosted its annual Great Egg Launch, with a fantastic number of children and families undertaking wide-ranging feats of engineering in the hope of being crowned champion and adding their name to the fabled list of past victors on the hallowed Egg Cup of Glory. This year, we had our first back-to-back winners, quite an achievement.

Academic provision is ever evolving at TDM and, as we reflect on the success of last year, we look forward to another exciting and ambitious year ahead. Our SkillsToThrive initiative will receive renewed emphasis next year; research has shown that, even in the world of AI, employers still look for candidates who can demonstrate these skills, and so we will strive to ensure our pupils are able to identify them, develop their own abilities and understand their value.

Steve Thomas



English: The Year of Reading, 2026

It has been another successful year in the English department. Alongside the usual exciting and creative lessons in the classroom, which have included inspirational class readers, opportunities to communicate, persuade and showcase their work, letters to and from authors, and weekly work on grammar, comprehension, spelling and the analysis of poetry and prose, there have also been a few real highlights this academic year.

Pupils have really embraced reading during the **Year of Reading**, and it has been lovely to see so many ‘climb’ the Reading Ladder, wearing their colourful badges with pride. We are thrilled that the new timetable will include dedicated daily reading time for pupils in Years 3–7 from September.

This year, we introduced a Reading Recital competition in place of our usual House Poetry competition. Pupils represented their Houses in year groups, reading passages from books within our Reading Ladder. This competition was launched in the week leading up to World Book Day, providing a refreshing change, and was met with enthusiasm. The House competition celebrated Winnie the Pooh, with Houses reciting poems focusing on Tigger, Eeyore, Piglet and Winnie the Pooh, in celebration of 100 years of the Hundred Acre Wood.



The Malvern College Family of Schools Literary Competition

To celebrate the Year of Reading, The Malvern College Family of schools embarked upon a joint venture asking pupils to respond to images selected from Shaun Tan’s wordless graphic novel ‘The Arrival’. Pupils were allowed to respond to these images in any way they wished using poetry or prose, the only restriction being time - the response was completed in class during a one-hour timeframe. Each school within the Malvern College Family of Schools was invited to submit three entries per category, with the aim being that all of the schools would be able to share the finalists within their schools, showcasing, and celebrating the talent of individuals across the Family of Schools.

It really was a celebration of words, as pupils at TDM from Years 3–8 all submitted entries completed within their English lessons. We are proud to announce that three pupils from our school were shortlisted as finalists: **Bea D** in the Foundation Category, **Aidan S** in the Junior Category and **Erin W** in the Intermediate Category. What a fantastic achievement!

A highlight for Mrs Reid, whose idea it was to launch the competition, was receiving a message from Shaun Tan himself which was shown during assembly.

The finalists’ entries can be viewed on the next page. ▶

Kate Reid



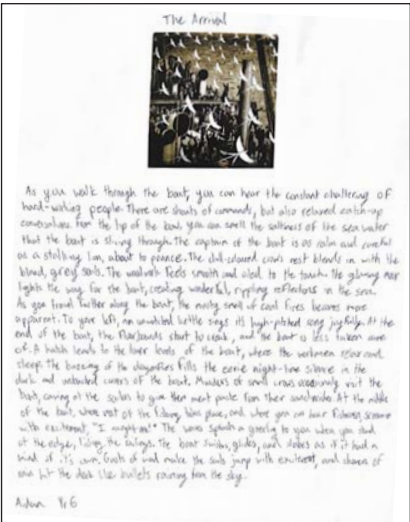
Foundation Years 3-4

BEATRICE, The Downs Malvern UK (YEAR 4)



Junior Years 5-6

AIDAN, The Downs Malvern UK (YEAR 6)



Intermediate Years 7-9

ERIN, The Downs Malvern UK (YEAR 7)



Maths

This has been another busy, academic year for the Maths Department. In our meetings, we have focussed on how to improve fact fluency, together with encouraging pupils to use the correct mathematical language and develop the quality of their explanations and reasoning. Awards for times tables recall have been given in assembly and Maths Monday was introduced, so that children can spend their Form time practising their times tables as well as in lessons and at home. This will be developed further next year, with the introduction of Key Information Recall Facts for Prep and Pre-Prep to work on. The Team has also been analysing aspects of Mathematics' pedagogy to develop adaptive teaching techniques and the use of mini whiteboards to increase pupil participation and check regularly for understanding before misconceptions develop. We have also used well-written Diagnostic Questions to help with checking for understanding, and to develop the quality of the children's explanations. Furthermore, we have embedded the reflection and progress checking activities to aid pupils' metacognition, and we have introduced new methods to illustrate progress so that the children can see their achievements, which boosts their motivation.

In November, we hosted the Maths Challenge Day for Year 6 pupils from local primary schools. This was a fun day where the children developed their teamwork when working in mixed school groups to complete a variety of challenges. Years 5 and 6 pupils entered the national Primary Maths Challenge, with many pupils achieving Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates.

In the Spring Term, some of our Year 8 pupils spent a morning working on problem solving and reasoning with Year 9 pupils from Malvern College. Four pupils were selected to represent TDM as a team in the UKMT Maths Challenge at Pate's Grammar School in Cheltenham.

In the Summer Term, 35 pupils in Years 7 and 8 entered the UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge. Over half the pupils were awarded certificates: four Gold, seven Silver and seven Bronze. Three of the Gold Award pupils qualified for the next round called the Kangaroo Challenge. **Luke A** in Year 7, also qualified for the highest round, The Junior Maths Olympiad, and achieved a Merit Certificate in this challenge. More recently, all of Year 4 and some pupils in Year 3 entered the First Mathematics Challenge, with two Gold, five Silver and 12 Bronze Awards. Well done to all the pupils who participated in the Mathematics Challenges this year and all those who were awarded certificates for their times tables knowledge and the MathsWatch leaderboard competition.

Lou Smith

13+ Scholarship Results 2025/2026

Huge congratulations to our talented Year 8 pupils, who together have secured an incredible 33 Scholarships and Exhibitions! Awards span Academia, Sport, Art, DT, All-Rounder, Photography, Drama and Music.

Amaya M	Sports Scholarship	RGS Worcester
Robert S	Academic Scholarship Academic Scholarship All-Rounder Exhibition Academic Exhibition	RGS Worcester King's School Worcester King's School Worcester Malvern College
Arthur F-G	Academic Scholarship	RGS Worcester
Isaac D'A	Sports Scholarship	Malvern College
Rory	Sports Scholarship	Malvern College
Hasleena H	Rachel Hayhoe Flint Award Drama Exhibition Academic Scholarship	Malvern College Malvern College Malvern College
Fleur D-D	Sports Scholarship	Malvern College
Charlie A	Sports Exhibition	Malvern College
Otto F	Sports Exhibition Design Technology Exhibition Academic Exhibition Headmaster's All Round Award	Malvern College Malvern College Malvern College Malvern College
Coco H	Sports Exhibition	Malvern College

Sadie B	Sports Exhibition	Malvern College
Amber M-B	Sports Exhibition	Malvern College
Michael R	Art Scholarship	Malvern St James
Erin W	Drama Scholarship Art Scholarship	Malvern College Malvern College
James H	Photography Scholarship Academic Scholarship	Malvern College Malvern College
Cressida G	Music Scholarship Art Scholarship	Malvern College Malvern College
Robert C	Art Exhibition	Malvern College
George B	Music Scholarship	Malvern College
Ava N	Academic Scholarship Academic Scholarship Academic Scholarship	RGS Worcester Malvern College King's School Worcester
Rupert G	Academic Scholarship	Malvern College





The Downs Malvern 125 Anniversary Ball



In October, Old Downians, current and past parents, staff and governors all enjoyed celebrating the 125th anniversary of The Downs Malvern.

Dancing followed dinner, and Brock Meadow was soon rocking to the sound of local 12-piece band the 'Hey Yahs' as the assembled guests made the most of the evening, partying the night away beneath the TDM glitterball!



Old Downian Reunion

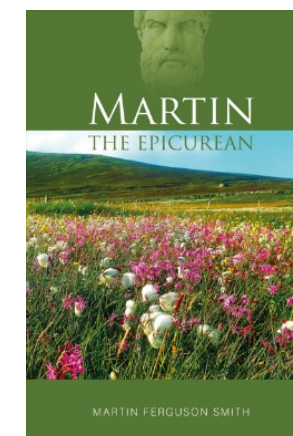
All former pupils, staff and parents are very welcome to join us on Saturday 29th May 2027 for a reunion at The Downs Malvern! Further details to follow...



Visits from Old Downians

Over the past 18 months, we have welcomed many former pupils back to The Downs Malvern. Below are just a few of the Old Downians we captured on camera during their tour!

Old Downians who were pupils during the 1940s and 1950s might be interested to know that Martin Ferguson-Smith has written two books. His autobiography, 'Martin the Epicurean', contains a chapter on his time at The Downs between 1948-1953.



** Urbi et Orbi: The Epicurean Inscription and Prescription of Diogenes of Oinoanda, tab edizioni, Rome, paperback and open access

** Martin the Epicurean (autobiography), SilverWood Books, Bristol, paperback and e-book



Peter Bachner (1967-1969)



Richard Llewellyn (1971-1976)



Hugh Roberts (1959-1964)



John Morrell (1950s)



Mo Saito (1976-1978)



What Makes a Downian?

When we think about the journey of education, it is often the later milestones that seem to carry the greatest weight. A Level choices, university subjects and career paths can appear to be the moments when young people truly begin to shape their own futures. Yet in many ways, the formative Prep School years are perhaps more important, providing powerful foundations on which everything else is built.

As children grow older, learning quite naturally becomes more specialised. Once chosen, subjects and interests are refined, knowledge carefully gathered. Academics can feel a little like rare botanical specimens preserved in glass jars, with each idea labelled, catalogued and ready for study. The developmental Prep School experience, however, is something entirely different: more akin to lightning in a jar, curious, vibrant and fizzing with possibility!

These are the years when children discover so much for the first time. They begin to understand what they enjoy and what they don't, and they face challenges too, but in the face of these, they discover valuable lessons in resilience and humility. They make friendships that shape them and encounter teachers who notice a spark in them, often before they have noticed it themselves. They learn to care for others and to find their place within a community.

Perhaps that is why Old Downians hold the school in such affection. At reunions, they are inevitably fascinated by new developments, yet when the stories begin, they rarely focus on bricks and mortar.

A mention of the old outdoor swimming pool or the Downs Light Railway may frame the scene, but the memories themselves are almost always about people: about teachers, friendships and shared adventures. It is not about the things that you can touch, but the things that you can feel. These are the memories that stay with people long after they have left.

That sense of continuity matters. Whilst the old custom of "ninepennies", when children were sent into the hills for the day with nine pence for sustenance, now sits

firmly in the past, the spirit behind it, of independence and adventure, remains a firm part of the school's makeup.

At the heart of our character are the values of Kindness, Courage and Respect, timeless qualities that have been present at The Downs since its earliest days and remain just as relevant now.

Kindness is seen in the way pupils look after one another, but also in the example set by generations of staff who have known children as individuals.

Courage, too, has taken many forms. Thankfully, today's pupils are not growing up in the shadow of a World War, as some Old Downians once did. But courage is still found in school life every day, whether reading a match report in assembly, expressing ideas through painting, or having the confidence to be true to who they are.

Respect is evident in the way pupils interact with staff and visitors, care for animals on the smallholding, learn alongside children from different backgrounds and cultures, and understand and appreciate that every member of our community has something valuable to offer.

On the page that follows, we celebrate six current pupils who embody the values at the heart of The Downs Malvern. In doing so, they remind us that Old Downians are not only part of the school's history. They are being shaped here every day.

Andy Nuttall
Headmaster



Pre-Prep

(Nominated by Mrs Willetts and the Pre-Prep team)



Kindness: Harriet

Harriet exudes kindness through her bubbly personality and beaming smile. She is always the first to help others, whether comforting someone who is upset on the playground or tidying away resources without being asked.



Courage: Arlo

Arlo has shown immense courage in the way he has overcome his fear of the water during swimming lessons. From a little boy who did not want to get into the pool to the confident swimmer he is today, we are incredibly proud of him for believing in himself and persevering, even when he felt scared.



Respect: Henry

Henry never forgets to say "please" and "thank you" and demonstrates fantastic table manners at lunchtime. He shows respect in the way he listens to other people's ideas with a smile and genuine interest.

Prep School

(Nominated by Mr Nuttall)



Kindness: Henry

Henry demonstrates a strong awareness of, and empathy towards, others within the school community. He engages confidently with pupils of all ages and helps create a positive, inclusive atmosphere in which everyone feels a sense of belonging.



Courage: Maddie

As a relatively new member of the school community, Maddie has demonstrated courage across many areas of school life. She has thrown herself into new opportunities, quickly made new friends and impressed everyone with her willingness to consistently step outside her comfort zone and challenge herself.



Respect: Nina

Nina models respectfulness on a daily basis. She is consistently considerate of others and cares deeply about the school, her peers and the opportunities available to her. Nina shows real strength of character in the way she develops her own individuality, strengths and talents, while also recognising and championing the talents of others.

“ At the heart of our character are the values of Kindness, Courage and Respect, timeless qualities that have been present at The Downs since its earliest days and remain just as relevant now. ”



Science at The Downs Malvern: A Century of Curiosity

It's safe to say that science at The Downs Malvern has enjoyed something of a well-earned spell in the spotlight in recent years. In 2026, the school won STEM Project of the Year at the Worcestershire Education Awards, hot on the heels of achieving Excellence in STEM at the Muddy Stiletto's Best Schools Awards 2025.

Beyond the awards, the school's online presence has helped bring innovative annual events such as the ever-popular Great Egg Launch to a much wider audience. Working in teams, pupils are challenged to design and build a device capable of propelling an egg as far as possible, while creating a protective cradle to prevent it breaking on impact. Malvern College's Magic of Science event is another annual highlight, where practical experiments, specialist facilities and ambitious ideas give pupils an early taste of science in a senior-school setting.



The Great Egg Launch

While it would be easy to assume that this attention is the result of a concerted effort to showcase science provision, the reality is that these accolades reflect a longstanding culture of scientific curiosity, woven into the history and ethos of the school.

In fact, The Downs Malvern boasts a remarkable roll call of prominent scientists among its Old Downians, including brothers Derek and Alec Bangham, Nobel laureate Sir Alan Hodgkin and two-time Nobel laureate Frederick Sanger.

“ The Downs Malvern boasts a remarkable roll call of prominent scientists among its Old Downians, including brothers Derek and Alec Bangham, Nobel laureate Sir Alan Hodgkin and two-time Nobel laureate Frederick Sanger. ”

Physics in Motion

Perhaps the earliest and most obvious evidence of this enthusiasm for applied science can be traced to the introduction of the Downs Light Railway in 1925. Never intended as a mere curiosity, the DLR was a serious educational tool, designed from the outset to give pupils first-hand experience of engineering, mechanics and the physics of motion.

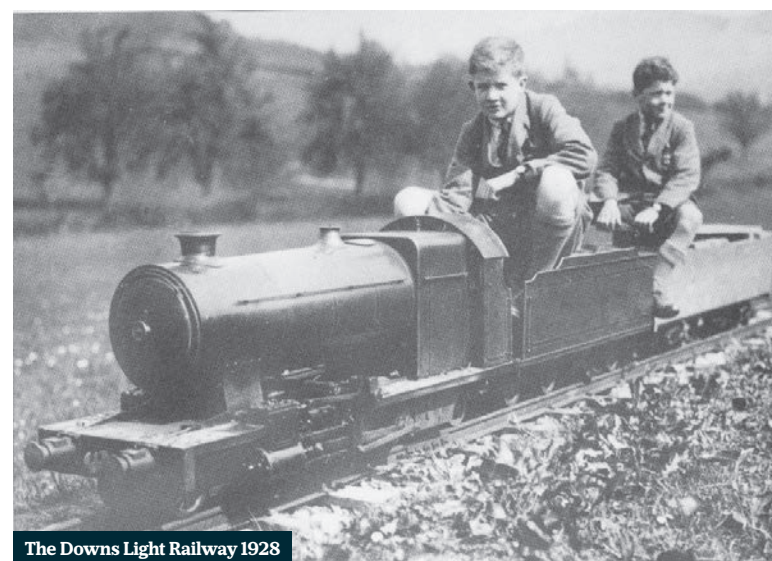
In the decades that followed, formal science provision expanded considerably. In The First Five: The Story of a School, former Headmaster Jim Brown recalls how a series of timely developments convinced the school that science was “the mast to which our colours should be nailed”.

During the early 1960s, Esso Petroleum launched an initiative designed to encourage practical science teaching in selected schools at a time when many lacked suitable equipment. Fortunately, The Downs was one of the schools selected and a large box of scientific equipment was dutifully delivered, helping to set in motion the creation of the school's first

purpose-built science laboratory, followed by a second dedicated to chemistry and biology. Shortly afterwards, the school was invited to take part in the Nuffield Trials, an exiting approach that placed practical investigation firmly in pupils' hands.

Malvern College has also played an important part in developing science at The Downs. Brown described it as “one of the foremost science teaching schools in the country” and wrote that The Downs “received immeasurable help from them”. That relationship continues today through shared expertise, access to specialist facilities and events such as Magic of Science, helping pupils see scientific learning as part of a lifelong journey.

In the following feature, Head of Science Steve Thomas reflects on how scientific curiosity is brought to life at TDM today, and why an environment in which pupils are free to experiment and make mistakes matters so much. ►



The Downs Light Railway 1928



The Nuffield Trials 1960s



The Great Egg Launch



Science at The Downs Malvern: A Century of Curiosity continued...

Creating the Spark

“Curiosity is everything,” Steve says. “It’s easy to ask why something happens and expect the teacher to provide an explanation, but we constantly encourage pupils to ask questions and develop the motivation and skills to seek out the answers for themselves.”

While that sense of curiosity is supported by excellent facilities and specialist resources, Steve is quick to point out that these only tell part of the story. “Facilities and resources are important, but the quality of teaching and the relationship between pupils and teachers is absolutely vital. Science is an amazing subject, but if it is taught without enthusiasm, the excitement is lost.”

Luckily, that enthusiasm thrives in an environment where pupils are encouraged to test ideas practically, without fear of getting things wrong. “There is a real culture here that encourages experimentation and allows room for mistakes.” Steve explains. “It’s so important because reflecting on mistakes and trying again are essential components of success.”

The Great Egg Launch offers a particularly memorable example. Although the event inevitably brings out a competitive streak, Steve is often more interested in the thinking behind an entry than the distance it travels.

“This year’s winning entry was a fantastic feat of engineering, but the one that really stood out to me came from Alfie and Jem’s group,” he says. “It only launched the egg two or three metres, but it was beautifully made. It was wonderful to see pupils take an idea, consider the practical and scientific challenges and create something genuinely unique.”

As in previous generations, the school’s relationship with Malvern College continues to enrich the opportunities available.



Summer Celebration, The Downs Light Railway



Magic of Science



“ There is a real culture here that encourages experimentation and allows room for mistakes. ”

“It has allowed us access to specialist resources, more advanced laboratories and equipment such as Van de Graaff generators,” Steve explains. “If there is an experiment that we cannot support, I can speak to Natalie Watson at the College and we can often arrange a visit. As the two schools move physically closer in 2027, these opportunities will become even easier to develop.”

For Steve, perhaps the greatest satisfaction can be found not only in the school’s impressive academic scholarship record, but also in the passion pupils carry with them long after leaving. This year’s Summer Celebration saw former pupils who had left several years earlier don their overalls once again and help operate the Downs Light Railway as it ferried visitors around the grounds.

“Another example is James Francis. James was one of the first pupils I taught and went on to pursue a PhD at Imperial College. He has told me that his science lessons here helped to inspire him. I would say that he already had a natural love of science and I was simply fortunate enough to be part of that journey, but it illustrates the influence teachers can have during such a formative stage of a child’s development.”

Ultimately, Steve hopes pupils leave The Downs Malvern with more than scientific knowledge.

“We want them not only to be curious about the world, but to be motivated and equipped to explore it for themselves.”

Doug Norton



Forest School

The children in Pre-Prep and Years 3 and 4, have enjoyed another fantastic year of Forest School in our wonderful woodland setting.

Visiting the site every week, they have experienced the changing seasons first-hand, developing a deep appreciation of the woodland and its fascinating flora and fauna.

Our younger children have embraced every opportunity for hands-on exploration and creativity. They have built homes and feeders for wildlife, constructed dams and bridges for trolls and made dens for the wolf in the undergrowth. The children have learned to craft by whittling, drilling and hammering safely using small tools, and they have enjoyed cooking delicious treats such as popcorn, fruit, s'mores and hot dogs together over the campfire.

The older children have taken great pride in caring for their woodland environment. On the site, some ash trees have been cut back to prevent ash dieback taking hold, and the children have helped to reduce the impact of our adventures by spreading bark chippings around Base Camp, on the paths and in the 'Wigloo'. Using larger tools, they have added to dead hedges to create natural boundaries and valuable habitats for wildlife. The willow whips have begun to grow, and they have tied them in to create the cosy dome of the 'Wigloo'.

During the Summer Term, we held a Camping Carnival in Forest School. The children in Years 3 and 4 welcomed Year 2 to the site for an afternoon of festive fun. Having pitched their tents together as a place to relax, the children enjoyed face painting, parachute activities, climbing and archery. Later, after enjoying hot dogs and s'mores around the campfire, Mrs Hunter led a singsong. It was lovely to see the Year 2 pupils getting to know the older children ahead of joining the Prep School next year.

Sarah Tsiquaye

Eco Team

Making a Difference Through Water Awareness.

This year, the TDM Eco Team has been busy raising awareness about one of the world's most precious resources – clean water. The children have enjoyed taking part in a range of exciting activities that have helped us learn more about the importance of water conservation while also supporting charities that work to improve access to safe drinking water around the world.

At the beginning of the academic year, we welcomed representatives from Severn Trent Water, who delivered an engaging whole-school assembly about the value of water and the simple ways we can all reduce waste. Following this, our Year 4 pupils took part in an interactive workshop, exploring how water is used every day and why it is so important to protect this vital resource.



To support global water charities, the Eco Team organised a successful jumble sale in the Spring Term, raising money for WaterAid and Team Water. Thanks to the generosity of

our school community, the proceeds will help these organisations provide clean, safe water and improve sanitation for people living in communities where access to fresh water is limited. The Eco Team showed their superb organisational skills in managing this event and advertising it to the whole school community.

TOILET TWINNING

Our commitment to making a positive difference doesn't stop there. At the start of next term, the Eco Team will be holding an ice cream sale in support of Toilet Twinning. For every £60 we raise, a toilet will be built in a community that currently lacks safe sanitation facilities. This simple but life-changing project helps improve health, education and quality of life for families across the world.

We are incredibly proud of everything the Eco Team has achieved so far, and we are excited to continue making a difference. If you would like to get involved, new members are always welcome! Join us at our weekly Eco Team meetings every Monday morning during break time and help us create a greener, fairer future for everyone.

Sarah McDonnell





Sport

As another sporting innings at The Downs draws to a close, it is a fitting time to reflect on an incredibly busy but, more importantly, successful year on the sports field.

The last three terms have gone by in a flash, but all the children have accomplished a great deal, and every single one of them should feel immensely proud of the effort and dedication they have put into their sport. Invariably, some individuals and teams have enjoyed more success than others, and that is the beauty of sport, but, win or lose, all our children have ultimately been successful at one point or another. Sometimes the biggest success is being able to pick oneself up from a fall, dust oneself down and carry on.

In the Autumn Term, there were some quite brilliant performances from our teams on the rugby and hockey fields, with the Junior teams in particular winning far more matches than they lost. The Senior rugby team began the season positively, playing an attractive brand of rugby, but sadly ran out of steam towards the end of November. The girls' teams were all very competitive, and the House competition was a closely fought affair, with Cadbury and Lewis Houses sharing the spoils.

The October Half Term also saw a group of Under-13 boys and girls head off to the Netherlands on our biannual sports tour, where they received professional coaching in hockey (Upward HC) and football (Vitesse Arnhem), before playing competitive fixtures against local clubs. The tour was hugely enjoyable for all concerned and a great learning experience. The group were hugely entertaining and wonderful company for the six days, and plans are well underway for the next sports tour in 2027!

Back in the Spring Term, the 1st Netball team were runners-up in the Malvern District Tournament, and the standard of the netball the girls played was exceptional along the way. **Fleur D-D**, **Lucy H** and **Ava N** were the core to what proved to be a very hard-working and successful team.

Special mention must go to the Under-11A team, which lost only one match all season, so we very much look forward to seeing the players' progress as they become part of the senior teams next season.

Our footballers and hockey players also played some good matches, with the second half comeback for the Boys 1st XI at Beaudesert Park, led by an effervescent Toby C, being a particular highlight. The cross-country team continued to excel in various meetings, including the National Prep Schools' event held at Malvern College. All of our runners performed superbly in what is always a tough event, and with several runners competing a year below their respective age groups, the future looks very promising.

We also hosted a hugely successful Under-9 Primary Schools' Football Festival, where it was fantastic to see so many young children enjoying their sport. In the Autumn Term, we will be hosting our first-ever primary schools' tag rugby festival, which promises to be an exciting addition to our calendar.

Our swimmers have also had an incredible year, winning all the galas hosted by The Elms, and for the first time, we sent a team to the IAPS Regionals event where they all swam superbly. Four of our girls ended up qualifying for the IAPS Nationals event held at the Olympic Aquatic Centre in London, where **Sadie B**, **Lucy H**, **Cressida G** and **Millie B** all swam personal bests. We are incredibly proud of their achievements, but for Millie B, who finished 7th overall in her individual final, it was a real highlight!

During the Summer Term, our cricket teams again showed that they are learning the game quickly in some very enjoyable and competitive fixtures. Results were not always what we would have hoped for, but learning the art of building an innings and applying pressure as a bowling and fielding team were essential parts of the coaching sessions. With only three of our cricketers reaching 50 runs in an innings, runs were at a premium. The Under-9 mixed teams were probably the most successful during the season, with the A team losing just once, so cricket appears to be in safe hands in the coming years. ▶





Sport

The annual Aquathlon held over at Malvern College was an exciting and hugely enjoyable event, and our teams performed incredibly well. In the Under-11 girls' event, three of our competitors finished in the top 10: **Millie B** – 2nd, **Flora A** – 3rd and **Esmé A** – 10th. Combined with **Hugo A** finishing 3rd in the Under-11 boys' event, these results secured a fantastic overall silver medal. The Under-13 combined team also earned a silver medal, with standout performances from **Charlie A** – 4th, **Cressida G** – 6th and **Rory A** – 8th.

Our annual Sports Day was, yet again, a fantastic day of athletics, where Resilience, Collaboration and Motivation were high on the agenda. There were some exciting races, with the relays in particular proving very tense as several were decided in the final 50 metres. At the end of the day, Morgan House was finally able to wrestle the House Trophy away from the grasp of Cadbury!

Towards the end of June, 34 of our athletes competed at the Mercia Prep Schools' Athletics Championships held at Stourport. With more than 900 athletes from across the region competing, it was great to see three of our athletes, Fleur D-D (Under-14 100 m), Henry M (Under-14 discus) and Barney C (Under-13 shot), qualifying for the Nationals, held at Alexander Stadium in Birmingham in July. Fleur, Henry and Barney all performed superbly in difficult events and in strong fields of athletes. To all finish in the top ten of their respective events was a fantastic achievement, so they should be incredibly proud of their performances.

All our children have represented the school at some stage of the year, where the teams have competed in weekly fixtures, showcasing their talents and skills developed in lessons, and they have all demonstrated not only technical ability, but also resilience, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout.

This past year also saw the emergence of our Gifted and Talented programme, and this will most certainly be developing further in the coming year. With fitness programmes, talks with guest speakers at Malvern College, and access to the College's Strength and Conditioning Team, our athletes will certainly benefit from this initiative in the years to come.

We have said goodbye to a talented group of Year 8 boys and girls, and we wish them the very best of luck in their future sporting endeavours. They have now passed the baton to another talented group of children, who must continue to drive sport at The Downs forward, trust the process, believe in themselves and, most importantly, enjoy playing sport the right way. Our next crop of sports players will have a tough act to follow, with no fewer than nine of our leavers earning Sports Awards to Malvern College:

Boys' Scholarships – **Isaac D'A** and **Rory A**

Girls' Scholarships – **Fleur D-D** and **Hasleena H**, who won the Rachel Heyhoe Flint Award for Girls' Cricket

Boys' Exhibitions – **Charlie A** and **Otto F**

Girls' Exhibitions – **Coco H**, **Amber M B** and **Sadie B**

I would like to personally thank our amazing grounds team for all the magnificent pitches they prepare for us every week, and the kitchen staff for their hard work preparing our match teas. Finally, may I thank all the children and our parents for their never-ending commitment and support for sport at The Downs. It has been another memorable year at the school, and I very much look forward to many more successes in the future.

It has been another memorable year at the school, and I very much look forward to more successes next term.

Michael Strong





Leaving The Downs Malvern, Reflections from Year 8



Every pupil's journey through The Downs Malvern is unique. For some, it is defined by sporting achievements, for others by creative opportunities, new friendships or the confidence to try something they have never done before.

As our Year 8 pupils prepare to move on to their next chapter, we asked five pupils to reflect on the moments, people and experiences that have shaped their time at TDM, and how the school has helped prepare them for what comes next.

Doug Norton

Ryan

What has been your favourite part of school life here, and why?

It would have to be boarding. I've made some great friends over the years, and laughing at the dinner table and hearing about what everyone has been up to each day has made it feel like family.

Is there a moment that really stands out from your time at TDM?

I really enjoyed Bonfire Night; the fireworks were a lot of fun, and I've become a big fan of toffee apples and hog roasts too!

Was there anything you found difficult, and how did you deal with it?

A lot of things felt difficult when I first arrived, such as different food and having to use English constantly. It was very tiring in my first term, but my EAL lessons helped and it soon became easier.

James

What first comes to mind when you think about Year 8?

When I think about Year 8, I think about the challenges I've faced, but also the brilliant achievements and rewards. For example, I worked really hard and revised a lot for the end of year exams, but it made the Leavers' Experience feel like a really special reward. I felt that I had earned it.

What has TDM helped you learn about yourself that you didn't know before?

I'm much more willing to try new things. Before I joined the school, I hadn't done much sport, but it was great to have the opportunity to try new sports and be part of a team with my friends.

What will you miss most about TDM?

There is lots about TDM that I will miss, including my friends, the teachers and the amazing lunches, which are delicious, but I think the thing I will miss most is the railway!



Cressida

What are you most excited or nervous about next?

I'm excited about meeting new people at Malvern College and getting to experience all of the new opportunities there, especially in my favourite subjects: Music, Art and History. I think it will be a big change, but I'm looking forward to it!

How do you think TDM has prepared you for your next school?

TDM has prepared me in lots of ways: I feel a lot more confident generally. I think that it'll help that I have lots of friends moving up with me, and that I already know Malvern College quite well from all the activities we have done there while I have been at TDM, such as sport, Latin Club, the end of year performance and the experience days. That makes me feel excited about moving up.

Rory

How would you describe your time at The Downs Malvern in three words?

Fun, inspirational and adventurous!

What do you feel has changed most about you since you joined the school?

I've definitely changed. I think I have become more mature during my time here, and I'm better at keeping going when things are difficult. I also feel more confident when working with and talking to other people too.

What has been your proudest moment, even if it wasn't obvious to others?

My proudest moment was winning the mile cup on Sports Day for the third year in a row. It was something I had worked hard for, so it felt absolutely brilliant and really rewarding to achieve it again.

Erin

What has been your proudest moment, even if it wasn't obvious to others?

I think that my proudest moment was performing 'My House' in the production of Matilda. It is a very difficult song from a West End musical, and although I was feeling poorly during the performance, I was still able to do it and was really proud of what I achieved.

Who or what has had the biggest influence on you here?

I would say my biggest influence at TDM has been my Form Tutor, Mrs Reid. She has been my Form Tutor for my last three years at TDM and she has helped me to become confident and more resilient. I also love her sense of humour!





Friends of The Downs

The purpose of the Friends (FOTD) is simple: to bring our school community together by creating opportunities for families to connect, get involved and make lasting memories; and to raise funds that enrich our pupils' learning through our Wishlist process, ensuring every pound raised supports initiatives and resources that enhance both learning and the overall school experience.

At our AGM in February, I reflected on four key areas:

- » celebrating our fantastic committee
- » strengthening our wonderful network of volunteers
- » our strong partnership with the TDM Leadership Team
- » the support we've been able to provide for our school community thanks to your fundraising efforts

A fantastic committee

One of our biggest achievements this year has been growing and strengthening our committee. We now have a brilliant team of 14 parents, with several new members stepping into key roles over the past year. Each of you has generously given your time, energy and enthusiasm, united by a shared goal of making a real difference for our children. Thank you for everything you have contributed over the past 12 months. FOTD simply wouldn't be the same without you.

Our amazing volunteers

A huge thank you also goes to every one of our volunteers, including both parents and TDM staff. We now have a community of more than 40 people who regularly volunteer their time to help at events and behind the scenes. Whether you've run a stall, baked a cake, helped in the uniform shop, carried tables, sold raffle tickets or simply stepped in wherever needed, every contribution has mattered. Our events quite literally couldn't happen without you.

A year of memorable events

This year has been packed with fantastic community events.

Bonfire Night welcomed a record 400 guests. As part of TDM's 125th anniversary celebrations, we served 178 complimentary drinks, and, perhaps most impressively of all, the rain stayed away! Families enjoyed a wonderful evening of fireworks, games, food and great company. A big thank you goes to a TDM family who kindly sponsored the fireworks.

The Summer Celebration was once again blessed with glorious sunshine and proved to be our biggest fundraising event of the year. Around 350 people came together, including TDM families and friends, staff and Governors.

There was something for everyone: live music, Matrons' Jam Jars, activities from Team Super Sports, inflatables and plenty more. Our ever-popular bar kept everyone refreshed, while pizzas, the hog roast, slushies, popcorn, strawberries, sweets and ice cream ensured nobody went home hungry! It was wonderful to see the DLR in action, bringing so much joy to children and adults alike! (Thank you to Mr Lamberton and the DLR volunteers.)

We were also delighted to support the Intermediate and Junior Productions, the Macmillan Cake Sale and the Summer Concert, where bubbles were raised in celebration of Mrs Hunter.

The difference you've made

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we've been able to invest in a wide range of resources that directly benefit our pupils, including:

- » the Wellbeing Hub subscription
- » senior and junior goalkeeper kits
- » a hen coop
- » a hydraulic piano stool for the Memo Hall
- » den-building poles for Brock Meadow

- » reading corner cushions for the Junior classrooms
- » visualisers for Maths lessons
- » pinhole photography accessories for the Hobbies programme
- » Mr Whippy ice creams for the whole school in celebration of the successful ISI Inspection

Every event attended, raffle ticket bought, donation made and hour volunteered, has helped make these investments possible.

Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported the Friends throughout the year. We would like to give a special mention to the TDM Front Office team, Catering

team and the Grounds team for everything they do behind the scenes. Your support, encouragement and willingness to help never go unnoticed.

We wish everyone a happy, restful and well-deserved summer holiday!

Upcoming Events:

Friday 25th Sept: Macmillan Cake Sale
(Front of School)

Friday 6th Nov: Bonfire Night (TDM)

Saturday 14th Nov: Christmas Fair
for our Tombola and Cake Stand! (Memo Hall)

Lilia Parfitt
Chair FOTD





“The Halls are Alive with the Sound of Music”

For more than two decades, Lesley Hunter has brought boundless energy and unmistakable musical flair to life at The Downs Malvern.

A stalwart in the purest sense of the word, Lesley has left an indelible mark on the musical culture of The Downs Malvern, broadening horizons and helping countless children of all abilities find joy and belonging through music.

As she draws a final double bar line across her illustrious teaching career, we took the opportunity to sit down with Lesley and reflect on an extraordinary 44 years in education.

Music Belongs to Everyone

“I just hope that anyone who felt music was elitist, or simply not for them, left The Downs realising how wrong they were!”, she says, when asked what she hopes her legacy will be.

That approach is reflected in everyday school life. Asked what role music plays at TDM, Lesley’s answer is immediate: “Integral!”



“You can go to many other schools and you won’t hear the children sing, but we start every week with singing in assembly,” she says. “It wakes the children up and ushers in the week properly.”

Music also helps pupils grow in confidence. Lesley remembers children arriving from other schools and saying, “I don’t play an instrument. I don’t do music.” Her response is simple: “Well, that’s lovely, but you’re here now and we do it!”

An inevitable path

That belief, that music is for everybody, has been at the heart of Lesley’s career, although her own love of music began much earlier. She recalls visiting her grandmother’s house as a toddler, clambering out of her pram and making her way to the piano, “banging the keys instead of sleeping!”

Music was an inevitable path. Piano lessons began at the ripe age of four, and at seven Lesley was encouraged to audition for the Saturday school at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Though considered too young to make the weekly journey from the Wirral, she was put in touch with Heather Slade-Lipkin, a distinguished piano and harpsichord teacher who became a great influence on her life.

At home, music was ever-present. Classical music became a deep part of Lesley’s musical life, with Bach, Mozart and Debussy among her favourite composers to play but, as she is quick to point out, her tastes were never narrow.

Teenage rebellion came in the form of English progressive rock band Barclay James Harvest, with Lesley embracing flower power, kaftans and Jesus sandals on frequent trips to London’s Carnaby Street, back when, as she fondly insists, it was “nothing like it is today!”

From the Tropics to the Malverns

Although she briefly considered following her mother into nursing, music was always the real path. “It was always going to be music,” she says. “I didn’t want to perform though, I wanted to teach.”

Lesley began her teaching career in state schools, working with pupils from 11 to 18 and eventually becoming Head of Department near Dudley. She loved the musical challenge of senior teaching, including tackling pieces such as a Mozart horn concerto with her sixth formers, before family life took an unexpected turn: five years in Singapore. “Not my choice,” she laughs, “my husband’s!”

Taking it in her stride, she took a job at the British International School, Tanglin, teaching Reception and Years 3 and 4, before becoming Head of Infant Music. A world away from A-level music, she admits there was a degree of improvisation involved. “I didn’t want to admit that I didn’t know what I was doing,” she laughs. “My children loved watching Play School on television, so I thought, ‘I’ll just do it like that. I’ll jump around and teach songs.’”

It worked. More than that, it helped her discover a love of teaching younger children. After returning to the UK, she briefly went back into senior teaching and “just knew it wasn’t for me anymore.”

Having joined Hillstone Prep School, Lesley came “over the hill” when it merged with The Downs in 2008 and has been part of the musical life of the school ever since.

During that time, music at TDM has grown tremendously in both range and ambition, and Lesley is justly proud of the many concerts, productions and collaborative projects that she has been instrumental in driving. ▶



“ I just hope that anyone who felt music was elitist, or simply not for them, left The Downs realising how wrong they were! ”



“The Halls are Alive with the Sound of Music” continued...

Community Champion

She has also nurtured important links with the wider community, from pupil performances in nursing homes to welcoming local musicians to perform alongside the children. Naturally self-effacing, Lesley is quick to play down her own achievements. Yet one particularly memorable example came in 2025, when she organised a concert bringing together pupils, staff, parents, alumni and members of the local community to raise money for the Macmillan Renton Unit at Hereford County Hospital, in honour of former French teacher Stéphanie Ingram. Lesley’s exceptional effort contributed to more than £12,000 being raised.

Memories and Melodies

Perhaps the most evocative story of Lesley’s time at TDM comes from 2004, when she took the school choir to Amsterdam. During a canal trip, the captain offered to take the group out into the main harbour to see the giant ocean ships, but only if they sang! The choir performed Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God in harmony, with the windows wide open and people along the banks listening. Later, on their return to England, customs staff realised they were a choir and playfully refused to let the group through until they performed once more. Naturally, they chose Seek Ye First.

“I will always think of The Downs if I hear that,” Lesley says.

As she leaves TDM, it is, unsurprisingly, the children she will miss most. “If I could, I’d be here until I’m 100! I will miss them hugely.”

Lesley’s legacy will endure in the musical culture she spent years crafting, fostering a deep belief in our pupils that music belongs to everyone. Teaching for Lesley was never just a job; it was a means to give children confidence and to pass on the pure joy that music brought her. As the children of today become the adults of tomorrow, they will join the ranks of Old Downians who will look back on their school days and still hear, and feel, the melodies she shared with them.

Doug Norton



“ If I could, I’d be here until I’m 100! I will miss them hugely. ”

2026 Leavers





Heads of School Speeches

“ The Malvern hills have stood above us silently, watching as we have outgrown the Pre-Prep, venturing over to the Prep school to continue our journey to the present day. They have watched every match, performance, friendship and moment of laughter, observing memories as they unfold. They have been there through every stage of our lives here at TDM, reminding us every day, that growth never happens all at once, it requires patience, happening one step at a time.

Year by year, we have grown in confidence, becoming more independent in our learning, becoming resilient in our approach to challenges. Year by year, we have been supported in our growth by our teachers. To the staff, you all have guided us, inspired us, encouraged us, championed us and supported our lives here. You have somehow managed to answer endless questions, with unbelievable patience, mark papers which must have felt like mountains of work, and reminded us more times than we can count, about forgotten equipment, prep deadlines and organisation. More importantly, you have challenged us to step over our boundaries, given us self-belief, and helped us become who we are today. For all of that, we are truly grateful for what you have done.

To our parents and families, we thank you for the unwavering support throughout our journey here. We are incredibly fortunate to have been educated at this amazing school, and we are ever so grateful for letting us experience every aspect of TDM. Thank you for cheering us on in sports games, encouraging us to take on new challenges and activities, even if we nagged you not to put us forward, and believing in us, even when we doubted ourselves. Thank you for ensuring that we were always at the right place on time, for all the forgotten pieces of kit rescued at the very last minute, and for always being there to celebrate our highs and lows and, as our journey reaches an end, and a new journey awaits us, thank you for helping us to navigate every twist and turn along the way, giving us the confidence to face what lies ahead in the future.

On behalf of the Year 8 pupils, I would also like to thank the wider community - from our very first days at this school, we have been surrounded by people who helped make this school a second home to us. We have been encouraged to show kindness to those around us, courage in the face of uncertainty, and respect for one and other. These are lessons we will carry with us long after we leave. Thank you for creating a community in which we have felt supported, encouraged, and proud to belong.

I would lastly like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow peers and friends. Some of you I have known for nearly all my life, some I have known for a couple of years, and some only a few months, but I thank you for making this experience unforgettable. The memories that I will treasure are not the big events. I will treasure the moments when walking to each lesson, every breaktime, every laugh, and every tear, all of which have made my time here special. I feel incredibly lucky to have grown up alongside such amazing people, and I hope that no matter where life takes us next, these years here will always stay with us. While our paths will soon branch off to different routes, we will always look back on this chapter of our journey with gratitude, knowing that we walked it together. As we say goodbye, we are reminded that every journey must eventually lead to an end, and that a new beginning is not far away. While we may be leaving The Downs Malvern behind, we will take with us the friendships we have built, the memories we have shared, and the values that have shaped us. The Malvern hills will continue to watch over this school as they always have, and a part of us will remain here with them. Thank you all for being a part of our journey, and for giving us a place that will always stay close to our hearts forever. Thank you. ”



Ava N
Head Girl

“ Good afternoon Headmaster, Chair of the Governors, teachers, fellow students, friends, and parents,

I am speaking to you all this afternoon on behalf of the Year 8 leavers. Some of us started at The Downs aged 3 in Nursery, and some of us have joined along the way. Regardless of when we joined, we all became part of the same journey, travelling the same path to reach this, our final destination - a place where our TDM journey has ended, and our future begins.

The Downs has given us so much - installing values within us, encouraging us to step out of our comfort zones, supporting us when we needed help and guidance. It has allowed us to express ourselves, equipping us with the skills to achieve and work together whilst providing us with the confidence to be creative. It has given us friends for life and helped us to become who we are today.

The journey from Pre-Prep to Year 8 is like taking a long walk up the Malvern hills. Some paths are easier and more familiar than others, and it might be tempting to stick to these paths but, being at TDM has taught us to have the courage to take an alternative route, should we wish to. It might be that our chosen path is trickier, and we might get slightly lost along the way, but the view from the top of the hill will be worth it and, looking back, you will be proud of how far you have come.

Our journey begins in Reception, a year of singing, cookery, phonics and fun. This was when we first became part of the TDM family, looking up at the giant Year 8 pupils who came to listen to us read. In Year 1 we built huge towers with straws, fought over the tricycle in the playground and enjoyed story time on a Friday afternoon. In Year 2 our journey continued with a residential trip to Boundless outdoors, climbing through tunnels and zipping through the trees. Pre-Prep, my advice to you is to enjoy everything you have...soon you will be too big for the tricycle and big slide.

We leapt across the road into Year 3, a year where we were introduced to WHOLE donuts! Yes, I know it has been mentioned in previous speeches before, but having

a WHOLE donut is a huge moment in the life of a 7 Year old! Isn't that right Year 2?

We were now part of the Prep school and our journey was continuing, though the road was not as smooth as we planned due to Covid, life changed as we learnt about something called isolation, embraced ipads whilst having lessons at home on Seesaw. In Year 4 we were back in school, back on our journey. We were split into two classes for the first time, and we became more independent, moving around the school for our lessons. In Year 5 we experienced Camp Out – a night of no sleep and fun! Soon we were joining Year 6, Cwm Llwh provided us with many memories – most of which involved rain! My advice to Years 3- 6 is to have fun, but keep in mind that if you work hard now, it will be easier later.

Year 7s - it does not seem like long ago that we were all in Year 7, sitting where you are now, anxiously waiting for the announcement of who would be Head Boy and Head Girl. Year 7 was a great year, we were now Seniors in the school, starting out on our Baccalaureate journey, having just been to Cornwall - we were ready to take on Year 8. Year 7s, you have an exciting year ahead of you, you will be the final Year 8 at TDM, Colwall, leading the rest of the school as they prepare to move over the hill to the new site.

We are all embarking on new journeys, new year groups, new teachers, new timetables, new adventures. However, I am sure our paths will meet again. The Malvern Hills will go with us all – they will always be part of our journey, just looking out for us all from a new angle, a different perspective, reminding us that the view from the top is definitely worth the journey taken to reach it. ”



Isaac D'A
Head Boy



Year 8 Parent Reflection



Lucy joined the Nursery soon after, and we were delighted that she settled in quickly. Over the years, she has grown so much in confidence, and I think it is partly through growing up alongside a lovely group of classmates, the vast majority of whom have stayed with her throughout her journey.

We couldn't have asked for a better start for Lucy, and her earliest days at TDM were shaped by wonderful teachers, from Mrs Hutchins in Nursery to Mrs Hardinges and Mrs Sigley in Pre-Prep, all of whom were amazing for her.

Community has been such a huge part of our experience here. We were welcomed right from the start, and I quickly made friends with other parents, a couple of whom remain among my very closest friends today. Volunteering is also a big part of the parent community, and there are so many events that run throughout the year to get involved in: I remember running a tombola stand, cooking sausages and manning the railway crossing, all at the Summer Celebration!

As Lucy progressed through school, we watched her confidence grow. I still remember her first Informal Concert in Year 4, when she looked so small and shy on stage, but by her final performance in Year 8, she was a far more assured performer, thanks to the many opportunities she had been given to sing.

I cannot thank Mrs Hunter enough for encouraging Lucy, and so many others, to share their musical talents. Mrs Hunter, through music, and Mr Mellor, through art, have both inspired her enormously and made a lasting impression.

The wealth of opportunities at The Downs Malvern, particularly in the arts and sport, has helped Lucy grow and develop in so many different ways. Swimming in the Olympic pool in London as part of a competitive team is something she will remember forever, as is the amazing Year 6 ski trip to Austria.



“It is hard to believe now, but we first visited The Downs Malvern when Lucy was almost three! My husband had attended Hillstone and Malvern College and had always been keen for her to go to TDM. Like so many families, we decided to attend an Open Day, and I was blown away by the setting and the opportunities that were clearly available to her. I knew straight away that this was a place I wanted my daughter to be.

Luckily for Lucy, many of her friends will be joining her at Malvern College, so she will not need to miss them! Naturally, she will miss the small, family-like community she has known since she was very young. However, I know that The Downs Malvern has instilled important values that will support her transition, while the many experience days and activities at Malvern College have helped her become familiar with her new surroundings.

When I look back, the main thing I will remember is how each member of staff has helped Lucy in so many different ways and cared about her both academically and personally. They knew Lucy as an individual and really understood how to help her learn and grow, and I'm proud that she always tried to build on their advice and continue to improve.

To another parent whose child is just beginning their journey at TDM, my advice would be: make the most

of every minute. Get involved, take the time to get to know other parents, and never be afraid to ask for help or advice. There is a wealth of experience within the parent community, and you will always find someone willing to support you.

Above all, remember that the staff genuinely have your child's best interests at heart, and you can trust them to do all they can to support both your child and your family. ”

Katie Holder

“ The main thing I will remember is how each member of staff has helped Lucy in so many different ways...they knew Lucy as an individual and really understood how to help her learn and grow. ”

House Competition



Autumn Term winners: **Cadbury**

Spring Term winners: **Cadbury**

Summer Term winners: **Morgan**

Overall academic year
2025-2026 winners:

Cadbury





A Seamless Leap: The Prep-to-Senior Transition

Now fully embracing life at Malvern College, Old Downians Danai and Lauren took time to reflect on their experiences at TDM, the transition to senior school and what they are looking forward to next.

As an avid sportsperson, many of Lauren's standout moments came on the sports field. During her time at TDM, her team came third in the national hockey finals, beating Repton and Millfield along the way, while she also achieved a fantastic sixth place in the athletics national finals in hurdles.

Danai took on responsibilities in his House, helping to organise activities and gaining great satisfaction from acting as a role model to younger pupils. A key moment came when he signed up for the whole-school talent show, which pushed him firmly outside his comfort zone but helped build his confidence. That growing self-assurance was later reflected in his appointment as Head Boy in Year 8.

The move to Malvern College felt seamless for both. Danai says: "I was fortunate to have my friends alongside me. I was already familiar with the facilities and some of the teachers as we had enjoyed many events at Malvern College over the years, which made it much easier."

Many of Lauren's friends from TDM also joined her and, during the first week of term, all Year 9 pupils boarded at school. "It was a brilliant way to get to know everyone," she says.

Life at Malvern College has since brought a wealth of new challenges and experiences. Danai particularly values the House system, which has helped him build friendships across year groups, while Lauren has been inspired by the quality of the sports programme,

including one-to-one coaching and personalised strength and conditioning.

Lauren has also taken part in Race the Sun and travelled on cricket tours to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Looking further ahead, she is particularly excited about the three-week, pupil-led Nordic Expedition, which will see her cycling and kayaking across Scandinavia.

Danai, meanwhile, is looking forward to shaping his own academic path. "Being able to choose subjects I enjoy means I can focus on what I am passionate about and really push myself. I'm really keen to take advantage of the opportunities that I have here and to discover what I'm capable of."

Lauren and Danai's journeys show how the foundations laid at The Downs Malvern can support a seamless transition to Malvern College and help pupils make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Doug Norton



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