

DOWNLANDS NEWS

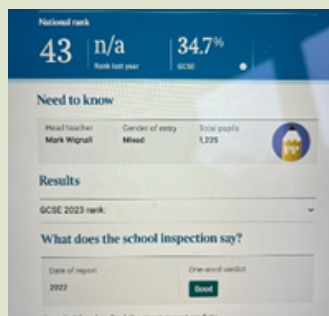


15 December, 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope you are well and that this half term has been a successful one. October always sees the publication of our progress data, this can be found on the DfE School Performance website.

We were again very pleased with our Progress 8 score of +0.52 which effectively means that all students on average achieve over half a grade more in every subject than the average student across the country.



We were also delighted to be recognised by The Times newspaper as the 43rd best state school without a sixth form in the country.

This is a tremendous accolade and appears to be based on the number of grade 7 to 9's achieved last year.

Clearly this a real strength of the school but we are also proud of the progress all abilities and groups of students make, our lovely community and the amazing range of opportunities available to our students.

With this in mind, the Character Passport launch has been really successful with huge numbers of students going to the West End theatres and London museums in January, and to France in May, and a Year 7 camp in July.

I genuinely feel that opportunities such as these are an integral part of a child's education so I am very pleased with the numbers involved.

We have had many wonderful events this half term including the DSA quiz, Winter Concert and the Burgess Hill Christmas Hamper project. The Christmas Market was a huge success, with a staggering £3,700 raised, including £940 from student stalls. The Prize Draw raised over £4,000! I would like to thank our incredible DSA who organised this event and to all of the people who helped make it such a success. Money raised by the DSA helps us to fund the Character Passport programme; the focus of the funding is equity.

We are very proud of our student leaders – our prefects have worked hard on duty this term and the Year 10 students had the opportunity to have a taster of prefect duty when the Year 11 students were completing their mock exams. The Year 10's are now completing their application forms ready to have their interviews and take over from the Year 11 after the February half term break.

School Council met at the beginning of December and discussed issues such as uniform, ROCKS points, the canteen offer and water points. The council consists of two representatives from each year group as well as Head Prefects, myself, Mrs Hunt and Mrs Skelton. The agenda is always formed from matters discussed at Year Councils and I will be feeding back to pupils in assemblies at the start of term.

Wishing you the very best over the Christmas break, we will all be back raring to go on 3rd January!

Best wishes,

Mark Wignall
Headteacher

CONTENTS

1	Words from Mr Wignall,
2	Contents
3	Useful Information
6	Christmas Hamper Project
7	Modern Languages
9	GCSE Art Trip
10	Art
11	Textiles
13	Photo of the month
14	News from the Library
16	Dance
17	News from PE
19	Duke of Edinburgh
20	Music & Choir
21	Student Spotlight
22	Franks Fight the Freeze
23	Downlands School Association
26	Fundraising
29	Community News
31	Vacancies

USEFUL INFORMATION

INSET DAYS

- Tuesday 2nd January 2024
- Wednesday 26 June 2024
- Monday & Tuesday 22nd & 23rd July 2024

EARLY CLOSURES

- Tuesday 16th January 2024
- Wednesday 5th June 2024
- Thursday 13th June 2024
- Friday 12th July 2024- Sports Day, (Timings to be confirmed)

On these days, school will close at 2pm for staff training. Transport will be arranged and we will be able to supervise students who can't leave early.

TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

- 08.35 First (warning) bell
- 08.40 Registration
- 09.00 Lesson 1
- 10.00 Lesson 2
- 11.00 Break
- 11.20 Lesson 3
- 12.20 Lesson 4
- 1.20 Lunch
- 1.55 End of lunch
- 1.55 Lesson 5 (including 10 minutes DEAR Time ** for Key Stage 3)
- 3.05 End of school day

** Drop Everything And Read – all Key Stage 3 students are required to bring a reading book

The School site is open to students from 8.20am, students will not be able to enter the school building until 8.35 am (unless the weather is inclement). Years 8 to 11 will assemble on the playground, Year 7 at the amphitheatre. The gates will be locked at 8.39am and the students will be marked 'late' after this.

USEFUL INFORMATION

REPORTING ABSENCE – STUDYBUGS

If you haven't already, please download the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child is ill and unable to attend school. You can still call us to leave a message to report an absence, however Studybugs is our preference for absence reporting as it feeds directly in to our registers.

Get the app or register now <https://studybugs.com/register>
<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>

Studybugs is quick and easy to register and use, and automatically reminds you to keep us posted. Using the Studybugs app or website, you can report your child's absence due to illness any time from 6pm the day before.

You are required to report absence a day at a time – it's not possible to 'block book' absence. Studybugs automatically email parents a reminder at around 8am the next morning if it's a school day. As an extra safeguard, Studybugs is set to automatically send parents a confirmation email after they report absence via the Studybugs app or website.



LOST PROPERTY

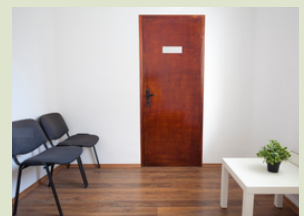
At the end of each half term and term we clear lost property and donate items to the local charity shops. Please ensure you label every item that your child brings to school. If a student loses an item, please ask them to go to Pupil Attendance/Services (near the Year 11 cloakroom area) at break and lunchtime.

USEFUL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL ROOM

- Please make sure that you are aware of the current Covid guidance, which can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#children-and-young-people-aged-18-years-and-under-who-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>
- Please remember to keep the medical room updated of any changes in your children's medical conditions. Your children's welfare whilst in school depends on this information being up-to-date.
- Please ensure that your emergency contact details are current. If you move home, get a new mobile number or your work number changes please remember to let us know; we need to be able to contact you in an emergency or if your child is unwell.
- Please do not send your children into school if they have sickness or diarrhoea. You should keep your child at home for 48 hours after their last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.
- Hay fever – the school does not administer antihistamine for the symptoms of hay fever. We ask that this be administered at home before the start of the school day.
- Finally, please be aware that any prescribed medicines to be administered during the school day must be provided to us in the original pharmacist's container. We would ask that where possible you ask your GP to administer a three-dose medication to avoid the impact on the school day. A 'Request for School to Administer Medicine' form must accompany it. Under exceptional circumstances, where it is deemed that their administration is required to allow the student to remain in school, the school will administer non-prescription medication for a maximum period of 48 hours. Any non-prescription medication administered in school must have been administered in the past without adverse effect. Again, a 'Request for School to Administer Medicine' form must accompany it. **Students must not carry their medication in school, apart from asthma inhalers and Anaphylaxis Auto Injectors, all other medication must be stored securely in the medical room.**

Ms Stubbs
Medical Officer





CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROJECT



Every year we are blown away by the generosity of the community at Downlands and this year was no different. The Burgess Hill Xmas Hamper Project aims to source and pack over 200 hampers filled with festive goodies for families in our local area who may struggle at this time of year. At Downlands we are proud to have collected over 1000 items for this project and to continue supporting such a brilliant cause.



On Wednesday 6th December, Mr Smith and six of the wonderful Global Ambassadors delivered our donations to Kings Church in Burgess Hill and spent the morning date checking and packing up the boxes ready for distribution.

One of the other volunteers commented the following about our students "put simply, they were amazing. Working as a team, interacting not only with their own peer group but with the adults that were there working on the project with such maturity."

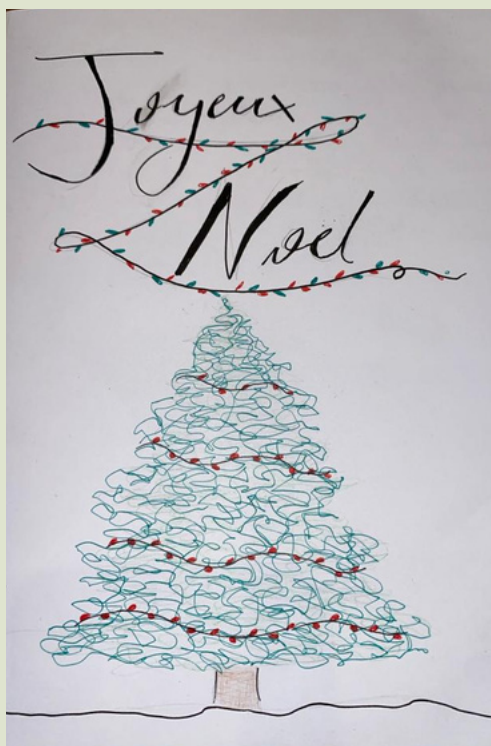
Without exception, every adult that was there commented on what an amazing group they were and how efficient and helpful they were. They are an absolute credit to the school and to their parents"

A huge thank you to everybody who donated food or supported our contribution to the project in any way!



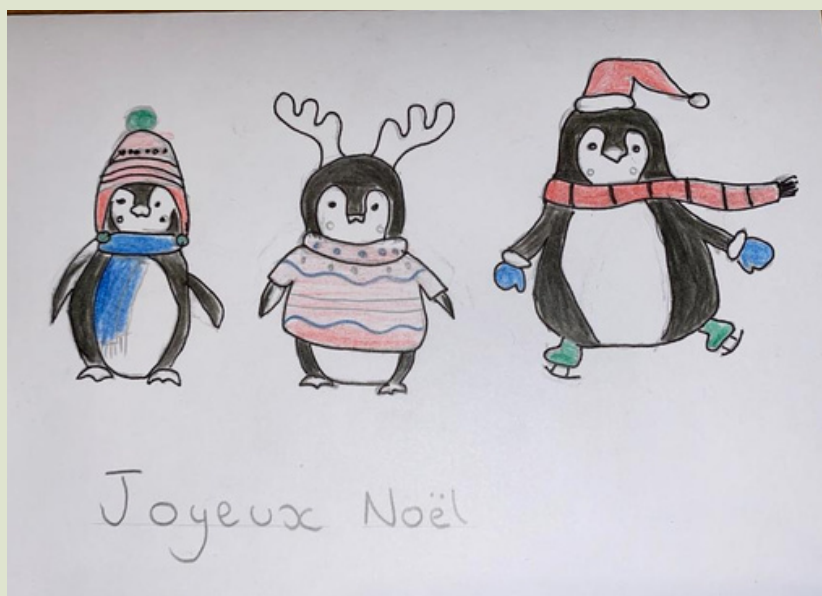
MODERN LANGUAGES

Our year 10 French students are very excited to be exchanging Christmas cards with the students from Le Collège de la Brie Champenoise in Montmirail, France- Hassocks' twin town!



Students have designed their own cards, written greetings in French and introduced themselves and their interests showing all the fabulous French they have been learning this term!

They are now eagerly awaiting their return cards from France!



MODERN LANGUAGES

In November, the Modern Languages department relaunched the Language Leaders group and asked for students to apply for the role. A huge number sent in their brilliant applications and the students below were accepted- congratulations! Since then, we have been creating Christmas lessons to teach to year 7 in the last week of term.

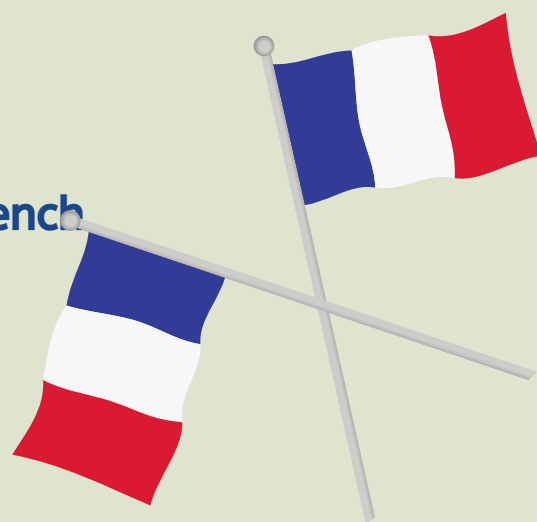
We have been amazed by the effort and commitment shown by our Language Leaders and can't wait to see what else they bring to the department this year.

Language Leaders for German



Ruby T 9EG
Finn HW 9HBR
Sophia B 9EG
Kathryn B 9EG
Florence K 9THU
Charlotte F 9EG
Elodie H 10GW

Language Leaders for French



Frank J 9SGR
Indigo W 9SGR
Eve K 9KBI
Assisi D 9AW
Phoebe S 9KBI
Freya T 9AW
Lara P 9KBI
Orlaith M 10CMO

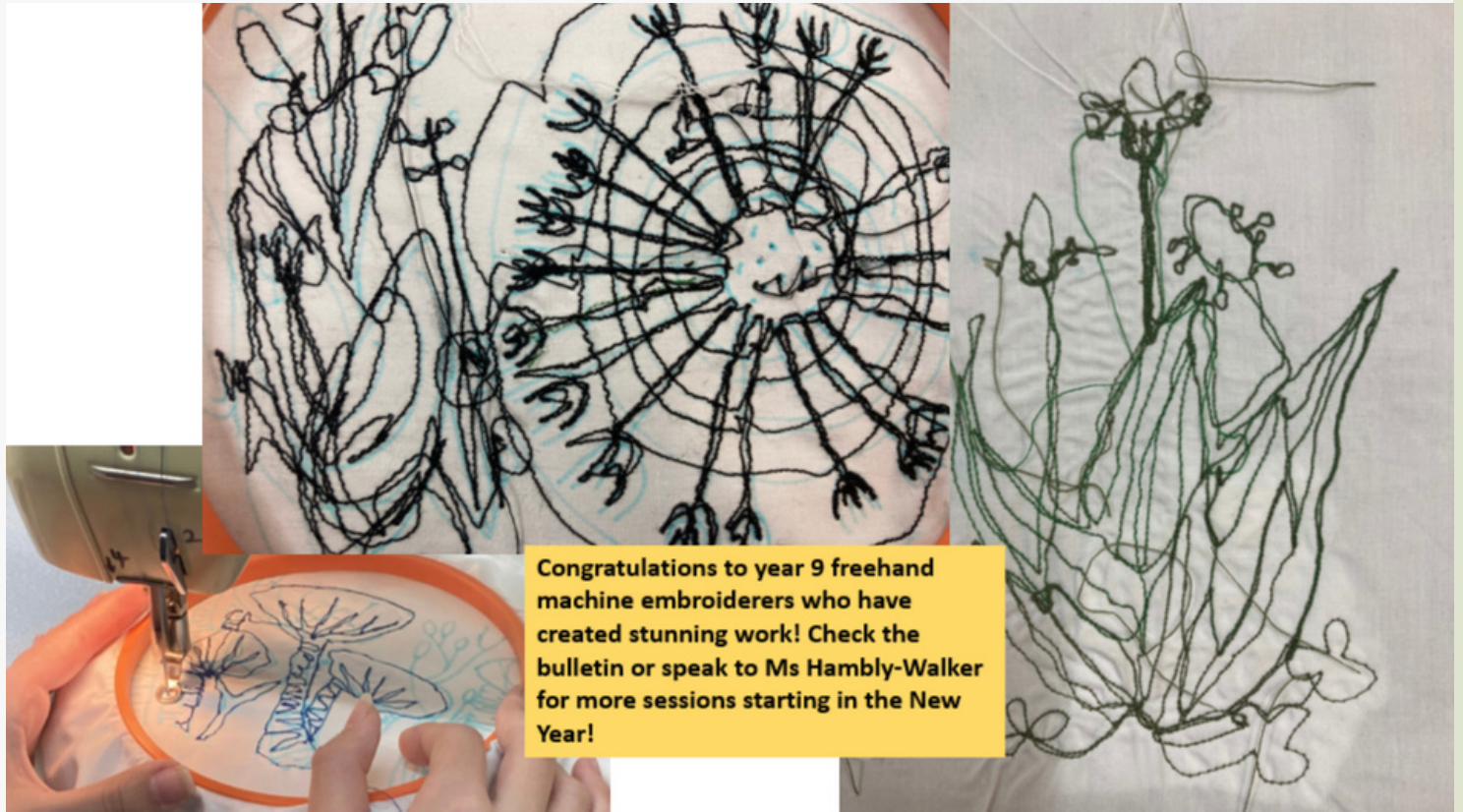
Language Leaders for Spanish



Marcy N 9NCo
Bobby F 9KLB
Jay W 9KLB
Jasmine D 9NCo
Hayley G 9NCo
Blake D 9KLB
Lottie W 9KLB
Hagar P 9KLB

TEXTILES

Year 9



Well done year 9 textiles students who have designed and created some amazing drawstring and tote bags using stencilling and the decorative processes learned in year 8



LIBRARY NEWS

Library News – December 2023

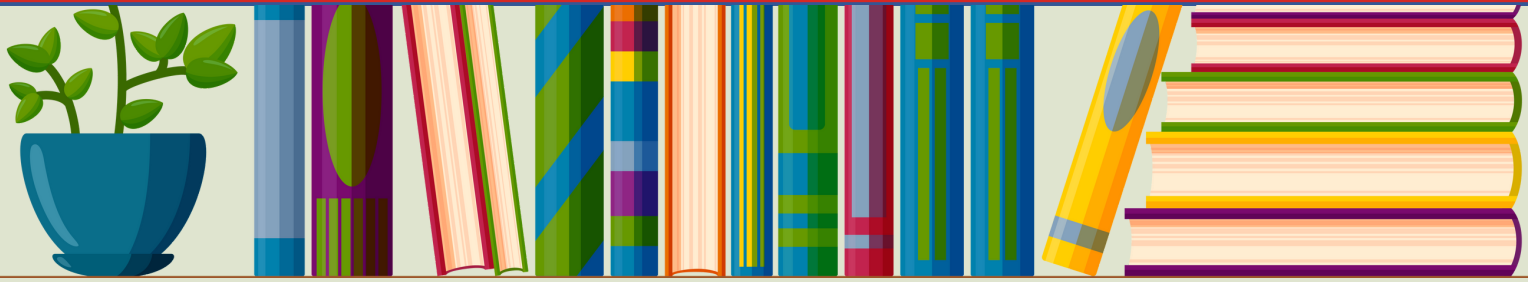
What a welcome to Downlands School it has been! My name is Ms. Quick and I have had the pleasure of joining Downlands Community School as the new librarian. Thank you to all the lovely staff and students who have been so helpful and kind as I become familiar to the role. Particularly the pupil librarians who are such valuable members of the library community.

After a few weeks of closure over half-term, the library opened back up again and has been busy and bustling at break and lunchtimes.

The library is currently following the Autumn and Winter timetable and the computer room is back to full capacity of 30 students.

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES		
Autumn & Winter		
Open every morning for Study, Printing or Stationery from 8.30am		
Monday	Break Lunch	Open to All Years 7,8,11
Tuesday	Break Lunch	Open to All Years 9,10,11
Wednesday	Break Lunch	Open to All Years 7,8,11
Thursday	Break Lunch	Open to All Years 9,10,11
Friday	Break Lunch	Open to All Year 7 & 11 Only
Open every day after school for homework & Study 3.00pm – 4.00pm		
Stationery may also be purchased before school, Break, Lunch and after school.		

LIBRARY NEWS



Visitors of the library can expect to see lots of interesting and creative displays each month that are bursting with books to be borrowed!



COMMUNITY SCHOOL
STATIONERY SHOP

LIBRARY

Stationery Shop

12 Felt Pens £1.50	Clear Pencil Case £1.00
12 Coloured Pencils £1.00	Berol Handwriting Pens £0.50
Glue Stick £0.50	30cm ruler £0.40
Black Biro Pen £0.30	15cm ruler £0.30
Protractor £0.30	HB Pencil £0.20
Revision cards (pack 10) £0.20	Eraser £0.20

NEWS FROM PE

YEAR 7 NETBALL

The year 7 netball A team won their tournament this half term! They played 9 games and left the tournament undefeated, which is an amazing achievement! We look forward to seeing where this team can go and what they can achieve next term!



YEAR 7 & 8 NETBALL



The year 7 and 8 netball teams have remained unbeaten this term! They continue to train hard at netball club each week and produce brilliant performances against strong opposition!



Year 7 & 8 Hockey

The year 7 and 8 hockey team are unbeaten and have won all their games this half term! It is great to see the year groups working so well together as one team. We look forward to playing more games and having joint training sessions with local schools next term!

UNDER 14 GIRLS RUGBY

The U14 Girl's rugby team had a successful win against Cardinal Newman recently. We were very impressed with the skills they have been learning in their rugby lessons and have transferred into competitive matches.

Well done!



PE DOWNLANDS SPORTS LEADERSHIP

Our leaders at Downlands have been very busy leading events with our primary schools this term with Mid Sussex Active. Year 9 leaders have hosted a Year 3 and 4 Netball tournament with 6 schools attending, Year 8 and 9 rugby leaders assisted with a Year 5 and 6 Rugby festival at Haywards Heath Rugby club. Our Year 9 leaders helped run a Sports Hall Athletics competition for primary and secondary students at Haywards Heath College.

Year 10 dance captains choreographed Christmas dances for 45 primary students this week. It is so lovely to receive such positive comments from our primary schools about how friendly and confident our leaders are.

As a PE Department we have many sports leaders in Year 10 who apply for the post and are chosen to assist with extra curricular activities. These students do an incredible job and are a huge asset to the PE Department. From these leaders, the PE Department selected 12 students to become our Leadership Academy and they will receive further training and will be visiting our primary schools soon.





MUSIC & CHOIR



Downlands Choir performing Christmas songs at AGE UK Hassocks



There has been a lot of interest from the students in the additional music lessons at Downlands and many have attended taster lessons.

If your child would like additional music lessons with one of our Visiting Music Teachers (VMTs) their contact details, along with the discipline they teach, are listed here and they are more than happy to answer your questions and add your child to their timetable.

Brass instrument (Trumpet, Trombone, Horn)	Mr Roff	Nroffbrass@gmail.com
Cello, Double Bass	Mr Merrick	ethanmerrick@msn.com
Drum kit	Mr Hodgson	tom@studiomuso.co.uk
Guitar, Bass Guitar	Mr Paton	Ferguspatonguitarschool@gmail.com
Keyboard	Mr Bedford	Hu.bedford@gmail.com
Piano	Mr Kew	charlie.kew@westsussexmusic.co.uk
Violin, Viola	Miss Wardrobe	blwardrobe@hotmail.co.uk
Woodwind (Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone)	Ms Lavelle	Lavellewoodwind@gmail.com
Steel Pan	Mr Nelson	Lee@sussexsteel.com

If your child is interested in studying an instrument that is not listed don't hesitate to contact me at school via email awardrobe@downlands.org and I will try my best to find a tutor.

Instruments to Loan

If the purchase of an instrument is preventing your child from starting instrumental lessons you may be interested to hear we have some Trumpets, Violins and Clarinets available to borrow from the department.

Please get in contact if this is something you would be interested in.



PROUD TO BE A
MUSIC MARK
SCHOOL

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

EMELIA SOLOMON - OBSTACLE COURSE RACING

Emelia has had a fantastic season competing as an OCR (Obstacle Course Racing) athlete, representing the United Kingdom at both the European (Hungary) and World OCR Championships (Belgium).

OCR has gained popularity as a sport, combining physical fitness, mental toughness, and the thrill of overcoming obstacles.



Following several podiums at Spartan races and winning the Age Group series, Emelia was invited to take part in the 2023 Trifecta World Championships in Greece.

As a pioneer for youth development in the sport, Eme is the youngest ever athlete to take part.

With three races over 3 days Eme ran a total of 52km through the Greek mountains of Sparta, with a total elevation gain of nearly 1200m and over 75 strength and technical obstacles throughout.

Emelia received a wealth of support from racers around the world as well as from Team UK. Inspiring athletes of all ages, she particularly enjoys coaching and developing the junior athletes at her training park. With just one race left this season, in Spain, Emelia is looking forward to training hard in the off season, ready to take on the World Championships in California USA in 2024.



We are always very interested to hear about our students' achievements outside of school. If you would like to submit an item for the newsletter please email: jmiles@downlands.org

DOWNSLANDS STUDENT - FRANK FIGHT THE FREEZE PROJECT

HELP FRANK FIGHT THE FREEZE

We will be distributing the donated warm clothes
(both adults and children) and blankets on
"Saturday 16th December 9.15-13.00."
at Age Concern Community Centre
(Wilson Hall - please use the side entrance)

Age Concern Hassocks and District Ltd.
Dale Avenue
Hassocks
West Sussex
BN6 8LW

WHO ARE WE?

HELP WITH FIGHT THE FREEZE

I am Frank Jones, a student at
Downlands Community
School. I have built this
project from the ground up
with my mother and father
and brought in many
different people to help us.

By helping with Fight the Freeze, we can ensure vulnerable
families stay warm throughout the day and at home, to
protect themselves from the chilly cold snaps.

Thank you!

Age Concern Hassocks,
Downlands Community School and
all of our donors. These great
things can't be happening without
your help!



FIGHT the FREEZE



www.facebook.com/helpfrankfightthefreeze

STUDENT MARKET STALLS CHRISTMAS MARKET

Well done to all of the amazing year 7 students who ran a stall at the Christmas Market and demonstrated ROCKS character !



A grand total of 120 pupils got involved.

They ran 40 stalls, all of which were great ideas, well organised and very well presented.

In total these amazing students raised a fantastic £940.00 for the school.



DSA PRIZE DRAW

**Thank you to everyone who very
generously donated a prize to the
DSA Christmas Prize Draw**

**A Twine Butchers
Abigail Lock Design
About Face Massage
Therapies
Arbikie Distillery
Art Room Brighton
BBQ Magazine
Be:Dog
Black Horse Findon
The BN Groove
Bryony Mae Flowers
Budgens
Cakes by Lara
Caroline Gransden Personal
Trainer
Clare Brakaj Mobile
Hairdresser
Create Space Studios
The Curious Tavern
DesRes
The Forge Comedy Club
Freedom Leisure**

**The Greyhound Keymer
Hair Obsession
The Hassocks
The Health Hub
The Hop Tub
Hurst HurstWorks
Infinity Foods
Marram Trading
The Mindful Gardener
Morleys Bistro
Morning Gorgeous
Nikki's Natural Beauty Box
North Laine Hair Company
Places Leisure
QD Stationery
Rebecca Yoga You
Rhubarb greengrocer
Sapphire Beauty Room
South Downs Cellars
Styling My Room
Unwind**

**with your help we have raised over
£4,000 for the school**

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES



DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise **FREE** donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and make a **BIG** difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely **FREE** and only takes a moment.

Turn your daily shopping into everyday magic for us with easyfundraising

You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!



Help us make a difference when you shop.
Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk



1 Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk

2 Sign up and search for us

3 Your favourite brands donate to us
whenever you shop with them

Shop with 7,500+ brands including:

Booking.com

ebay

M&S

GROUPON



TUI

JOHN
LEWIS



Viking

ASOS



Uber Eats

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES



Thank you to all our family and friends that are supporting our School Lottery. We are delighted with the support it has received and the money that it raises will be going towards more facilities for the students.

The lottery draw takes place every Saturday evening. Tickets can be purchased by clicking the link below:

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/dowlands-community-school>

Tickets are £1 and can be purchased individually or you can set up a standing order for weekly tickets.. There are weekly prizes and national prizes to be won. It's easy to take part but makes the biggest difference to our school and students.

USEFUL INFORMATION



Downlands receives extra funding for all students eligible for free school meals, called the Pupil Premium. This funding is extremely valuable to us as it enables us to support our students to be happy, confident learners & make the best possible progress.

For more information please visit :

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/free-school-meals/#how-to-apply>

or email in confidence: vthompson@downlands.org

Those children and families that are not eligible for FSM will be able to access urgent support for food via the WSCC Community Hub. The Community Hub can be contacted on 0330 222 7980 and is open 9:00 – 17:00 seven days a week. Further information can be found via the [West Sussex County Council website](#)



Burgess Hill Pantry was set up as part of the Town Council's 'No Cupboard Empty' project, to help residents struggling on low incomes stretch their household budgets a little further.

The pantry is a community group, run by volunteers to help people living in Mid Sussex.

For a weekly membership of £4, residents can choose a selection of food to the value of up to £20, helping budgets stretch further. There's a variety of food available including fresh fruit and veg, store cupboard favourites, bread and dairy products.

**You can find more details and sign up on the
Burgess Hill Pantry webpage**

<https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/pantry-listings/burgess-hill-pantry/>

Fundraising for the Downlands PE South Africa Trip

Ditchling Village Association

COFFEE MORNING



On Tuesday 19th December 10-11:30

At Ditchling Village Hall

Hosted by Downlands Community School

VACANCIES

JOIN OUR TEAM



**Do you want to join a friendly,
enthusiastic, and committed team
in a successful community school ?**

We are currently looking for:

**Learning Mentor
Facilities and Project Manager
Second in Charge of Languages Faculty**

**For details of current vacancies please visit:
<https://www.downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk/join-us/vacancies>**

SOCIAL MEDIA

Thank you to everyone is liking, sharing & following our social media pages.

We are delighted to say that our audiences just keep on growing

