



The Dixie Grammar School  
Nursery • Junior • Senior

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01455 292244



The end of the Term and the end of the calendar year is always a time for reflection. I started the final Senior School assembly of the term with the Thought for The Week. Reflecting on this most successful autumn term is important and there are many people to thank including staff, parents and pupils. Looking back reminds us of the various vital contributions of so many individuals and it is also important because it helps remind us how far we have come. For pupils aged 3 to 18, this has been a term full of respect, resilience, courage, commitment and care. It was a pleasure handing out the values badges at the Junior School Carols singalong in the barn, and wonderful to share the success of our new values aligned rewards system at the Senior School. With over 80000 House points awarded for our 5 values this term, Epraise has been critical in helping us recognise and celebrate pupil success. Pupils have made wonderful suggestions for the in-app rewards shop, and we look



forward to the grand opening in the New Year!

The Senior final assembly finished with the traditional intra-year competition—the singing of the 12 Days of Christmas, led by Toby Wayte. Congratulations to Year 9, who Mrs Cormack judged to be the most tuneful—each pupil receives 12 house points!

The Carol services, nativities and end of term concerts, including the Junior piano time and Senior 'Touch of Christmas', remind me how lucky I am to work in a school where the ambition of staff is matched by the willing participation of students. I look forward to the Christmas Dinners (!) and to welcoming over 30 alumni back to celebrate with us. Last year's Upper Sixth were a wonderful group of individuals and we look forward to hearing about the successes and challenges of their first term post-Dixie.



Congratulations to our Year 11 pupils on completion of their mock examinations on Wednesday 18 December—their hard work, resilience, courage and commitment has earned them a break over Christmas.

On the following pages, you will see picture highlights of the festive period at the Dixie and then a short review of the half term—from our youngest to our oldest. Thank you for your magnificent support this term—I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

*Richard Hyman*





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## Pippins



The children in Pippins spent a morning exploring the Christmas Tree Farm. They had lots of fun playing hide and seek and looking at the displays. Afterwards, they had the very important job of selecting two Christmas trees for the Junior School!







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## EYFS Nativity Year 1 & 2







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Year 1 and 2







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## Year 1, 2 & 3



### Year 1 and 2 trip to National Forest North Pole Adventure

Year 1 and 2 had the most wonderful day at the National Forest Adventure Farm visiting Santa and his many elves. Thankfully they were all on the nice list (in the end!) and everyone received their present from Santa!



### Year 3 - Volcano project

Year 3 rounded off their 'Tremors' topic by creating volcanoes. They were able to use any material to do this - including mashed potato, lego, cake and papier mache. We were very impressed with all of the hard work that was put into these projects and the children presented their work clearly and in detail.







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## Year 4 Forest School



# Titanic Project

Year 4 have greatly enjoyed the Titanic topic this half term. They have written poems, newspaper articles and playscripts which they green-screened using iMovie. In Art, they have sketched the Titanic and created calendars and port-holes.

While studying states of matter in Science, Year 4 learnt how salt changes the melting point of ice and also looked at buoyancy to link to the Titanic.







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## Year 5

### Year 5 - DT project - Wire Soldiers and Aeroplanes

As part of Art and Design Technology, Year 5 have manipulated wire to create soldier statues. They also designed and built a model Spitfire plane, which included an electric motor and a spinning propeller. The children really enjoyed the creative and practical aspects of this work.



### Year 5 - Art Project in collaboration with Media Artist Mya and Senior School

Year 5 had a great day at the Senior School Art Department. They created the first Dixie Community Weave project, working alongside Senior School students and mixed media artist-Mya.







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Sport, Charity,  
Year 6



### Salvation Army Present Appeal

Head Boy and Girl and House Captains visited the Salvation Army in Hinckley to drop off the donated gifts from the Junior School parents and carers for their Christmas Present Appeal. In the Hinckley and Bosworth area alone, the Salvation Army are helping support 400 children this Christmas. Thank you for your support.



### Year 6

The whole of Year 6 got up early and travelled to the Harry Potter studios just outside London. The two classes have been reading the first Harry Potter book and so were excited to be seeing how the films were created.

After arriving, we were whisked into a seminar room to find out how the characters were brought to life. We found out how Hagrid was made to seem like a giant (animatronics and an ex-rugby player!) and what planning went into some of the costumes. We also found out that a werewolf costume costs £5000 to create, but can only be used for one day before a new one has to be used.

After the seminar, we had our lunch then went into the tour. The main hall was set up for Christmas and looked fantastic. We managed to get some photos on broomsticks playing quidditch and enjoyed walking through the forbidden forest.

Several students tasted the butterbeer and then there was the vast shop at the end to load up on Harry Potter goodies. The trip was enjoyed by everyone and we received some complimentary comments from members of the public about the students' behaviour.







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Year 6, 7, 9



### Year 7 Visit to the Frankfurt Christmas Markets in Birmingham



### Year 6 Visit to the Warning Zone, Life Skills Centre



### Year 9 DofE Enrichment - campsite cooking

Over the last half term, some Year 9 students have been trying their hand at cooking on a Trangia (camp stove) as part of their Bronze DofE training. Some excellent meals have been cooked, and students have relished the challenge of the more primitive cooking facilities. Highlights include Joel and Henry's breakfast bap for breakfast week, and Ela and Clementine's burger for the burger challenge. Their final challenge will be a Master Chef style competition judged by Mr Baden and Mr Burns.







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## Year 10

### Year 10 visit to Coventry University

Year 10 GCSE PE students visited Coventry University to take part in a session discussing what it takes to become an Olympian. They participated in sports research experiments, explored rehabilitation facilities, and engaged in activities such as a mid-thigh power pull, a 6-second Watt bike test, and a psychological evaluation.



### Year 10 Enrichment

Year 2 had a fantastic PE lesson lead by the Year 10 Enrichment group. The older students' enthusiasm and knowledge engaged and inspired the younger ones through fun exercises. The laughter and encouragement among Year 2 students highlighted the benefits of peer-led learning, enhancing their physical skills, confidence and motivation. They are looking forward to their next session!







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## Year 11



### Year 11—Carding Mill Valley

Year 11 pupils went to Carding Mill valley in Shropshire to complete their Physical Geography field work on river systems. During the trip, pupils were split into small groups and had to collect data on velocity, channel shape and sediment characteristics. As part of the trip, pupils walked up the valley and visited the waterfall near the source. The Year 11 girls particularly enjoyed singing to Mr Macqueen on the minibus journey to and from the field work site!



### Sport

Year 7 took part in the first of hopefully many mixed netball matches. The students were split into two teams and played against TMBS. The Dixie students, as always, displayed our school values perfectly and as a result came away with two convincing wins. This is the first time we have introduced boys into netball fixtures, due to their interest and commitment at co-curricular clubs. A step in the right direction for inclusivity in sport.







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## Bees



### Bee team

Several of our Year 7 students, including the "bee team", had the chance to explore the honey-jarring process. David brought in a bucket of honey that had been collected on his previous visit and we all participated in filling the jars, ensuring each one contained at least 120g. In total, we filled 92 jars — now, we just need to determine the price, considering that it takes bees approximately 5,000 flights of up to 3 miles to produce a single jar!



### Work experience / database of parent businesses

#### ***Calling All Parents - Share Your Business Expertise!***

*We are seeking to expand our network of potential contractors and work experience placements. Your business could be a valuable resource to our school community. By sharing your details, you are helping to provide our students with opportunities to learn from industry professionals and gain practical experience. [Please click on the link](#) to complete the form.*

### Alumni

Please scan the QR code and follow the Dixie on LinkedIn.







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## Mandarin



### Alumni

In a unique online event on December 10, Mandarin students in Years 8-10 had the privilege of meeting Eleanor Partridge. A former student, Eleanor is currently studying Chinese at Zhejiang University through a UK-China exchange programme. She shared her experiences of living in China and studying Mandarin, offering invaluable insights to our aspiring linguists.

Year 8 students William Brown, Barnaby Pointon, Toby Wayte, Emily Webb, and Year 9 student Jasper Vernon were eager to learn. They asked a range of questions about learning Chinese characters, cultural differences, challenges faced, and the benefits of studying the language. Eleanor patiently answered each question, providing practical tips and advice.

This inspiring meeting has motivated our students to continue their Mandarin studies with renewed enthusiasm. We hope that Eleanor's experiences will encourage them to embrace the challenges and rewards of language learning.



### Year 10 - British Values celebration cream tea

As part of their PSD unit on British values, Year 10 were treated to a thoroughly British experience: a gorgeous cream tea prepared by our catering team. We had tea in cups and saucers, orange juice, homemade biscuits and fruit scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam. I think all students would agree that this added to their enjoyment of the topic of British Values and was a great way to finish the unit!







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## Music



### Music Department

WOW... what a fantastic term!

Dixie Fest back in October was absolutely wonderful - the performers were incredible and really stepped up to the mark! There were some stunning performances, showcasing the huge array of talent throughout the school.

In 2027 we will hold our third Dixie Fest, when our current Year 6 will be in Year 9 and Year 11 may have just started university! You will, of course, be invited back to join the growing number of alumni who return to perform. The Music Department cannot wait to see what the future holds for our bands!

It was a very quick turnaround after half term to prepare for our Christmas performances and, yet again, we have seen an enormous amount of talent across the year groups.

A Touch of Christmas, now in its third year, was a roaring success thanks to the support of so many. The dancing, singing and musicianship seen from pupils was fabulous and the way they worked together in pairs was outstanding. It was also a treat to see our talented staff on stage - stepping out of their comfort zone and thoroughly enjoying the experience.

We finished the year with a stunning Carol Service at St Peter's church, which was a fitting end to what has been a fantastic term.

In the New Year, we are excited to announce that we will be launching a school musical at the Senior School. There has been such a swell in numbers and enthusiasm within the Department this term that we feel now is the time to relaunch a somewhat-lost school tradition. More information to follow in January.

Thank you to all of the students who have made this term such a success and to all the Dixie family for supporting the events.







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## Year 7 and PSD



### Year 7—Computing and Design

Year 7 have just completed their 3D Design unit, learning to navigate and create objects in a 3D environment.

The 3D printer has been busy creating the first batch of student designed keyrings - just in time for Christmas!



Certificates for this year's Bebras Computing Challenge have been printed, with the Merit and Distinction certificates being given to form teachers to handout and the Gold certificates awarded in the final assembly of the term. Gold Awards are given to students who score in the top 10% nationally—this year there are 18 Dixie students with a Gold Award. Well done to:

Scarlett Serdetschniy, Ethan Cole, Thomas Whitby, Zephyr Cassidy, Marcus Veall, Barnaby Pointen, Toby Wayte, Sebastien Harrison, Jasper Vernon, Boden Fisher, Ela Dumas Matos, Jack Hames, Freddie Hammond, Liam Bullingham, Oscar Knowles, Jacob Spears, Henry Davies, Joel Shaller. Special mentions to Scarlett - this is the first year Year 6 have taken part in the competition - and to Tom, Seb and Liam, who scored a maximum of 220/220 points!

### 2024 Personal and Social Development update from Mrs Cormack

The role of Head of PSD was handed to Mrs Cormack from Mrs Hillier from September 2024 - please email her with any concerns, thoughts or comments  
[cormackc@dixie.org.uk](mailto:cormackc@dixie.org.uk)

**Right to Withdraw** - at the Dixie, we teach RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) in line with statutory guidance. As such, parents have a right to withdraw their children from any sex education lessons until 3 terms before your child's 16th birthday. Please see our [PSD policy](#) for further details.

PSD also includes online safety. If you need any further information or support, the <https://www.internetmatters.org/> website is a brilliant source of advice and information for parents and students.

### One to watch....

'Swiped' A recent Channel 4 documentary investigates the effect of banning smartphones for 21 days on a group of year 8 students.

Online Safety Act - [Ofcom progress update](#) on implementing the UK's Online Safety Act

### Sporting Success

Huge congratulations to Jack Hames, following his selection for the England Men's Under 15 Squad.







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## Assessment



### Senior School Assessment Points

Last year we introduced assessment points throughout the academic year, to enable us to formalise the way in which we monitor student progress and the way in which we communicate this to you.

In response to feedback, we have made some adjustment to how assessment points work this year. Instead of all assessments taking place in one week, they are instead spread across an 'assessment window' - allowing them to be held at the most appropriate point in the curriculum for each subject.

Assessment Point 1, which applied to students in Years 8—Upper Sixth, took place earlier this term. The next assessment point will involve all students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and Lower Sixth and runs between Tuesday 7 January and Friday 31 January. The exact form of assessment will vary depending on the age of the student and the subject, but should not be onerous - we are seeking to capture assessments that were already a routine part of the way in which Departments operate. Individual subject teachers will give students further details and guidance and the dates of assessments will also be made available on Google Classroom by class teachers.

Full results will be sent home on Friday 14 February - but if there are subject specific or wider academic concerns, teachers will make contact with you in advance of this date.

This year's academic calendar [can be found here](#), and shows the pattern of assessments for each year group. If you have any questions or concerns, [please do not hesitate to contact me at the school](#).

Mr Dixon, Head of Academic and Head of Sixth Form, Senior

### Junior School—Behaviour and Sanctions

We have recently become aware of some isolated instances of language used in our Junior School that we considered to be discriminatory. We understand that children are still learning about the impact of their words, and we want to use this as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of respect and inclusivity within our school community.

To further support our commitment to fostering a school environment where kindness, respect and inclusivity thrive, we have reviewed our School's Behaviour Policy - specifically regarding the consequences for using language that could be hurtful or disrespectful to others. This review ensures that our approach aligns with our core values and that we address any concerns consistently and fairly.

We encourage all parents to discuss with their children the importance of using kind and respectful language at all times. We believe that open conversations at home can significantly contribute to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment for everyone.

Mrs Baker, Mrs Banton and Mrs Mackenzie





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## Epraise

### Epraise Review—Mrs Craig and Mrs Cormack

This term has seen a significant change in our way of working at the Senior School in relation to our rewards & sanctions. September saw the launch of the Epraise system which has been tailored to match our Behaviour & Discipline Policy and we have been so impressed by how the new system has been embraced by students and colleagues alike. Our old system of credits and misdemeanours had become too biased towards the negative and our older students in particular were not motivated by the credits system. With Epraise, all that has changed and we have been delighted to see the pleasure and pride experienced by the students as their House Point totals have mounted across the term. The old misdemeanours have been replaced by demerits in Epraise and we have seen far fewer of these this term, which has been fantastic. With any new system, it takes time to fully implement and this is why we have taken a phased approach, focusing initially on staff and students and awarding House Points, with a gradual introduction of demerits. At every stage, we are talking with colleagues to ensure the highest possible levels of consistency, although no system that involves human beings can ever be entirely consistent.

Early in the new term, **you will receive an invitation to log on to the Epraise system as a parent.** There you will be able to see your child's profile in full. You will be able to see how they have demonstrated our school values and the house points they have received as a result. You will also be able to see any special accolades or achievements they have received, such as Snow Leopard Awards, Sports Leadership Awards, Duke of Edinburgh, etc. We have increased the number of categories of Snow Leopard Award to widen the accessibility of the scheme and introduced a Golden Snow Leopard Award for students who achieve an award in seven out of the ten categories. You will also be able to see when your child has received a demerit. Demerits do not detract from their House Point totals, but are an important way of us monitoring when things occur that fall below our expectations in school. We are working hard to help students understand this and will rely on your support when you have your own access next term. Previously, such things were noted in the Student Planner, but it was not easy to spot any particular trends or patterns. Now, our pastoral teams can use this information to track any specific areas where a student may need support. For example, a student who regularly forgets to bring books or equipment to school may need help with tips for organisation, or a student who struggles to meet homework deadlines may need help knowing how to manage their time. We have built a range of support interventions into Epraise, alongside our sanction interventions, precisely in order to be able to respond to each student's needs and the tracking of demerits is an essential part of this process.

The other aspect of Epraise that students are particularly excited about and that will also come on



stream early next term is the Rewards Shop. Here, they will be able to "spend" their House Points on rewards and treats, and we have been grateful to all of them for their suggestions of what items should be in the shop. We hope that you will enjoy seeing your child's profile in the New Year and that this will prove to be an important and beneficial additional tool in the communication between home and school as we work together to see your children thrive.





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## Safeguarding



### Keeping Children Safe During the School Holidays— Mrs Banton

As the Christmas holiday approaches, we want to remind our families of the importance of ongoing child safety, both online and offline. Pupils are reminded that the [pastoral@dixie.org.uk](mailto:pastoral@dixie.org.uk) email is available for non-emergency concerns and for our Senior School students, contact can be made through the Wellbeing Concerns area of Epraise. Both points of contact will be checked regularly by a member of the School's safeguarding team during the Christmas break.

#### Online Safety:

Children and young people use smartphones so frequently and confidently that we can sometimes forget how much access they have to the world through these devices and through social media. Any reminder of this is timely and important.

During the Christmas period, please continue to monitor your child's online activity and talk openly to them about their use of social media. With apps like Snapchat, children and young people can easily share their location with others and talk to strangers and so it is important that we continue to remind our young people about these risks and monitor activity. Some of our pupils may be lucky enough to receive new devices this Christmas – please remind them of the responsibility that comes with them. It is also important to discuss the importance of strong passwords, privacy settings and the responsible sharing of personal information.

It is also timely to remind your child that online bullying has serious consequences – please do encourage them to talk to a trusted adult and report any instances of online harassment or abuse.

[The UK Safer Internet Centre](https://www.uk-safer-internet-centre.org/) provides support as to how to protect children and young people online on a range of devices. Parents and young people can refer concerns about online sexual abuse to [CEOP Safety Centre](https://www.ceop-safety-centre.org/) or can report concerns to the Police via 101.

As the Christmas holidays approach, please take a moment to review some important safety tips with your children:

- **Clever Never Goes (formerly known as Stranger Danger):** Discuss with your children the importance of understanding when someone is trying to persuade them to go somewhere with them against their will. Emphasise that they should always trust their gut instincts and seek help from a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any situation.
- **Water Safety:** If you are planning to visit any water bodies, such as lakes, rivers or the sea, please ensure that children are always closely supervised by a responsible adult.
- **Road Safety:** Review road safety rules with your children, including the importance of looking both ways before crossing the road and always using designated pedestrian crossings. Remind them to wear reflective clothing when walking or cycling at night to increase their visibility to motorists.

We encourage you to discuss these safety tips with your children and enjoy a safe and memorable holiday with your families. If you have any concerns about your child's safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact the school.





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End of term

## Final Assembly—Senior School



## Carols in the Barn



## Alumni

Were delighted to welcome over 30 alumni back for Christmas Dinner.







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