



We are Dragons

Reaching for the Sun





Our Aim

To inspire, encourage
and develop free-
thinking, confident
young people who
reach for the sun.





Head's Introduction

This publication is our annual opportunity to inform you as current and prospective parents how we intend to stay true to Skipper Lynam's founding vision whilst ensuring we continue to evolve. Our aim is to inspire, encourage and develop free-thinking, confident young people who reach for the sun. Positive outcomes for each individual Dragon are central to every decision we take.

We were delighted to be shortlisted for the TES Boarding School of the Year which recognised our market leading boarding offering. Our agile boarding model allows families to choose what works for them. The boarding ethos permeates our community with our focus on a holistic education which provides endless opportunities for our Dragons to become free thinkers.

As we launch our digital strategy encompassing the best of modern technology into our teaching and learning we remain determined to give our young Dragons a stimulating learning environment so that they can develop the skills essential for a successful future.

As the new academic year begins, we will be opening our extraordinary music and performing arts building; two of our boarding houses have been freshly refurbished, our changing rooms refitted and thanks to a generous donor our cricket pavilion has been re-thatched.

Please take a moment to read our targets for the next academic year which sees us continually aspire to improve what we provide for young people and the support we offer families.

With best wishes,

Emma



Chair's Introduction



I am pleased to take this opportunity to share the significant progress we have made against our strategic plan. The comprehensive plan ensures the Dragon continues to grow and develop for our pupils, colleagues and the wider community. It also forms a backbone to anchor the School and help us navigate our way through a period of uncertainty (and opportunity) as a direct result of the proposed changes to taxation faced by all private schools, and more locally in Oxford, our responses to the changes in traffic management.

In the past twelve months, physically we have made some significant steps in enhancing the quality of the School. There's a palpable sense of excitement as the new Music and Performing Arts project nears completion, ready for the start of the new academic year. Our journey towards Net Zero got underway in 2024 and it's great to see the addition of electric vehicles to our growing fleet of minibuses, helping our pupils and staff move about the School more easily and efficiently.

Boarding has always been, and will continue to be, a key part of a Dragon education; indeed, nearly half of all pupils at Bardwell Road now enjoy some form of boarding, demonstrating just how valuable it can be to our pupils' development and preparation for senior schools. Finally, we continue to invest in the pre-prep too, ensuring the facilities meet the needs of our youngest Dragons. All of this has been made possible with the refinancing of the School in 2023, significantly reducing our annual financing costs and helping create optionality to invest in key aspects of the School

for current and future generations. This current phase draws to a successful conclusion in 2025, providing an opportunity to pause and reset. Strong governance continues to be a focus in my role as Chair and we have further strengthened the Board through the appointment of new Governors and ensuring our committee structures are aligned with the ambitions and challenges pursued by the School. Governors continue to scrutinise, challenge and support all areas of the School, with strong budgetary control never more important. Finally, 2025 will be my last year as Chair and the Governance Committee is active in selecting my successor who will help support the School through our 150th anniversary and beyond.

In other aspects of School life, I'm delighted to see the Dragon community thrive and grow together. Our communication with Parents and ODs continues to improve. Positive social impact is one of the themes that defines a Dragon education and it's great to see this develop in-line with our pupils' own ambitions. Lastly, it's also right that the School continues to offer the Oxford Living wage for our valued support staff.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every colleague at the Dragon for their continued professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm in making a Dragon education such a special and rewarding experience for our pupils.

Best wishes,

Andrew



COO's Introduction

A significant amount has been achieved operationally over the last 12 months, delivering across all our objectives.

The Pre-Prep has been able to benefit from its wonderful new playground and has been the early adopter for a number of other advancements. LED lighting is now installed across the School and the Pre-Prep was first to have PV/solar panels installed as part of our Net Zero strategy; PV/solar panels will begin to be fitted at the Prep over the Summer.

Work on the Music and Performing Arts Building will conclude over the Summer holidays, with the grand opening scheduled for 14 September 2024. This work has also enabled us to reinstate our main astro sports pitch. We will also refurbish two boarding houses over the Summer holiday as well as extensive work in the classrooms and the pupils' changing facilities.

The Pre-Prep was also first to adopt many aspects of our migration to Microsoft 365, which will conclude across the School in

the Autumn Term. Aligned with this, is the development of a new flexible way for our pupils to interact with devices to enhance their learning.

We are mindful of the concerns many parents have over forthcoming traffic restrictions being introduced by Oxford County Council. In response, we are developing a School Travel Plan which will be ready for September. The Dragon Bus Service, introduced in September 2024, has gone from strength to strength and we are delighted to introduce 2 new routes (making 6 in total), as well as an afternoon service, from September 2024.

Finally, we have been excited to host a residential summer camp and a day camp over the Summer holidays. In particular, we hope that the day camp has proved an attractive option for many of our parents for their children over the break.

Best wishes,

Martin



Academic

To raise a generation of Dragons who are academically rigorous, creative, independent and ambitious free thinkers. To be a market leader in prep school education through curriculum design, professional development of teaching staff and partnerships.

- To develop the Humanities curriculum, including assessment, opportunities for cross-curricular links, project-based learning and links between Prep & Pre-Prep.
- To progress the digital teaching & learning timeline, including digital literacy & curriculum IT and greater opportunities for blended learning.
- To implement a robust and effective system for colleagues to facilitate professional development and review.
- To review routines and implementation of 'prep' and how independent learning is fostered.
- To review suitability and purpose of learning environments on both sites.



Pastoral care and safeguarding

To put pastoral care at the heart of all we do, by advocating every Dragon pupil to 'Reach for the Sun' and approach everyday life with Kindness, Courage and Respect. To equip all pupils with the necessary skills to tackle life with confidence, empathy and determination. To respond progressively to the modern world and ensure we lead with a proactive and restorative approach.

- Launch a behaviour strategy that considers the whole school's culture and ethos.
- Explore ways to better utilise spaces, to encourage clear outlets to play, learn, find quiet and connect.
- Continue to develop collaborative opportunities with external agencies and select local partner schools, to share good practice and expand perspectives.
- Assess which routines and resources across Pre-Prep and Prep can provide continuity and natural change, especially during transition points.



Co-curricular

To provide an outstanding co-curricular and enrichment curriculum to develop and create confident, free thinking young people. To ensure participation and inclusivity are at the heart of our provision.

- Explore how activity time can be improved with opportunities for pupils to have further choice in selecting what they learn.
- Assess the timings of clubs across the school day (Mornings/lunch times/evenings).
- Competition v inclusion – develop enough opportunities across all areas of co-curricular to support each child.
- Review all school trips and what opportunities pupils get whilst on their journey at the Dragon.



Boarding

To provide an outstanding boarding provision, in a home from home environment, led by exceptional boarding practitioners. To be at the forefront of the national strategy for boarding education which is child-centred, safeguards children's wellbeing and is ambitious for the progress of every child.

- Expand the calendar of events to widen the opportunities for Dragons to be involved with boarding.
- Develop infrastructure to best deliver flexibility in boarding, streamlining processes and communication across boarding.
- Within the framework of the new school day, evolve the boarding provision to ensure it best supports the needs of the pupils.
- Promote opportunities for professional development within the boarding team, across the Dragon and wider sector.



Communication and parental engagement

To provide timely, accurate and relevant information to the Dragon community. To embrace Dragon families in creating a positive and supportive community through workshops and social initiatives.

- Refine Dragon News to deliver operational information to parents in the most succinct and accessible way.
- Support international families to be able to engage fully in school life and events.
- Review and improve the Parent Noticeboard for better integration with external communications.
- Develop collaboration with admissions and boarding to standardise key external communication to parents.



Preparation for future schools

To provide Dragon families with personalised advice and support in choosing their child's future school. To provide appropriate support and preparation for admission assessments.

- Host calendar of Future School Forums.
- Host Future Schools Fair January 2025.
- Review preparation pathways for assessment processes.



Social Impact

To be pioneers in the area of Social Impact, as a School that develops pupils who understand the local and global challenges facing society today. As a whole organisation, undertake positive action to address and alleviate these challenges.

- Continue to work with our partner schools to address lack of music and arts provision across the county, making use of the new Music and Performing Arts Building to refresh our offering.
- Produce the inaugural Social Impact Report for publication at the beginning of the Autumn term.
- Create a bank of social impact case studies, featuring beneficiaries, participants, and donors, and including metrics measuring the effectiveness of our programmes, to use throughout the year in order to raise awareness of our partnership activities.
- Encourage the whole school community, particularly pupils, to engage with the social impact programme through classroom-based teaching, hands-on opportunities, shared learning experiences with children in local schools, and the Charities of the Year.
- Continue to manage the Community Larder and introduce focal points during the school year in tandem with the Wardrobe.



Development

To create strong, life-long relationships and two-way engagement with our community of ODs, Current Parents and Former Parents.

- Seek and respond to feedback from the Dragon community to enhance our programme of communications and events and attract broad participation.
- Ensure that all members of our community are fully aware of the impact of philanthropic support on everything the Dragon does, through regular and targeted communications.
- Continue to integrate the social impact programme into our fundraising and communications activity.
- Invite all members of our community to support our school ambitions however they are able, whether through lifetime giving or as a member of our Skipper legacy society.



Equality, diversity, inclusion

To be a community where every Dragon and their family feels included, diversity in every respect is celebrated and equality is championed.

- Integrate EDI principles across school structures, policies and procedures.
- Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to have a voice regarding EDI objectives across all aspects of school life.



The Estate & Net Zero

To ensure that the School estate enables Dragons to achieve the best possible outcomes academically, personally and physically.

- To oversee a sustainable replacement programme for the School's heating plant, to align with our Net Zero ambitions.
- To complete the refurbishment programme of the School's boarding houses.
- To consider the use of spaces in Pre-Prep.



Governance

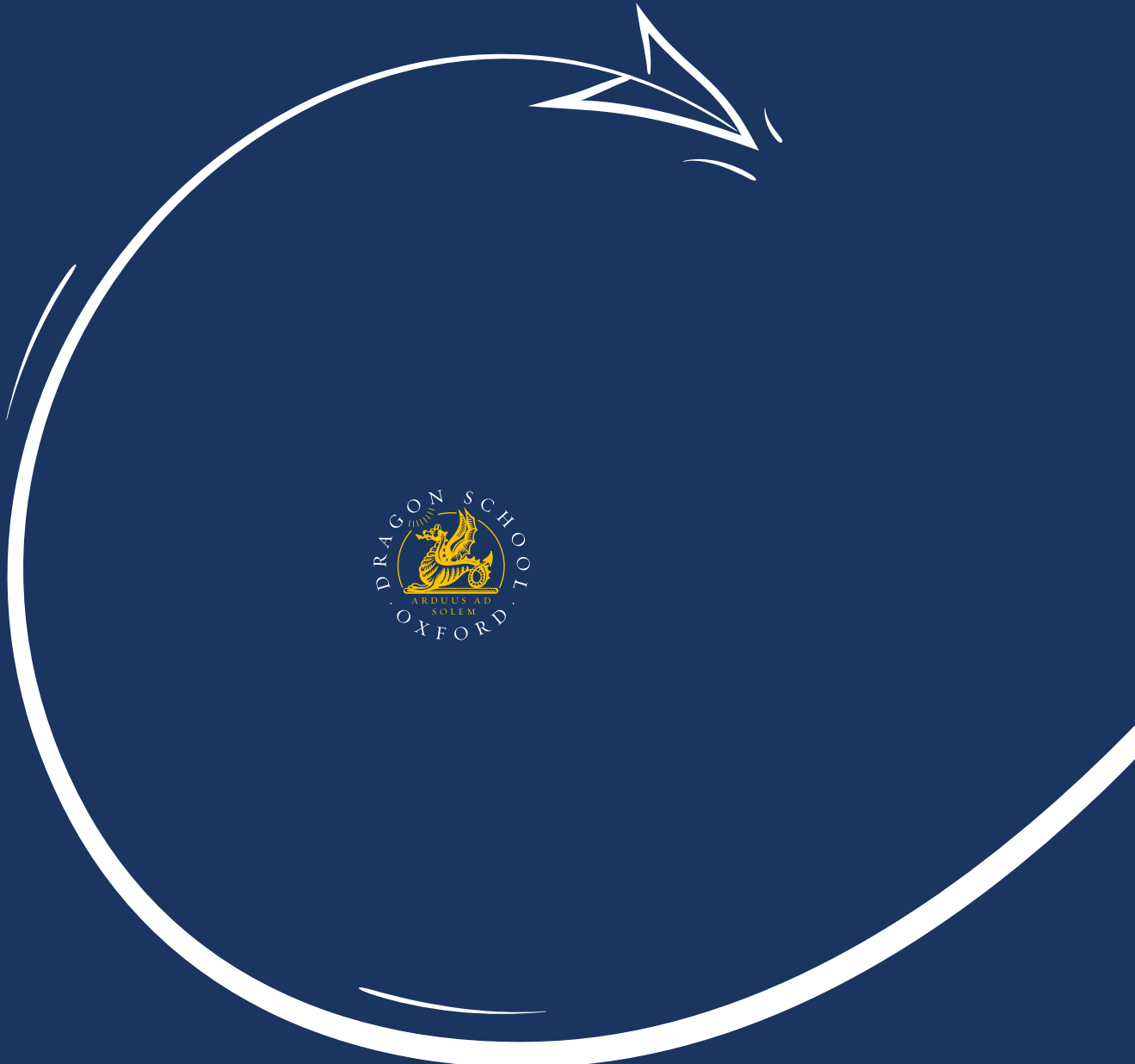
To ensure the governing body is configured appropriately and is fully engaged in the School to enable the Dragon to achieve its strategic aims.

- To ensure Governors receive inspection training early in the Autumn Term.
- To continue with governor recruitment for the Board.





We will achieve our aim within an inclusive community where we celebrate diversity and strive for equality. The positive outcomes for each individual Dragon are central to every decision we take.



August 2024

Dragon School Trust Ltd, Bardwell Road, Oxford, OX2 6SS Tel. +44 (0)1865 315 400

Company no. (England & Wales) 524331 Charity no. 309676