

The termly magazine from Dragon School

Dragon's Tales



Summer Term 2024





HEAD'S WELCOME

Dear Dragon Families,

By now we will have all dried out after a rather soggy sports day! It would have been an easy decision to cancel, but in true Dragon style we were keen to make it work as it is the finale of the school year and the send-off for our A Block. Thank you for your good cheer and forbearance – quite frankly we are due a blazing hot Sports Day so let's cross our fingers now for next year.

The Summer Term is the crescendo of the academic year with an opportunity to celebrate successes in the classroom, a record number of scholarships to senior schools, impressive public speaking in our Dra-Gone in Five Minutes competition and some fabulous art to admire in the Forum. We held lots of very successful charity fundraisers, and on the sports field our cricket teams continue to impress as do our tennis players, not to mention our scullers and athletes who excelled in the IAPS national competition. As we eagerly anticipate the opening of the new Music & Performing Arts building in September, our musicians treated us to a cracking Summer Serenade; we will miss the talented group of musicians who leave us this term. The Middle School production of 'Alice in Wonderland' was a triumph with some wonderful cameo roles and a dazzling set.

So term comes to an end and our boarders return home after a fabulous term of festivals, trips, movie nights, BBQs and some sunny nights on the fields.

Have a fantastic summer

Anna Addison



SOCIAL IMPACT



The Dragon School's Social Impact Programme has made remarkable strides this term, reflecting our community's commitment to philanthropy. Our collective efforts have raised over £6000 for our chosen school charities, Asylum Welcome, FareShare and World Land Trust, taking the total raised this year to over £11,000 and counting! Our students have shown incredible initiative and creativity, engaging in a diverse range of fundraising activities across the term, including a Reception Jog Along, Year 3 Art Exhibition, the Boarders' Fayre and the A Block Revue to name but a few.

Over 152 young Dragons also took part in the annual Marlborough Schools Triathlon in aid of Restless Development. Our kitchen staff have generously prepared dozens of hot meals for the local community and the Dragon Community

Larder, in collaboration with Oxford Food Hub, has successfully gathered 20 boxes of food and essentials. We've also had the pleasure of hosting children from Wheatley Primary School for our weekly Quest sessions and from Chilworth specialist school for a wonderful Gamelan Day of Indonesian music, dance and art. Looking forward to the summer holidays, we are delighted to be welcoming children from Asylum Welcome to our Summer Residential Camp, joining students from all over the world for a range of activities including English and Maths lessons, and of course lots of fun and games across the Dragon site.

As always, we would like to offer our huge thanks for your unwavering support towards these initiatives and helping us to foster a culture where the children learn to appreciate that even small steps can lead to significant positive change.

SUMMER TERM AT THE PRE-PREP

This Summer Term has had everything apart from summery weather! Stand-out moments include the creative fundraising events by each year group, which raised almost £6000 for the Pre-Prep charity Asylum Welcome, a series of excellent class assemblies, showstopping performances from Years 1 and 3 in their year-group plays and, of course, focused learning in the classroom. As always, the talents, courage and determination of all our youngest Dragons have been on display and they have all been reaching for the sun.

Annie McNeile, Head of the Pre-Prep



It is hard to believe how much our Reception class has grown in their first year of school. It has been wonderful to be a part of and lots of memories have been created. This term witnessed an opportunity for our youngest and our oldest Dragons to work together. Reception headed to the Prep school for a workshop on monsters devised by the PEG children. This included a poetry performance from the older children, creative workshop to design and make their own monster puppet, AI animation of their own drawings, stories in the Prep school library, a monster party and a parade organised!

We have also been learning phonic sounds and working on learning to read and write. Class assemblies have been brilliant as the children's confidence continues to grow. This was also seen at the Reception Summer Concert where all children played instruments and sang songs. We enjoyed hosting our parents for our open phonics lessons and, of course, the first Sports Day where all the children did fantastically well. Break The Rules Day will absolutely go down as a highlight for the teachers as much as the children!

The Summer Term has been full of fun, learning and excitement for Year 1. In the first half of term, the children worked with dedication towards their play, 'The Adventures of Egg Box Dragon', which they performed with enthusiasm to the school, their parents and the daughter of the author of the book, Richard Adams. They were rewarded with a trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park (train ride and ice creams included) to consolidate all their learning on animal classification. In Summer 2, they embarked on a new core text, Pattan's Pumpkin, learning about India, plant structures and plant life cycles. They were treated to a spice workshop with Ma Michelle in the kitchen where they discussed how different plants and spices are used in India and the UK, followed by a masterclass in making samosas. Each week, Year 1 also delighted the school with their class assemblies, full of laughter and joyful singing!

In the first half of term, Year 2 had a brilliant trip to Winchester Science Museum to expand on our topic 'Space'. Here we immersed ourselves in "all things space" and had a lot of fun considering the things we would pack if we were going into space. To coincide with this, the children were given a spec to consider whilst building their very own space buggies on DT Day. The end results were fabulous! This year's theme of Science Week was everything to do with 'Time'. Professor Bubbleworks came in to inspire and wow the children in an afternoon of learning and laughter. In the second half of term, we had a fantastic trip to Uni Parks to look at the Swift Tower. We also did some observational drawings, had a picnic in the park and went to the National History Museum to see the swifts' nesting places. Our Swimming Festival and Sports Day were also highlights for Year 2.

This term Year 3 put on an incredible and energetic performance of 'The King Who Banned The Dark' to the Pre-Prep and their parents. What a triumph it was! The Summer Art Exhibition showcased Year 3's architectural drawings of Oxford, and raised over £1200 for our partner charity, Asylum Welcome. Our Music Maker concert celebrated the children's talents and progress on their instruments whilst Sports Day saw the House captains of Phoenix lifting the winning House Cup! It has also been a term about transitioning and making sure the children feel as excited and comfortable as possible moving on to the Prep. They enjoyed a day in E Block, getting a feel for life and routines in Year 4, and the Sports Festival that was held at the Prep with E Block was a great afternoon of tennis and cricket skills with Year 4.

The term finished with a happy Leavers' Assembly to celebrate all of Year 3's amazing achievements during their time at the Pre-Prep and preparing them for their next adventure in E Block or at their new schools.



SUMMER TERM AT THE PREP



It has been wonderful seeing E Block gain confidence during their first year at the Prep. Academically, they have worked hard and proved themselves as curious, eager learners. They have represented the school in a multitude of sports, cheering each other on and enjoying being part of a team. E Block managed the residential brilliantly and approached all the activities with delight and gusto. From a musical perspective, they are a talented year group, and it has been super to see so many of them improving. E Block have stepped up and raised money from their "Cake Bake" and of course at the Dragon Sale. I am so proud of them all for a coming to school with a consistently positive attitude and celebrating each other's successes.

It has been an action-packed term in Middle School, where the Summer Term arrived with an unseasonal chill followed by a heatwave so the children were never sure whether to wear thermals or shorts! We have had concerts, our MS play, Form Athletics, lessons on the fields, Prize-Giving, and trips to Warwick Castle and Portsmouth, which were interspersed with exams for academics,

music and drama.

Now Sports Day is complete and the Middle School, both teachers and pupils, can take the long summer holidays to rest and recover from all the excitement to start again in September.

Energy, commitment, service, courage, kindness and fun are some of the words that come to mind when we think back to this last year in Upper School. Pluses for the children have been at a record high this term, with many recognised for showing the Dragon Values. It was wonderful at Prize-Giving to have all children stand and be applauded, by parents and the staff, for all their hard work. Whether formally winning a prize or not, they have given a huge amount during this last year and deserve praise and recognition for this.

Highlights for B Block this term have ranged from academic enrichment, with the FPE Day, a celebration of drama with whole-school assembly involvement and the B Block studio production. Sporting moments have been plentiful, with various swim relays, cricket, tennis and athletics fixtures and, of course, the long-awaited



three-day Sports Day! We look forward to seeing all the children continue to thrive in their final year at the Dragon.

For A Block, this final term has seen every child end their academic journey with the completion of scholarships and Common Entrance, embarking on their Post Exam Program at various points, but all during this final three weeks. Expeditions was a wonderful week of outdoor pursuits, fun and friendship, with the children returning to outside-the-box learning via subject-based projects and visiting speakers. This final week has been a celebration of

the children and all they have given to the school – drama, sport, music, art, academics, service, commitment and fun. These gifts were most noticeably summed up in the A Block Revue, with all the children involved in some way, both in preparation and performance, while parents looked on in wonder. Well done A Block with all you have achieved and given; we wish you well all the best as you start the next stage of your journey at senior school.

DRAGON QUEST

Our fourth year of Quest finished off with a bang this term in some glorious sunshine. We made full use of the increase in temperature with paddleboarding and canoeing on the river, sailing over at Farmoor, and plenty of outdoor sessions such as spikeball, lacrosse and Aussie Rules. Quest is always up with the times, so we had a Taylor-Swift-themed Dragon Eras group and harnessed the current passion for table tennis with Dragon Whiff-Whaff. We look forward to making use of the new performing arts building, but already our West End Dragons are producing some high-quality performances. Some exciting new Quests await us in September, as well as old favourites.



MUSICAL DRAGONS



It has been another bumper term for music at the Dragon. The musical events began strongly with a very evocative chamber music concert at St Andrew's Church, which was described by Marlborough's Head of Instrumental Studies as "truly outstanding". After a successful tour of Berlin during the Easter break, our touring choir and Dragonetti Strings performed their concert repertoire to an appreciative audience in the Lynam Hall while raising a significant sum for the Ukraine effort.

Our Keyboard Festival was once again a staggering array of talent with some very big hitters in the final. Around 250 pianists were whittled down to the hotly contested final

of 16 performers adjudicated by the Director of Music at Teddies. This was followed by the always enjoyable (and very competitive!) Form Singing Competition ably judged by Cokethorpe's Director of Music.

The final two weeks has been its usual whirlwind of concerts and events including rousing Middle School and E Block concerts, a more intimate curtain call involving our finest musicians and actors, an emotive Leavers' Service and the jewel in the crown of our music events – the Summer Serenade.



DRAGONS ON STAGE



The big-ticket event of the term was an outstanding Middle School production of 'Alice in Wonderland'. The Middle School cast of just over 70 pupils, brought to life this creative imagining of the classic Oxford tale, to uproarious applause. Well done to the massive team that pulled this off and to Mr Bailey for his first school production.

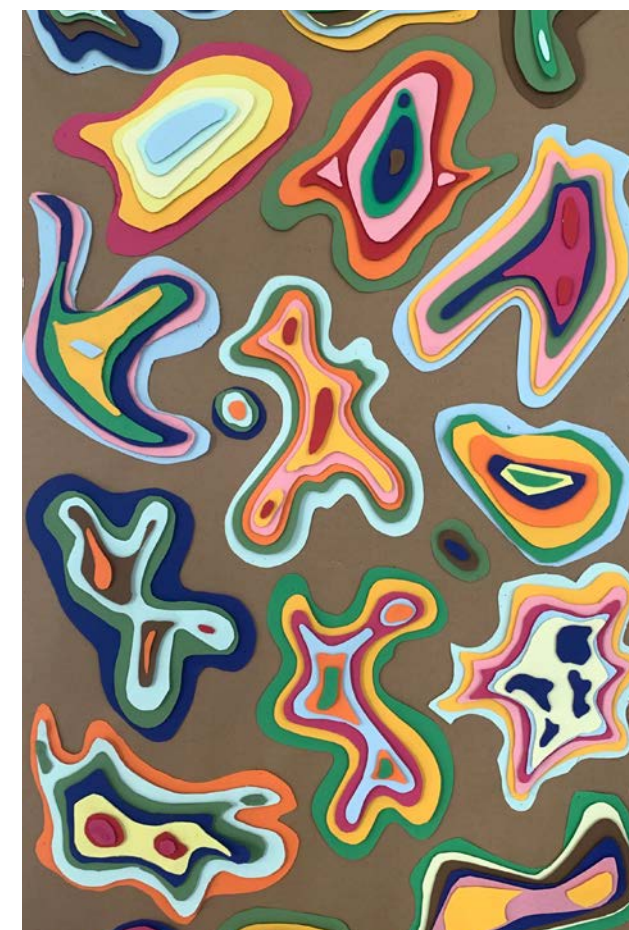
Earlier in the term, all of D Block engaged their audience in the Bards of Bardwell Road showcase performance. This production saw 120 pupils, perform seven short Shakespeare plays in about 65mins – quite an effort! Some great performances were seen.

The B Block Studio production, performed in the Rink, by a cast of around 30 B Blockers, was thoroughly entertaining.

Other highlights were the annual PEG plays, the A Block revue, a new addition to the calendar in the form of the E Block form plays and a thoroughly successful C Block trip to the Oxford Playhouse to see 'The 39 Steps'.

As if all of that wasn't enough, a small team of A and B Blockers are just beginning to rehearse their performance for the Dragons' first tour to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The cast will be performing six times over the course of a week in a professional environment at the world's largest arts festival. Their production has been created by Dragon staff (Mr CJ, Mr Ponder, Mr Dickson and Mr Morris) and can be found under the title 'Behind the Curtain' on the Edinburgh Fringe website.

ARTISTIC DRAGONS



As the Summer Term comes to an end, we were thrilled to showcase the amazing artistic adventures our students have embarked on in the Summer Art Exhibition. Each Block has explored unique themes, resulting in a stunning array of creative works and it was a pleasure to put it on display for the whole school community to enjoy.

In A Block our budding artists tackled the theme of 'Issues' head-on, creating powerful and thought-provoking pieces that speak to various social, environmental and personal challenges. From climate change to mental health, their artwork serves as a vibrant canvas for change and awareness.

In B Block the students took on the challenge of capturing the human figure, and the results are nothing short of spectacular! Through detailed sketches, expressive Keith Haring paintings, dynamic sculptures and newspaper collages, they explored movement, form and emotion, bringing their figures to life in unique and compelling ways.

C Block dove into the exciting world of mixed media and abstract art. Our Dragons unleashed their creativity, experimenting with a variety of materials and techniques. D Block Dragons were inspired by the animal kingdom and went wild and produced a zoo-tastic array of artworks!

Volcanoes erupted in E Block as explosive and dramatic volcano-themed artwork was produced that blends science and art in a truly captivating way.

We are incredibly proud of the creativity and enthusiasm our Dragons have shown not just this term but throughout the whole year. Their artwork not only reflects their hard work and talent but also their unique perspectives and imaginative minds. To our excellent A Block students and those leaving us at the end of this term, we wish you all the best at your new schools. You've created some incredible art and tackled important issues with creativity and passion throughout your time at the Dragon. Keep using your talents, stay inspired and, remember, the world is your canvas. Good luck and keep making it colourful!

SPORTY DRAGONS



This Summer Term our boys and girls have played in 323 cricket fixtures, which represents an increase on last year and is testament to our ongoing aim of improving our participation rates and inclusivity.

Girls' cricket continues to develop and we are incredibly pleased with the increased amount of hardball cricket that is now being introduced across the Middle and Upper School teams. The girls' 1st XI have had an excellent season and reached the semi-final of the IAPS tournament and there have been some very encouraging performances from our U10 and U11 teams.

Boys' cricket continues to flourish; the 1st XI had an excellent season and reached the regional final of the National Cup (where they lost out to KES Birmingham). The U10A team had numerous successes in tournaments including Oratory and St Edward's.

We have continued to expand our fixture provision for E Block boys and girls and our Friday Festival afternoons – hosted at Bardwell

Road – have been very popular and successful.

Our swimmers have excelled once more, with an extraordinary 30 Dragons qualified for the IAPS national finals (in relays and individual events) held at the Aquatics Centre in London, where they performed with distinction.

Our athletes have had a fantastic season, where our boys' and girls' teams enjoyed numerous successes in inter-school competitions including events at Stowe and Winchester House. Forty-nine athletes competed at the Mercia Regional Finals in Malvern and seven Dragons will go on to compete in the national finals, which will be held in Birmingham, in July.

Our tennis teams saw a greater number of fixtures this year and we've been delighted in the increased participation in our after-school clubs. Children have also represented the school at sculling, tennis, judo, fencing, sailing, real tennis, horse riding and polo.



BOARDING DRAGONS

The Summer Term is a highlight in the boarding year with the relaxed evenings spent on the fields after Prep and time spent socializing with friends. Dragon Boarding continues to thrive, and April saw a record number of children try their hand at boarding in our 3rd Annual Boarding Week. They took part in karaoke sessions, swimming parties, inflatables on the fields, eating Mr Whippy ice creams and a neon disco in the Forum. The rising numbers of flexible boarders joining the full boarders has seen Houses collaborating and taking part in regular combined events. These have ranged from fire pits, watching movies in our Dragon outdoor cinema, games evenings and strawberry picking.

The final In-School Weekend saw the boarders making some incredible memories and celebrating the end of the year by taking part in trips to Wet n Wild, surfing at the Wave at Bristol, river trips in Oxford, trips to the beach for kayaking and paddleboarding, celebrating the inaugural Stradstonbury Festival, punting, picnics and formal dinners. What a brilliant culmination to another successful year of Dragon Boarding!



SCHOLARSHIPS

We have had a record-breaking crop of scholarships this year, with 77 scholarships and an additional six awards. This is such a fantastic result and a testament to the hard work and dedication that the A Block have shown over the years, and the teachers who have supported them on this journey. A Block sat Common Entrance exams in early June and were able to celebrate the whole year group moving on to their chosen senior schools in September. To help with this transition, we were joined by representatives from 22 senior schools for our Future Schools Day on Friday 21st June to

— speak with their prospective pupils.

There have been a variety of Future Schools events ranging from our E Block Future Schools Forum, giving an overview of the process of helping parents navigate the senior school admissions processes and finding the right school for each child, through to our Parent Forum with visiting Heads and registrars from five top co-ed senior boarding schools. If you're unsure about your future schools journey, just let us know – we're here to help.

