

The termly magazine from the Dragon School

Dragon's Tales



Spring Term 2023





MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Dear Dragon Families,

We signed off the Spring Term with a reunion of Dragons from the 2000s; this was a fitting finale as they reflected the same values and spirit that underpin the Dragon today. The values of Kindness, Courage and Respect have rippled through this term which has seen such an array of opportunities.

We were dazzled by the Upper School production of 'School of Rock' which received rave reviews. Our ears are still ringing from the E Block, Middle School and Spring Concerts. Our Concert Band have just got back from Paris where they performed three concerts including on the mainstage at Disneyland Paris. Year 2 reminded us to 'Look Up' and be in awe of our universe. The term has also offered us an array of sporting successes with particular mention to our senior cross country runners and equestrians who have brought home silverware. In short, these highlights are the icing on the cake of a fruitful term of learning and focus on each individual's journey. Everyone deserves a well-earned break before we embark on the Summer Term.

Best wishes
Emma

Emma Addison





SOCIAL IMPACT

At the start of the term, we announced that the 2022 Dragon Christmas Sale raised over £120,000, a remarkable amount that will be shared amongst dozens of charities, voted for by the children. In addition, last month over 45 children from Reception – A Block bid for additional funds from the Sale on behalf of a charity of their choice as part of the Pupil Presentations. It was a privilege to listen to the children present so personally and passionately about causes that mean so much to them, and highlighted the incredible philanthropic mindset of our young Dragons.

We have enjoyed working closely with our three School Charities of the Year, Rose Hill Junior Youth Club, Plan International UK and Blue Marine Foundation, welcoming representatives to talk to the children about their work, and sharing a number of their educational resources. The first of our Year Group Fundraisers, the C Block Swim the Channel challenge, raised over £3,500 for our Charities of the Year, and we are looking forward to adding to this with more year group fundraisers next term.

We have welcomed over 80 children from eight local primaries to take part in music programmes, including a Gamelan Day and Percussimo! a percussion day in collaboration with Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. Year 3 Dragons hosted Year 3 children from Windale Primary School for an art and music workshop, and together they worked on their submissions for Young Art Oxford, kindly supported by Pre-Prep families; and an additional 55 children from Years 4 and 5 at Windale took part in a musical workshop for 'School of Rock', learning two songs and dances, before performing on stage under lights and accompanied by the live band. We were blown away by the children's excitement and enthusiasm.



PRE-PREP

The Pre-Prep has been buzzing this term. Our Reception Dragons have been exploring what is beneath their feet by learning about worms, burrowing animals, tree roots, pipes and fossils. They've enjoyed an interactive dinosaur workshop, taken a trip to the Prep for a tour around the new Music and Performing Arts Centre (complete with the appropriate safety equipment!), took part in a STEM LEGO® workshop to build a wind turbine, and have even tried their hand at woodwork.

Year 1 have been busy Muddy Dragons on Wednesday mornings (roasting marshmallows, building dens, making nature mobiles). They have enjoyed Class Assemblies with some amazing performances, confident speaking and lots of fun songs. They also had a fun and educational trip to the Living Rainforest to enhance their Topic learning on animal classification and climates.

Year 2 launched themselves into the term with their topic of Space. They discovered how astronauts stay safe and healthy on the ISS and were even lucky enough to ask their own questions to Christina Mackail, Space Medic, and the Chief Health and Medical Officer for NASA! They had an exciting day out at Winchester Planetarium and ended the term with their very own performance of the book *Look Up*.

Year 3 have taken part in a Daisy Pratt Poetry Competition which was adjudicated by William Dickson, Head of English at the Prep, and Annie McNeile, Head of Pre-Prep. Poetry by Valerie Bloom has been also been enjoyed, and a Carnival Day was held in celebration of her Jamaican culture. A steel drum workshop was a particular highlight that brought the theme to life. The children learnt to orienteer at Hill End and were soon off in groups around the whole site with their adult trying to keep up! Science week played host to Professor Bubbleworks which is always a fascinating and hilarious scientific exploration.



PREP

This term our E Block enjoyed a Trip to the Story Museum where everyone acted out and retold their own creation stories and explored the museum galleries. They also visited the Pitt Rivers Museum to learn all about prehistory and to handle historical artefacts. Jungle Jonathan was a huge hit and everyone loved learning about and having the chance to hold different creepy crawlies and reptiles. The silent films the children created made for brilliant viewing.

D Block learnt all about the solar system and how to recognise constellations in the sky courtesy of the Astrodome visit at the beginning of term. The D Block Chess Competition took place, and the Gamelan workshop with local primary locals was a huge success. Form Cross Country saw 5G bring home the best results of the School.

C Block has been very busy with interviews and Future Schools with over 80% of the year group involved. They embarked on their French trip to Normandy where they enjoyed some truly memorable experiences. The Middle School Concert, cross country, Variety Show and swim relays were all key dates in a very busy diary!

Scores of people have been blown away by some truly remarkable performances on the stage, as many Upper School pupils have discarded their usual School uniform and donned new and daring outfits to perform their roles in 'Holes' and 'School of Rock'. Scholarships, whether they be Academic, Art, Music or Sport, continue to be collected – 44 at the last count – whilst titles were also being won by our team of A Block pupils at the Maths and Science Olympiad hosted Caldicott. So much success, and so many opportunities squeezed into such a short space of time has really created a well-deserved feel-good factor at the Prep this term.



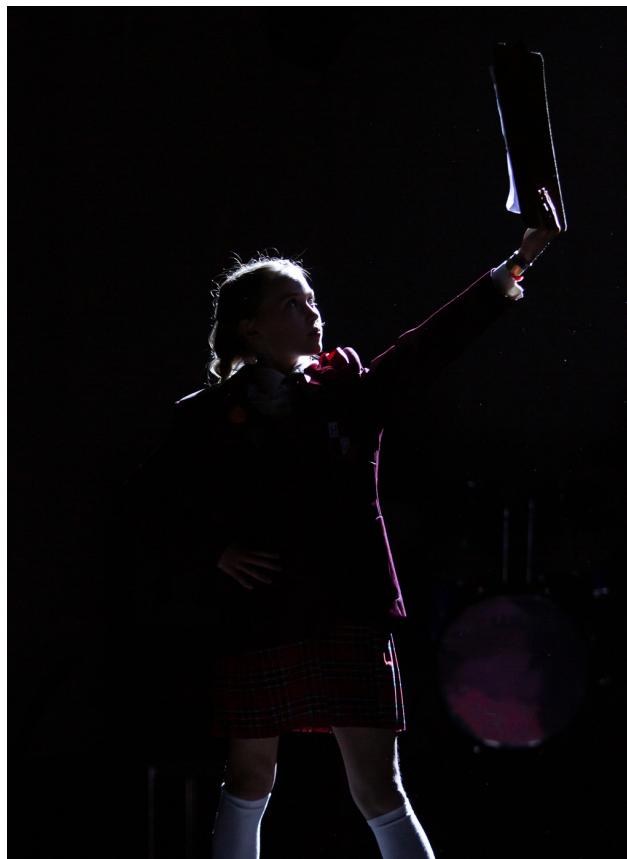
BOARDING LIFE

Spring has been another busy, fun-filled and action-packed term for our Boarders. They have loved the weekly Spectrum programme, with notable highlights including; meeting the man who invented the Brompton Bike, watching 'School of Rock', the Middle School Variety Show and Wild Life documentaries.

International Week was celebrated by all of the Houses just after half-term, with many celebrating their International Communities in tandem with the international celebrations across School. The boarders have been sharing their different cultures, food, religions and music, not just for International Week, but since the beginning of the academic year. It has been an enlightening experience which has helped everybody understand each other's beliefs and practices in much greater detail.

The Inter-House socials continue to be extremely popular; after exam week, just before a holiday, the children don't need an excuse to socialise and have fun. From discos to baking, crafting and playing games together, the children have had a great time.





DRAGONS ON STAGE

We couldn't have squeezed in another production if we tried. From music and drama to LAMDA, our Dragons on stage have put their all into this term. We have had the Downe House Drama Day where 15 C and B Block girls attended a musical theatre workshop day, 100 A Block pupils enjoyed 'Noughts and Crosses' at the Oxford Playhouse, and we hosted 60 children from Windale Primary School for an absolutely unforgettable workshop. Alongside all of this we have had the Middle School Variety Show, the Upper School musical 'School of Rock', and the Upper School play 'Holes'. The standard of these performances really does need to be seen to be believed.

The Gamelan and Percussion days were brilliantly received, and March saw six performances happening almost one after the other! The final week of term was extraordinary for our musicians and, despite the tiredness of a long and wintery term, they demonstrated an outstanding level of skill and professionalism. The Upper School Concert was fantastic, as were the E Block and Middle School Concerts. The Spring Concert led us nicely to the end of term, but before the band hung up their instruments, they were whisked off to Paris for three special performances across the city.



ART

The pupils have enjoyed a variety of creative activities in Art lessons this term in both 2D and 3D.

E Block have been exploring texture with particular reference to Jasper Johns 'O Through 9' and discovering the delights of wax resist. They have made physical textures and also responded to Henry Moore's sheep studies in biro.

D Block have taken the theme of Water and investigated a number of artists, from Monet to Hokusai, and explored paint, collage and some wax resist.

C Block looked into the theme of still life where cakes, vases and flowers have all featured, with the amazing drawings and paintings of Wayne Thiebaud for inspiration.

B Block have created art around the themes of Culture and Books, with a variety of artists being studied and reflected upon in creating mini concertina books, Alighiero Boetti inspired ceramics, pop art inspired imagery, Ming inspired ceramics, Jasper Johns inspired flag paintings, and some Aboriginal art.

A Block have looked at Mechanical Form and the Figure, using artists from Jim Dine, Matisse and Keith Haring, with some enjoying a brief venture on the potter's wheel.

The A Block Art Scholars have been busy developing their portfolios for scholarships, and in particular finishing off their large-scale acrylic portraits.



QUEST

It's been another successful term of *QUEST* with our new offerings proving very popular. As ever, we continue to create new opportunities, that generate new interests, and develop new skills. Our Fly Fishers caught some trout, Magic Dragons learnt new tricks, our Egg Chaser girls enjoyed playing some rugby alongside many other activities. Our Gaelic Dragons have impressed their coaches so much, that we are looking to create a competitive fixture next term. Old favourites continue to provide great opportunities to learn new skills or try different things and we always enjoy the showcases with Dragons Rock and Dragon Hits.

It's not just the pupils though, as *QUEST* Prime continues to grow, culminating this term in a Super Saturday with fixtures for both Prime Netball and Prime Football. There's one final session of module 4 in the Summer term, before we move onto the 5th and final module of the year.



SPORT

The incessant rain hasn't stopped our sporting Dragons. 90 Netball, Hockey and Football teams played in over 350 fixtures during the Easter Term! This is absolute testament to our inclusive 'sport for all' approach.

It has been brilliant to see more opportunities for Girls' Football, with our fixtures programme increasing. This is something that we really look forward to developing further next year and beyond. Similarly, with Year 3, there have been more fixture opportunities, including festivals; one of which was hosted at the Prep.

We once again hosted a very successful IAPS Regional Qualifier in the pool, where we welcomed 225 swimmers from 12 different schools. Our Dragons acquitted themselves well and we are hopeful that some will have qualified for the National Finals to be held later in the year.

Our Cross Country runners enjoyed success in a number of events, with three pupils winning Gold Medals at the Farleigh meeting. Our teams also did the Dragon proud at the National Championships at Malvern. A brilliantly successful sporting term, well done to all who took part.

