



# 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. Importantly, this was recognised by the Independent Schools Inspectorate earlier this year and we were delighted to have this external validation of everything we do.

In the past year we focused on improving our communication with Dragon families. We have made real progress this year but

we recognise there is still room to improve further how we keep you up to date with our busy community. The Dragon Parent Partnership (DPP) has been a really positive focus group for us and this group will evolve further as an invaluable source of feedback and support for us.

Please take a moment to read our targets for next year. I hope you will be reassured that we continue to be ambitious in moving the School forward. With so much change in our sector, we remain proud of our independence, individuality and indeed security as an institution.

With best wishes,

*Emma*



# Chair's Introduction



I am delighted to take this opportunity to share the significant progress we have made against our strategic plan.

It has been another milestone year for the Dragon, and the successful ISI Inspection in December was a chance for the School to demonstrate our energetic approach to teaching and learning. I want to thank all the teaching staff and the rest of the School's colleagues for their continued dedication and commitment and for achieving such an excellent outcome. If you haven't already done so, then I urge you to read the ISI report (search ISI on the Dragon website). The inspectors managed to capture the absolute essence of the Dragon whilst also recognising the significant effort that the School provides in supporting the pupils' emotional and mental needs too.

I believe strong governance is vital in assisting executives create thriving and successful organisations. Hence, one of purposes of the Governing Body is to ensure we have a robust governance framework, creating an environment for innovation and inclusivity and ensuring we have the appropriate resources to deliver our vision. I'm pleased that we continue to make good progress against this.

The refresh to the Governor committees last year is now providing even more rigour and challenge to support the Head, COO

and Senior Leadership Team in delivering our vision. In response to the growing need to manage the regulatory burdens being placed on schools, we set up a Risk and Compliance committee. This committee is already proving invaluable in supporting the School's approach to mitigating risk, but perhaps more importantly, it's also helping the Common Room be even more creative in finding practical solutions to new rules and regulations. Finally, promoting diversity of thinking has always been a strength of the Dragon Governing Body. The newly formed EDI committee, with the backing of a new Governor, is a natural extension to this thinking and is highly valued.

Turning to finances, the Dragon isn't immune from the many headwinds and challenges facing all UK organisations. Naturally we will continue to try and reduce the impact of inflationary pressures on the School. As always, I am thankful for the rigour and challenge from Governors in helping the Dragon navigate these stormy waters. On a more positive note, we broke ground on the new Music and Performing Arts School last September and the project remains on plan and, perhaps most importantly, on budget too.

Best wishes,

*Andrew*



# COO's Introduction

The last 12 months have seen us deliver across the operational objectives we set ourselves at the start of the year. A number of milestones have been reached, most notably with the Music and Performing Arts building but also in terms of improving the overall fabric of the Estate at both the Prep and Pre-Prep. As well as completing refurbishment of two of our larger Upper School boarding houses over this coming summer holiday, the Pre-Prep will see the introduction of a new play area. The summer will also see the completion of the first phase of our net zero work with the replacement of all existing lighting to LED.

Looking ahead to the next academic year, our net zero work will continue with the installation of solar panels on the most suitable roof areas across the Pre-Prep and Prep, including on the new Music and Performing Arts building. The School will also implement a new Home to School transport service from September, including a shuttle between Prep and Pre-Prep using an electric minibus. With the demise of the

OSBP, we hope this initiative will provide a more suitable service to meet the needs of many more of our parents. We also anticipate this service evolving to provide an even more comprehensive service from September 2024, including an afternoon provision. This will also be in time for the anticipated introduction of changes to traffic flows around the City by Oxford City Council in Autumn 2024.

Finally, we will continue to work towards the School's migration to Microsoft 365. As well as enabling a new way of working across the School, this will provide the foundation for meeting the key recommendation from the ISI inspection to develop 'pupils' ability to use ICT routinely to further enhance their day to day learning'. Aligned with this will be a continued focus on our cyber, data and information security..

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.

- Develop academic transition across Year 3 and 4, as pupils move from Pre-Prep to Prep.
- Develop a digital teaching and learning timeline and strategy, beginning with pilot system.
- Develop opportunities for academic extension and lesson support across the Prep.
- Form an Academic Committee to develop and fulfil these academic aims.



# 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.

- Develop clear pathways of support (Learning Support, Neurodiversity and Social, Emotional and Mental Health) that embodies a holistic approach, to help and encourage the development of each child.
- Rebrand a bespoke 'Character and Health Education' Curriculum, that encompasses PSHEE and RSE topics, with a focus on six core themes.
- Review how we deliver and celebrate our rewards, with particular focus on Skipper Shield (Form Competition) and the House System.
- Regular upskilling opportunities for staff and parents through themed workshops, talks and signposting in Dragon News via the Wellbeing Hub.



# 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.

- Develop a broad and balanced club offerings at Pre-Prep and Prep .
- Review and develop how we celebrate co-curricular achievements.
- Review the impact clubs and activity offerings and how we measure the success.





# 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 well-being and is ambitious for the progress of every child.

- Enable as many Dragons as possible to access boarding as part of their Dragon Education.
- Promote and develop opportunities for collaboration within and between the boarding houses.
- Embrace inclusivity and provide the best possible care for all boarders, with dedicated training and implemented strategies for pupils with neurodiversity.



# 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.

- Ensure Dragon News serves the best needs of our community.
- Enhance links with parents to engage a wider cohort with our communication methods.
- Develop a calendar of events to provide opportunities for parents to meet socially.
- Launch the new website.
- Develop ways of celebrating children's achievements and successes through multimedia channels.





# 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.

- Launch new advice framework.
- Host calendar of Future School Forums.
- Host Future Schools Fair January 2024.



# 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.

- Develop our school partnership programme to offer more co-curricular opportunities encompassing music, art, drama and sport.
- Evolve our Dragon Community Larder parameters / partner with Sustainability Shop to support partnership schools with games kit and sports equipment.
- Create a metrics table, utilising the Independent Schools Council (ISC) framework, to measure the effectiveness of our SI initiatives and implement changes accordingly.
- Introduce an annual Social Impact Report, sent to whole community, to ensure our work reaches a wider audience.
- Update and provide new Case-studies of our initiatives for the ISCs 'Schools Together' platform.
- Raise awareness of our Charities of the Year through targeted communications and expand opportunities for them to engage in the curriculum.



# Development

- To create strong, life-long relationships and two-way engagement with our community of ODs, Current Parents and Former Parents.
- Deliver a diverse series of local, national and international events which appeal to our broad community of ODs.
- Maintain an accurate database capable of efficiently and effectively supporting our engagement with Old Dragons.
- Highlight the impact philanthropy has on our pupils and wider community through our Social Impact programmes.
- Invite all members of our community to donate at a level they feel comfort with, for projects of interest to them which support the ambitions of the School.





# 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.

- Develop the EDI committee made up of representatives from every part of the Dragon Community.
- Review all School policies in line with EDI objectives.
- Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to have open conversations regarding our EDI objectives.



# The Estate

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

- Continue to develop the extra-curricular facilities at the Pre-Prep.
- Complete the refurbishment programme of the boarding house building.
- Conclude the [Music and Performing Arts Facility project](#)



# Net Zero

To have achieved Net Zero by 2030.

- Continue to move towards the School's Net Zero ambitions.

# 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.

- Ensure our governance model and performance keeps pace with the changing requirements and demands that the School faces.
- Continue to review the performance of the sub-committees and their alignment with the School strategy.
- Conduct an independent appraisal of the Head and COO (3 years).







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.





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