
The termly magazine from Dragon School

Dragon Tales



Spring Term 2024



HEAD'S WELCOME

Dear Dragon Families,

We started this term in the darkness of January and finished with the lighter mornings and evenings full of the hope of springtime. Please take a moment to look at this round-up of the Spring Term 2024. Amidst the seemingly constant rain we enjoyed much success on the sports field, netball courts, Astros and with cross-country running.

We have ended the term with music ringing in our ears with a series of fabulous concerts across the age ranges, culminating in a choir and strings tour to Berlin departing at the start of the holiday.

This term also saw two extraordinary productions with 'Midsummer Night's Dream' blowing the audience away with the well-known characters' dancing, swinging, mirth and merriment. Hot on its heels was the musical 'Sister Act', which revealed a depth of singing talent amongst our Upper School Dragons, who treated us to a production worthy of the West End. We know that the talent runs deep as the Year 2 play indicated that there is plenty of performers coming through.

Term ended for our thriving boarding community with our traditional Boarders' Supper and Sing Song. The dining room was bursting with the largest number of boarding Dragons we have ever had at this event. Our A Blockers have had their heads down this term working towards scholarships and CE, I hope they will have some rest over the holidays. We wish all of you a restful holiday and a happy Easter.

Anna Giddons





SOCIAL IMPACT



This term's Social Impact Programme has been packed full of enriching events, which have drawn together different areas of the school as well as partners in our local community and beyond. Pupils from across the county have joined us for a range of music workshops, including a Gamelan Day of traditional Indonesian music, dance and art, and Percussimol! which welcomed eight local primary and secondary schools for a day of making and performing music, under the expert guidance of the Dragon Music department and Oxford Philharmonic. Years 4 and 5 children from Windale School returned for our second hugely successful musical workshop based on the Upper School's production of 'Sister Act', culminating in an amazing onstage performance that raised the roof of the Lynam Hall! At the Pre-Prep, Year 3 students from Dragon and Windale School took over the Art room to work on their pieces for Young Art Oxford, which will form part of an exhibition at the prestigious Ashmolean Museum

in May. Spectrum talks provided thoughtful discussions and prompted some impressive and insightful questions from the children. Tom Murray from Cutteslowe Community Larder spoke about this invaluable local initiative, which offers a range of services including citizens advice, a food larder and community café, helping combat food poverty as well as loneliness. Representatives from Asylum Welcome, one of the school's Charities of the Year, spoke about the life-changing services they provide individuals and families seeking asylum in Oxford. Our non-uniform day for Red Nose Day successfully raised over £2000 for Comic Relief, and C Block joined forces to swim the length of the English Channel in under an hour to raise money for another of our school charities, FareShare. Finally, we were delighted to announce that the 2023 Dragon Sale raised over £149,000 for charity, a remarkable sum which will be dispersed amongst UK and international charities that support children and families, voted for and put forward by Dragon pupils.

SPRING TERM AT THE PRE-PREP

This has been a short but very busy term full of lots of learning, fun and laughter. We have gone from deepest, darkest winter to brighter and warmer days, swept along in a flurry of exciting activities and events. These have ranged from Reception tree-planting and Year 1 Dragon building to a brilliant Year 2 production and the Year 3 Victorian Day with E Block. As always, our youngest Dragons have excelled and I congratulate them all on a brilliant term.

Annie McNeile, Head of the Pre-Prep



Reception enjoyed the topic Tremendous Trees this term. Each class planted and tended to a sapling to go with our core text Eco Girl who loved trees and lived in the tropical rainforest. With the help of the ground staff, we also planted saplings at the Prep, donated by the Woodland Trust. We thoroughly enjoyed a trip to the Living Rainforest to experience what it is like to be in that environment, and to learn more about the plants and animals that live there. Muddy Dragons started in January, with each class having the opportunity to explore the outdoors each week. A huge highlight this term, for the children, parents and staff alike, has been the hatching of five ducklings in the incubator, and the opportunity to observe them in the hatching cage!

Year 1 studied a tale of friendship and kindness: The Adventures of Egg Box Dragon by Richard Adams. They learnt to write lists, instructions and newspaper articles in Literacy, compared the physical properties of materials in Science and designed their own Egg Box Dragons to specific criteria in Design and Technology. The term concluded with parents coming into school to build the most flamboyant and fabulous Egg Box Dragons we have seen to date with their children. The children also demonstrated courage and determination to succeed in their swimming lessons and enjoyed sharing their progress in the Year 1 Swimming Festival to parents in the final week of term.

Year 2s have been busy absorbing themselves in the world of Orion and the Dark. They have been studying the book by Emma Yarlett

and alongside this been doing all their subjects that connects to the Light and Dark theme. In Art we have been learning about nocturnal animals and creating 3D designs out of egg boxes to bring their special night-based animals to life. In Science we have been doing lots of experiments surrounding Light and Dark; learning about light sources and things that are just made of reflective material to help us see them in the dark. In addition, we have been learning about seasons and how they affect sunlight in our country.

The highlight of the whole term was performing and acting the play 'Orion and the Dark' so beautifully. They performed a story about Orion, a little boy who is scared of lots of things... especially the dark, which was written especially for this year group. They performed the play with such Dragon Courage and should be very proud of their acting abilities. The singing and coming together as a year group was really magical.

In Year 3, the children started the year by deepening their exploration of the Victorians, engaging in a day of circus fun and a Victorian school experience with E Block. They actively participated in various sports events both at the Prep and away matches. A heartfelt thank you was extended to the current House Captains for their outstanding service as ambassadors. The term concluded with their enthusiastic participation in writing and performing an eclectic range of poetry, showcased in virtual class poetry anthologies that we look forward to sharing with you.



SPRING TERM AT THE PREP



E Block dove back in time for Victorian Day, showcasing some fabulous outfits! They practised Victorian circus tricks, learned about the old money system and researched Victoria modes of transport. The E Block concert showcased their musical talent with some beautiful singing and group playing. E Block have also taken part in many hockey, football, netball and swimming matches, proudly representing the Dragon. They enjoyed the cross-country event, running for their Forms, and the Swim Relay event.

Highlights from the **Middle School** have included a very successful French trip to Normandy for 40 lucky C Blockers, a fun-filled ski-trip for both solo children and Dragon families, musical and drama outreach days with local schools, showcasing a little Dragon magic from our hard-working and talented staff, and an enthusiastic competition between Forms to transform our doors into exciting book covers for World Book Day. C Blockers have continued to attend a wide variety of future schools for interviews, and a steady stream of offers have been coming in as testament to the hard work of both the children and staff to prepare for the next step after

the Dragon. D Blockers have enjoyed talks from outside speakers inspiring them to explore the world further.

We finished the term with a Middle School concert displaying the talents of so many of our children, including the whole of D Block onstage performing as a united choir, whilst C Block also had chance to shine in the Greek plays, invitations to Maths competitions, DT challenges and full Middle School participation and triumph in football, netball and swimming fixtures.

The damp, dark weather has not affected the spirits of our **Upper School** children this term. From the word 'Go', their energy and commitment has been amazing. Early on, we enjoyed an incredible show of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', involving over 60 Upper School Children either on the stage or behind the scenes. During Children's Mental Health Week (My Voice Matters), a large number of B Block children performed short sketches during an assembly, highlighting our different feelings and emotions, how to help our voice be heard and how to help ourselves to feel good. A Block Ambassadors have been supporting their various



departments and Upper School Council have been busy sharing the year group's proposals for change within the school, some of whose ideas have already been implemented. Academically, the children have been focused and diligent, with B Block reaching the highest number of pluses in the Prep School, and A Block managing their demanding week of CE and scholarship mock exams with an exemplary attitude. On top of this there has been a flurry of Academic, Music, Drama, Sporting and Art scholarships awarded from Senior Schools. On the sports field, A and B Block children have participated in over 420 matches, with our sporting values of Courage, Respect and Discipline shining through. The Art rooms are regularly full of children working on creative projects in lunch

and Bun Break, as well as our potential scholars producing some outstanding paintings. Musically, there is so much to celebrate. The awesome production of 'Sister Act', involving another 50 A/B Block children singing and acting to the highest standard. The progress children have made individually with their music lessons, ensembles, grade exams, and finally the vibrant concerts we are enjoying during this final week, with over 200 Upper School Children involved. The lighter mornings have now arrived, and it is exciting to think ahead to all the Summer Term has waiting for our community. Well done to all for displaying our Dragon Values of Courage, Kindness and Respect in this fast-paced Spring Term.



BOARDING LIFE

The Spring Term has seen many children enjoying the delights of full, flexible and occasional boarding. Dragon House have successfully launched their annual MasterChef competition, with the boys cooking up steak, burgers, tiramisu, noodles and dumplings, and homemade ice cream.

Chess has spread through the boarding community and Ma Goldsmith has enjoyed being challenged to matches in all the houses she visits. Matches, tournaments and knock-out sessions are happening in free time.

In coordination with International Week, the Boarding Houses put on numerous events. The boarders loved the ongoing Lunar New Year celebrations, the children decorated lanterns, opened money envelopes, tried their hand at calligraphy and feasted on dumplings, ramen and noodles.

This term the girls in Cherwell dusted down the glitter ball,

polished their dancing shoes and dimmed the lights for the inaugural 'Swiftly Come Dancing' competition. The judging panel were blown away by the dances and the creative talent of Cherwell. Sassy, light, collaboration, graceful, emotional and artistic were some of the complements being bandied around after each dance.

The houses have enjoyed some good old-fashioned bingo, discos, downtowns and fire pits and end-of-exam-week treats. The end of term has been marked by incredible Easter egg hunts and gratitude trees with the children chasing around after chocolate eggs and remembering to say thank you for what they are grateful for this term.

Overall, we have had a very exciting term, and we are all looking forward next term with Boarding Week, the neon disco and the Summer Fayre.

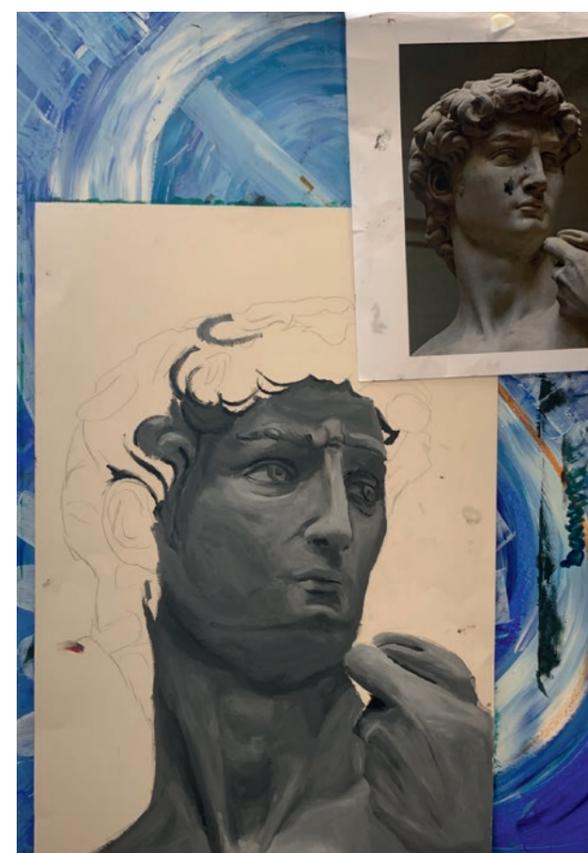
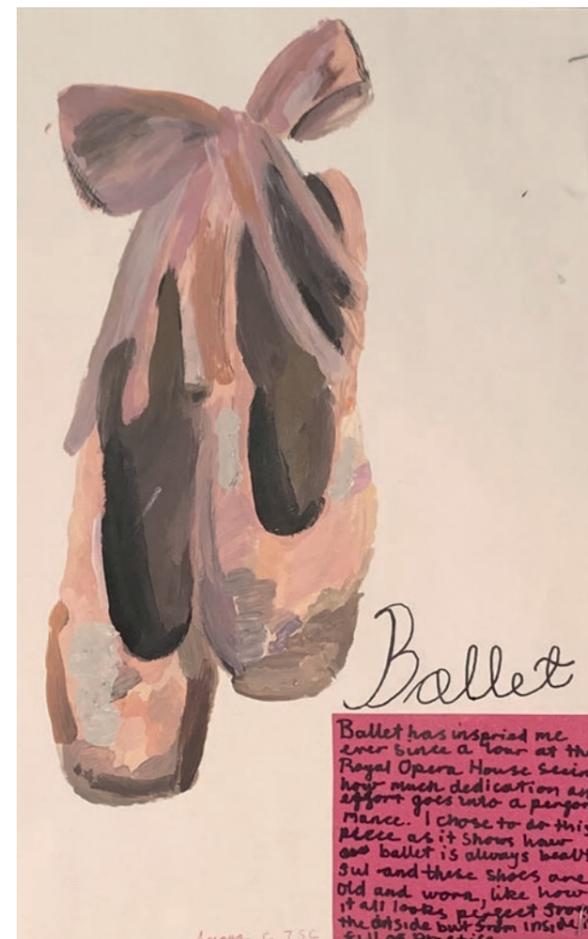
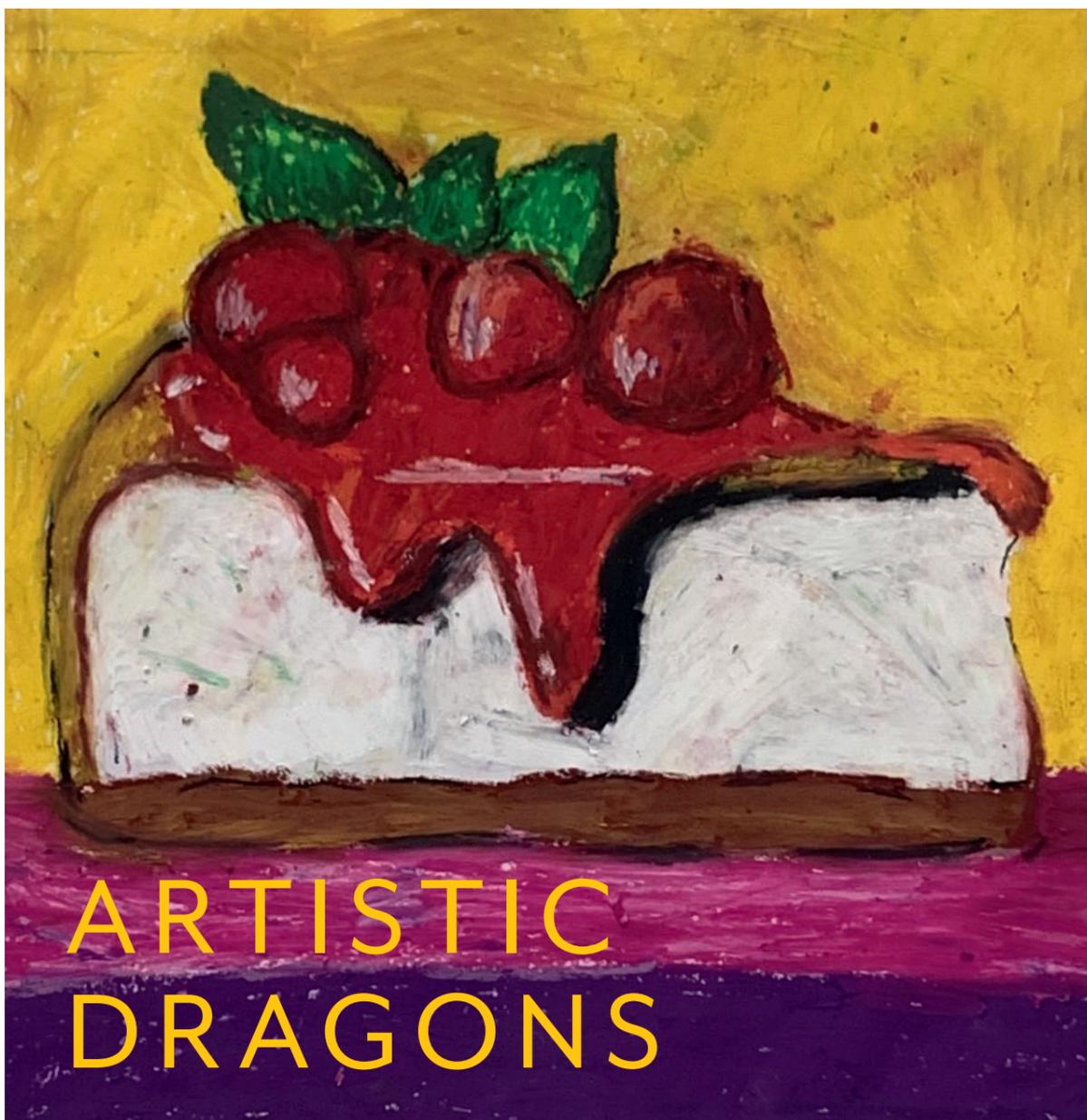


DRAGON QUEST

Our Quest-takers have encountered the first sign of spring as paddleboarding is back! Lots of enthusiastic children have been glad to be back on the river. This term we have a new Quest that is inspired by The Traitors TV show – a murder-mystery-style activity based around honing the art of persuasion, manipulation and back-stabbing! Apologies parents, it's all in jest! Dragon Mafia is also new this term, which involves games of strategy and treachery. Water polo is proving a hit, and our Dragon Reviewers are reviewing books as part of the national Yoto Carnegie scheme. A taste of La Dolce Vita is on the horizon for our new and improving Italian speakers, and board games and jigsaw puzzles are slower, more strategic and thoughtful Quests new to this term. Electric go-karts are taking shape ready to compete next term which, as you can imagine, is very exciting!

Mr Springer's arrival has increased our Dungeons & Dragons provision – it is still one of the most oversubscribed Quests alongside Ma Coombes' Floral Dragons, Culinary and Ceramic. West End Dragons and Messi Dragons continue to be enjoyed by many. We are very excited about what the Summer Term will hold for Quest, and the Saturday mornings filled with laughter and learning!





This term, A Block delved deep into the intricacies of figure study this term. From anatomy sketches to more refined portraits, looking at movement and artists such as Keith Haring and Henri Matisse, they meticulously observed and captured the nuances of the human form. Through their studies, the pupils gained a newfound appreciation for figure and how it is portrayed in the world of art.

In B Block, the pupils ventured into the realm of books as art. Through bookbinding techniques and innovative approaches, it is a topic that reshaped their perceptions of literature and its artistic potential. B Block turned ordinary and old books into extraordinary works of visual delight.

In C Block, pupils immersed themselves into the timeless tradition of still life. From capturing the play of light and shadow, to arranging compositions rich in narrative, to 3D cardboard cakes and sweet delights inspired by Wayne Thiebaud, students honed their observational skills and artistic sensibilities.

D Block have explored the dynamic nature of water in art. From tranquil streams to turbulent seas, they experimented with watercolour techniques to convey its ever-changing essence. The pupils created mark-making fish, tissue-paper collages, David Hockney swimming pools, and replicated the work of Monet.

Finally, E Block delved into the tactile world of textures. They went on a hands-on journey through the world of textured art, exploring rough, smooth, and everything in between. With a variety of materials at their fingertips, they added depth and dimension to their creations that included miniature weaves, Henry Moore Sheep and clouds, turning ordinary surfaces into sensory sensation.

As the pupils reflect on the diverse themes and techniques explored this term, the Art department hope all the Dragons carry forward the lessons learned, and the inspiration gained. Their journey through art is ongoing, and with each stroke of the brush, knit of the needle, smudge of the finger, hot glue from the gun, they continue to explore, create and grow as artists! Well done to all the Dragons this term!

MUSICAL DRAGONS



With such a talented A Block this year, it is no surprise that this term has seen its fair share of 'best of' moments, from our 18 offered music awards to the spectacular 'Sister Act'. Our outreach days continue to thrive, introducing numerous children from our local community to a variety of musical genres from our termly Gamelan Day, to our annual DragonPhil Day; this year involving nearly a hundred wind and brass players. The term has ended with a fantastic concert season with one of our finest Upper School Concerts and Spring Concerts to date with my personal highlight being Take That's 'Shine' performed by over 100 children from singers and strings to wind and brass. It was also nice to see the choirs performing to such a high standard just prior to our Berlin tour.

Finally, there is much excitement as we see the decades-long journey of the new Music School reaching its final stages and we can look forward to many more successful years of artistic endeavours ahead in a building our musicians deserve.



DRAGONS ON STAGE



With both Upper School productions happening only five weeks apart, this term has been an exceptionally exciting and busy one for the Drama department.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream', this year's Upper School Play, took part in early February and was a rip-roaring success. The production was delivered in full Shakespearean language, but featured a rollerblading Puck and included a 1970/80's rocking soundtrack. It was a creative and engaging reworking of the classic story.

Five weeks later, the Dragon was thrilled by the Upper School Musical of 'Sister Act'. This gloriously upbeat and fun musical wowed audiences with its talented cast and depth of impressive singers. Over 1,000 people were drawn to the Lynam Hall to see the production, and I doubt that any of them left without a smile on their faces and humming the show tunes.

Alongside 'Sister Act', the Drama department welcomed Windale Primary School to join for a day of musical

theatre. This was run by many of the 'Sister Act' cast and provided some wonderful opportunities for all.

Workshops on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' were also run down at the Pre-Prep, as Year 3 attended the Upper School Play for the first time.

Some B and C Block students took an outing to Downe House for the day, where they took part in a fabulous day of musical theatre, performing 'Bugsey Malone' at the end of the day.

The Middle School Variety Show was a great success, as always, and provided some excellent opportunities for our C and D Block to showcase some of their talents (including a giant worm doing 'The Worm' to the song 'Happy!').

Lastly, the preparations for Dragon's first Drama tour to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival have picked up the pace, and the cast and crew are excited about beginning work on the project.



A mind-boggling 83 hockey, netball and football teams have played in 340 fixtures across the term! In addition, our Dragons have competed in fixtures and competitions both locally and nationally in a variety of sports: cross country, swimming, rugby sevens, real tennis, polo, dressage and even indoor rowing. To highlight a few particular successes this term; in hockey our U11A boys became IAPS Regional hockey runners-up and National finalists. In netball our U11A girls became IAPS Regional netball runners-up and U12B team were St Hugh's Tournament winners.

Our boys' 1st football team have had an unbeaten season, and our U10's girls' team were Chandlings Tournament winners, and our U11 girls were Chandlings and Teddies Tournament winners.

Our U13 girls' cross country team were Spratton Hall winners, while our U11 & U13 boys' and girls' were Oratory School winners. Four of our pupils qualified for the National Championships and one for the English Schools' Finals.

Our 1st girls cricket team were Oxfordshire Indoor Cricket Tournament runners-up.

As you can see it's been a hugely successful term, and even more good news, we have 10 Sports scholarships and awards to date for our current A Block.

Well done to all of our Dragons who showed true sportsmanship and Dragon values this term!

