

The termly magazine from Dragon School

# Dragon Tales



Summer Term 2025



# HEAD'S WELCOME

## Dear Dragon Families,

The fields are already scorched by the warmest Summer Term I can remember. As I write, I can hear Dragons cheering on the tug of war as we gear up to the finale of Sports Day on the last day of term.

The Summer Term is often quoted as the favourite term; evenings by the river, exams are over and we celebrate so many achievements. It is true to say we have applauded the success of our A Block who have been awarded 63 scholarships.

In September Tom Hiddleston reminded us of the importance of play and this term also lends itself to plenty of creativity. We have had extraordinary concerts (One parent commented, "I have no adjectives left..."), we have had the Middle School play, and the Art and DT exhibitions which have showcased our talented actors and artists.

The finale of our sporting calendar was the Pre-Prep Sports Day and our event at Bardwell Road heralded the end of the sporting year with 1200 fixtures completed.

As the academic year comes to a close, we can be proud of all the money raised by the year groups for our three charities in addition to the tremendous efforts of the Dragon Sale.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Dragon Tales. I think it encapsulates what one Dragon parent wrote recently: *No words can really explain how much the Dragon has infused our daughter with such happiness, childhood memories and confidence. Everything she has hoped to do she has achieved but with a splattering of glitter and sparkle in every area.*

With best wishes

*Emma Giddons*



# SOCIAL IMPACT

It's been another inspiring and action-packed term for Social Impact at the Dragon, with pupils across the school embracing opportunities to make a meaningful difference. In amongst the spectacular plays and performances, the Pre-Prep have somehow found time to host a range of amazing fundraising events, from the Cake Sale and Year 1's bespoke recipe books, to Year 2's 'Make Your Money Grow' challenge and the vibrant Year 3 Art Exhibition, which raised over £2,500 for their Charity of the Year, Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground. Our youngest Changemakers also made a real impact through their support of the Dragon Larder, ensuring it remains a valuable resource for our community. Our Changemakers have been passionate about creating posters and discussing how to support the Dragon Larder in our weekly sessions. They have been great at sharing their pupil voices with the rest of their classes. They have also created the Pre-Preps first "Bug Hotel" and have planted over 100 wildflowers to encourage pollinators into the Pre-Prep.

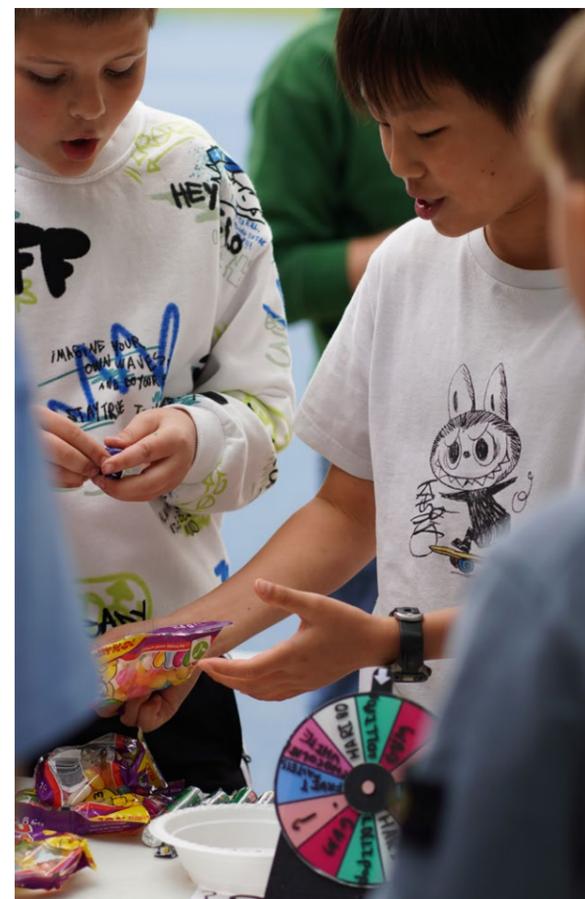


At the Prep, the C Block Governors' Challenge unleashed a wave of creativity, with pupils developing original fundraising ideas to support Firefly International, from handcrafted jewellery and refreshing elderflower cordial, to custom-made t-shirts and original busking performances. D Block pupils enjoyed another fantastic Gamelan Day, this time with St Barnabus' Primary, and some of our A Block pupils spent mornings volunteering with the Nursery and Reception classes at one of our partner schools, Windale Primary.

With Common Entrance out of the way, our A Block Social Impact Ambassadors have helped to research and shortlist charities for our next Charities of the Year vote in September, and 12 lucky A Block children also had the opportunity to attend the world premiere of David Attenborough's breathtaking new documentary,

Oceans. Finally the whole year group came together last week for an unforgettable A Block Revue, which raised over £3,000 for the Upper School Charity, South Downs National Park Trust. B Block raised further donations for the Trust through their impressive 160km charity run, the length of the South Downs Way.

Finally, we have been fortunate to learn from some inspirational speakers to our assemblies and Spectrum events this term, including representatives from Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground and Firefly International to talk about their work and how our fundraising will support children locally and further afield, and the Oundle/Imperial STEM roadshow, who literally lit up the Lynam Hall with their incredible interactive presentation on space!



# SUMMER TERM AT THE PRE-PREP

What a term! It has flown by in a whirl of fun, friendship and sunshine! Every year group has had an event that showcased both the talents of our brilliant young Dragons and their positive approach to everything they do. Whether acting on the stage, competing on Sports Day, making music or emerging from the learning pit in the classroom, they give their all and do it all with a smile. I congratulate them all, wish those returning the best of luck and hope everyone has a great summer break.

Annie McNeile, Head of the Pre-Prep



Our **Reception** cohort have had a brilliant first year at school and it's been fantastic to watch their progress over the year! They enjoyed listening to a wide range of stories as part of our Once upon A Time topic, including much-loved traditional tales such as *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The children predicted different endings and tested their knowledge and ideas to solve problems in the construction area by trying to build a house that the Big Bad Wolf definitely couldn't blow down! Lots of work went into the charity Cake Sale; the children baked both at school and at home, they decorated bunting to put up around the Cake Sale tent and raised a good amount of funds for one of our Charities of the Year, BLAP.

We investigated a variety of life cycles throughout the year, although the most exciting by far was observing our chicks hatching in real time in the incubator.

After Half-Term our topic was Time Travelling, and the children explored what is the past and what is the present? They learnt all about the past through listening to music, reproducing art from different centuries and learning about the lives of famous people and how their work affects us today. Looking to the future we talked about what these curious four- and five-year-olds would like to be when they grow up. There were a range of answers including scientists, astronauts, hairdressers and firefighters.

The Summer Concert to parents in the Sadler Hall at the Prep was a highlight and showcased just how far the children have come since joining the school in September. They performed poems, played

percussion instruments, joined in with call and response, and sang a wide range of songs from memory. The audience we were truly wowed.

**Year 1** have been on a journey to the Arctic where we learned about Arctic animals, habitats, food chains and the mysterious Arctic jellyfish. We were fascinated by the incredible bravery of the famous explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton. The children were inspired by his exhibitions and the gruelling conditions that he and his crew had to overcome. The second half of the term has seen us think about a polar bear who found himself far away from home, lost and all alone in a strange environment surrounded by woodland animals he had never seen before. The children took on the role of a woodland animal and wrote a letter to describe the strange creature they had seen. This led to further discussions on global warming, plastic pollution and what we can do to help our planet.

Our year-group play on the Great Fire of London was a highlight and full of fun and we made wonderful memories on our end-of-term trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park.

We have also been telling the time, working on our fractions, perfecting our food and drink vocab in French, coding, and learning about seasons, oceans, continents and animal classification.

If you asked the **Year 2** children what their highlight for the term has been, I'm sure a lot of them would say the visit from Professor Bubbleworks! His bespoke workshop for Wow experiments certainly delivered on wows, particularly when everyone was put inside huge human-sized bubbles!

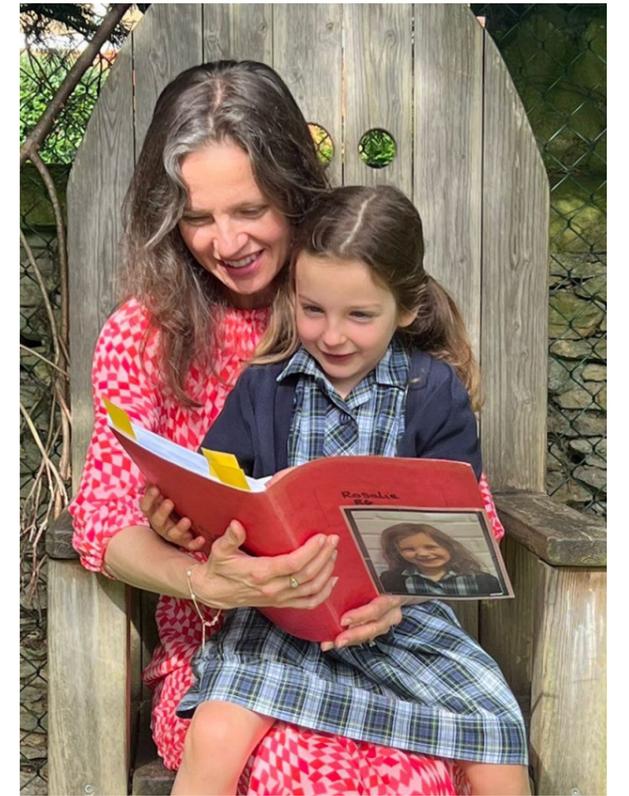


Our trip to University Parks to look at the swifts nesting in the National History Museum, and other Swift activities in the park, was another highlight made even more enjoyable by the fantastic weather.

We also enjoyed the LEGO Stem workshop where the children got to build a fairground ride and programme how it is controlled. The children loved building with their partners and learnt a lot about programming too.

The Gratitude Café saw the children turning the gym into a place to give thanks to people in their wider circle of care. They sang songs, ate cake and had a chance to chat with their chosen guest. The event ended with a presentation of art for each guest. To continue the theme of gratitude, Be Space came, and each class had a chance to reflect and give thanks for things in their world they are grateful for.

For **Year 3**, the Summer Term has been all about storytelling. They have been learning about the history of how stories are shared and loved throughout history, and how they can be brought to life. They enjoyed a puppet workshop from the Little Angels Theatre, made stunning 3D puppets in Art, and had a visiting actor teach them sound scaping and physical theatre techniques. All of this came together in the Year 3 play 'The Lost Happy Endings', where the children showcased their incredible singing and actor skills to an audience of Dragons. The children can look back upon all their hard work, dedication and learning this year, and look forward to continuing their journey through the Dragon in E Block.



# SUMMER TERM AT THE PREP



In addition to the many different cricket matches that have been played this term in **E Block**, the children have competed in their final swim relay of the year and experienced their first Prep School Sports Day – what a way to end the term! Our final concert and Prize-Giving was a superb showcase of the skill level and progress the children have made in Music, whilst the Form Singing Competition was fun for all. To compliment the work in class on early history, the children had a wonderful visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum where they were able to find out more about the past through handling and exploring different artefacts. The children all experienced their first residential (camping out in Badminton Woods), where they built fires to cook food, built shelters, played games, whittled pencils with knives and sang songs around the campfire.

**Middle School** has enjoyed a vibrant and eventful term, packed with trips, performances and academic challenges. Pupils demonstrated resilience and dedication as they balanced a whirlwind of activities with the demands of exam preparation.

Highlights included D Block's energetic Bards of Bardwell Road Shakespeare performances, where students brought classic plays to life with humour and flair, and C Block's impressive production of 'The Kid Who Fell Back into a Story', written and directed by Mr Ponder. The show featured standout vocals, ensemble dances and a timely message about stepping away from screens to embrace imagination.

Middle School's musical ensembles continued to shine, with Thursday activities and concert – a fitting finale, showcasing their talents. The Form Singing competition added a joyful, team-spirited highlight with excellent performances. History came alive through immersive trips – D Block explored medieval life at Warwick Castle, while **C Block** visited Portsmouth's Naval Dockyard to prepare for next year's study of the Battle of Trafalgar. And of course, Tudor Day brought learning and laughter, with both pupils and staff embracing the chance to dress up and step back in time. Sport played a major role this term, with a full calendar of cricket, tennis



and athletics fixtures, all promoting teamwork, healthy competition and sportsmanship. And with Sports Day just concluded, a huge well done to all of Middle School for your tenacity, enthusiasm and determination to be your best selves.

For our **Upper School**, it has been wonderful to see the children continuing to display our values of Kindness, Courage and Respect. They have shown excellent commitment and service throughout the year with over 27 in A Block gaining a Gold Award in the Dragon Award Scheme and two B Blockers also managing this, achieved in just one year!

**B Block** have been an outstanding year group, regularly bringing in the largest number of pluses in the school. They have put on their B Block studio play, performed to parents and children. Our top sports players have been flying with the U12 Boys' cricketers getting to the County Cup Final and the girls winning the Bloxham 10s. Four B Block athletes qualified for nationals, and we have seen the usual

commitment in art, drama, music, sport and academics.

Expeditions are the post-exam celebration of the year for our A Block, and all children headed off to the Lake District, Devon and Wales for a week of adventure and memory-making. This trip was certainly one to remember!

The **A Block** Revue was a resounding success, the ticket sales and raffle tickets raised over £3,000 for our school charity the South Downs Trust and was a joyful evening to boot. CE results were received along with 68 scholarships, as well as 5 A Block children making it to the National Athletics Finals.

We have enjoyed wonderful music and drama pieces, including the Summer Serenade and Curtain Call, and of course, the usual fun on the fields with Form Athletics and Sports Day. We wish our A Block the best of luck moving on to their senior schools and we cannot wait to hear how they get on.

# BOARDING LIFE



This Summer Term has provided a continuous stream of “Golden Hours” every evening, where the Boarders have enjoyed playing in glorious sunshine on the fields, socialising and making memories with their friends.

Boarding Week was a massive success early in the term with 60 extra children trialling boarding. The week was packed with fun, from karaoke and swimming parties to water fights, inflatables on the fields, Mr Whippy ice creams, and an epic neon disco in the Lynam Hall. The growing number of flexi-boarders joining our full boarders has fostered a wonderful spirit of

collaboration in the Houses, with regular joint events such as games evenings, outdoor cinema screens, fire pits, BBQs and visits to the Pick Your Own farms.

The final In-School Weekend was a celebration to remember. Boarders created lasting memories with exciting trips to Wet n Wild, punting on the river, slip n slide, petting zoos, silent discos and the second Stradstonbury Festival. The term concluded with the tradition of House Suppers and Sing Song—a brilliant conclusion to another fantastic year of Dragon Boarding!



# DRAGON QUEST

During another busy and buzzing term of Dragon Quest, we lucked out with the weather so the fields have been busier than ever.

Trickz & Flipz was a popular addition to the schedule this term, with Step2Dance coaches coming in to teach Dragons how to flip on the lovely new AirTrack. Some of our Dragons were really flying! Lawn games was another popular new edition, with Croquet and Cornhole also being played and enjoyed. A number of Dragons graduated to new karate belts through Enter and Continue the Dragon, with an orange belt awarded for the first time ever.

Quest Prime continues to be popular with a mammoth triangular touch rugby session on the final day.

Off the back of our Quest sessions, we had our first padel tournament at Smash Padel Bicester with one of our pairs going undefeated throughout – lots of fun was had!

We continue to offer a wide variety of options and Saturday mornings remain a highlight of the week for many.



# ARTISTIC DRAGONS

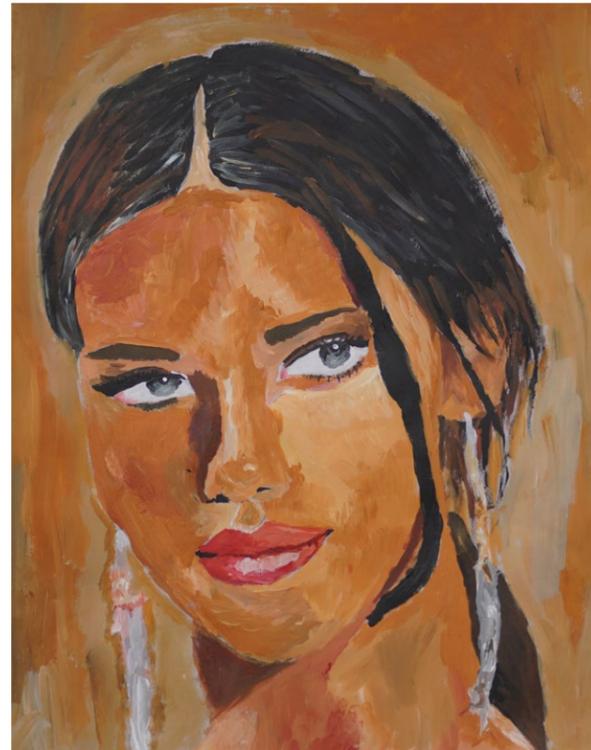
This term, A Block pupils focused on the theme of 'Issues', exploring a variety of social, environmental and political topics through different artistic approaches. They created war-themed collage paintings, using layered imagery to reflect on conflict and its consequences. Pupils also addressed environmental concerns through mixed-media work, highlighting topics such as pollution and climate change. In exploring social perception, they used magazine collage to question stereotypes and media influence. To finish the term, they applied their ideas in three dimensions by making ceramic pots, developing both their creativity and practical skills in clay.

B Block pupils explored the theme of graphics and fonts, developing their understanding of typography and design. They began by creating medieval-style letters using watercolour and metallic pens, focusing on decorative detail and historical styles. Pupils then designed relief posters in cardboard, creatively highlighting the school values through bold, layered compositions. They also studied the work of Norman Ives and Alighiero Boetti, producing their own typography-inspired pieces influenced by each artist's unique approach to shape, form and layout.

C Block focused on the theme of mixed media, exploring how different materials can be combined for creative effect. They began by studying natural forms, using tissue paper and magazines to create vibrant flowers and poppies. Pupils then constructed playful cardboard cake sculptures, developing their skills in 3D design. To finish, they created collage artworks from old magazines, using imagery to communicate messages and ideas visually.

D Block explored the theme of animals through a variety of creative projects. They began by making Damien-Hirst-inspired butterflies, focusing on symmetry and bold colour. Pupils then produced tonal drawings of animal faces, developing their shading and observational skills. They also created zentangle animals, dividing the forms into sections filled with repeated patterns. To finish, they experimented with collage techniques to construct imaginative and textured animal artworks.

E Block took part in a cross-curricular project on Iron Age Britain, combining art with history. They used pastels and pencils to create rubbings and textures that reflected natural materials and ancient surfaces. Pupils also designed and made medallions and brooches from card and string, finishing them with metallic pens to give the appearance of realistic Iron Age relics.





# MUSICAL DRAGONS

It has been another epic term in the Music Department, which began with much optimism following a successful choir tour to Paris and Disneyland. The term opened with a tour concert at St Michael and All Angels in Summertown where we delighted a full house with our tour repertoire raising a significant amount for charity.

Other events this term have included a fantastic Gamelan Day for local primaries and several trips to the Pre-Prep with our top music groups to entertain our littlest Dragons. Our Keyboard Festival was at a particularly high standard this year, drawing admiration from our workshop leader, the Head of Keyboards at Eton. The Form Singing Competition included the B Block for the first time, which proved to be a popular addition to the format.

Concert season included an energetic Middle School Concert and E Block Concert, an impressive and quite moving curtain call featuring our best musicians and actors and an emotional Leavers' Service for our wonderful departing A Block. The culmination of the year's work was surely the Summer Serenade for our top pre-select music groups featuring the pounding rhythms of Big Band, the soaring emotion of the choirs and the musical precision of Dragonetti. The finale this time was the Ben E. King classic 'Stand by Me', which is surely a suitable sentiment for our A Blockers to take away into their future lives.



# DRAGONS ON STAGE



This term's theatrical highlight was the Middle School production of 'The Kid Who Fell Back Into A Story'. A thrilling sequel to the 2022 hit, this magical adventure brought 105 talented C and D Block pupils to the stage, performed to nearly 1,000 enthusiastic audience members. Across three unforgettable performances, our young actors were absolutely phenomenal, bringing the beloved characters of Jamie, Rockfist and Monique back to life. The show even welcomed back 12 original cast members now in senior school – and whispers of a third instalment are already in the air!

Other standout moments included the ever-popular Bards of Bardwell Road, with 110 pupils delivering seven mini-Shakespeare plays in just over an hour. It was a fast-paced, fun-filled morning packed with passion and performance. D Block truly stole the spotlight – definitely a few future stars in the making!

A huge shoutout to Delilah for writing the B Block Studio

play, the first-ever performance in our new Sadler Hall. Thoughtful, mature and beautifully acted. Well done to all!

The Academic Scholar plays returned with clever Shakespeare adaptations, and the A Block Revue rounded things off with charm and laughter – a perfect farewell performance as they closed their final curtain at the Dragon.

Bravo to all our performers for an unforgettable term of drama!

# SPORTY DRAGONS



53 Cricket teams played 270 fixtures this term (which is an increase of 10% on last year). The 1st XI girls finished runners-up in the National Indoor Competition; the U12 and U11 girls won the Bloxham and Stowe tournaments respectively. The U11 boys finished runners-up in the IAPS Festival and the U12 boys did likewise in the Oxfordshire Cup. Tennis squads smashed it, winning three golds and a bronze at the IAPS Festival and the U13 boys qualified for the LTA Regional Finals. Our swimmers continue to make a big splash with eight relay teams and five individual swimmers reaching the National Finals. Similarly, 12 of our athletes ran, jumped and threw themselves into the National Finals! Our judo team also “ipponed” their way to four golds, two silvers and five bronzes at the IAPS Championships and our rowers stroked beautifully at the Teddies Indoor Champs, winning two golds and a silver.



We can certainly say that we remain true to our ethos of “Performance and Participation”!

