



Dragon School Social Impact Report



Inspiring free thinkers through social impact

I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural edition of our Social Impact Report, which presents a snapshot of the vibrant and dynamic range of activity that takes place over the school year.

There are four key pillars to our social impact work: the Transformational Bursary Programme (page 4–5), School and Community Partnerships (page 6–7), our School Charities of the Year (page 10–11), and Pupil Engagement (page 12–13). The following pages will present highlights from each of these areas, with testimonials from beneficiaries and donors. By focusing on each of our core areas, this report will act as a record of our growing ambitions and help us to evaluate our progress. We hope it will also inspire you, our readers, to get involved.

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to everyone who makes the Social Impact Programme what it is. We are fortunate to work with, and learn from, schools, charities and community groups in Oxfordshire and beyond, and you will hear from some of them within this report. We also owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who has supported our fundraising activities: from cheering our pupils on to donating to one of our fundraisers, your commitment and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated. Particular thanks must go to the organisers of the Dragon Charity Christmas Sale, which celebrated its 80th anniversary in December 2023, and to everyone who gives up their time to make this such a high point of our school calendar.

Finally, I would like to thank our pupils. At its heart, our Social Impact Programme provides a framework for our young Dragons to develop a lifelong commitment to service and philanthropy. As this report shows, they are the driving force behind this work, and there is so much more that we plan to achieve together.

Emma Goldsmith, Head



The importance of social impact

Many members of our Dragon community are involved with charitable activities or social enterprises. We asked Sarah Easton, Dragon parent, Trustee of the Dragon Christmas Charity Sale and co-founder of The Room, to talk about why it is so important to embed social impact into everything we do.

The Room is a multi-generational philanthropic collective of members from across Oxfordshire, who come together to pool resources and invest in small, local, grassroots organisations that support marginalised women and children. It's a very simple formula: local values meeting local need to create local impact. It is democratic, strategic and effective, and is changing institutional philanthropy from within.

The beauty of collective, collaborative, community-driven philanthropy is that – by virtue of the many voices and ideas gathered around the same table – there are countless permutations of how to give your treasure, time and talent. It is less about the form and more about the function: making a greater impact together than we can alone. Everybody has a role to play. Everyone is valued. And everyone can make a difference.

The Dragon's model is based upon similar principles and allows every child in the school to experience the joy of philanthropy. Promoting social entrepreneurship and impact opportunities to children means opening doors from a young age to lives and worlds other than their own. This is similar to why we love our children to read: it nurtures connection, curiosity and a more expansive mindset.

Everyone deserves to know that no matter how loud their voice, they can contribute to positive social change. Schools can play a pivotal role in inspiring a sense of social entrepreneurship by offering their own model of collective, collaborative, community-driven philanthropy. Along the way they'll scoop up lessons in innovation, creativity, communication, problem-solving, finance, leadership... the list is delightfully long!

(www.theroomoxford.org)



Transformational Bursaries

Our aim: to grow and secure our Transformational Bursary Programme, allowing more children to benefit from a Dragon Education.

The Dragon's Transformational Bursary Programme allows us to welcome up to 25 bursary holders ever year, receiving on average an 80% remission on their fees. During the 2023/24 academic year, we welcomed our first Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (RNCSF) bursary holder, who will be with us for two years and receives a 110% bursary, allowing them to take full advantage of everything a Dragon Education has to offer.

Profile of a typical Bursary holder



Loves sports, after-school activities and Quest



Academic scores have jumped up



Received additional learning support



Given the confidence to advocate for themselves



Weighing up several secondary options

Our vision is for every Dragon and their family to feel included, for diversity to be celebrated and equality championed. We work hard to ensure that our bursary holders are carefully and compassionately integrated and supported by a network of staff to help them thrive in their new environment. We are so proud that in addition to academic achievements — and many are selected to be part of the scholarship track — our bursary holders also have the opportunity to excel in drama, music, and sports.

“Back in the 1980s, I was fortunate enough to be awarded a scholarship which covered 100% of my school fees, from Year 6 through to the end of senior school. I have no doubt that this had a big impact on my work ethic and provided opportunities I would otherwise not have had.

I've recently retired from full-time work, and having enjoyed a successful career wanted now to “pay forward” the opportunity to the next generation. **I was very keen for my donation to go to providing a genuinely life-changing opportunity, and I believe the Transformational Bursary Programme, particularly combined with RNCSF, does just this.**”

Bursary Donor



“We are so delighted that the Dragon has continued to stretch and inspire our daughter academically, and we were very proud when we learned that she'd been selected to be part of the scholarship stream. There have been many highlights from an extracurricular perspective but watching her have the time of her life in a school production stands out. What an incredible experience for her!”

Bursary Parent

School and Community Partnerships

Our aim: to create strong, long-term partnerships with schools across Oxfordshire that are inspiring, informed and collaborative.

The Dragon has always been aware of its place in the local community, and this strong outward focus continues to guide everything we do. We welcome Oxfordshire schools for workshops and activities, and for over a decade have maintained a close relationship with three primary schools in Blackbird Leys across a range of areas including music, drama, art and literacy. We are committed to creating strong and long-term collaborations with our partner schools that offer unique, engaging ways for children and staff from all schools to learn together, and from each other.

Highlights of the year

- ✦ Children from Windale Primary and other local schools worked alongside Dragon pupils in music and art events, including three Gamelan Days, a musical theatre workshop based on the Upper School production of 'Sister Act' (pictured right), our annual orchestral workshop in partnership with Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, and a collaborative art project with Young Art Oxford.
- ✦ An interactive STEM roadshow presented by Oundle School and Imperial College London wowed audiences from Dragon, Windale and Pegasus.
- ✦ Children from Wheatley Park School joined our weekly Saturday Quest activities.
- ✦ Parent volunteers supported dozens of children at Windale and Pegasus with literacy and maths through the Dragon Parent Volunteer Programme.
- ✦ We opened a Dragon Community Larder at the Prep site, running alongside the already thriving Pre-Prep larder.

"'Sister Act' was ace – it was one of my favourite days in school! I love looking at the photos that are up around school to remember how it felt to be there and take part."

'Sister Act' workshop participant

"Creative arts are so good for well-being, brain development, focus and concentration, confidence and autonomy, and so much more. **In a world that seems to be stripping young people of these foundations, it's all the more important that music and performing arts are placed at the very centre of all education.** That's why we're proud to have made a contribution to the Dragon's Music Outreach Programme, which will reach so many children who wouldn't ordinarily have these opportunities."

Donor to the Music Outreach Programme

"Working with the Dragon School has been a **great opportunity for our children and has widened their cultural capital and experiences.** They see the Dragon School as an exciting place to visit – they know a trip there will involve stepping out of their comfort zone into a **safe environment with friendly and welcoming staff,** and that they will come away from the day feeling proud of **their contribution.**"

Katie Geran-Haq, Head, Windale Primary School



Our aim:

to be pioneers in the area of social impact. As a school, to develop curious and empathetic pupils who understand the local and global challenges facing society today. And as a whole organisation, to undertake positive action to help address and alleviate these challenges.



25

TRANSFORMATIONAL BURSARY HOLDERS ACROSS THE SCHOOL EACH YEAR



OVER

100

BOXES OF FOOD AND ESSENTIALS DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL FOOD BANKS AND COMMUNITY CENTRES



6,800

HOT MEALS MADE BY OUR KITCHENS AND DISTRIBUTED TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFORD FOOD HUB



£35,000

RAISED FOR OUR THREE SCHOOL CHARITIES OF THE YEAR AND NATIONAL CHARITY CAMPAIGNS



250

PUPILS FROM 10 LOCAL SCHOOLS JOINED A RANGE OF EVENTS INCLUDING MUSICAL THEATRE AND ORCHESTRAL WORKSHOPS, STEM DAYS AND MUCH MORE



OVER

£120,000

£120,000 RAISED FOR MORE THAN 100 LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHARITIES THROUGH THE DRAGON CHRISTMAS CHARITY SALE



105

STALLS RUN BY CHILDREN AND OVER 500 VOLUNTEERS



900

DRAGON PUPILS AND STAFF INVOLVED IN SCHOOL FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES



OVER

110

BENEFICIARIES OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL BURSARY PROGRAMME SINCE IT WAS LAUNCHED IN 2002



School Charities of the Year 2023/24

Our aim: to create meaningful partnerships with charities working to support children, young people and families, working locally, nationally and internationally.

For the second academic year, Dragon pupils selected three charities to support. This framework allows children to develop deeper knowledge of their chosen charities through sustained engagement. Our school-wide fundraisers are an invaluable way of teaching children about philanthropy and social entrepreneurship, inspiring them to think openly and critically about global issues, and demonstrating the impact of our collective efforts. We are proud that all children from Reception to A Block are involved in voting and fundraising for these organisations.

Asylum Welcome (Pre-Prep Charity of the Year)

Oxford-based charity Asylum Welcome offers information, advice and practical support to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants living in Oxfordshire.

In addition to our school fundraisers, we were delighted to invite children from Asylum Welcome to our Summer Residential Camp, joining children from all over the world for a range of activities. It was a wonderful opportunity for collaborative learning and making new friends.

FareShare (Lower and Middle School Charity of the Year)

FareShare is the UK's longest running food redistribution charity. It tackles the hunger crisis and food waste by redistributing good, nutritious food that would otherwise be wasted to those who need it most.

World Land Trust (Upper School Charity of the Year)

This international conservation charity works with a network of partner organisations around the world to protect the world's most biologically significant and threatened habitats.

Alongside our School Charities of the Year, young Dragons also take part in Children in Need, Comic Relief, and the Marlborough Schools Triathlon. In addition, they nominate charities to receive support from the annual Dragon Christmas Charity Sale, a staple event in the Dragon calendar. Children and their families plan and run stalls featuring games, handmade goods, pre-loved clothes and toys, and much more. Every penny raised supports over 100 local, national and international charities.



Pupils vote on their School Charities of the Year	SEPT
D Block Colour Run	OCT
E Block Waste-Less Bake Sale	NOV
Children in Need Non-Uniform Day	
Dragon Christmas Charity Sale	DEC
C Block Swim the English Channel	JAN
B Block Water Run	FEB
Comic Relief Non-Uniform Day	MAR
	APR
Pre-Prep Accumulator Challenge	MAY
Year 3 Art Exhibition	
Boarders Fayre	
Pre-Prep Plant Sale	JUN
Reception Jog-Along	
A Block Revue	

“The three key values the Dragon School espouses are Kindness, Courage and Respect. This was so evident in providing our students with the opportunity to be part of this special environment where meaningful connections, valuable friendships and exciting discoveries were made.”

Jan Dougar Hurd, Schools Programme Advocacy Lead,
Asylum Welcome



Pupil Engagement

Our aim: to ensure that every child within the school has the opportunity to engage with social impact initiatives, and to maximise engagement through teaching and hands-on learning experiences.

The Social Impact Programme is an integral part of the Dragon experience. It is designed to enrich our young Dragons' learning while fostering a sense of community and responsibility, developing essential life skills such as empathy, leadership and teamwork. It is instrumental in our vision to help shape free-thinking global citizens who reach for the sun.

The programme is supported by our Pre-Prep Changemaker Champions and our A Block Social Impact Ambassadors, who are pivotal in helping to organise, support and promote our activities across the year, and inspire us all with their enthusiasm, commitment and ideas.

In the classroom, children engage with our School Charities in different ways. Our E Block pupils spent time in lessons learning about food waste and produced their own "waste-less" recipe books to sell during their bake sale in aid of FareShare, and our Pre-Prep learnt about displacement, writing welcome postcards to Asylum Welcome families and individuals seeking refuge.

Assemblies and Spectrum events provide platforms for pupils to learn more about the inspiring work of our community and charity partners, and we were delighted to welcome Revd Tom Murray from Cutteslowe Community Larder, an invaluable local initiative which houses Citizens Advice, a food larder and community café, and representatives from Asylum Welcome to the life-changing services they provide to individuals and families seeking asylum in Oxford. We were particularly grateful to be joined by one of their clients, who generously shared his own personal experience of seeking asylum in Oxford.

It is always encouraging to hear about the endeavours children undertake outside of school.

After months of independent research and conversations which began during lockdown, B Blocker Lapo Brady persuaded Grassroots Reconciliation Commission (GRG) to create a project helping the children of former child soldiers and war victims to access education, in a small village on the border with South Sudan. Lapo's subsequent fundraising efforts enabled 23 children to go to primary school, in what GRG called "a compassionate force dedicated to facilitating the reintegration of war victims into the community".

After visiting family in India, Veera Narayanan (E Block) was inspired to use the money from selling home-made perfume to help two local girls who were unable to go to school due to financial restraints – and because they were girls. The cost of their education is £50 per year, which Veera funded, and she has since pledged to continue to support the girls throughout their time at school through similar entrepreneurial ventures every summer.

From asking questions and sharing ideas, to supporting charitable organisations through fundraising and advocacy, we hope you agree that the achievements highlighted in this report demonstrate the empathy and determination of our pupils alongside the profound, positive impact they can have on the world.



How to get involved

Volunteer for the Dragon Christmas Sale. Current Parents are all welcome to get involved! Please contact dragon.sale@dragonschool.org to register your interest.

Apply to become a School Charity of the Year. Applications open again on 1 May 2025. Charities must be registered in the UK and must directly benefit children or families. Follow the QR code below to register to receive an alert once applications have reopened.

Join the Dragon Parent Volunteer Partnership. New volunteers are always welcome, helping local school children with literacy and maths. Please contact lairdnicky@gmail.com to find out more.

Talk to our young Dragons. Do you work in, or are you closely involved with, the charitable sector? Talk about your experiences at either a Spectrum or Careers Carousel event. Register your interest via the QR code below.

Donate and help us do more. You can find information about how to support the pillars of our Social Impact Programme below:

£1,000 will support one musical workshop (Gamelan or Oxford Philharmonic)	£5,000 will fund an entire year's worth of musical workshops	£10,000 will cover transport for school visits to the Dragon
£42,500 will support a Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation bursary for one year	£150,000 will support a day bursary pupil throughout their time at the Dragon	Contact us 

As we approach the Dragon's 150th anniversary in 2027, our aspiration is to create an endowment to underwrite our Transformational Bursary Programme in perpetuity. Please contact us if you would like to learn more about our plans.





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Company no. (England & Wales) 524331 | Charity no. 309676

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