

The termly magazine from Dragon School

Dragon Tales



Summer Term 2026





HEAD'S WELCOME

Dear Dragon Families,

At last, a warm and sunny Sports Day – it was the dream! I hope you all enjoyed your picnics on a glorious sunny afternoon.

I think we will always remember Summer Term 2026 as the first time we have experienced extreme heat during term time. It has been years since we have had to use the Snow and Ice Policy, but a new one for extreme heat is on the cards.

The Summer Term is the crescendo of the academic year and an opportunity to celebrate successes in the classroom with stunning CE results and 73 scholarships to senior schools, impressive public speaking in our Dra-Gone in Five Minutes competition, and some fabulous art to admire in the Forum.

We also hosted several very successful charity fundraisers, and on the sports field our cricket teams continue to impress with national success for the senior girls and county success for our U12 boys. Equally impressive are our tennis players, not to mention our scullers and athletes who excelled in the IAPS national competitions.

Our musicians treated us to a 'goosebumps' Summer Serenade; we will miss the talented group of musicians who leave us this term. The Middle School production of Shrek underneath the weeping willow trees by the river was tremendous and unleashed some emerging stars of the future.

So term comes to an end, and our boarders return home after a fun-filled term of festivals, trips, movie nights, BBQs, and dreamy evenings playing on the fields, Sing Song providing the final flourish.

We wish you all a wonderful summer break.

Emma Giddons



SUMMER TERM AT THE PRE-PREP

Summer Term 2026 has been a busy and sunny one with our young Dragons making the most of all the opportunities on offer. It began with our 30th birthday party, which was a wonderful celebration of all things Pre-Prep. This was followed by two magnificent year-group plays from Year 1 and Year 3 who acted and sang their hearts out. The term was rounded off with a hot and happy Sports Day, which showcased the sportsmanship and courage of our children. All of our Pre-Prep Dragons are well set to make the move to their new year groups where I am sure they will continue to Reach for the Sun.

Annie McNeile, Head of the Pre-Prep



This term has been all about growing; both with our youngest Dragons finishing their first School year, and with the topic 'Tiny Wings and Growing Things' in the first half of term. We planted seeds and watched them grow, learnt about Jack and the Beanstalk, and watched their own magic beanstalk grow from a seed. We enjoyed a visit to the beehives at the Prep to learn about the importance of bees and their role in the environment, where we were also treated to a brilliant talk from Mr J, and a picnic by the river. The children have been doing lots of crafts – making bees, butterflies and jellyfish from recycled materials.

In our 'Roar, Splash, Squawk' topic in the second half of term, our focus was under the sea, in the jungle and down on the farm. This was further brought to life by a visit to the farm to feed the animals, and to learn more about how to care for them. Particular highlights for the children were the highland cows, feeding the goats, chickens, baby foxes, and very noisy pigs!

Other highlights from the term were performing songs and poems to parents in the Sadler Hall, holding a charity disco to raise money for one of our Charities of the Year, Flexicare, and our Proud Moments event, where parents joined us in School and the children got to show them their books, sharing all of the amazing progress they have made since starting Reception.

Year 1 have enjoyed a fantastic Summer Term of learning, beginning with our 'Exciting Explorers' topic, and moving into a wonderful world of minibeasts in the second half of term. A standout moment was

taking to the stage for our lively, laughter filled performance of Pirates vs Merpeople, where the children's humour, confidence, and creativity shone brightly. We also loved our trip to Science Oxford, packed with curiosity, hands on experiments, and plenty of discovery.

To finish the term, parents came to our Swim Festival at the Prep to watch how much the children have been enjoying their swimming lessons. And at the end of term the children danced the afternoon away at our charity disco, raising money for Flexicare with music, glow sticks, and refreshing ice lollies – a perfect end to a joyful summer of learning.

Year 2 have had an incredibly exciting and enriching term filled with creativity, collaboration, and impressive achievements. The LEGO STEM workshop was a huge hit. The children worked brilliantly in teams to design and build their own imaginative fairgrounds demonstrating excellent problem-solving and engineering skills. They have also shown growing independence and creativity through their entrepreneurial activities, exploring how to make their own money grow through innovative ideas. In Science, the children embraced investigative learning, testing scooters to deepen their understanding of friction and developing their ability to think and work scientifically. The real highlight of the term, however, has been our outstanding production of Leona and the Place Between. The children truly shone onstage, delivering a spectacular performance that showcased their confidence, charisma, and talent. Their singing was exceptional, with powerful renditions



of songs from The Greatest Showman, and their expressive acting brought the story to life, captivating the audience from start to finish. It was a magical and memorable experience for all, and a wonderful way to celebrate the children's hard work and growth this year.

Year 3 has had a wonderful term, filled with memorable experiences and achievements. The children have enjoyed learning across the curriculum, a few highlights include: in Art, they created artwork inspired by Vincent van Gogh; in Maths, they developed their understanding of fractions; in English, they explored The Lost Happy Endings through poetry, diary writing, and creative writing; in History, they learned how storytelling has evolved over time, from oral traditions to the internet; and in Science, they investigated forces and discovered the important work of Sir Isaac Newton.

Throughout the term the children produced fantastic class assemblies, confidently showcasing the Dragon Values and demonstrating the qualities that make our community so special. E Block Take Over Day was a particular highlight, giving the children an exciting opportunity to step into life at the Prep for the day and enjoy new experiences and responsibilities. Another standout event was our end-of-year Barn Dance, which was thoroughly enjoyed by both children and parents alike dancing the night away with laughter, and a strong sense of community. The term culminated in the Year 3 assembly, where emotions were running high at the prospect of the children moving on to the Prep, but they demonstrated their true Dragon Spirit, and we are so excited for what is to come for our Year 3s.



SUMMER TERM AT THE PREP



E Block tea have enjoyed a fantastic end to the School year, filled with memorable experiences and exciting opportunities. Highlights included their amazing overnight residential at Youlbury, where they tackled zip lines, crate stacking, orienteering, sensory trails, fire building and camping with friends – creating memories that will last a lifetime.

The children also visited the Pitt Rivers Museum to learn more about the Stone Age through hands-on exploration of fascinating artefacts. They represented the School in a singing competition, took part in numerous cricket matches, celebrated International Day, and wowed audiences with their end-of-year concert.

As part of their transition to Middle School, the children enjoyed an E Block takeover of the Forum and worked alongside Ignite students in a whole-School treasure hunt, helping them become familiar with their new surroundings. They also demonstrated fantastic teamwork and community spirit by organising a successful charity cake sale as part of their philanthropy project.

Middle School has experienced a busy and rewarding term, filled with

trips, performances, and academic challenge. Throughout, pupils have shown resilience and commitment, balancing a full range of activities with the demands of exam preparation and end-of-term fun. There have been many highlights, including D Block's Bards of Bardwell Road Shakespeare performances, which reflected creativity, confidence, and careful preparation, bringing classic texts to life with humour. C Block's production of Shrek was directed and produced by Mr Bailey on the banks of the River Cherwell. This was an exceptional showcase, with pupils rising to the occasion with standout performances. Music has continued to bring the community together, particularly with Thursday ensemble activities and the Form Singing competition, which provided opportunities for collaboration and shared enjoyment – well done to 5S and 6BM for their uplifting performances.

With trips and theme days, D Block explored medieval life at Warwick Castle, while C Block visited Portsmouth's Naval Dockyard. Tudor Day offered a chance to step outside usual routines, with pupils and staff embracing the experience with energy and good spirit.



As ever, sport has been an important part of the term, with cricket, tennis, and athletics fixtures encouraging teamwork, effort, and positive competition. This culminated in Sports Day – our grand finale – where the team spirit was as loud and proud as any dragon's roar.

For our Upper School, the Summer Term has been one of achievement, adventure, and celebration across the Dragon.

For A Block, the term was defined by the challenge of Common Entrance, which pupils approached with determination and success, alongside a growing list of scholarship awards. Following their exams, pupils embarked on unforgettable expeditions to Devon, Wales and the Lake District, enjoying outdoor adventures, sport, teamwork, and time together in some spectacular settings. Back at School, they embraced the Ignite programme, tackling everything from writing and performing Shakespeare adaptations to breadmaking and code-breaking, while creating lasting memories through the A Block Revue, Punting and Picnic, Sing Song, and the presentation of leavers' hoodies and leavers' books.

B Block enjoyed a packed and varied term, with highlights including the B Block Production, STEM Day, Exam Week, FPE Morning, Boarding Week, supporting the C Block plays, and earning an impressive number of Pluses. Pupils also made the most of the summer sunshine, from the traditional Water Run to cooling off with ice lollies during the heatwave.

Sport has been a particular highlight for both year groups, with Form Athletics and a memorable Sports Day showcasing determination, teamwork, and Dragon Spirit.

Whether excelling in the classroom, performing onstage, competing on the sports field or enjoying time with friends, Dragon pupils have embraced every opportunity this term with enthusiasm, resilience, and a real sense of community. It has been a fantastic term and a fitting end to another successful year at the Dragon.

SPORTY DRAGONS

It has been a truly exceptional term for sport, with pupils achieving outstanding success across a wide range of disciplines. Their commitment, teamwork, and enthusiasm have been clear throughout, and the following highlights capture just a glimpse of what has been a superb season.

Cricket has led the way with a landmark achievement, as the Girls' 1st XI were crowned national champions – a remarkable success reflecting their skill, resilience, and unity as a team. The boys have also enjoyed an outstanding season, with the UI1A side securing bronze at the IAPS Festival and the UI2A team lifting the Oxfordshire Cup after a superb campaign.

In the pool, our swimmers have once again competed with distinction on the national stage. The UI1 girls delivered a standout performance to win gold in the Medley Relay at the IAPS Championships, while the UI2 girls added a bronze medal in the same event. Individual success has been equally impressive, with gold in the 50m freestyle and bronze in the 50m breaststroke. Further national recognition came as the UI1 girls secured two bronze medals at the English Schools Swimming Association National Finals.

On the courts, it has been an excellent season for tennis with both the UI1 girls and UI3 boys finishing as IAPS Festival silver medallists.

Athletics has also been a significant success story, with eight athletes qualifying for the National Athletics Finals across nine events. This remarkable accomplishment culminated in an excellent performance at the National Finals, where our athletes secured two silver medals and one bronze medal.

Our pupils have also excelled in martial arts and combat sports. At the IAPS Judo Championships, Dragons delivered an impressive medal haul of one gold, three silver and five Bronze medals. These achievements we matched in fencing, where we secured a gold medal at the IAPS Championships.

Across all sports, this has been a term defined by the enthusiasm and sense of pride the pupils have shown when representing the School. We are immensely proud of all our Dragons, whether competing on the national stage or contributing to their teams in other ways and we look forward to building on these many successes in the seasons ahead.



DRAGONS ON STAGE



From fairytale swamps to spooky shadows to Shakespeare's shorts... Oh sorry, I mean Shakespeare shorts!... our students brought immense energy, talent, and passion to the stage this Summer Term.

The headline event was the hugely successful Middle School production: Shrek the Musical, which was performed in the most magical of fairytale settings on the bank of the River Cherwell. This blockbuster production, including a cast and crew of well over 100, was performed for three nights to an adoring crowd and received a standing ovation! With an outstanding cast, many of whom I'm sure we'll see much more of on the Dragon Stage over the next two years, there were too many great moments to highlight here. However, I certainly think it will be difficult to forget Shrek and Fiona's 'belching battle' for a while (particular thanks to Mr Bailey for his astonishing sound effects with this).

Other wonderful moments of Drama came in the form of The Bards of Bardwell Road. This Dragon staple saw all of D Block (around 100 pupils) take to the stage to perform seven short, fast-paced Shakespeare stories. The B Block Studio Production: Ghost Stories. This immersive and spooky performance included decorating the Sadler Hall in eerie candles and telling some terrifying tales which were adapted by Mr CJ and Mr

Dickson. The audience were fearful but loved it! For the Ignite Plays, the Ignite group of academic scholars took on the challenge of adapting three famous Shakespeare tragedies. The audience were treated to Romeo and Juliet as Cowboys and Oil Tycoons[RM1.1][ES1.2], Hamlet set at Strictly Come Dancing, and Macbeth on a Monopoly Board.

Aladdin was a new addition to the Drama calendar, as five A Block Drama ambassadors wrote, directed, and choreographed around 35 E and D Block children in a short production of Aladdin. Congratulations team!

And finally, The A Block revue. Ever-anticipated, this annual event was a huge success with every pupil in A Block (143 of them!) being involved – a very special way of saying farewell to an outstanding cohort.

A massive congratulations to every single student who performed, directed, or worked backstage. You made it a term to remember!

Finally, on a brief personal note, I would like to thank Mr Will Bailey who leaves the Dragon for pastures new at the end of this term. He is a hugely talented classroom teacher and director, and we wish him the very best in whatever he decides to do next. He will be missed.

MUSICAL DRAGONS



The Summer Term here in the Music department has been as rich and varied as the weather(!); from our whole year-group events like the D Block Opera Day to our year-group concerts, there has been something for everyone.

Once again, our term started with the Gamelan Day with students from Chilworth House interacting with our A Block Ignite scholars. The Keyboard Festival was a huge success with over 230 talented pianists whittled down to just 16 finalists giving our visiting adjudicator, Jennie-Helen Moston of Eton, the challenging task of choosing some winners. The Chamber Music Concert brought the first half of term to a close with some fantastic performances that would not have been out of place at a senior school and, in some cases, university level!

Our Form Singing Competition was a great way to kick off musical proceedings in the second half of term, adjudicated once again by the great Laurie Perkins of Matilda fame. There's not a lot he doesn't know about children's voices!

Our Summer Term concert season started with the Strings Concert, which was warmly received by the appreciative

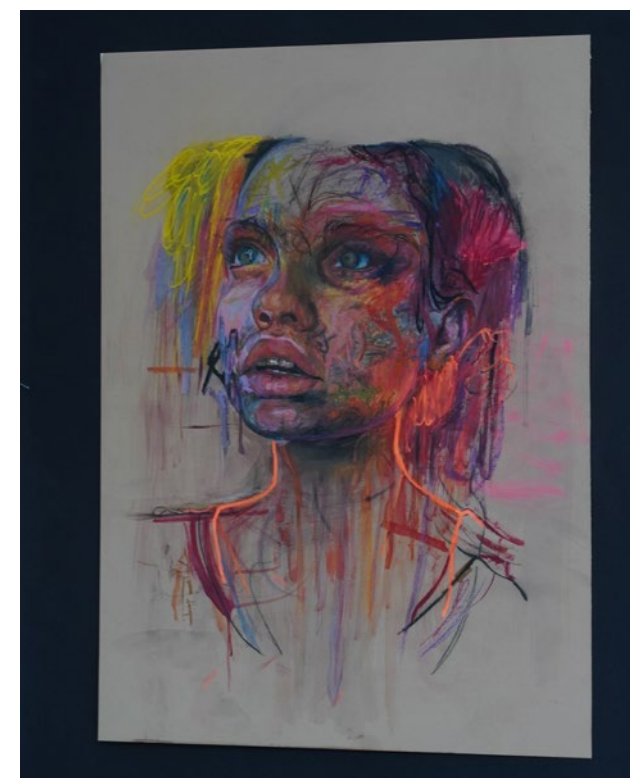
audience. Then we hit the heatwave! The unprecedented levels of heat meant we had to take the incredibly tough decision to cancel the Middle School Concert, however, in our final week the weather finally broke and we saw the ever-poignant Leavers' Service with some beautiful singing from Idris and a degree-level performance from the Dragon Piano Trio.

Our Summer Serenade followed on the Monday, which was not only an opportunity to say goodbye to our A Blockers but also to David Smith who has been such an important fixture of the Music department over the years. There was a lovely atmosphere of celebration with some of the best quality of music I have experienced at the Dragon. A highlight was surely when Mr Smith called for volunteers from our SLT to come and play percussion in what has become his theme tune, the Latin classic Tequila. Our final two musical events were the E Block Concert, which was wonderful to see how far this talented year group have come, and Big Band playing at Sports Day, where we were able to give David Smith one last Tequila for the road.





ARTISTIC DRAGONS

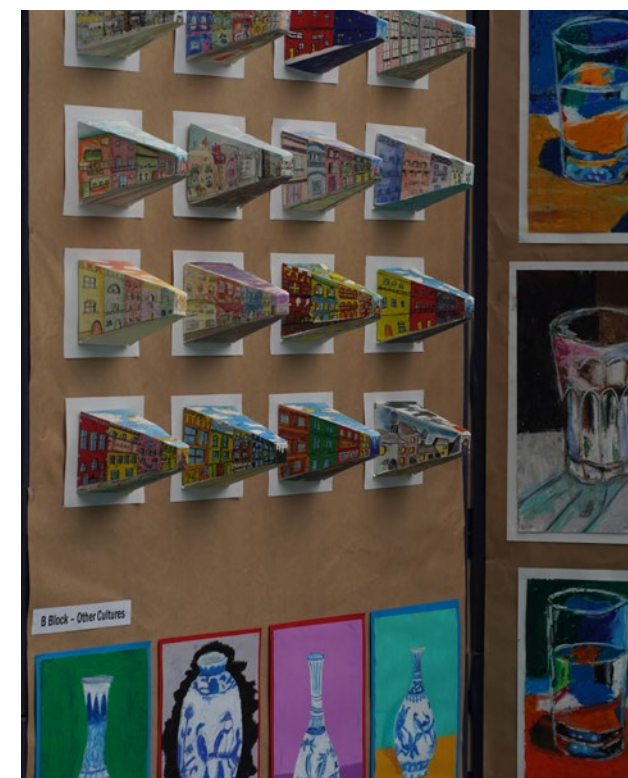


As the Summer Term draws to a close, we were delighted to celebrate our students' creativity at this year's Summer Art Exhibition. Throughout the year, each Block explored a different theme, resulting in a vibrant and inspiring display of artwork showcased in our Forum space.

Our A Block artists tackled the theme of 'Issues', producing powerful and thought-provoking pieces that explored a range of social, environmental, and personal topics. As a collaborative project, each student also created a small section of a large jigsaw artwork. When assembled, the individual pieces formed a striking tonal and colour composition featuring words that reflected their memories and experiences of their time at the Dragon.

B Block embraced the world of graphic design, experimenting with typography, text, and font styles, alongside printmaking techniques to create beautifully textured fish prints.

C Block explored mixed media and abstract art, experimenting with a wide variety of materials and techniques. The result was a colourful and eclectic collection of artwork that showcased our Dragons' imagination, innovation, and willingness to take creative risks.



Inspired by the theme of animals, D Block produced an outstanding range of artwork celebrating the beauty and diversity of the natural world. From intricate 3D cardboard insects to expressive watercolour fish, their work demonstrated both skill and creativity.

E Block linked their artwork to their humanities studies by exploring Iron Age art. They investigated Celtic patterns found on jewellery and pottery, before designing and creating their own intricate decorative pieces.

We are incredibly proud of the creativity, enthusiasm, and dedication our Dragons have shown throughout the year. Their artwork reflects not only their developing artistic skills, but also their individuality, curiosity, and imagination. We look forward to seeing what they create next academic year.

Finally, to our A Block students, we wish you every success as you move on to your new schools. Thank you for the creativity, passion, and enthusiasm you have brought to the Art department during your time at the Dragon. We hope you continue to enjoy making art for many years to come.



The Summer Term brought fantastic weather for Quest, and it was great to see so much going on in all areas of the School.

Our ATs ran some of the Dragons through the key skills of Aussie Rules. Our Dragons still love their football, and Messi Dragons got people in the mood for the World Cup. The Summer Sports Spectacular brought in some niche games; we can thoroughly recommend five-bat rounders if you haven't played it before!

Another cohort of martial artists graduated after their belt gradings.

Paddleboarding on the river went down a storm, as did playing padel over at North Hinksey.

The curtain came down on West End Dragons with another showstopping performance. The fact that the performance was choreographed and directed by pupils is a testament to the talent we have at the Dragon.

Ceramic Dragons continues to produce some amazing pottery; we might have lost Denby, but lots of our Dragons can clearly do it themselves.

Quest Prime continues to be popular among parents, so much so that we were asked whether it could run alongside Speech Day this year (the answer was no, but we love the enthusiasm).

SOCIAL IMPACT



The Summer Term is always a highlight of the Social Impact calendar, and over the last couple of months we have had a wave of amazing year-group fundraisers, from fantastically fun afternoons spent at the Reception/Year 1 Disco, the E Block Bake Sale, the D Block Colour Run and the annual Boarders' Fayre, to carefully planned enterprise projects such as the C Block Governors' Challenge and Year 3 'Make Your Money Grow' initiative, rounding the season off last Tuesday with a spectacular A Block Revue.

It has been wonderful to see the pupils, staff, and wider community pull together to support our three School Charities of the Year, FlexiCare, Dreams Come True, and Horatio's Garden, and we have been fortunate enough to welcome representatives from all three organisations to the Prep and Pre-Prep to learn more about their incredible work supporting children and families locally and nationally.

At the Pre Prep, the tomatoes our Changemakers planted out during National Children's Gardening Week in May are coming into full bloom, and they also introduced a new pen recycling scheme which has been highly utilised by staff and pupils alike.

Donations to our Dragon Larders at both sites have helped Oxford Food Hub supply 250 charities and community centres across Oxford; and our amazing Dragon Parent Volunteers have continued to support children at Windale

Primary with additional reading, speech and language, and maths. Their time, enthusiasm, and encouragement have a hugely positive impact on the children they work with, and the team are always looking out for more volunteers so please do get in touch if this is something you might like to get involved in.

With their exams out of the way, our A Block Scholars had the opportunity to lead a Science Morning for Year 3 and 4 pupils from Windale Primary, carrying out a range of rainbow-themed experiments before ending the morning with some amazing colourful explosions! The explosions continued as part of another incredible Oundle STEM Roadshow, which visited our partner schools in Blackbird Leys before heading to the Dragon in the evening for a Spectrum take over.

Finally we were able to celebrate our wonderful A Block Young Philanthropists (pupils who have run stalls at the Dragon Sale every year since they arrived at the Dragon) with a very special picnic on School House Lawn. Their commitment and enthusiasm over the years has helped to make such an incredible difference to children and families around the world, and we very much hope that they will continue their philanthropic journey as they move on to their secondary schools.





BOARDING LIFE

The Summer Term has been filled with opportunities for friendship, adventure, and fun for our boarding community. As the weather improved and the evenings became longer, boarders made the most of their time together, enjoying a wide range of activities and making lasting memories across the School community.

One of the highlights of the term was our Fifth Annual Boarding Week, which welcomed a record number of pupils eager to experience life as a boarder. The week was packed with exciting events, including some brilliant new inflatables, like the Rodeo and Wrecking Ball, Mr Whippy ice-creams and Nerf gun battles on dorms. It was a fantastic showcase of boarding life and a brilliant opportunity for pupils to enjoy everything our boarding community has to offer.

With growing numbers of flexi-boarders joining our full boarders throughout the term, the boarding houses have continued to

thrive. A varied programme of shared activities brought pupils together, with popular events including evenings around the fire pit, water play in the sunshine, trips to Gifford's Circus, sushi making and spontaneous cinema trips.

The term concluded with our final In-School Weekend, providing a fitting celebration of another successful year of boarding. Pupils enjoyed a range of exciting trips and activities, including visits to Wet n Wild and Millets Farm. The Stradstonbury Festival and A Block Gala Formal were particular highlights, bringing the community together through music, laughter, and celebration.

Combined with BBQs, picnics, formal dinners, and silent discos, the Summer Term provided a perfect ending to another exceptional year of boarding. We look forward to building on these experiences and creating even more memorable moments in the year ahead.



Ignite



The 2026 Ignite programme gave A Block pupils an exciting and intellectually ambitious conclusion to their time at the Dragon. Designed to prepare them for their next schools and beyond, Ignite encourages pupils to think independently, take intellectual risks and engage meaningfully with the world around them through a variety of activities.

Creativity and collaboration were central throughout Stage I, with pupils designing escape rooms for C Block to complete, working with Year 3 on art activities, developing teamwork through the 3D printing pen challenge, and performing in the Ignite Plays, where they devised and staged their own version of a Shakespeare tragedy. Trips to the Bodleian Library, Oxford Castle and Prison, and London to see Hamilton further enriched their understanding of history, storytelling, and performance.

Key highlights included the 'Dragons' Den' challenge and the 'UN for a Day' workshop, encouraging pupils to think critically, communicate confidently, and respond to global issues with maturity. Sessions broadened perspectives, from a powerful session by Holocaust survivor Michael Pinto-Duschinsky to STEM-focused activities such as Target: Mars, a Windale outreach

morning and discussions on the ethics of driverless cars. Pupils also engaged with SpecialEffect, a charity using technology to improve accessibility, gaining insight into how it transforms lives.

Following expeditions, Ignite Stage II built on this momentum with a focus on leadership, communication, and teamwork. Pupils took part in 'A Day in the Life of a Dragon', creating films about the School and developing skills in planning, filming, and editing. A trip to Bletchley Park explored themes of code-breaking and wartime intelligence, while STEM Day included CSI workshops and SpaceStore challenges.

Leadership Day encouraged reflection on effective teamwork, while talks from speakers including James Shone and Laura Weeks inspired pupils to consider resilience, ambition, and impact. Alongside this, activities such as the breadmaking challenge and the Oxford Gargoyles performance fostered confidence, creativity, and community.

Overall, Ignite enabled pupils to explore new passions, reach beyond the curriculum and develop the confidence to move forward as thoughtful, ambitious, and free-thinking young people.

