

# Abingdon School in Partnership

Partnership  
Abingdon  
Sport  
Performing Arts  
Science  
Music  
High Performance  
Working Together  
Sharing Ideas  
Creativity  
Teamwork  
Self Confidence

Developing Leaders

Collaboration

Community

Challenge

History

Access

Interpersonal Skills



**Newsletter 2018–2019**  
Volume 1 | March 2019



# Introduction



Welcome to the first edition of the Abingdon School in Partnership (ASiP) newsletter. The aim of ASiP is to build relationships with the local community, in particular our partner schools, to the benefit of and to challenge

As a forward-thinking, outward-looking school, Abingdon is keen to forge further links, with both primary and secondary schools, within the town and surrounding area.

The ASiP programme is based on the concepts of **Community**, **Collaboration** and **Challenge**.

**Our aim is for:**

- Abingdon School to build on the positive role it plays in the local community
- Students and staff to collaborate effectively and positively with members of the local community
- Students and staff to stretch and challenge themselves via collaboration.

~ **Robin Southwell-Sander**  
Director of Partnerships

all staff and students. Abingdon School has a long history of working with partner schools on a range of projects from teaching Classics to primary school sports days. The opening of the School's Science Centre and the fantastic work achieved by Jeremy, Megan and the Abingdon Science Partnership team has broadened our association with around 30 schools.



# 2017–2018 Overview



## 2017–2018 Overview

### Abingdon–Fitzharrys Swimming Partnership



Participants aged 13–17 years

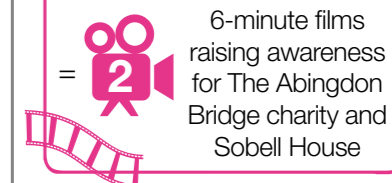
**1** Hour of student-led teaching per week over a 5-week period

"I now feel a lot more confident in the water and it was great fun being coached by a swimmer rather than my normal teacher"

"This opportunity has been amazing for my son as he has gone from someone who can't swim, to a swimmer in 5 weeks"

### Abingdon Arts Project

**8** + **60** + **13**  
students hours of interviews  
student teaching



6-minute films raising awareness for The Abingdon Bridge charity and Sobell House

Joint Abingdon–Fitzharrys production of *Romeo and Juliet*  
27 students

15 hours of teaching  
An audience of 250

### Abingdon Science Partnership 2017 to 2018



Number of children that attended ASP events

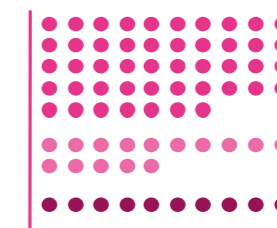


Shortlisted for the TES Community and Collaboration award



Number of primary pupils that received a CREST science award

### ASP worked with:



47 primaries  
15 secondaries  
10 external organisations

### Primary Partnerships Attendance

Great Pottery Showdown



20 pupils

Mini Olympics



60 pupils

Festive Fun with Languages



75 pupils

Business Challenge



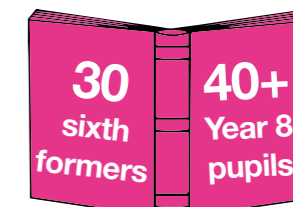
42 pupils

Workshops



7 Subjects

### Abingdon–Fitzharrys Academic Mentoring



30 sixth formers

40+ Year 8 pupils

**85%**

found it useful or very useful



# Abingdon Science Partnership



**Community** and **collaboration** are at the heart of Abingdon Science Partnership (ASP) events, whether they be primary school science workshops or student-led research projects working with partners in universities and science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) organisations.

**Challenge** is certainly there too, whether for primary pupils working in a science lab for the first time or for sixth formers grappling with techniques they wouldn't usually encounter until university level. All our activities also rely on the importance of these three values within the school, as far less would be possible without the constant support and enthusiasm of over a dozen science teaching staff and our essential team of science technicians. And, of course, there is our growing team of Science Ambassadors, pupils here and at other schools who volunteer their time and

skills to help run everything from Primary Science Club to Science Oxford's Saturday Science Clubs and our increasingly successful Science Factor Research Clubs.

A shining example of all these factors working together is our recent success in gaining a Royal Society Partnership Grant to fund a project involving six local schools, the University of Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit and community organisations such as Science Oxford. The opportunity for primary and secondary pupils to work together on this project, guided by our science partner and to present their project to Fellows of the Royal Society at their headquarters in London is truly inspirational for all involved. However, the daily inspiration provided by working on partnership projects cannot be underestimated either. The pride of every primary child that gains their CREST science investigator award or the delight of being allowed to light a Bunsen burner for the first time are the smaller, but important things that will encourage and inspire these children to be interested in science and to change their conceptions of science, scientists and opportunities for their futures.

~ **Jeremy Thomas**



Primary Science Club



Royal Society Wildlife Project



Secondary research projects



# Developing Leaders Programme

For the second year running ASiP has run a sixth form academic mentoring programme to help develop student leadership. On Thursday 15 November we welcomed 15 sixth formers from Larkmead and Fitzharrys Schools to join 15 sixth formers from Abingdon School. The older students, who had met previously, split into smaller groups from each school and planned a series of 4 lessons to teach key stage 3 students from each of the 3 schools. Maths topics included quadratic sequences, polygon angles, and dividing fractions, while English lessons involved developing an understanding of the process of creative writing.

English and Maths teachers from each school were on hand to oversee the delivery of the lessons, which took place over 4 weeks in November and December 2018. The standard of organisation, collaboration and engagement was superb. At the end of the 4-week period, 55 students and staff were surveyed: 82% found the experience very worthwhile or worthwhile and 80% would strongly recommend or recommend it to a peer. When analysing only sixth formers the results changed to 100% for both. During the Lent term 2019 we plan to roll out a similar programme across the sciences and we will welcome staff and students from John Mason School.

~ **Robin Southwell-Sander**

“I learnt to collaborate with peers, plan a lesson and how to deal with unexpected situations flexibly.”

~ **Ethan Chui, sixth form student**



I was struck by how effectively the sixth form mentors connected with their younger students, how quickly they learned to balance supporting and challenging their groups, and how thoughtfully they planned engaging activities.

~ **Jason Taylor, Maths teacher**

The 6th form mentors for English were very enthusiastic and patient, carefully crafting lessons that were both fun and educational. There was an excellent working atmosphere in each room, and I feel like all involved really benefited from the experience!

~ **Réna Papadopoulos, English teacher**



A word cloud showing the skills students said they learnt from the experience.

# AbingMUN 2018

On Saturday 1 December 2018 Abingdon held its inaugural Model United Nations conference, AbingMUN18. Over 150 delegates from nine schools took part in the day including Larkmead, Bishop Thomas Grant School, Aylesbury High School and Coloma Convent Girls School from the maintained sector.

The standard of debate was very high and delegates in the committees were kept busy discussing resolutions on topics including sanctions against developing nations, the Iranian nuclear deal, contemporary slavery and the deforestation and destruction of habitats. The conference also held an International Court of Justice and a Security Council.

~ **Kathy Yarker**



# And More...

- Extra GCSE classes in Latin, Geology and Astronomy are being offered to more than 20 local key stage 4 students from 3 partner state schools, Larkmead School, Fitzharrys School and John Mason School. The aim is to offer interested and able students the opportunity to gain a GCSE in subject areas not offered in their own schools. The students currently attend 1–2 lessons a week offered by Abingdon staff free of charge.
- Staff from local schools are taking part in joint training in Mental Health First Aid.
- 11 Abingdon staff are on the board of governors at local schools.
- Sharing of curriculum resources.
- Abingdon staff are supporting local sixth form mathematicians.
- Shared support for Oxbridge applications and university interviews.



# Primary School Liaison



The Fun with Languages event was enthusiastically supported by local primary schools. Year 5 and 6 pupils had the opportunity to learn about Chinese New Year and linguistic codes. They also experienced an introduction to Spanish, German and Italian and learnt about Russian culture and language. They were really excited to discover the similarities and differences between the world's languages.

## Pottery Throwdown



We are looking forward to hosting a Pottery Throwdown in the Summer term, when local primary school pupils will have the opportunity to use our brand new kiln room and art facilities to create their own sculptures.

~ **Victoria Middleton**

## Business Challenge

Six primary school teams competed in our very popular Business Challenge. They were asked to design, advertise and promote a new health drink. With the assistance of sixth form Business and Economics students, they developed a range of novel and interesting beverages and then pitched their product to a panel of judges. The overall winners were Long Wittenham. Long Furlong won the marketing prize and Sunningwell the logo prize.

## Fun With Languages



# Sports Partnerships

Returning for the third year this Summer term, pupils from Fitzharrys, Larkmead and Abingdon Schools will be working collaboratively over 5 weeks of joint year 7, 8 and 9 swimming masterclasses under the guidance of senior swimmers from all schools and overseen by Abingdon Vale Head Coach, Amanda Ford.

~ **Tom Donnelly**



# Performing Arts Partnership

Arts Partnership activities at Abingdon began in September 2018 in two areas — filmmaking and playwriting — but there are also plans for Abingdon students to work with their counterparts at partner schools on the staging of a music theatre production before the end of the academic year. The *Abingdon Film Academy* launched this term with filmmaking programmes run by the Abingdon Film Unit (AFU) tutors at Larkmead and Fitzharrys Schools. At Larkmead, 5 pupils in Years 11–13 have come forward to work on their own films while also creating a short promotional film for Larkmead's website. This film is now ready, and the students started working on their own projects in January 2019. At Fitzharrys, an initial taster workshop with 9 students drawn from Years 9–13 was followed by further filming sessions at Abingdon in shooting and editing, and 6 students in Years 9–11 are preparing to make their own films. Meanwhile, the AFU has been working with *Raw Workshop* in Blackbird Leys — a social enterprise that manufactures bespoke furniture

from recycled wood and supports the rehabilitation of people who have overcome significant challenges such as addiction, homelessness or imprisonment — on the making of a promotional film for the organisation's website.

On the drama front, Abingdon is running the *National Theatre's New Views Playwriting scheme* in which professional playwrights guide students through the process of creating their own thirty-minute plays for entry into a national competition that offers winners the chance to see their work staged by the National Theatre in July 2019. There are currently 5 students from Larkmead in Years 10–13 taking part. Finally, Abingdon sixth form pupils are in discussion with Andrea Phillips, the Head of Performing Arts at Larkmead, about plans to collaborate on a music theatre production involving Larkmead's Year 7 and 8 pupils in July 2019. More projects and partners are in the pipeline.

~ **Jeremy Taylor**





# Design and Technology

This is the fourth year of developing and delivering Design and Technology projects to Rush Common Primary School pupils, either in the Rush Common classrooms or in the Abingdon School workshops. Most terms, a project has been taught to the two classes of a year group. The lead year teacher requests a topic and an age-appropriate project is developed within that context, for example, last year the Year 4 summer topic was 'Animal Habitats', and the pupils made Bug Hotels that resembled a bird box without a front or back but rather an internal divider and then filled them with sticks and small branches cut to length.

For this year's project the year group was divided into 4 groups of 15 and each group was brought into Abingdon's workshops for 2 practical sessions. Each pupil used saws, drills and screwdrivers to shape and join the pieces of timber together and each pupil, regardless of ability finished their own Bug hotel. This project, being in the Summer term also lent itself to allowing some of our lower sixth pupils to help as workshop assistants, they all got involved and did a great job and really seemed to enjoy the experience. For the younger groups resources are generally taken to them and projects are developed so they can be delivered using basic classroom tools, such as saws and drills that can be used on tables with protectors. For the first time this year a project was delivered to Year 1 pupils and that was based on cutting card with scissors. Discussions are also in progress with the DT Coordinator at Dunmore Primary School with the aim to deliver a similar programme there, starting in this Lent term.

~ Mike Webb



## Working with ASP

The ASP has been supporting the National STEM Learning Centre's Polar Explorer Programme for the past two years in local primary schools. The programme's activities are all linked to exploring and understanding aspects of the polar oceans and the ice caps. The DT department's expertise was called on to help develop the Ocean Grabber activity, where pupils work in teams to design and build a sampling arm for a remotely operated submersible. This was successfully piloted at Botley Primary School with the Year 6 classes. The pupils themselves then led the same workshop for the Year 5 pupils, developing teamwork and leadership as well as technical

skills. The Ocean Grabber activity has since been used at a number of other schools, including Rush Common, Hagbourne and Chilton.



# Coming Up...

## Schools Together Conference

Tuesday 26 March, 5–7:30pm, Abingdon School  
The Schools Together conference is taking place at Abingdon on Tuesday 26 March from 5-7:30pm. The Schools Together Group is a nationwide group of those in state and independent schools with an interest in inter-school partnerships: "Harnessing the power of partnerships for the benefit of children". The conference will welcome guest speakers from different school partnership programmes from around the country to come and discuss and share best practice. We hope to welcome 60–70 delegates. Colleagues are warmly invited to attend.

## Futures Fair

Monday 29 April, 5–7pm, Beech Court, Abingdon School  
We are delighted to announce that at our inaugural Futures Fair, 28 of the UK's leading universities, UCAS and 7 representatives from apprenticeship schemes will be joining us.

This presents lower sixth students and their parents from Abingdon and our partner schools with a fantastic opportunity to learn about the range of degree courses on offer and to talk first-hand to representatives and students about what life is like after school.

**Sixth Form Science Mentoring**  
Lent term 2019

**Sixth Form Pastoral Mentoring**  
Summer term 2019

**Sixth Form Study Skills Conference**  
Summer term 2019

**Rugby and Hockey Partnerships**  
Summer term 2019

**Primary School Mini Olympics**  
Summer term 2019

**Abingdon Festival of Sport**  
Summer term 2019



## Schools Together Group discussion meeting: “Sustaining Partnerships”

**How do we ensure that worthwhile school partnerships last?  
This meeting will explore the importance of people, relationships, funding,  
impact evaluation and partnership agreements.  
The discussion will be led by a panel from state and independent schools,  
with plenty of opportunity for questions and comment from all.**

**This event is open to anyone with a professional interest in school partnerships from state or independent sectors, including school leaders and those responsible for coordinating multi-school or community partnerships.**

**Timing:** Tuesday 26 March 2019; 17:00 - 19.30 including refreshments

**Venue:** Abingdon School, Park Rd, Abingdon OX14 1DE (shuttle bus from Didcot available)

The Schools Together Group is a nationwide group of those in state and independent schools with an interest in inter-school partnerships: “Harnessing the power of partnerships for the benefit of children”.  
To sign up to our mailing list for future events, please email:  
[info@schoolstogether.org](mailto:info@schoolstogether.org)

## Where will you go next?

Come and explore more about UK degree courses and apprenticeships at our

## Futures Fair

**Monday 29 April 2019 5pm-7pm**  
Beech Court, Abingdon School

*For Lower 6th students and parents from Abingdon and our partner schools.*

