



Leading the Way



In our lockdown virtual sports fixture versus Beachborough in February, over 500 boys from both schools took part in an afternoon of energetic activity trying to surpass a target of 1000km. Abingdon Prep achieved 1395km, Beachborough a little more. It was great fun with boys taking part on foot, on their bikes and, in the case of Jamie in Year 5, on horseback!

From the Headmaster

It has been another very unusual term here at Abingdon Prep with eight weeks of remote learning and three weeks back in school. It was so lovely to have the school corridors echoing once more with the sound of busy children going about their everyday school lives and break times filled with den building, or creative play on the fort or a ball being kicked between friends. These are some of the most formative parts of childhood and these are the key moments that cannot be replicated through our online zoom lessons and learning from home.

There are two things that have really stuck in my mind since our return to school on the 8 March. The first was our 'birds' project with messages of hope and support coming from the boys' hearts. Their artwork was wonderful but the supportive messages of kindness and hope really spoke volumes about their empathetic natures and how they wanted the whole community to come together once more. The second moment that really struck a chord with me was the unbounded excitement with which our Pre-Prep boys chased around the forest and their play area on their Easter egg hunt, finding the shiny chocolate eggs

that had been hidden by the Easter Bunny, who incidentally also made an appearance. These are the memories that will stay with these boys long after their memories of having to stay at home and learn online have faded. These are the memories that really count in what has been a very challenging world of education this past year.

I hope that you will enjoy seeing some of the great work that the boys have been producing and the activities that they have been a part of this term, set out in this volume of APS News. It never ceases to amaze me when I look back at a term just how much our brilliant children have accomplished, and the spirit in which they have approached it all. In years to come when talk of Covid-19 has long since faded, the children will remember their artistic birds, their science in a jar and they will take with them heightened resilience and independence, traits that will stay with them and help them to make the most of their talents, in whatever field they may lie.

With best wishes

Craig Williams



Learning a new skill during our screen-free afternoon



Checking what the Easter Bunny brought

Fantastic new facilities to open in autumn 2022



We are excited to announce that we will begin work on our new building this spring with the opening planned for autumn 2022. The new development includes a specialist music school, second science lab, purpose-built spaces for CDT and new classrooms. It will also create space to transform many of our existing facilities including a major change to the library which will more than double in size and undergo complete refurbishment becoming a bright, modern, new learning space with teaching, break out and quiet reading areas. There will be a new multi-use hall for Pre-Prep and much improved facilities for Computing, Drama and Learning Support.

Further details can be found on the website: abingdon.org.uk/prep/about/fantastic-new-opportunities-at-abingdon-prep

School Nursing During the Pandemic

Our school nurses, Debbie and Juliette have been a fixture during the COVID-19 pandemic, with one of them being on site each day the school has been open to pupils. They've covered keyworker school and then set up and run our testing programme, really being in the forefront of our pandemic response. We asked them some questions:

What has been the biggest challenge for you during the pandemic/lockdowns?

Wearing a mask and keeping a distance from boys has been difficult, we are smiley nurses and want the boys to feel comfortable and reassured, but with our faces covered it is more of a challenge. For Juliette, starting a job in a school in a lockdown has been very strange, it is also strange not to have a full school of boys in.

How is the testing programme for staff and older boys going?

Testing is going smoothly using the drama studio. It is nice to see staff and pupils as we usually work in bubbles and only see a few members of staff. There has been a lot of planning in bringing about all the testing but we have been very well supported by the Foundation. We have developed a routine for doing the tests and processing the results and have enjoyed working together.

How have you had to change the way you look after the boys in general?

We had to remove all the soft furnishings from the medical room and move the chairs further apart. We have asked staff who are first aiders to deal with as many events as



Debbie (top) and Juliette (below)



possible so we don't mix too much with bubbles and they have been really good about it. Keeping a distance is difficult as we naturally want to be near boys to help them and reassure.

The majority of our minor injuries occurring at school happen in the playground. Have you seen any changes there?

Definitely fewer injuries, the boys have played more ball games which does keep them apart, however, we have seen more balls in faces and nose bleeds. As we have not had any rugby or fixtures we have had far fewer injuries during games lessons.

What would be your key message to continuing to keep COVID-19 at bay at school?

Washing hands has been a major contributor to reduce the level of infection, we have not had the number of coughs and colds and tummy bugs we usually see, we hope that everyone will continue to be so good about washing their hands.

And finally, what are you most looking forward to as lockdown eases?

Debbie: Swimming pools opening, visiting friends and eating out.

Juliette: Seeing friends, dancing, eating out, live events/music. Going on holiday!

Thank you to both our school nurses for looking after us so well.



Star Litter Picker

Ben, in Year 1, has been noticing increased litter on his walk to school with his mum, so he has taken it upon himself to do litter picks on his way into school. A fantastic effort and a wonderful example to set.

Karting Success

Congratulations to Lawrence in Year 7 who has enjoyed some impressive karting success, despite COVID-19 restrictions. He came second at his club championship and qualified fifth in the national simulation tournament with finals due to be held at Silverstone once Covid restrictions are lifted. Next year the promising young driver is focusing on the British National competition.



The Lunchtime Concert Series

The boys' individual music lessons have continued via remote teaching during lockdown. Many have been keen to share their playing, enabling us to run a series of weekly, short lunchtime concerts from half term onwards, beginning during lockdown and continuing after the return to being in school. Boys from Year 8 down to Reception sent their videos in. These included family ensembles too, plus guitar maestro Paul Wisby created a collage of all his remote guitar pupils playing together. The concerts are all available to watch on the school website's News page.

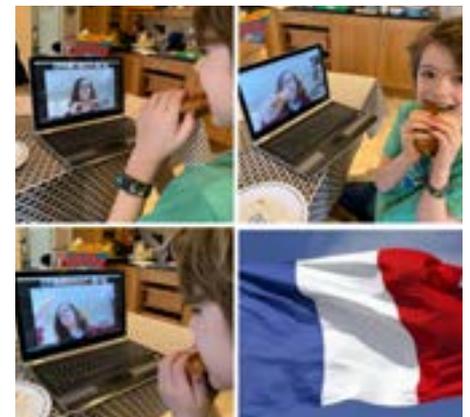


The Lockdown Year 8 Bake-Off

Live on Zoom, the boys had an hour to produce a bake of their choice, sweet or savoury. The boys were very imaginative in their ingredients and ambitious with their creations – we had sushi, pasties and a variety of biscuits and cakes. They demonstrated some fantastic skills and although we could not taste the food, the lingering parents and siblings in the background gave some indication of the delicious smells emanating. Our worthy overall winner was Xander who produced a rainbow coloured stack of pancakes sandwiched together with different fruits and drizzled with syrup – an amazing effort.



Au Voleur!



Pupils in Year 5 became French detectives to solve the mystery of the stolen pains au chocolat. The boys listened to the ten prime suspects talk about themselves and read police transcripts (all in French of course) so they could build up a profile of each individual. In their haste to leave the crime scene, the thief left a bag behind which contained a number of clues to their identity. Whilst other police forces work with the aid of sniffer dogs, our young detectives enjoyed the support of their cats, dogs and even guinea pigs during the investigation, ending with a celebratory French pastry via Zoom. Bravo les agents de police!

Year 5 take on 'The Highwayman'



Year 5 has been studying the romantic ballad poem 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes, published in 1906. They had great fun acting it out in their English lesson. Some of the boys managed to find suitable props for dressing up while others used clever settings on their computer to create their costumes! They also wrote about the poem.



Exploring the Feelings of Bess, by Rupert

Bess is a very important character in this dramatic poem. Bess experiences a wide range of emotions which develop and change at different points in the poem.

At the beginning of the poem, in verse three, she is feeling quite excited, looking forward to the Highwayman's visit. The poem shows this by describing her getting ready, 'plaiting a dark red love-knot in her long, black hair'. She wants to look her best for his visit, so he thinks she looks nice and is happy when he arrives.

When he does arrive, she is feeling very romantic, in love with him. The poet writes in verse 5, 'One kiss my bonny sweet-heart, and I'm after a prize tonight, But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light.' These words make Bess feel warm inside and make her feel more in love. Later on in the poem (verse 6), she 'loosens her hair in the casement' and lets it flow down to the highwayman, who 'kissed its waves in the moonlight'.

The highwayman told her that he would be back 'before the morning light', but since he wasn't, Bess gets slightly worried and anxious. As it informs you in the poem that 'he did not come in the dawning, he did not come at noon'. She was eagerly waiting for his return but when he did not, this could make her feel that he either had been caught or injured etc. by something.

Later on in the same verse she is puzzled as the 'red coats came marching, marching-marching, King George's men came marching, up to the old inn door'. She wondered why they were coming to her father's house.

A verse later (verse 8), she feels more terrified than ever! Alfred Noyes writes, 'but gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed'. When the red coats tie her. This confused her and she wondered why they were torturing, kissing her and getting drunk.

Soon after, Bess also feels in despair when she realises what is going on. The poem reads, 'And hell at one dark window, for Bess could see through her casement, the road that he would ride', she then knew that she was acting as bait to lure him in so he could be captured. She is feeling heart-broken at the thought of him being shot down in front of her very eyes and so is desperate to stop it from happening.

Now she is feeling determined and strong (in verse 10). In the poem it says this, 'she twisted her hands behind her, but all the knots held good... they stretched and strained in the darkness'. As she twists and turns fumbling and writhing to try and grasp hold of the musket. This is tricky as her hands are tied behind her back.

Finally, in verse 11, she begins to feel terrified. The poem states, 'And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain', she is scared as this is the end of her life, the gun is pointing at her breast. Her heart is pumping quickly but she must try to save and warn the Highwayman before it is too late.

As it explains, Bess has many different feelings, she is happy, scared and in love, quite a lot for a small space of time, though all her worries and concerns have gone as she sadly killed herself.

The Masked Reader

World Book Day took a different direction at Abingdon Prep this year. Natasha, Head of English and Drama, decided to mark the start of this important day with an assembly entitled The Masked Reader. This involved members of staff covering their faces or using masks whilst reading part of a book they had chosen. The boys and staff watched each video and had to try to guess which masked reader was which. 13 members of staff took part and the assembly was a great success. There were lots of accents being used and some staff have obviously missed their dramatic calling!



Lockdown Modelling in Science

Year 6 made cells (top), Year 5 made microbes (bottom)



Science Week



Our first week back in the lab was Science Week, and this year it was a little different with no external events, but we did not let this stop us from having fun and experimenting! Our Senior boys built magnificent marble runs and spaghetti bridges while Year 6 designed robo bugs.

Year 5 investigated the role of yeast in the fermentation process and held 'yeast races' to show the powerful effect of sugar in the mix!



The Year 4 boys explored the importance of clean water and made their own water filters. In Year 3, the boys had fun building balloon rockets to investigate forces and compare which shape went fastest and why.

Down in Pre-Prep they were learning all about 'George and his Marvellous Medicine' with a science themed week.

Thank you to those who took part in the competition, 'Science in a jam jar'. There were many well thought out creative ideas.



5S used nets to make 3D shapes



Charlie in Year 7 created some wonderful abstract experiments using canvas and wooden boards attached to a

drill, the spinning sensation created these energetic explosions of colour!



Share a Bird

During the final week of remote Art lessons the boys were tasked with creating a 'bird of positivity' attaching a happy and supportive message that may cheer anyone that reads it upon their return to school. Yet again the Abingdon Prep community rose to the challenge and a flock of birds fluttered in through the doors this week, from clay blue tits, paper robins, cardboard kingfishers, salt dough doves, a wire falcon and even a milk bottle toucan!

The thoughtful messages include, "Never give up" "We can conquer anything when we work together" "If you want to change the world, smile" and finally "to be happy, be happy with who you are." With such thoughtful messages from our positive boys our weeks back in School were sure to be happy. Well done everyone, and to the staff for their contributions.





Middle Section Balloon Cards



Y4 Ladybirds



Junior Section Wooden Egg Pictures



Year 6 Nail Art

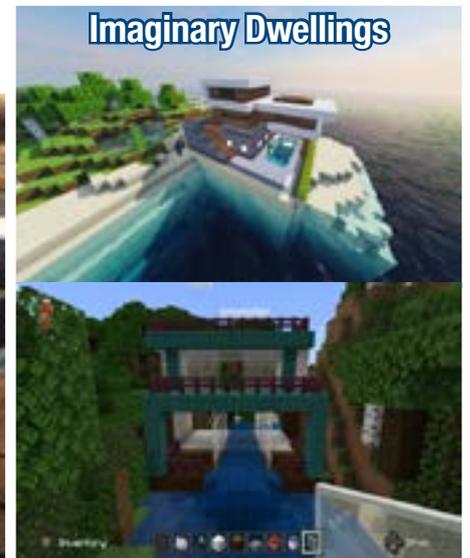


Newspaper Animals

The boys took the concept of relief drawing into an animal collage. By layering and exaggerating the features, the animals pop out of the contrasting background.



In Art, Year 8 has been researching well known architects such as Frank Gehry, Jorn Utzon, Frank Lloyd Wright and Moshe Safdie. They then designed their own imaginary dwellings. The plans came flooding in including Minecraft builds and CAD plans (see right).



Imaginary Dwellings



Mad March Hares

Year 5 explored Albrecht Durer's 'Young Hare' in Art. For our mixed media hares, we used cotton buds to blend our pencil, wet on wet techniques to apply watercolour and collaged bright flowers for a springtime effect.

AbingdonPrep PSHCE & Wellbeing

The boys enjoyed bringing their pets to online school. We were introduced to cats, dogs, hamsters, horses and chickens. Unlike the boys they weren't very good at sitting still!



Pet PSHCE

Turn off your screen Learn new skills

Abingdon Prep enjoyed an afternoon off screen learning 'new skills'. There was a whole range of activities in action, from cooking to outdoor pursuits to the creative arts and music, games, and even a spot of DIY! What a talented lot of boys we have and what a great way to launch our Mental Health Week, learning a new skill!



Express Yourself

Positive mental health and wellbeing was the focus of Abingdon Prep's Children's Mental Health Week. A series of assemblies through the week looked at the themes of 'Expressing Yourself' and 'Positive Mental Health'. The boys learnt that there are five main steps to mental wellbeing:

- Connecting with other people,
- Being physically active,
- Learning new skills,
- Giving to others,
- Paying attention to the present moment.

The week ended on a high with boys and staff 'Expressing Themselves' by dressing up for online and keyworker school.



Sport Highlights



Sport in lockdown has been very different. Senior section had zoom circuit sessions, and a boxing workout (left) led by Head of PE Steve Hibberd. Keyworker School were able to use the Sports Hall, and enjoyed an obstacle course in January. All the boys kept activity logs alongside their zoom circuits, with additional challenges such as yoga on Wellbeing Wednesday.

You'll have seen this issue's stunning cover photo, taken during our virtual fixture vs Beachborough School, the week after that we took on St Hugh's. Add in an Inter-Year challenge and a John O'Groats to Lands End virtual challenge, between them, the boys, staff and parents have covered 1000s of km during lockdown!

Everyone is looking forward to summer term, when cricket and tennis fixtures will allow live competitive sport (with appropriate COVID-19 protocols). We can't wait!



Keyworker School Obstacle Course



Our virtual fixtures and challenges



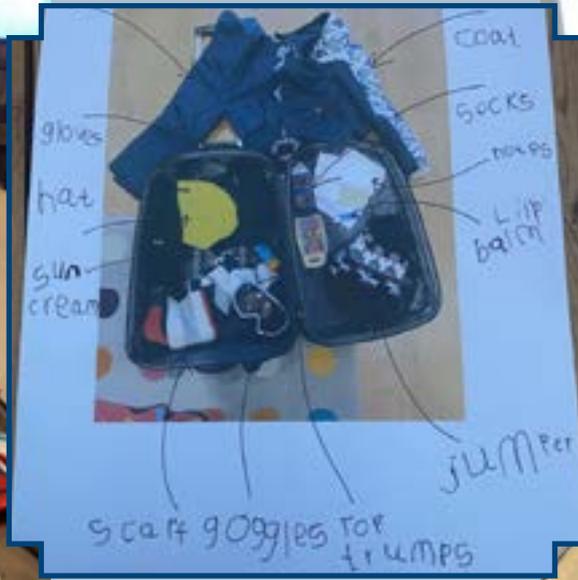
Yoga on Wellbeing Wednesday



Inter-House Football - Year 5 (above), Years 3 and 4 (right)



Brrr! Reception prepare for a Polar Safari



Science Week fun in Year 2



Lanterns for the Chinese New Year

Offline Pre-Prep activities on our Screen-free afternoon

The Pre-Prep boys made dens, built bridges and even helped assemble a standing desk in their afternoon away from screens. There was also plenty of art and craft, cooking, Lego and just enjoying being outdoors.





Codecrackers Club

Back in School,
Pre-Prep boys have
been busy, busy, busy



Wellbeing Club



Big Build Club



In phonics, Aimee's group went outside and practised sharing o-e words using string telephones.



The boys in Year 1 mixed their own potions using a range of containers and measuring equipment to carefully read and measure millilitres.



The Easter Bunny came to Pre-Prep



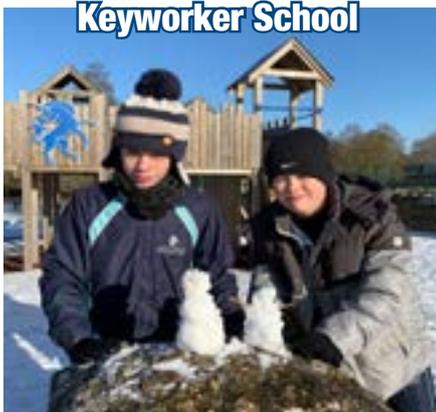
On the last day of term, the Easter Bunny visited Pre-Prep and took them on an Easter egg hunt in the playground.



Happy Easter from Pre-Prep



**Snow fun at
Keyworker School**



Phillipa (Pip) Usher

Phillipa joined the Abingdon Foundation in 2012 as a Year 4 Classroom teacher. Her vibrant and energetic approach to teaching was evident from the start. With very good subject knowledge, classroom management and understanding of new curriculum requirements, her skills set was much appreciated, especially in the Junior Section. Throughout her time at the Prep School, she has involved herself in a variety of events and trips, including visiting Jimba Gede, a school in Kenya we partnered with, in 2013. She has also been active and enthusiastic on the sports field.



On a personal level, over this time, Pip has married and had a lovely little boy called James. Pip is to take up a new teaching role at New College Prep School in Oxford. We wish her all the best for this new professional journey.
Trudi Hibberd.



Sam Barder

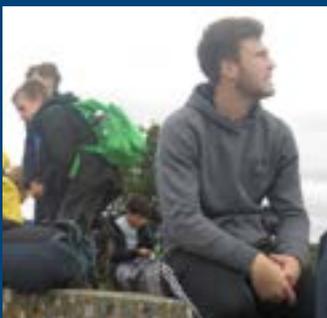
Sam started his role as a GAP Year Sports Assistant in 2018 and made a big impact on us as a community. He forged a great relationship with the staff, but it is his relationship with the boys that impressed us all. When the school realised his huge potential, it was not long before he was promoted to a Sports Coach.

As a schoolboy, Sam excelled as a footballer and progressed through the Oxford United Academy ranks. Having broken into the Wantage Town first team at the age of 16, Sam spent a couple of years at Alfredian Park before signing for Didcot in 2016. He was part of the Didcot team which reached the Division One play-offs and the final of the Southern League Cup in 2017/18. In the 2019/20 season, Sam joined Thatcham Town as a semi-professional player, but later returned to his beloved Didcot Town where he remains.

With his vast footballing experience, Sam took on the 1st XI & 1st VII (IAPS) football teams and enjoyed several unbeaten seasons with the Under 9A and Under 10A teams. His successes and expertise was not only limited to football. Sam developed his rugby, hockey, swimming and cricket coaching skills over the years and inspired the boys in his charge from Reception all the way through to the Year 8s.

Sam drove the school minibus, volunteered to go on school trips and took on lots of Other Half activities at lunchtimes and after school. There was no limit to his boundless enthusiasm as a Sports Coach.

We wish Sam the best of luck in his new job, where he will be training to become a Broadband Installation Engineer for Gigaclear. A natural born teacher lost to the commercial sector. He will be very sadly missed by us all! *Ashley David-Ward*



Charities



In these unprecedented times it has been hard to run any charity fundraising events, so we asked the boys if they would be willing to donate an Easter treat for the homeless. The boys were incredibly generous and we collected over 200 chocolate bars!

The chocolate will be delivered to The Gatehouse in Oxford who will then distribute it to the homeless and vulnerable people they support.



THE GATEHOUSE

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