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AbingdonPrep News

Fossil Hunting

Our Year 7s and Year 8s spent a morning on the beach at Kimmeredge Bay fossil hunting during their week in Dorset in June.

Message from the Head

As I sit down to write this introduction, looking out across the playground now quiet for the summer, I am filled with a deep sense of pride in our remarkable community. Abingdon Prep News is always a treasured tradition, but flipping through these pages serves as a powerful reminder of just how much life, laughter, and learning have been packed into the term.

A prep school education is an unique tapestry. It is woven not just from academic achievements, but from the quiet moments of personal growth that happen every single day. This term, we have seen our youngest pupils perform in a joyful music concert, and our seniors lead the school with maturity, kindness, and wit, throughout trips and sport and in excellent Prize Day speeches. We have celebrated victories in sports, chess, art awards and competitions, and academic and music scholarships.

What makes our school so special, however, is not just what we achieve, but how we achieve it. Our core values - be kind, work hard, get involved - have been on full display. I have witnessed pupils cheering on their peers at Sports Day, offering a helping hand in the playground, and tackling difficult classroom challenges with a determination that never fails to inspire me. We have learned that success is sweet, but the resilience built through trying, failing, and trying again is what truly prepares our children for the future. Success like this does not happen by accident. It is the result of a monumental team effort. My thanks go to our dedicated staff, whose passion and boundless energy bring learning to the fore in our classrooms every day. To our parents, thank you for your support, your partnership, and your trust; you are an integral part of the magic that happens here.

As you dive into this magazine, I hope it brings back fond memories of an exciting term. Whether your child's highlight was a muddy match win, a brilliant science experiment, or simply the daily joy of playing with friends, thank you for sharing their journey with us. I hope you all have a wonderful, restful, and sun-drenched summer holiday.

With every good wish Nicky

New Nursery Class for January 2027

Abingdon Prep School is delighted to announce the launch of a new co-educational Nursery. The Nursery will provide a warm and welcoming environment for its children in the term in which they turn three, covering the crucial year before they start Reception. Operating on a term-time only basis, it will offer greater flexibility for families.

To give children the best possible start, the Nursery will offer a rich and varied Early Years curriculum, with an emphasis on nature, outdoor learning, and child-led discovery, which will naturally foster confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning from the very beginning

Nicky Black, Head of APS, says: "We know that choosing the right environment for a child's first step into education is a deeply personal, and often emotional, milestone. Our new nursery will offer a gentle, supportive transition into early education. Through an holistic approach, play, exploration, and learning will be balanced within a safe and joyful environment where every child can thrive at their own pace."

To find out more or to register your interest, please email: **admissions@abingdonprep.org.uk**

Chess Success at APS

This year we had an unparalleled interest in chess which was also matched by incredible success. The U13 chess team came second in the IAPS national online finals with our chess captain, Ricky, being undefeated and Isaac finishing sixth in the country. Ricky was also runner-up in the IAPS national Over the Board competition. We also had a very exciting fixture at Abingdon School where we played members of their U18 chess team and ate pizzas!

In the Senior Section House Chess competition Griffin came out worthy winners with Unicorn finishing second.
My thanks go to all the chess players for their enthusiasm and to all members of the Strategy Games Club. Paddy and Ricky have been excellent ambassadors as Young Leaders throughout the year.

Gardening Club

Having weeded the raised beds earlier in the term, and planting a variety of flower and vegetable seeds, the garden burst into life in June. Our pupils were really excited to be able to harvest their first crop of the season. Radishes and 'cut and come again' lettuce leaves went home to be added to delicious, healthy salads. We're still waiting to see how high the sunflowers we planted will grow!

Design Competition

The finalists in our MyVision Design Competition presented their ideas to Nathan and Devante from the charity. Pupils in Pre-Prep had designed new guide dog coats with features to enable others to identify a working dog, and the owner to hear where the dog is. Older pupils had designed a range of creative gadgets to help a visually impaired person. These included a device to identify when a chair is occupied, a door-bell with lasers to identify the height of a parcel being delivered, and vibrating shoes with insoles to help with direction. We definitely have the tech giants of the future in our midst and thankfully Maisy, the retired guide dog, was there to preside over proceedings in her own relaxed manner.

Years 7 and 8 at Rockley

Years 7 and 8 joined forces this term for our residential trip to Rockley at Wareham in Dorset. Despite the heatwave that week, the pupils were on really good form and got stuck into their activities, particularly enjoying the water and climbing activities. The trip also included excursions to the water park and a morning at Kimmeridge Bay fossil hunting. We managed the heat successfully, keeping everyone hydrated and cool. A big thank you to Jane, Russell, Ralf, Liam and Conor for running the trip, with a cameo visit from Nicky.

Live like an Egyptian

Year 3 spent a morning at the Oxford museum delving into the fascinating world of the Ancient Egyptians. They played detective, seeking out clues revealing insights into the daily lives of the people of that era. They also had the unique opportunity to handle ancient Egyptian artefacts, although arguably, the mummies were the main attraction!

Year 5 - HMS Victory

Ahoy! This week, Year 5 brought their History topic on HMS Victory to life by going to visit the vessel at Portsmouth Historic Dockyards. Before the trip, each pupil had researched a real life member of the crew who had been part of the Battle of Trafalgar. Once aboard, they quickly established which deck they would have spent the majority of their time on and got a feel for the daily life of their crew member. The pupils were full of questions and had a brilliant time.

Year 3 at Coleshill

Year 3 had a great day discovering what it was like to be a member of the Army Auxiliary Unit, training at Coleshill base. They explored an underground bunker, completed dead letter drops and experienced camouflage and stealth training, as well as trying some code breaking techniques. It was lovely to meet volunteer Steve Treadwell again, who formerly taught in Pre-Prep at APS.

Year 4 Camp Out

Josca's field was transformed into a vibrant mini-festival zone this June as our Year 4 pupils enjoyed two warm days of pure adventure for their annual Camp Out. The star attractions of the weekend were undoubtedly the school's glorious new bell tents! A huge thank you must go to the JPA for purchasing these - they were an absolute hit with the children and provided the perfect base for their outdoor stay.

The pupils threw themselves into a packed itinerary of outdoor games, team-building activities, and camp crafts. As dusk fell, the field came alive with the sounds of a fantastic mini-Motown disco, getting everyone up and dancing as the sun went down. A truly fabulous time was had by all, creating wonderful memories that will last a lifetime!

Year 6 Bushcraft

Year 6 had a wonderful time in Badminton Woods on their two-night residential Bushcraft trip. Building shelters, making fires, the art of camouflage and plenty of fresh air, made for a brilliant time for all.

Year 8R Journalism

8R became journalists in their English lessons. They interviewed renowned environmentalist Liz Goodwin, and created magazine style features (facing page), and reported on some of their trips (below and top right).

8R Culham Trip

We arrived at Culham Campus where researchers had set up a variety of activities. First we searched for (false) alpha radiation using a radiation searcher. Then we used a glove box, typically used in an irradiated or contaminated environment, to perform some tricky tasks including assembling a screw puzzle, building a methane molecular model and tying shoe laces. Finally, we did bowling with spherical robots, controlling the ball to move by changing its weight distribution to roll in a specific direction. The visit was educational and entertaining. *Isaac*

Dalton Barracks Trip

In June Year 8 visited Dalton Barracks army base as a taster of CCF at Abingdon School. The trip was run by Staff Sergeant Mackenzie who had organised six activities that Year 8 did in small groups. These included physical training, communications, movement, first aid, camouflage and many people's favourite - vehicles. At the end Year 8 even tried to master the art of marching, or drill. It was a challenging and enjoyable morning for everyone there. *Reuben*

Longworth Walk

On the penultimate day of term we managed to dodge the early showers for our annual Year 8 leavers walk. This time we took a new circular walk around Longworth which took us through woodlands and fields, one of which is an area of conversation run by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Just after lunch Year 8 enjoyed walking across the ford, getting some nice cool water onto their feet. We returned to APS for some fun games including rounders tennis, followed by an ice cream, with thanks to the JPA for organising.

PEOPLE

Liz Goodwin

"I always wanted to make the world a better place"

Environmentalist Dr. Liz Goodwin OBE, is a food-waste expert. In the light of our current topic in English, she gave us a visit and allowed us to interview her.

Dr. Liz Goodwin (June 2020)

The Interview

Before our questions, Liz talked to us about the detrimental effects of the food industry on our environment, and how the UK alone throws away over 27 million slices of bread each day: that's nearly 10 billion a year! This amount of wasted food worldwide makes up for just under 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Our first question was if the problem had worsened since the 1950s? According to Liz, it is much worse today due to the greater availability of of all food. In the 1970s, some food was sold out later in the day, meaning planning meals was very much a requirement. We throw away about 50% more food globally than we did then. During the pandemic, food wastage dropped by 20%, but quickly rose back afterwards.

We then asked her what food was wasted the most, she responded that salad was a primary example, as many of us buy it with intentions to be healthy yet never really eat it. Bread is also often wasted due to people not finishing the whole loaf in time. Most dairy products require a large resource drain of water, land and feed to come into existence as well. Her team conducted an investigation into over 2500 bins to review the contents: what they found were many in-date apples, potatoes and even full chickens.

The next question that arose was of what we can do on a day-to-day basis to reduce food wastage. She told us that planning meals was one of the most effective strategies, and that ordering the exact amount of food you need will overall reduce food waste. Personally, Liz orders a mere 60% of the food required for people at a meeting, as it is often too much for everyone to finish.

We asked what schools could be doing more to combat food waste. Her main response was using separate bins for items like tissues and food, and getting seconds if there is leftover food.

Another question addressed to her was if she thought she communicated all this effectively to others. When she began, she was worried for bad publicity or even no publicity, yet her and her teams' work has changed the world. Assorted food waste and recycling have become daily practices to many of us today, yet even Liz still believes that we need "more effort by more people".

Liz has also worked with many large supply chains, as said when we asked her if she supported refilling stations. She told us that there was a point where ASDA was doing refills for fabric softener, but after a year of trials they had to stop it due to the cost of changing how their supply chains worked.

We were also informed that the amount of money wasted globally each year on food waste could be as high as 1 trillion dollars. Restaurants also apparently waste less, as, excluding people not finishing their meals, they have no interest in wasting food as all it does it cut profits down ever further.

WRAP

Liz recalled how she was the CEO of WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) from 2007 to 2016. She achieved many things in office, even receiving an OBE (Officer of the British Empire) for her work in 2015. Other initiatives led by her include: attempts at creating a more circular economy (reusing and sustaining), working with large supply chains to reduce packaging, and making the problems of food waste understood worldwide.

Written and presented by Alex and Carter

ReLondon

In February 2017, the mayor of London appointed Liz as the chair of the LWARB (London Waste and Recycling Board). Some of their main goals include increasing the recycling rate substantially by 2030 and helping London become a zero-carbon city by 2050.

Later in 2020 the name was changed to ReLondon to reflect more of what they do. In October 2024, she announced that she would be stepping down as Chair of ReLondon.

Did you know the average family household in the UK throws away £1000 worth of food each year?

"More needs to be done"

When we asked Liz if she thought enough was being done currently to combat food waste, she replied, "more needs to be done, we are not winning the battle."

Years 3 to 6 Poetry Recital

After class heats, this year's finalists in our annual poetry recital competition performed to a larger audience with confidence and feeling. Learning poetry by heart is proven to benefit memory, focus and wellbeing. Congratulations to the winners from each year, and well done to all of those who took part in this enjoyable event.

PCSO Talk

PCSO Haynes returned to APS to talk to Year 3 about differences and bullying. She started by sharing a story called *The Clown Who Took Flight*. The story is about a clown who wants to leave his town because he feels different, but PC Ben helps him change his mind. The children then reflected on their own similarities and differences, learning that everyone is unique—and that our differences are something to be celebrated.

Language Café

The Language Café has been a resounding success, transforming the library into a vibrant hub of cultural exchange on Thursday afternoons. The café has fostered a welcoming community where students celebrate diversity through the teaching and learning of new languages. Our linguists have shared home languages, including Cantonese, Arabic, Spanish and Hindi; others have eagerly picked up new phrases while enjoying biscuits from around the world. Congratulations go to those pupils who have already earned their Elementary Language Explorer certificates. Their commitment to building friendships and appreciating global cultures is truly inspiring. Well done, linguists!

Parent Careers Afternoon

Our annual Parent Careers afternoon was a great success and an enjoyable event for all involved. Huge thanks must go to the fourteen parents from a wide range of professions who gave up their afternoons to talk to our Year 8 pupils about their career paths in fields from dentistry and medicine to engineering and toxicology, and more.

8R CREST

Nearing the end of another busy term in 8R, pupils presented their CREST projects to a busy Science lab at the end of the school day. A wide range of scientific projects were shown, from selecting equipment for cricket and hockey, and understanding nucleation sites on different sweets and how they make the best reaction with a range of cola products, to looking at compounds that could make an elixir of life that will keep us all from ageing. A huge well done to our 8R pupils.

Class Pairings Reading together

Charity Update

It has been a truly heartwarming year of fundraising at APS, where the wonderful enthusiasm of our staff and pupils was matched only by the incredible kindness and generosity of our parents, raising over £2,800. This is to be shared between two excellent Oxfordshire-based charities: MyVision and Flexicare, which we will be delighted to continue supporting next year.

This fantastic total was achieved through a bustling calendar of events, which included the Silver Coin Trail, Be Seen in Green day, Christmas Jumper day, Year 7 Tycoons projects, and the wonderful sponsored swim at Abingdon School. Our school community also gave generously at a host of concerts and performances throughout the year.

Alongside this, our House charities raised over £900 overall for four excellent causes:

- Dragon for Ronald McDonald House
- Phoenix for the Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary
- Unicorn for SOS Children's Villages
- Griffin for the Sumatran Orangutan Society

A huge thank you to everyone who made this year of giving so successful!

Unicorn Splat the Teacher!

Well done to our pupils for their hard work, creativity, and enthusiasm in Design Technology this term. It has been fantastic to see the skills, imagination and resilience shown by all. The children produced some excellent projects, including Year 3's balsa wood fish, Year 4's bridges, Year 5's delicious homemade pizzas, Year 6's practical pencil holders, Year 7's clocks and smart thermometers, and Year 8's impressive perspective rooms and exciting puck games. All demonstrated thoughtful design, problem-solving, and a real sense of pride in their work, and we look forward to seeing what you create next!

The Art and DT Exhibition was a brilliant celebration of creativity and talent across the department, showcasing the outstanding work produced throughout the year. It was wonderful to see pupils confidently sharing and explaining their creations with visitors.

Special congratulations go to our DT Arts Award students for achieving their award. They should be incredibly proud of their commitment, creativity, and the confidence they showed while exhibiting and discussing their work.

Above, Year 6 drew flower details inspired by Georgia O'Keefe. Below, Year 4 experimented with shape and colour in the style of Sonia Delauney, and Year 3 drew Ancient Egyptian style canopic jars. Below right, Year 5 drew cakes after Wayne Thiebald in chalk and pastels.

The Addams Family

What a wonderfully weird and brilliantly spooky week we had with our production of The Addams Family. Across just four intensive days, the children worked with focus and energy to bring this ghoulishly funny story to life. The final performance was a real triumph and the audience were thoroughly entertained. Huge congratulations to every pupil and staff involved on stage and behind the scenes for their hard work, teamwork and fantastic performances. A creepy, kooky success!

Junior Section Summer Concert

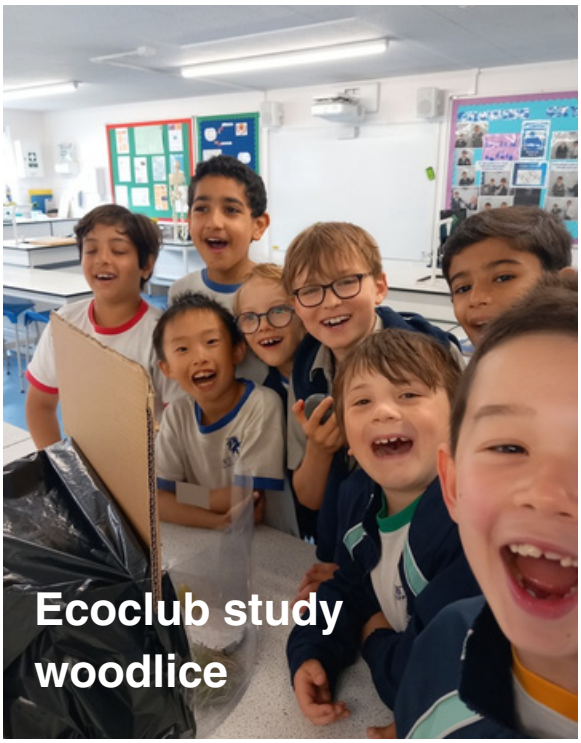
Years 3 to 5 performed in their summer concert to friends and family. The varied programme included group numbers from each Year and all together. Soloists, playing on a range of instruments from French horn to saxophone, cello, piano and more showcased the talented young musicians. All sang with gusto and feeling. Well done!

Pre-Prep Summer Concert

The Pre-Prep Summer Concert, themed “All Around the World,” celebrated the rich diversity of countries and cultures through music and song. Each child proudly wore a flag representing a country of their choice and delighted the audience with their songs, including singing in different languages. The event also showcased solos from some of our youngest musicians, confidently playing pieces on the piano, drums, violin and harp.

Art Around the World

This half term, Reception has been exploring Art Around the World, with a particular focus on African art. The children discovered how artists use bold colours, repeating patterns and different textures to create beautiful artwork. Inspired by what they had learned, they designed and created their own colourful African-style masks, using a range of creative techniques. We were incredibly proud of their imaginative and vibrant creations.



Ecoclub study woodlice

Ecoclub were very excited with a project to build their own choice chamber to look at different habitats for woodlice. One half of the big container in the bottom left of the photo was kept in the dark; wet and dry samples, and grass, soil, leaf litter and apple slices were added to see which the critters went to. Many preferred to try to escape!

Move Up Day

Year 8 pupils enjoyed a fantastic Move Up Day at Abingdon School, taking part in a range of activities including squash, pickleball and climbing. After lunch, they experienced masterclasses in Science and Maths designed to give them a flavour of the year to come. Sixth Form Peer Support Leads also gave them a tour to see key areas of the school, and their House locations.

Heatwave Water Games

During the heatwave, games lessons took an organised fun approach - here Year 6s had the task of passing a tub of water along the line, in that old party game, going over and under without spilling a drop! Many water balloons were also launched in the fun session.

Wheels Day

Reception and Year 1 had an exciting Wheels Day filled with fun, learning and lots of movement. The children brought in their own bikes and scooters and had a great time riding them around the playground, circumnavigating the cones with ease. As well as enjoying the freedom of being on wheels, they also learned about bike safety - from always wearing a helmet, to making sure that brakes work and using the bell to alert people. It was a fantasic day combining active play with important learning.

Can you believe it's a full school year since the this year's Reception class joined Abingdon Prep? Here they are, gathered for a final class photo.

How to keep cool yet still have fun in the heatwave... Water pistols and balloons, plus ice lollies did the trick.

Cotswold Wildlife Park

Reception and Year 1 had a wonderful day out exploring the park and seeing all the incredible animals. After their picnic lunch, they took a scenic ride around the whole park on the train before heading back to school.

Year 2 trip news

Due to the heatwave, Year 2's Forest School trip to Wittenham Clumps has had to be postponed until September. We look forward to hearing all about it when they go as Year 3s...

Pre-Prep Sports Day

The heatwave was on the way, but that didn't stop the Pre-Prep children from enjoying a fun-filled Sports Day on the games field. Events included running, throwing, jumping, mini-hurdles and the exciting obstacle race.

The children gave their all while cheering on their classmates, boosted by the Year 8 helpers and the many supporters who came to watch. The event was rounded off with refreshing ice lollies, plenty of smiles and a well-deserved rest after their exertions.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

To celebrate the end of a fabulous year, Reception enjoyed a very special Teddy Bears' Picnic in the woods. Each child brought their favourite teddy from home and helped to plan and prepare the entire picnic. We made filled baguettes, baked delicious cupcakes, decorated party bags and designed our own party hats, before rounding off the afternoon with karaoke, dancing and lots of laughter.

U13 Trip to Lords

Year 8 pupils enjoyed a fantastic day at Lord's Cricket Ground, the Home of Cricket, where they experienced an inspiring mix of history and practical coaching.

The visit began with a guided tour of the iconic ground, providing a unique insight into the rich history and traditions of the game. The pupils gained exclusive access to some of Lord's most famous areas, including the world-renowned Media Centre and the fascinating MCC Museum. This was followed by an exciting coaching session at the Indoor Cricket Centre, where MCC coaches delivered an engaging session designed to develop their cricket skills in a fun and supportive environment.

A real highlight of the day came when pupils were lucky enough to see the England and South Africa women's teams training on the Nursery Ground. Seeing international players prepare at close quarters was an unforgettable experience and a source of inspiration for everyone involved.

Phoenix win the House Cup

Our annual Sports Day held at Tilsley Park was blessed with glorious sunshine, ending just before showers moved in. It began with the parade of the houses, followed by a full morning of field and track events, cheered on by parents, friends and staff and an air of good-natured competition throughout. Well done to all who took part!

(Photos by Corrinne Amos Photography)

Sports Awards

The following awards were made at the School Prize Giving and the Cups and Colours Assembly:

Prior Cup for Sportsplayer of the Year: Will B & Trystan
Anderson Cup for Cricket: Will B
APS Athletics Award: William B & Trystan
APS Cross-Country Award: William B & James Co
APS Football Award: William A & Zac
APS Hockey Award: Charlie H
APS Swimming Award: James Ch
APS Tennis Award: James Ch
Belvedere Shield for Rugby: Will B & Trystan
Cricket All-Rounder Cup: Dhiren
Chess Award: Ricky
Junior Sportsplayer of the Year: Sam D and Tomas

Full and half junior and senior colours were presented for summer term sports. In cricket, awards were made to each year for 'Most Improved Player', 'Player of the Year' and 'Clubperson of the Year'.

Year 8 Leavers' Gift

We are extremely grateful to the families of our departing Year 8 pupils for their generous leavers' gift to the school.

The money is to be spent on equipment for sports and the school playgrounds.

Thank you!

Phoenix, House Cup Champions

With fewer than 800 points separating the houses, this year's champions are Phoenix.

Our Year 8 Leavers

Destinations: Abingdon 25; Burford 1, Cokethorpe 1, Clongowes Wood College 1

Year 8 Special Awards and Subject Prizes

Special Awards:

The Governors' Prize - for co-operation and kindness: Lucas

The Savin Cup - for academic achievement in the AP+ exams: Sam

The Abingdon Award - for most outstanding academic results: Reuben

Peer Cup - chosen by Y8: Theo

Vaux Cup for personal progress: Aayush

APS All Rounder Award: Johnny

Subject Prizes and Awards:

The Music Award: Damon and Daniel

The Drama Award: Graydon

Strategy Games Award: Isaac

General Knowledge Award: Reuben

Art: Sam

Computing: Lucas, Carter, Alex

DT: Bearm Aayush, Carter

Drama: James Co

English: Noé, Daniel, Alex, Pak Yin

French: Teddy, Sam, Graydon

Geography: Charlie F, Charlie R, Pak Yin

History: William A, Theo

Latin: Charlie F, Damon, Charlie R

Maths: Charlie H, Reuben, Zac

Music: Isaac

PSHCE: Teddy, Dhiren, Johnny

Theology, Philosophy & Ethics: Dylan, Theo

Science: Dylan, Bear, Noé

Ready for co-ed: The journey to a new chapter at Abingdon

This September, Abingdon School embarks on a landmark chapter as it welcomes its very first co-educational cohorts into the First Year and the Sixth Form. But this historic shift is no sudden leap. It is the culmination of two years of forensic, ground-up preparation designed not just to introduce girls, but to elevate the school experience for every single pupil.

When Abingdon School first announced its transition to co-education, the leadership team drew a firm line in the sand. This would not be a superficial rebrand or a passive exercise in shifting admissions. Instead, the two-year lead-in was treated as an invaluable opportunity - a mandate to review, challenge, and refine every single aspect of school life. The philosophy guiding the entire process has been clear from day one: it has never been about making things better just for co-education; it is about making things better for everyone.

The journey began with a remarkably democratic strategy. Rather than dictating policy from the top down, Abingdon established a series of cross-functional committees. Crucially, these were made up of staff from any department who wanted to contribute, drawing directly upon a massive well of prior experience working in mixed environments. These working groups did a deep-dive into eight fundamental pillars of the Abingdon experience: academic, curriculum, pastoral, Other Half, culture, facilities, external relations and boarding. This internal scrutiny gave the school the perfect excuse to question long-standing norms and ask whether specific areas of school life could be made even better.

To ensure they were completely on the front foot, Abingdon did not just look inward; they looked outward as well. Staff conducted extensive research visits, gathering detailed insight from at least 40 other educational settings that have successfully navigated mixed environments. No detail was too minor for scrutiny - everything from environmental dynamics i.e. what it genuinely feels like to learn and socialise in a modern mixed environment, to pastoral setups, uniform, and facilities, were meticulously scrutinised. This to ensure that from day one, every student feels secure, seen, heard and a profound sense of belonging.

True readiness also required listening to the people who matter most: the students. Leadership held open, honest forums with existing pupils to unpack their excitement, answer practical questions, and directly address their fears. This collaborative approach extended into the broader community through the OX14 Learning Partnership. To ensure the PSHCE curriculum was genuinely sharp and relevant, Abingdon consulted directly with girls from partner schools tackling real-world, practical topics, such as managing menstruation, to ensure pastoral staff handle such conversations with utmost confidence, dignity, and normality.

Sport has seen some of the most dynamic changes, spearheaded by a newly appointed Director of Sport and an Associate Director of Sport. Both came from co-ed settings and have been in post for well over a year, working proactively to build a modern athletic roadmap before the first co-ed cohort even arrives. Rather than waiting for September 2026, the foundations are already laid, with netball teams already up and running alongside a brand-new multi-use sports surface explicitly designed to expand options for all pupils.

Academically, the school has looked indepth at classroom dynamics, including through a co-educational lens, receiving specific training on how to spot tendencies like perfectionism or over-working, which high-achieving girls can occasionally experience, to help balance workloads and model healthy academic habits.

For prospective girls looking at the school, a common question emerged during open days regarding leadership roles. Abingdon recognised early on the absolute necessity of strong male and female role models, structuring student leadership pathways so that incoming younger year groups immediately have diverse older pupils to look up to.

Ultimately, the journey to co-ed has reinforced Abingdon's foundational values and the message is clear: at Abingdon, you can rock up, be exactly who you want to be, and thrive.

Going for Gold

A number of Upper Sixth and OAs celebrated receiving their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award at Buckingham Palace this year. 2026 is particularly poignant as it marks both the 70th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Taking stock

In May, the Abingdon School Investment Trading Club (AITC) hosted the annual stock pitch competition. Over 30 students from the Third Year to Sixth Form pitched their 'Best Stock to Buy or Short' to a panel of expert including Dom Spalding, Expert Wealth Management; Stuart Bartholomew, Craven Street Wealth; and Ben Armitage, Evenlode. The winners were told their presentation was 'en par with final year university students'. AITC sessions provide students with valuable skills and knowledge for pursuing a related degree or career in the City.

Evensong at Westminster Abbey

On 1 May, the Chapel Choir sang evensong at Westminster Abbey. Following an historic tour and a warm-up performance at St Margaret's Church, the choir rehearsed in the Abbey with the organist. During the service, they performed with superb diction and blend, delivering a resounding rendition of Stanford's *Evening Service in C* and S.S. Wesley's *Blessed be the God and Father*. Singing at such an iconic venue is a wonderful accolade and a special mention must go to Teodor for his poised treble solo.

Farewells

Claire Ringrose

For the past 12 years our Art Technician, Claire, has supported our pupils with kindness, patience, and quiet inspiration. Although much of her work is behind the scenes, its impact can be seen in each piece of artwork displayed in the hall, our exhibitions, and school productions from the lamp post in Oliver! to countless headpieces in The Bee Musical. She has helped to foster an atmosphere in which children's confidence can grow, making an environment where imagination is encouraged and creativity can flourish. Her Creative Arts Club allowed many to explore new skills, express themselves and develop a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

However, many of you won't know that Claire was once an incredible fashion model travelling all over the world, she speaks fluent Greek, and is a keen yogi, as well as being a talented artist and sculptor.

The art room will miss your presence. We will miss you dearly. We wish you every happiness and success in this next adventure.

Conor Rogan

Conor spent a single term with us as a gap student, but it was soon clear how lucky we were to have him. An excellent sportsman, he made a great contribution to cricket coaching in particular, teaching all year groups. He made a big impact across school life. Helpful, enthusiastic and with a great sense of humour, he fitted in immediately becoming a favourite of all of our pupils. We send our thanks and wish him all the best for his future studies at Loughborough.

Rachael Freese

Rachael joined us as a Year 2 teacher and was instantly popular with the children, taking on being interim Head of Pre-Prep before going on maternity leave. We send her and her family our very best wishes for the future.

Caroline Luckraft

Caroline has been a caring, considerate member of the team and has shared her good humour with pupils and staff. She is incredibly hard working and has led assemblies, trips, playtimes and lunches with a bright smile always. Caroline's class have felt known and safe in her care and will remember the fun they had with her in all kinds of creative activities from photography to tree planting, not to mention her legendary pyjama days! We all wish Caroline every happiness in her new adventures.