

ABINGDON



This booklet gives a guide to the Other Half activities available. Please refer to the Other Half section on the school website for full details. Pupil Guidelines on Other Half activities are also available on the website.

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Welcome

The 'Other Half' is a colloquialism used throughout Abingdon School. It represents a substantial part of the educational experience, involving activities that take place beyond the academic curriculum – and usually outside the classroom. It is to be seen as an essential part of the learning experience – offering boys the opportunity to learn about life in its broader context; its challenges and opportunities, successes and inevitable disappointments.

I hope boys will enjoy looking through this booklet and that during their time at Abingdon they will have the opportunity to experience a range of contrasting activities; hopefully one or two will become pursuits they follow and develop in their adult lives.

Stuart Evans,
Master i/c Other Half

Architecture Lego Club

Gives aspiring architects and designers the opportunity to bring their designs to life, using Lego as the construction material. Project briefs are set and work can be done in teams or individually.

Art Activities

Designed for those keen to extend their skills and to try something new. Boys can set their own project briefs and work on collaborative ideas if they wish. GCSE and A level students are free to develop coursework.

Design and Technology Club

The workshop facilities are open to students to develop their design and technology skills. They either work through some existing project briefs or develop their own to work on.

Digital Product Development

An opportunity to learn or improve knowledge of the Computer Aided Design programme *Fusion 360*. This industry standard piece of software is used by commercial designers. Boys learn to create objects and designs in 3D, working towards outputting their work using the Makerbot 3D printers.

Lower School Lego Architecture Club

Encourages boys to realise their imaginative designs in 3D using the Lego Architecture kits. Boys research existing examples of interesting architecture, develop their own designs and then work with 3D CAD software to generate virtual scale models of their creations.



Young Designers

The great thing about Young Designers is the creativity. In many other Other Half activities, lessons and even out of school activities, one must follow a set of precise, linear instructions given by a teacher or guide who is constantly trying to assess you or grade you on something. And that is wonderful – assessment is a part of life and Abingdon is one of the best places to come if one wants to learn about how to become great in life – but everyone needs time to relax and unwind, away from the stress of everyday schoolwork and study time. That's why Young Designers is so wonderful.

In Young Designers, you have the option to make whatever you want. A box? A bed? A table? A large wooden boat? Yep. Every Young Designers session, a group of lucky boys has access to the School's state-of-the-art DT department – complete with sanding machines, laser cutters, and even a few 3D printers! If you can think it, you can make it – all it needs is for you to select Young Designers for an Other Half session.



Ceramics Club

Come and explore the wondrous world of clay; experiment with a range of clay construction and decorating techniques and develop your creativity and innovation skills. Be inspired by traditional/functional ceramics alongside contemporary, more sculptural work.



Abingdon Academicals

This close harmony group exists for keen senior singers to develop their choral, sight-singing and solo skills, prior to applying for Choral Awards to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, in particular. Throughout the year we sing at a number of concerts and high-profile events within the School as well as in the local community. The music performed ranges from home-grown arrangements of well-known and well-loved 'pop/rock/easy listening' songs through professional King's Singers' arrangements to intimate church music settings.

Abingdon Drum Circle

The Abingdon Drum Circle has been created for anyone with an interest in learning how to play in an African djembe ensemble. As well as learning basic drumming techniques and patterns, there is much opportunity to develop improvisation skills.

Blues Society

The Blues Society gives an opportunity for musicians playing contemporary instruments (guitars, keyboards, horns, drums) to learn to play together and perform. We tend to focus on songs from soul and blues genres; enthusiasm, rather than great skill, is the main requirement!

Big Band

Ever popular, Big Band performs at the Christmas Concerts, the School's Bands Concert and its own Big Band Jazz Concert. Regular tours abroad include a highly successful visit to Tuscany and a tour to the USA playing in Boston, New York City and Washington DC. Big Band has also made two CDs.



Brass Band

Performs twice a year at the Autumn/Christmas Concerts and the School's Bands Concert. Also plays at special assemblies and other services, including every Christmas at the Community Service Tea Party.

Chamber Music

A full range of 30-40 ensembles are rehearsed weekly by members of the visiting music staff. They include ensembles for strings, woodwind and brass: String Trios, Quartets and Quintets; Saxophone Quartet; Bassoon Quartet; Flute Choirs; Double Reed Ensemble; Clarinet Ensemble; Wind Quintet; Jazz Ensembles; Brass Quintets; Horn Quartet; Piano Trios; String Quartets; Abingdon Academicals – close harmony and many more miscellaneous ensembles.

The ensembles have numerous opportunities to perform, take part in specialist ensemble workshops with coaching from distinguished musicians and compete in the Pro Corda Chamber Music Competition, in which Abingdon groups have won places in the finals concerts for many years.

Chamber Orchestra

Chamber Orchestra consists of excellent string players who perform at Open Day, Christmas and Summer Orchestral Concerts. This Orchestra supports candidates for their A level exams and gives concerto opportunities to chosen soloists, with plenty of opportunity to tour abroad.

Chapel Choir

The Chapel Choir sings for the School Carol, Commemoration and Leavers' services, and makes termly visits to sing Choral Evensong in college chapels and cathedrals in a wide area. The Choir tours abroad and has released a CD.

Composers' Workshop

This is a session for budding composers – or anyone interested in the craft of composition – to expand their composing experience and learn about the mechanics of how music works. The sessions include some 'taught' elements where composers' techniques are introduced and some more improvisatory and exploratory sessions in which boys learn about the essentials of different vocal, instrumental and choral forces and how to write for them.





First Orchestra

First Orchestra is one of the Music department's flagship ensembles. It has achieved a considerable reputation in recent years for producing quality performances of mainstream symphonic repertoire. Its success can be accounted for by the now well-established tradition of proactive recruitment across the full range of orchestral instruments among the younger boys (including French horn, bassoon and double bass) and offering instrumental tuition from a particularly distinguished team of some 35 instrumental teachers. The Orchestra plays autumn, summer and Christmas concerts and at prestigious venues at home and abroad including Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre. The Orchestra tours frequently, most recently to Europe, the USA and the Far East where over 100 boys took part. Planning is underway for the next full tour to Japan.

Gospel Choir

Gospel Choir embraces a popular style of choral singing which is both accessible and life-affirming. We sing traditional Gospel songs and arrangements of popular songs in a Gospel style! You don't need to be able to read music as you will be taught the music by rote.

Joint Chamber Choir

This select group of advanced singers from Abingdon and St Helen's School explores the most challenging and rewarding pieces in the Choral repertoire. The mixed voice ensemble enables nine Abingdonian Tenors and Basses to experience singing alongside nine female Altos and Sopranos. It performs at concerts for both schools and serves as an important platform for potential Oxbridge choral scholarship candidates.

Joint Choral Society

Open to all boys and compulsory for GCSE/A level musicians.

Junior Strings

Performs during the year but especially for the Lower School Gala Concert. For all string players from beginner to about Grade 5 standard. The atmosphere is relaxed and the ensemble progresses significantly.

Lower School Band

This performs twice a year, normally in the New Year Concert and at the Bands Concert in the summer.

Music Technology

This activity enables a small group of selected students to learn about studio techniques and the history of audio recording, under the guidance of a Music Technologist. It follows the A level course offered by Edexcel, although it is not envisaged that this will lead to the qualification. It is also possible to study Music Technology through individual lessons.

Second Orchestra

Plays at Christmas or New Year Concerts and in the Summer Orchestral Concert. A Lower School Orchestra is formed after the Summer Orchestral Concert and performs at the Lower School Gala Concert at the end of term.

Symphonic Wind Band

Performs twice a year at the Autumn/Christmas Concerts and the School Bands Concert. Plenty of opportunity for international tours.





100 Documentaries

Aimed primarily at the Lower School, this club watches and discusses recent and topical TV documentaries. No one particular genre of documentary is favoured but rather a wide variety – historical, cultural, geographical, economic and natural history. The aim is to raise awareness of the world around us.

Abingdon Film Unit

The Abingdon Film Unit was formed in 2003. Since then its members have produced over 110 short films, a number of which have won awards and been screened at the National Film Theatre in London, throughout the UK and at festivals in France, Sweden, USA and Hong Kong. The Unit enables students to make their own films under the guidance of industry professionals. Please note: membership is offered to boys in Third Year and above after a process of applications and interviews that take place during the Summer term for entry in September.

Once accepted, students become members of the Film Unit for the whole year. Films are researched and planned in the Michaelmas term; shooting begins any time from October onwards; editing occupies much of the Lent and Summer terms. The finished films are screened in September or October of the following year.

Members of the Unit can also be invited to make films for others, whether within the school or the wider community. They can also undertake special film projects abroad. AFU members have made films in Cambodia, Moldova, China and Hong Kong, for example.

Trips may also be organised to cinemas, exhibitions or film studios.

Amey Theatre Technical Crew

Members gain experience of all aspects of technical theatre from the design stages to implementation. They are regularly involved in the preparation and running of drama productions, concerts, school events and external hires. Wednesday afternoons are put aside for the main bulk of the work but due to the large number of events, much of the work happens on other afternoons, evenings and weekends and therefore a high level of commitment is required.

Digital Photography

Investigates aspects of digital SLR photography, including: technical settings (aperture, ISO, etc.) and the effect they have; technique (e.g. lighting, focus effects); post-processing on a computer. A test camera is available but students get the most out of the activity if they are able to bring and use their own DSLRs.

Middle School Drama Production

Pupils in the Third Year have the opportunity of an annual play that rehearses in the Michaelmas term and is usually performed in the Amey Theatre in early December. Details and auditions are usually announced in September.

Lower School Drama Production

Lower school pupils have an opportunity to take part in an annual drama production in the Amey Theatre at the end of the Michaelmas term. Other opportunities include a weekly monologue workshop in the Lent term which offers those interested in applying for an Abingdon drama scholarship the chance for one-to-one coaching. In the Summer term, there is a weekly drama and theatre arts workshop which introduces theatre arts such as lighting, sound design, puppetry, masks, stage and set design, alongside performance-based skills such as mime and stage combat.





Senior Drama Production(s)

The number of opportunities for boys in Fourth Year and above to take part in extracurricular drama productions with their counterparts at St Helen's continues to grow.

Senior plays usually take place in the early part of the Lent term to allow students to concentrate on exams thereafter. Things generally start in earnest in September, when students can choose to audition for one production from a range that may include a large-scale musical as well as a number of straight plays with varying cast sizes. Each year we aim to present a variety of challenging pieces ranging from established classics to recent or new work. Rehearsals take place after school with performances commonly in late January or early February. There are also rehearsed readings of plays written by students in the Summer term or early in September. Those who wish to stage their own productions are invited to bring their proposals to the Drama department

staff in May/June of the year before, when we do our best to accommodate them in the programme for the following year. Senior productions often tour to the Edinburgh Festival during August and there have also been trips outside the UK such as an expedition to see a production by Peter Brook at the Bouffe du Nord in Paris, or a trip to Japan to study Bunraku puppetry and perform a devised piece.

Theatre Design Workshop

Members are involved in the creative side of technical theatre, focusing on the current term's production. The workshop's aim is to give participants an idea of the design aspects of technical theatre which is then applied in the Wednesday afternoon Amey Theatre Technical Crew activity.



Lower School Podcasting Club

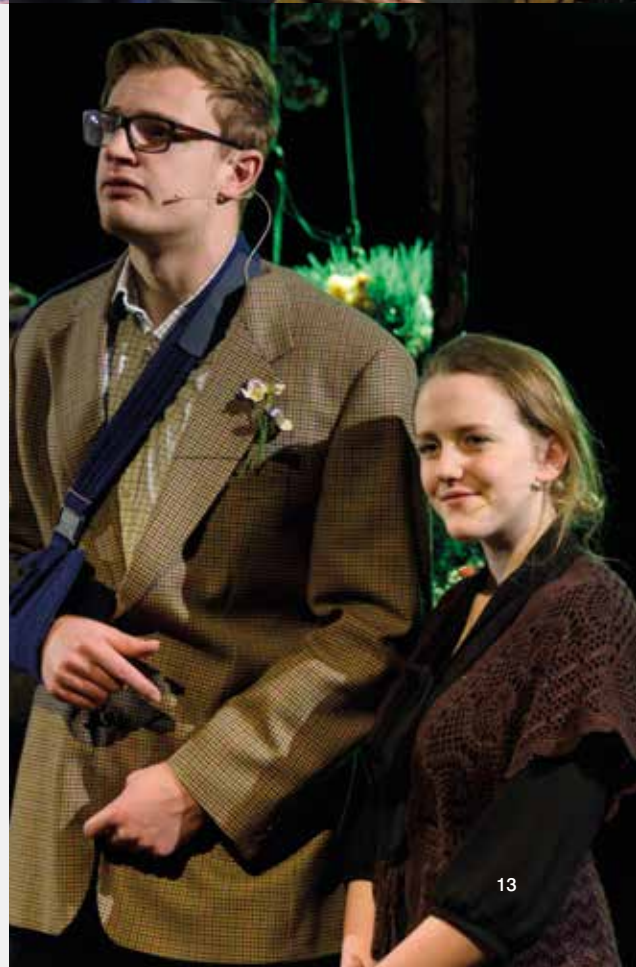
Lower School Podcasting Club ventures into the realms of broadcast media.

Definition: *a podcast is a digital medium that consists of an episodic series of digital radio, subscribed to and downloaded through web syndication or streamed online to a computer or mobile device.*

In the club we aim to explore the medium of radio programme production; the most popular format to date is quiz making.

Third Year Podcasting Club

Similar to the Lower School Podcasting Club in exploring the medium of radio programme production, using news casting, sports reporting and possibly even making jingles.



Astronomy

This is an opportunity for anyone from the Third Year upwards to learn about astronomy in more detail and to enter for the GCSE exam in the subject if they wish. It is being run through the Abingdon Science Partnership and a number of pupils from other local schools also follow the course.



Biology Society

Lectures are organised to support work in the Biology specification, to extend knowledge of the specification and to give boys an up-to-date account of current advances in modern Biology. Some lectures may also have a more general "Natural History" theme and be open to middle school pupils as well. Some pupils may also carry out more open-ended practical investigations or other experiments. Additionally, groups of pupils can prepare presentations on topics of interest to them and present them to their peers.

Entomology Society

A chance for young entomologists to study insects.

Lower School Science Club

Lower School Science Club is an opportunity for boys to partake in science projects and experiments outside of the curriculum. The boys will have a chance to extend their science knowledge in a fun, hands-on environment.

Primary Science Club

An opportunity for fifth year and lower sixth Science Ambassadors to help run a weekly science club for children from local primary schools.

Science Factor

This is the club for anyone who wants to do real, scientific research but can't wait for university. Carry out your own projects or work with our partners such as the Institute for Research in Schools, The Young Scientists Journal and partner schools in Abingdon.

Science Partnerships

Boys assist in running science outreach events on site in the Yang Science Centre or in local primary schools.

Science and Engineering Club

An opportunity for students to experience hands-on science outside of the syllabus.



Codebreaking Club

XFMDPNF UP DPEFCSFBLJOH DMVC – Codebreaking Club takes place weekly and teams prepare for and take part in the National Cipher Challenge. This is an annual competition for students across the country to crack ever more complicated ciphers, including simple Caesar Shift Ciphers, Vignere Ciphers and beyond. If you like solving puzzles and reading secret messages then come along – programming and IT skills are a bonus but not necessary.

Computer Programming (Advanced)

We support a mixture of students' own projects and guided investigations into areas covering software, computer science/algorithms and electronics interfacing using Raspberry Pi and Arduino platforms. Examples include smartphone games/apps and facial recognition using Python and OpenCV.

Computer Programming for Beginners

This activity is intended to provide hands-on experience of the nitty-gritty of computer programming. It takes an overview of the history of computer-programming languages, from assembler through to modern object-oriented languages – and the development of the hardware on which they run. Practical tasks are undertaken in a dedicated programming environment using the latest interpreted object-oriented languages and application development frameworks. Applications are likely to be web and network based, with the ability to show off the results from any internet-connected computer. No previous experience is necessary, but an aptitude for logical and analytical thought is essential.

Electronics

This provides an opportunity to learn how to design and build simple electronic devices. The emphasis is on experimenting and learning rather than copying existing designs. Past projects range from reaction games to light-sensitive musical instruments. Programmable microcontrollers are also available for more adventurous tasks such as robotics. No experience is necessary but eagerness to learn is essential.

Looking at Science Data with Python

Python is now the computing language of choice for many scientists including biologists, chemists and physicists. It is used to visualise data sets, varying from population data to the variation of physical systems. This introductory course uses the extensive libraries of programmes available online to learn more about how scientists visualise and study their data.

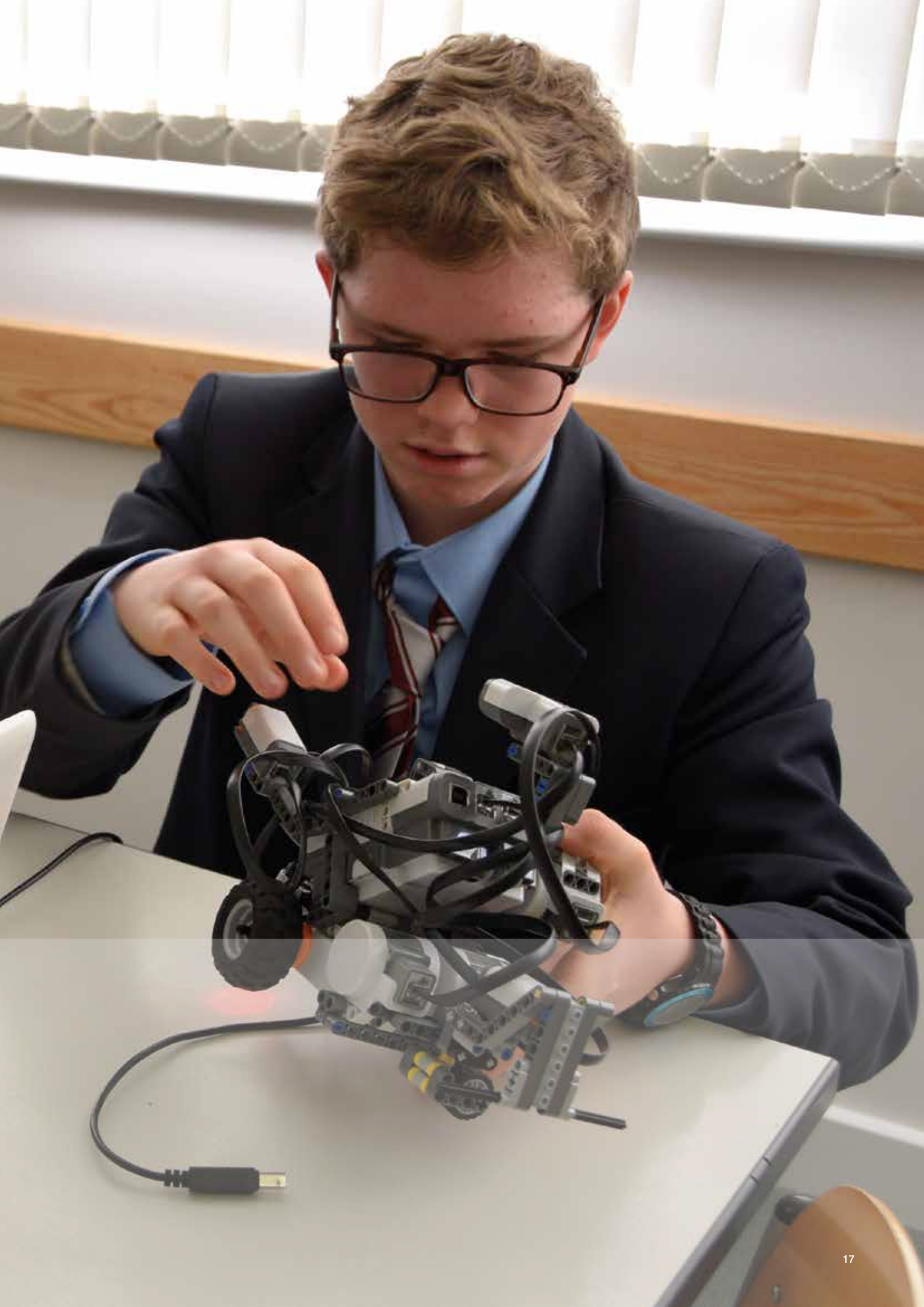
Lower School Computer Programming

A fun introduction to computer programming. Hands-on sessions: writing your own programs; using different programming languages and packages; making graphical pictures, games and animations.

Robotics Club

Working with Lego Mindstorms robots, Robotics Club combines programming and engineering techniques. Building different models and machines using technical Lego, they are brought to life by using a programmable brick which takes control of its movements. A variety of tasks are set through the year to stretch and challenge builders to develop their ability to program within the Lego Mindstorms environment.





The Abingdonian

The Abingdonian is an annual publication that provides a review of a year's events at Abingdon. Those joining the editorial team will be responsible for commissioning and editing articles and designing the magazine layout, with the aim of publication at the end of the Michaelmas term.

The Axiom

The Axiom is the philosophy publication for Abingdon School with contributions from the pupils themselves. We meet once per week to critically discuss articles, works of philosophers and explore philosophy through film, art, music, science fiction and any other genre where philosophy is present. *The Axiom* gives the boys the opportunity to write their own articles, submit creative contribution, edit the publication and design the layout. It is published at the end of each term. We aim to spark interest in the popular subject of philosophy and develop the creative juices of those already inspired.

The Blazer

The Blazer is a magazine designed by lower school boys for lower school boys. Members of the editorial team write articles and conduct interviews with the aim of producing four issues a year.

Griffenomics

Griffenomics is a student-led magazine that looks at current economic and business issues.

The Inklings

The Inklings is a creative writing group for Third Years interested in developing their own stories, poems and play-scripts in a friendly and informal environment. We are named after the famous literary group who met in The Eagle and Child in Oxford and included JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis. We play writing games each week and then use a variety of materials as stimulus for our own work, including famous first lines, works of art and graphic novels. Biscuits are provided!

The Martlet

The Martlet is Abingdon's student newspaper, covering both school news and features, as well as national and international stories. Ideal if you are interested in journalism, creative writing, photography or working on the design side of a newspaper.

The Polyglot

The Polyglot is a termly, student-led Modern Foreign Languages journal, which covers the large and popular areas of languages, linguistics and foreign affairs. It comprises a variety of essays, reviews and interviews written in French, Spanish and German – in addition to a number of more meaty articles in English incorporating politics, opinion and history. The magazine is open to article proposals from all boys and staff interested in languages and foreign cultures. Also design and production experience.



The Postmen

Take a trip into the unknown; as a wise man once said, 'writing is exploration; and most of the time, I'm surprised where the journey takes me.' Visit aspects of character, genre, setting, mystery and metafiction as we create our own pieces and publish our work. In the steps of Brin's postman we walk through the harsh landscapes of reality and deliver the impossible.

Timeline

Timeline is a student-written and edited history magazine which comes out twice a year. Articles are on subjects the students are interested in and anyone can submit work.

Young Scientists Journal

This is an opportunity for pupils from any year to learn some science writing skills and to pursue a writing project on a topic of their own choice. Abingdon Science Partnership is affiliated to the *Young Scientists Journal*, which gives the opportunity for finished articles to be published online and possibly in the hard copy edition.

Words and That

Words and That is a collaborative, student-led literary publication. It combines the best of Abingdon's talent and showcases all forms of art, music, cultural debate and creative writing. Boys work together to produce an innovative and dynamic publication each term. It's a great opportunity for those with imaginative flair, an interest in design, art, poetry, fiction writing and current affairs.





Abelard Society

The Abelard Society is the Abingdon Third Year philosophy club. It is named in honour of Peter Abelard, a medieval scholar well known for his excellence in dialectic, a form of philosophy. Meetings are in the form of an open discussion arising out of a philosophical prompt.

Books and Biscuits

Books and Biscuits is for any lower school student who likes reading, wants to become more adventurous in their reading choices and enjoys discussing what they like (and don't!) in a book. In the Michaelmas and Lent terms, we decide which books we're going to read together, and usually get through one every half-term; recent favourites include *Ender's Game*, *The Declaration* and *Burning Midnight*. During the Summer term, we shadow the annual Carnegie medal, getting together with other local schools to decide the best children's book of the year. Our meetings are lively and opinionated – and always include biscuits (and sometimes cake).

Christian Life at Abingdon – 'The Way'

This Lower School group meets to consider what it means to follow Jesus. Each week we seek to do this together as a group by playing a game and looking at the teaching of the Bible, often with the help of an outside speaker. Anyone in the Lower School is welcome. Snacks provided.



Model United Nations

Through the Model United Nations Society we take delegations along to conferences throughout the year at other schools. At these we represent a country's interest in debates. It's an excellent way of building legal, political and debating experience as well as broadening knowledge of current and international affairs and socialising with other schools.

Christian Life at Abingdon – 'Y'

This middle school group is a fun way of exploring the Christian faith by discussing tough questions, watching video clips and by looking at the Bible. Anyone in Middle School is most welcome – whatever your beliefs. All accompanied by good food!

Christian Life at Abingdon – Youth Alpha Course

The Alpha Course, attended by millions worldwide, is an opportunity for fifth and sixth formers to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed café-style setting. It is designed primarily for those who are not church-goers and is open to anyone who wants to understand more about Christianity, whatever their beliefs. There are ten thought-provoking sessions, where there is a short presentation and opportunity for discussion. Pupils get to discuss what they really think and to ask any questions they may have. This could also be of particular interest to pupils studying Philosophy and Ethics to help them formulate their own opinions and arguments. For more information check out www.alpha.org.

Debating Society

Allegedly Abingdon's oldest non-sporting society, the Debating Society is the place to argue and form opinions about a variety of topics and motions. If you love an argument, or generally thrive on controversy, this is the society for you.

We debate everything from serious politics to more abstract ideas such as whether we should follow our dreams in life, via the thorny issues of organ donation and torturing terrorists.

In the open debates, volunteer speakers put their views across in speeches before the debate gets opened up to the floor and everyone else gets their say – lively disagreement inevitably ensues.

We enter teams into a number of national competitions in debating and public speaking and run workshops to help improve debating skills. Throughout the year, we arrange popular dinner debates with girls' schools for the senior members of the society. All are welcome. Within the Debating Society there are also opportunities for sixth form pupils to meet in smaller groups to hold debates – and there is a workshop aimed at middle school pupils to help them develop debating and public speaking skills.

Lower School Debating Society

A chance for lower school boys to hone their public speaking skills while debating topical issues. Joint debates with St Helen's can be arranged over the course of the year.

Novels and Nibbles

Novels and Nibbles is for any third year student who enjoys adventurous reading and intense discussions of books and writers (along with pretty much anything remotely connected to those two things). We decide which books we're going to read together and usually get through three or four a term; recent favourites include *Flowers for Algernon*, *Nation* and *The Lost Art*. Our meetings are lively and opinionated, and have covered everything from clichés in dystopian fiction to the possibility of extra-sensory perception.



Abingdon Hospital

This is invaluable work experience for aspiring medics.

After School Clubs

There is scope for initiative and leadership. Tell us your special skills and interests: football, computers, music, art, etc. The usual commitment is for the whole school year, though this may be for a shorter time through prior arrangement if sporting activities clash in one term.

Afternoon Tea

Tea party and entertainment for the elderly once a term. Musicians particularly welcome.

Baker Award

The Baker Award (named after retired teacher, Mr Roger Baker) represents an Abingdon School junior version of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, designed to run over the course of a boy's time in lower school. All lower school boys are automatically entered for the award. There are four sections: Skill, Service, Expedition and Sport. Boys are strongly encouraged to become involved in all sections, keeping track of their participation by using a record book. Satisfactory completion leads to a certificate, presented at the end of the Second Year.

Biology Department Volunteers

A small number of lower school pupils can get involved in the Biology department, helping out with a variety of tasks. Primarily they are involved with the routine care of the animals in the department and maintenance of the fish tanks. At certain times of year work needs to be carried out in the departmental pond and we are also looking to set up a wildlife area somewhere on the school grounds.

Boarders Community Service

A chance for upper school boarders to visit the elderly.

Bridge House Quiz Team

An opportunity for a team to run a weekly quiz for lively residents at Bridge House, on subjects ranging from Literature to History and Geography, Nature and Science, Famous People, General Knowledge, Sport, Music and Entertainment.

Charities Committee

The Charities Committee organises and co-ordinates the key charity events within the school. The pupils involved help with the selection of charities to support as well as the planning, organising and promoting of events. Pupils find the work very rewarding and enjoyable.



Combined Cadet Force

CCF membership is voluntary and begins in the Third Year. Recruit training takes one year and boys are expected to parade every week in uniform. Pupils commit to attending for a whole year at a time – and to keep their hair cut short and smart. The CCF is a disciplined organisation, which emphasises qualities of leadership and teamwork, common sense and responsibility. It involves a variety of activities including Tuesday afternoon parades and camps, exercises and field days throughout the year. At least one camp must be attended in each year, and in the first year this will

be the Easter recruit camp. Cadet training continues into the Sixth Form in either the RAF or Army sections of the CCF; it involves academic work, adventurous and military training. There are opportunities to fly, shoot, take part in joint exercises, to train alongside the regular armed forces in the field, and to develop an understanding of why these forces are needed and how they operate. We are well-supported, and Abingdon's CCF is highly regarded outside the School for its excellent standards. A number of cadets go on to join the armed forces as commissioned officers.



Environmental Service

By virtue of school membership everyone should consider themselves a part of the Environmental Service scheme. Our Environmental Service scheme seeks to increase awareness of waste recycling and energy conservation within the School and the broader community.

The Third Year programme is a compulsory element of the Service scheme: the aim of the course is to heighten awareness of our school policies and mechanisms for waste recycling and energy efficiency within the school plant.

This is suitable for any age group as part of the Lower School Wednesday afternoon programme as well as a service activity contributing towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Timing and levels of commitment are negotiable.

This is an excellent opportunity for boys with an interest in environmental issues and architecture to make a real difference at the School. In addition, there is a pupil sub-committee of the School's Environment Committee. The aim of this committee is to coordinate specific campaigns during the year to raise the profile of environmental issues within the School. In addition, this sub-committee aims to monitor and audit our overall programme of activity and to drive new initiatives as and when appropriate. It is an important conduit for pupils to suggest and coordinate new initiatives that could become part of school policy.

Gardening and Conservation

The School has a fruit and vegetable garden. There are opportunities to maintain this and develop it as a source of vegetables and summer fruits. Conservation work takes place in Boxhill Walk Nature Reserve and includes maintaining a list of plant and animal species, removal of dead/decaying timber and providing management of the nature reserve and its accompanying stream, the River Stert.



Library Team

The Library Team is integral to the library service at Abingdon, operating both front-of-house at the library desk and behind the scenes. Students are expected to commit for a year at a time, and usually do so from the beginning of their second year, having undertaken a 'taster term' at the end of their first year. On Wednesday afternoons, every student librarian is in the library, preparing books for the shelves, tidying, discussing priorities and undergoing training. Student librarians also commit to at least one lunch slot and one morning break slot a week, when they help manage the library desk, re-shelve returned books and answer queries from students. Most students who join the Library Team remain part of it as they move up the school, taking on increasing responsibility for managing other team members and developing valuable skills in ICT, information management, display and problem-solving.

Moldova Project

Since 2000, Abingdon has been supporting the work of AGAPE, a charity working with young people in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe. There is an annual Sixth Form visit to Moldova to run a summer camp for disadvantaged Moldovan children, while third years can find out more about the project through the Service and Citizenship Scheme. The project represents an excellent chance to learn about a culture very different from our own – and to provide support and friendship to those in real need of it.

Older and Bolder

Help make tea and chat to Abingdon ladies who attend an exercise class.

Sensory Garden at Abingdon Hospital

Help tend the Sensory Garden at Abingdon Hospital. The garden is maintained by volunteers and is used by patients to speed their recovery and relax.

Third Year Service and Citizenship Scheme

The Third Year Service and Citizenship Scheme helps pupils develop a broader understanding of their place in the wider community (local, national and global) and encourages them to make an active contribution to the society in which they live. All pupils in the Third Year who are not involved in CCF participate in the scheme.

A range of different activities is available. Boys can go into the local community to undertake activities ranging from visiting residential homes and entertaining the residents, to offering ICT help in the Abingdon town library. In other groups boys may acquire life skills such as managing personal finance or touch-typing. Contemporary global issues are covered by activities such as Environmental Service and the Moldova Project.

Within the scheme, pupils have the opportunity to do a basic First Aid course or some expedition training that will be particularly useful if they are thinking of participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in the Fourth Year.

With such a wide range of activities on offer, boys are able to gain experience of different aspects of service and citizenship and many choose to continue serving the community higher up the school.

Visiting the Elderly

Boys visit the elderly, providing company and conversation at various venues in Abingdon.





Bellringing Club

The traditional English art of bell-ringing requires a combination of skill, musicianship and strength. The club is open to complete beginners and those with prior experience.

Boardgaming

A chance for lower school boys to play a wide range of fantasy role play games, strategic war games and boardgames.



Bridge Club

Bridge is one of the world's most popular card games. This trick-taking game is played by four people in two competing partnerships. Bridge is an excellent way to stretch your brain, sharpen your maths skills and make new friends. Beginners are welcome and will be taught the basics of contract bridge. Experienced players will be able to enjoy opportunities to play with other players of a similar level.

Chess Club

Come along, practice and improve. Pupils of all standards attend, from novice to England squad player. We are happy to teach you to play from scratch and help you to develop your game. We enter county and national tournaments, and run knockout tournaments for individuals and for House teams. Coaching from a Grandmaster is also available.

Cooking for Students

Learn to cook essential and economical student meals. Try your hand at making dishes like spicy risotto, spinach and feta frittata and chocolate pudding – not forgetting spaghetti bolognese. Learn the basics of menu planning and budgeting to make a tight student budget stretch. No prior knowledge or skill necessary.

Croquet

Boys from throughout the school tackle the application of the tactics of chess and the physics of snooker. Senior boys organise the external fixtures combining the social and competitive elements of the game.

Arabic for Beginners

Beginners Arabic offers an introduction to speaking, reading and writing modern standard Arabic, loosely following the course 'Mastering Arabic' by Jane Wightwick and Mahmoud Gaafar. Our aim over the course of two years is to gain enough confidence to tackle most simple written Arabic with the aid of a dictionary and the ability to speak with confidence about our family, school, travel essentials (ordering food in restaurants) etc.

Archaeology & Classics Club

This club offers the opportunity to learn about life in the Ancient World in many different civilisations, including the Egyptians, Persians, Vikings, and of course the Greeks and Romans. The club also learns how archaeologists piece together information about past societies – and most excitingly there is the opportunity to excavate. Activities include watching films and documentaries, making models and posters, learning to use archaeological techniques, and how to dig.

Classics Society

We offer a range of events throughout the year enabling boys to pursue their interest in the Ancient World beyond the confines of the various syllabuses. Speakers are invited from universities and other schools on a variety of historical and literary topics, but there are also trips to plays, various museums and classical sites in Britain, as well as further afield. Those not studying classical subjects are welcome to attend.

Geography GIS Club

An exciting opportunity to explore geography through digital mapping software called GIS (Geographical Information Systems).

Navigate the globe, create your own datasets and maps, and explore the world through this virtual software.

Joint Literary Society

Do you want to broaden your mind, read more widely, become more interesting, cultured, imaginative, and generally well-versed in intellectual discussion? The Joint Literary Society is a chance to read and discuss literature from around, above, beyond, below, and indeed nowhere near the syllabus. Here you can encounter writing and ideas from the most classic to the most contemporary of writers and become a literary critic and connoisseur in the company of Abingdon's and St Helen's finest minds.

Rumour has it that the eating of cake may also be a central feature of this society.

If you are interested in reading, literature, culture, discussion and cake, or indeed you are considering applying to read English at university, then please do come along.

Joint Modern Languages Society

The Modern Languages department runs a series of events throughout the year in conjunction with St Helen's. The Society is co-organised by a committee of sixth form linguists at both schools. The Society is not only for boys studying modern languages (French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Russian...) but any sixth formers interested in languages, language learning and other cultures. Events include social evenings, dinners, film showings, visits to the theatre/cinema and talk by visiting speakers. Details published on an ad hoc basis.

Linguistics Club

This is a club run by students for students and focuses on linguistic code breaking. Students will unravel a wide range of rules for the formation of sounds, words and sentences in a wide range of languages; this often leads to surprising insights and always broadens cultural and linguistic horizons.





Edmund Society

The Edmund Society is a club for members of the School with a passion for philosophical discourse and discussion. It is an activity aimed predominantly at sixth formers where a variety of material is covered, including, but by no means limited to, epistemology, symbolic logic and the philosophy of science. On top of regular meetings the Society looks to put on one lecture per term, and guests have included Peter Hitchens, Prof. Michael Lacewing and Prof. Stephen Mulhall, with talks on the political situation of the Ukraine, epistemology and Ludwig Wittgenstein respectively.

SUBJECT STRETCHERS



Lower School History Club

Designed for those interested in fun activities related to history. Past activities have included the making of helmets and swords, constructing models of castles and battlefield scenes and big screen viewing of history-based movies and favourites such as *Blackadder*.

Lower School Modern Languages Club

Students play languages games, do quizzes and find out more about languages they study or may wish to study.

Middle and Upper School History Film Club

History meets Hollywood. This is an opportunity to watch some of your favourite historical films on the big screen in a relaxed and informal setting. Films (based on real-life events) are chosen by vote. School packed lunches are provided – supplemented by the famous History department chocolate biscuits!

FINANCE AND BUSINESS



Psychology Club

Psychology is the study of the mind and tries to understand and explain our behaviour. Psychology Club offers a chance to discuss and research some interesting psychological ideas such as memory, body language, perception and illusions.

Sixth Form History Society

An opportunity to listen to talks from distinguished visiting historians – and to discuss historical topics, informally. A range of topics will be addressed, often tied to the A level syllabus – but also designed to broaden historical perspectives. The society stages a Christmas Quiz and end of term social gatherings.

Sixth Form Russian Club

GCSE Russian is offered to sixth formers during their free periods. They have the option of taking either full course or short course Edexcel GCSE after one or two years.

Sixth Form Spanish Club

Open to any pupil who, having done IGCSE Spanish, is not taking the subject in Sixth Form but wishes to keep up his skills in this language.

During our weekly meeting current affairs in Spanish-speaking countries are discussed, certain aspects of the Spanish grammar are covered and a deeper understanding of the Hispanic world is gained.



Economics Society

Together with pupils from Larkmead, St Helen's, OLA and Headington School we invite speakers from the world of business or academia who give a lecture followed by Q&A. This gives pupils a chance to understand the practical application of some of the ideas they have learnt about in class.

Young Enterprise

Young Enterprise, YE, provides the opportunity to set up and run your own company. You sell shares to raise capital and elect directors to manage the day-to-day running of your business. We take part in the national YE competition, selling goods or services to the real world and to customers who demand quality and competitive prices. This is an activity for highly motivated individuals with entrepreneurial instincts. There is also an opportunity for YE product design.



Boat Club (Rowing)

The Boat Club has been in existence at Abingdon School for over 180 years and goes from strength to strength. Boys can row from the Third Year upwards and training takes place both in the school gym and at the boathouse on The Thames.

We have a number of aims for the Club, at different levels. The Third Year (J14) is an introductory year where we try to give everybody a fair chance to improve and to see if they like it. We compete in a number of 'friendlies' against other schools and later on in the year we compete at some regattas, including The National Schools' Championships.

The next few years through J15 and J16 are spent developing 1st and 2nd Vllls, which will compete at external regattas and National Schools' championships. The School competes at Henley Royal Regatta and participates in the Junior International scheme, and boys have represented Great Britain since 1992. We try to accommodate all abilities and levels of commitment to foster enjoyment of a great team sport. We hope to maintain, and build on, our reputation as one of the most successful school boat clubs in the UK. There is a very active parents/friends supporters club, FASBC.

Athletics

The aim is to produce excellent athletes by providing an opportunity for all those with an interest to learn and to develop new skills. It is a structured programme of coaching by committed staff and there is regular competition in the Summer term against a large number of schools, at a local, regional and national level.

Coaching is provided in the full range of events; on the track: 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m and hurdles; and in the field: shot, javelin, discus, high jump, long jump and triple jump.

Training takes place at Tilsley Park with superb athletic facilities including an eight lane, floodlit track with steeplechase, pole vault, high jump and long jump facilities, a brand new throws area for javelin, shot put and discus as well as a 300 seat covered grandstand.

Badminton

Both match players and learners are accepted, although often there is a trial because more boys opt than we have space for. Our record against other schools is enviable.

Basketball

We are looking to build on our existing squad for the future so any aspiring Kobe Bryants or Michael Jordans are welcome.

Canoeing

We aim to introduce boys to various paddlesports and we currently specialise in whitewater kayaking, open canoeing and racing. Although most paddlesport sessions take place from the boathouse on the River Thames, we also run sessions in the school swimming pool where we can develop key skills, such as rolling, or play canoe polo. We are affiliated to the British Canoe Union and boys can obtain various qualifications during training sessions.

Boys can also complete their Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions at all levels in open canoes. In the past this has involved expeditions to various parts of the UK as well as overseas expeditions.



Cricket

We have an impressive fixture list and enter local and national tournaments often progressing well into the final stages of e.g. the National Schools 20/20 and the Lord's Taverners trophy.

Our U15 side tour South Africa most Lent terms and the 1st XI enter the Emirates pre-season trophy in Dubai every three years. Players regularly represent county and regional sides.



Cycling

This is an activity for those interested in an off-road ride once a week. There are currently two routes available to us, though we hope to add more. These are a fairly flat route with some lumps and bumps around Tilsley Park, and a more technical route around Shotover Country Park just east of Oxford.



Fencing

All year groups are welcome to come and try this Olympic sport, from beginners to experienced fencers. Full coaching is given and the School provides fencing kit and weapons for students. A minimum commitment of one session per week for one full term is required, although in practice many boys enjoy doing much more fencing than this. Matches are arranged with other schools throughout the calendar year, and keen fencers from our club have competed in and won many national and international competitions in the recent past. There has never a better time to try this popular Olympic sport. En garde!

Football

Football is well-established at Abingdon, with around 19 teams representing the School. The club plays regular fixtures during the Lent term and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd XI, U15A and U14A all compete in the Thames Valley League that comprises schools in the Oxfordshire and Berkshire area. Players have also gone on to represent the ISFA side, as well as county and academy squads.

Futsal Club

A recent addition to the Abingdon School Football Club is the Futsal Club. This form of the game, originating in South America, aids the development of the player's close control, dribbling and game awareness, utilising a smaller weighted ball whilst playing in a five-a-side environment.

Golf

The golf team is coached by a PGA professional at Drayton Golf Club. The team consists of players with, or aspiring to have, single-figure handicaps. During these sessions we work on all aspects of the game including course management, shot shaping and the short game, and there is the opportunity to computer-analyse players' swings.

The team plays in the Oxfordshire county championships, and both the HMC foursomes and Independent Schools' Golf Association knock-out competitions, as well as various friendly fixtures against other school sides. There is also a House Golf competition.

There are other opportunities for a broader range of players to play, and to receive expert coaching. Golf lessons take place as a group on the driving range, and there is specialised putting practice as well as visits to the 'par 3' course (weather permitting).

Hockey

Hockey is a major sport in the Lent term. The Hockey Club usually fields 15 teams throughout the age groups, with every team from U14D to 1st XI competing in the Independent Schools Hockey League. This has been set up by the top flight of hockey-playing independent schools, to challenge and stretch their hockey players above and beyond the standard school fixtures.

The Hockey Club has enjoyed a great deal of success in recent years, with many players representing county, regional and some national sides.



Cross-Country

Cross-country running is open to all. Training assumes a motivation for good health, commitment to the values and competition schedule of the club, and strict adherence to teamwork. Competition takes place in both Michaelmas and Lent terms in many prestigious and long-standing events.

We start our training in September with very short distances and build gradually and carefully to longer distances of 20km. The season ends in March. Training is a mixture of long, slow distances, threshold and speed workouts as well as the introduction of strength and conditioning sessions to help avoid injury. All staff who coach are competitive athletes locally, nationally and internationally. Runs take in most of rural Oxfordshire and beyond. Results are excellent with close competition between the top running schools. Past pupils have captained their own club at university and some have competed on the international stage. One of the aims of the club is to build a life-long affinity for running and competition.

Judo

Judo is a popular activity which takes place during regular weekly sessions; these are taken by a qualified external coach. Boys are instructed in the various principles and techniques, and there are opportunities for sparring in a competitive context.

Karate

Karate is an excellent way to improve fitness, co-ordination, stability and suppleness – skills useful in other sports. It also has the added benefits of teaching self-defence and discipline, and thus increases self-confidence. Sessions are timed to allow participation in another sport as well. No experience is necessary. Gradings are four times a year; you could achieve a black belt in three to four years.





Pilates

There is growing evidence to suggest that a strong core and improved flexibility is key to sporting success. The classes focus on delivering a programme which seeks to improve pupils' core strength in order to assist in keeping them injury-free and stronger through their core.

Real Tennis

Real Tennis is a famous, fun and fascinating sport. Once played by King Henry VIII, it gave rise to the modern game of Lawn Tennis. Played on an indoor court, the ball is hit over a sagging net either onto the court or a wall – straight or sloping – or into another net! We play on the court at Radley College. No previous experience is expected, however an aptitude for racquet sports, particularly tennis, is an advantage. Professional tuition is provided.

Rugby

We pride ourselves on offering enough rugby teams per age group to boys of all ability levels. We play competitively each weekend throughout the Michaelmas term, against a tough fixture list.

Most years we enter teams into the National Natwest Cup at U18 and U15 age group; the County Cup at various age groups; several Sevens competitions, including the Rosslyn Park National Schoolboy Sevens at U14 & U16 age group; as well as the Sedbergh School Super Tens at 1st Team level. Our Seniors tour internationally every two years and our Juniors and Junior Colts squads tour annually at October half-term.

All parents are encouraged to join Abingdon Touchliners, a parental committee that supports our rugby club programme – through organising major events throughout the year that help support and add to the provision offered to all boys in the club.

Rugby Sevens

Rugby Sevens is run as a Lent term activity across all ages. For the senior boys it also helps assist in their preparation and participation in representative games for county, academy or national games that take place at this time. Age group sides have a minimum of two festivals/tournaments, with the emphasis on skill development combined with tactical decision-making.

Shooting

No experience is necessary since training is provided. Once at a reasonable standard, pupils are formed into teams and entered for postal competitions against other schools. We also have the opportunity to shoot in international matches against European schools. We participate in an annual exchange with the Stade team in Germany during the Easter holidays.

Lower school boys may sign up for the eight-week Air Rifle Youth Proficiency Scheme. Successful completion of this course allows lower school boys to move on to .22 rifle shooting. Recently, members of the Rifle Club have won county titles, and some have taken part in GB development training. There is a charge for coaching and ammunition.



Sailing

We mainly sail at Farmoor Reservoir, with beginners using boats owned by the Oxford Sail Training Trust and more advanced sailors making use of our extensive school fleet, which includes eight Standard Lasers, four RS500s, two 29ers and two SB20 keelboats.

Opportunities for sailors at Abingdon are varied and include learning to sail from scratch, developing racing skills in single handed, double handed and multi-crew boats and working towards RYA qualifications.

Abingdon Sailing Club has an active DofE programme with expeditions offered under sail at Bronze, Silver and Gold Level. As an RYA recognised training centre we supplement the yachting side by offering and delivering RYA theory courses up to and including yachtmaster theory as well as the Diesel Engine course and RYA VHF radio course.

Highlights for the Sailing Club over the past few years include competing at Cowes week, competing in the SB20 World Championships and students passing their Day Skipper, Dinghy Instructor and Yachtmaster Qualifications (run in association with partner organisations).



Squash

The superb courts in the Sports Centre provide a focus for home matches and training. We have a highly-promising squad of talented players throughout the school, trained by a Squash England coach.

Squash is available as a sports option to selected squad players in the Third Year and above, but other boys will have opportunities to play at various times as an activity. Senior boys and boarders are also able to play in their free time when the courts are not being used.

Swimming

Our eight lane 25m swimming pool provides the ideal environment to develop swimming technique throughout the year. The squad train at allocated times and cover up to 10,000m a week, with the possibility of dry land training in addition. The majority of the galas are held in the Lent term, but we also enter swimmers for the English Schools National Championships in both the individual and relay events. It is recommended that serious swimmers join the local club which uses the Abingdon School pool. For those that wish to swim recreationally there is space to swim within the allocated sessions and a programme to improve fitness is provided.

Table Tennis

An opportunity for players of all abilities, but numbers are limited to about 20, so places are on a first-come-first-served basis. At the top end the standard is very high.

Tennis

We run 17 teams across the age groups, with coaching sessions and matches being held in our excellent facilities. Most years the club takes part in the Independent Schools League, Oxfordshire Independent Schools Competition, the Aegon Cup and the Independent Schools Tennis Association Tournaments. There have been a number of unbeaten teams over the last few years and many players go on to gain county and even national honours.

The Tennis Club runs internal box leagues and ladder competitions, with every match being played as a British Tennis rating match.

All players in the club are eligible to sign up for a free British Tennis Membership, offering them a rating, free entry to the Wimbledon ticket ballot and other LTA membership offers.

Touch Rugby

Touch Rugby is a fast-paced and energetic game that removes the physical nature of the 15-a-side game, focusing on skills and game awareness. With between seven and ten on a team there is much more time on the ball, and the removal of the contact allows a more level playing field. It provides an excellent opportunity for boys of all years to mix and for younger boys to learn vital skills from those older than themselves.

Water Polo

Water Polo is a fast-paced and physically demanding hybrid of swimming, basketball and rugby. The teams compete against other schools and often as part of a 'double-bill' with swimming competitions. Matches and training with the Oxford University Men's team takes place on an ad hoc basis. New players are always welcome to come along for a trial. No previous experience is necessary but being a confident swimmer is essential.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, DofE, is a nationally recognised scheme and is the single most sought-after non-academic qualification with UK employers. It consists of three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold and within each level there are four component parts: Skill, Service, Physical recreation and Expeditions. At Gold there is a fifth section, Residential.

Each year approximately 225 boys sign up for DofE. The School runs all their expeditions in-house, using teachers as supervisors to give the boys the extra support and mentoring that adds value to the experience. By completing DofE boys demonstrate their team work, commitment and organisational skills, and as a package it gives them the life experiences that develop them into well-rounded young men.

Bronze Award

Participants need to show commitment and determination to organise their activities, and need to do two of the first three sections for at least three months, and one for at least six months. However, with the wealth of Other Half activities on offer it is usually possible to complete these requirements in school.

For the Expedition section, initial training takes place in the Fourth Year during the Lent term. Planning sessions and the expeditions themselves follow in the Lent and Summer terms.

It is vital that participants attend all these commitments, which are advertised well in advance. The skills covered on expeditions will be learned in real situations and should remain of use throughout life. Boys may also complete their expedition phase by canoe or by sailing.

The Bronze level of the award usually takes about a year, but is not time-bound and can extend for longer if needed.

Silver and Gold Awards

The Silver and Gold levels of the award allow participants to build on the skills and abilities they have gained from the Bronze level and apply them in more challenging situations. At Gold the assessed expeditions are normally run in remote areas of the Scottish Highlands; we offer boys three methods to complete their expedition: walking, canoeing or sailing.

At the Bronze level, participants will need to commit to the four component sections but are involved for a greater period of time. They also will need to complete a Residential section where they will take part in a worthy activity for five days and four nights with other young people they have never met before.



Lower School Adventure Trips

The aim of the First Year trip is to allow the boys the opportunity to experience a wide range of outdoor activities and team building exercises within a purpose-built centre. The activities include abseiling, archery, climbing, a high ropes course and quad-biking.

The Second Year trip provides the opportunity to take things a stage further and includes similar activities to the First Year trip, plus canoeing, gorge-walking and hill-walking – all in their natural environment within the Brecon Beacons. Both trips are residential and are organised with fully-qualified instruction.



Worldwide Expeditions

The School has a strong tradition of embarking on challenging and adventurous trips and expeditions to various parts of the globe. They are for anyone interested in trekking and experiencing new cultures and climates. Trips have included: ten-day expeditions to Egypt and Morocco, three- to four-week expeditions to Peru and the Himalayas, Vietnam and Turkey and an eight-day ascent of Kilimanjaro as well as dog sledging and cross-country skiing in the Arctic. A recent trip to Finland, a winter multi-activity expedition, included: wilderness snowshoeing, ice climbing, building quinzees and husky dog rides. The trips are designed to be challenging, both mentally and physically, with boys taking responsibility for much of the organisation themselves (both before and during the trip). It is hoped the boys will develop their leadership skills and ability to work as a team during the expeditions. With many trips boys are asked to raise a substantial portion of the cost of the trip themselves.

All future trips and expeditions will be advertised on the website.

