

Abingdon School in Partnership



Newsletter
Volume 2 | Autumn/Winter 2019/20

Introduction

As we enter our second year of the Abingdon School in Partnership programme (ASiP) there is much to report and much to look forward to. Having had the opportunity to visit several of our fantastic partner schools across the town such as Fitzharrys, Larkmead and John Mason, as well as seeing fruitful learning partnerships flourish in other parts of the country such as Canterbury, Norwich and York, I remain convinced that while we as a school have much to offer, we also have much to learn. Which is why Abingdon has placed partnerships at the very heart of its foundation, and has developed a strategic vision based on three key elements allowing us to focus effort and attention on developing meaningful and collaborative relationships across the town. The three elements of Abingdon School in Partnership (ASiP) include:

Community - For Abingdon School to build on the positive role it plays within the local community

Collaboration - For Abingdon students and staff to collaborate effectively and positively with members of the local community

Challenge - For Abingdon students and staff to stretch and challenge themselves via collaboration

With almost 70% of Abingdon staff having had experience of working in partnerships before, and 85% being keen to remain, or indeed become involved, it is clear there is an appetite to collaborate with colleagues and students

from across the town. The benefits of such partnerships can be broad and meaningful; from teacher professional development to leadership opportunities for students. To get a sense of the scale of partnerships, here are a few statistics to reflect on for the academic year 2018–19:

- Abingdon School hosted almost 150 events
- ASiP partnered with more than 50 primary and secondary schools and other organisations
- Abingdon academic staff volunteered more than 1,300 hours to partnership events
- Abingdon support staff volunteered more than 1,500 hours to partnership events
- Over 300 Abingdon students were involved in partnership events
- More than 6,500 partner school student experiences

(a student experience is a student from a partner school taking part in an ASiP event)

This year we aim to broaden the scope and variety of our partnership programme expanding into visual arts, sports and music, while sustaining and hopefully expanding our science partnership, academic mentoring, performing arts and extra-curricular links. So read on and hear about the ASiP programmes that staff and students have been involved in over the last year.



Overview



**Summary
of ASiP
2018–2019**



30
Activities



>6,500
Students from
partner schools



>300
Abingdon
students



>6,800

Total number of
student, staff and
public visits to
ASiP events

Community, Collaboration, Challenge

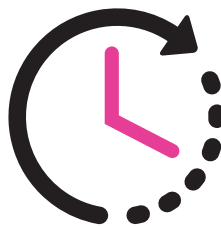


90% of students agreed or strongly agreed
with the value of the the ASiP academic
mentoring scheme

In partnership
with



>50
primary and
secondary
schools and other
organisations



Hours spent on
ASiP events

~1,300
by teaching staff
~1,500
by support staff



90% of students
would recommend or
strongly recommend
the ASiP academic
mentoring scheme
to a friend

Abingdon Science Partnership

ATOM Festival

Abingdon Science Partnership (ASP) plays a key role in supporting the ATOM Festival of Science and Technology. At this year's Primary Science Fair eight primary schools exhibited interactive stands at the Amey Theatre, which were visited by hundreds of their schoolmates during the day. The Science Market in the town square featured a team of Science Buskers from local secondary schools engaging the public with science demonstrations. The Amey Theatre was the venue for the sellout headline speaker Dr Hannah Fry, and Saturday lectures on everything from puffin research to proton beam therapy. ASP's major contribution though is the ever-expanding Family Science Fair. The Yang Science Centre is filled with exhibits run by over 20 organisations and our own team of science teachers, technicians and pupil Science Ambassadors, and was enjoyed by nearly 600 visitors last year. The ATOM Festival is a shining example of the contribution the school is making to partnerships in Abingdon and beyond. ATOM 2020 will be no different with highlights set to include: a student-led Climate Solutions Conference, and headline speakers Dr Helen Czerski and Professor Richard Wiseman. Visit <https://www.atomfestival.org.uk/> to find out more!

Ogden Trust Physics Intern

ASP was delighted to collaborate with the physics department and The Ogden Trust in hosting an intern, Gabriel Semple, during the summer term of 2019. Gabriel was especially suited to the role, being an ex-pupil of two of our local partner schools, Fitzharrys and St Edmund's RC Primary. Gabriel made a hugely positive impression due to his enthusiasm for science and his ability to engage with all ages. As well as assisting with ASP activities, he developed workshops of his own: one on Orbits and Circular Motion delivered to pupils from his old school, Fitzharrys. He would definitely have a fantastic career as a teacher ahead of him.

Other highlights

- 382 primary pupils received a CREST Award in 2018-19
- Abingdon staff have delivered 38 science workshops to more than 800 pupils this academic year
- ASP staff helped to develop CELL, a science-inspired dance production, performed for four schools in partnership with Larkmead

~ **Jeremy Thomas**

Abingdon Science Partnership Coordinator

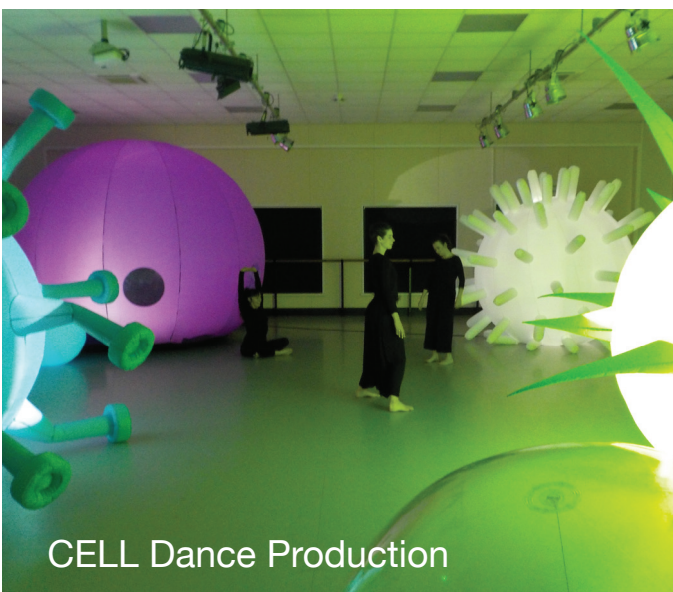




CREST Science Investigator Award



Primary Science Workshops



CELL Dance Production



Developing Leaders Programme

An exciting initiative was launched earlier this year: a cross-town peer mentoring programme with sixth form students from Abingdon, St Helen and St Katharine, John Mason and Fitzharrys School mentoring Key Stage 3 and 4 students in their own schools. These students undertook training in relevant counselling skills and the official role of Peer Support Leads began in each school from September 2019 and will carry on until the Easter break. Twilight training sessions in each school throughout this year will provide an opportunity for Peer Support Leads to share experiences and learn from each other while supporting mental health and wellbeing in each school. Hopefully, this will enable peer mentoring to become embedded within school life across the whole town. So far the experience has been hugely positive with the Peer Support Leads meeting Mrs Preiss-Chapman and Mr Southwell-Sander on a fortnightly basis to discuss their experiences. Ultimately we hope this programme adds a layer of support to our already excellent pastoral care.

~ **Robin Southwell-Sander**

"I feel the skills I have acquired from the training workshops are invaluable and being able to implement them in my day to day life as well as when talking to younger students has helped me develop as a person as well as hopefully helping to convey the message that I'm someone younger students can have a chat with. As well as this the training workshops helped me make friends with a couple of people from the surrounding schools I probably wouldn't have otherwise met and learning about the variety of situations that peer supporters from other schools have had to deal with has made me appreciate just how useful a peer support programme is."

~ **Sixth Form Peer Support Lead, Abingdon**



Academic Mentoring



English

Sixty Year 11 and sixth form pupils from Abingdon, Larkmead, Fitzharrys and John Mason came together for English mentoring lessons to study a variety of topics ranging from descriptive composition to speech writing. The sixth form mentors plan and deliver lessons to GCSE pupils, helping the Year 11s to prepare for their mock exams whilst also consolidating their own knowledge. As an exciting addition to this project we are using the software of ImpactEd (<https://impacted.org.uk/>) to measure the impact of this project on the Year 11 and sixth form students in terms of a selection of competencies such as growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy and motivation. The results will then be used to improve the programme moving forward.

~ **Robin Southwell-Sander**

"My sincerest congratulations to you on a very worthwhile and engaging initiative. I greatly look forward to the next one!"

~ **Teacher, Fitzharrys School**



Maths

Fifty pupils from Abingdon School, Fitzharrys, John Mason, and Larkmead matched wits in a local version of the Team Maths Challenge. After some initial training sessions, Year 12 students taught problem-solving skills, and mentored mixed teams of Year 8s and 9s as they competed to solve perplexing mathematical puzzles against the clock. The Year 12s gained a deeper understanding of problem-solving strategies through teaching themselves, while the Year 8s and 9s worked together and learnt from each other.

~ **Jason Taylor**

Abingdon Maths Teacher

"The partnership scheme has helped me develop clear communication and organisation skills. I would definitely recommend it to others both because of how enjoyable it was and the skills it teaches you."

~ **Sixth Form Student, Abingdon**

Performing Arts Partnership

The summer of 2019 saw vigorous activity by Abingdon Film Academy students from Larkmead and Fitzharrys Schools who had been working on five new films with Abingdon Film Unit tutors, which were then premiered at our first partnership film screening in December. Our new students experienced the reality of the filmmaker's adage that says to make one film, you must make three - the one you plan, the one you shoot and the one you edit. As well as filmmaking, partnership projects in art, playwriting, drama, technical theatre and music are under way. It has been exciting to start the second year of formal arts partnership activity, and to see students collaborating closely, as in the impressive-looking music video directed by Larkmead student Renée Le Maguet, featuring Abingdon actor Archie Turnbull, or the ghost thriller directed by Fitzharrys student Alex Thornton with music composed by Abingdon's David Bicarregui.

~ Jeremy Taylor

Arts Partnership Coordinator

"Thank you so much for your help and support during the production! If it wasn't for yourselves and of course Mrs Phillips (getting me in touch with all you amazing people), I wouldn't have anything to present. It's been an amazing experience, and I can't wait to think up a new idea for the next film. I'm looking forward to seeing it being screened on the big screen soon!"

~ Sixth Form Student, Larkmead School



Primary School Liaison

Language Leaders

A group of middle school students was trained to deliver lessons on their chosen topic in a particular language in some of our partner primary schools.

"My friend and I, feeling really quite nervous, were shown into a primary school classroom of Year 5 and 6 pupils. We had been attending the Other Half Language Leader programme for sixth months, and had been planning and creating resources for a Spanish lesson on our chosen topic — Sport. Overall, it was a very rewarding and enjoyable morning and the programme has given me a better understanding of the work that goes on to prepare and give lessons. I am really hoping to do it again."

~ Fourth Year Student, Abingdon

Humanities morning

In the inaugural ASiP Humanities morning, Year 4 pupils were fascinated by lessons and workshops on Judaism, philosophy, geology, Tudor food, Roman soldiers and studying landmarks using the computers in the GIS suite.

"The classes were engaging and interactive and each subject area extended children's learning well without being too far beyond their understanding."

~ Teacher, Sunningwell Primary School

Mini Olympics

The Sports Department welcomed seven local primary schools for our annual Mini Olympics event. Teams from Appleton, Buckland, Long Furlong, Longworth, Long Wittenham, St Nicolas and reigning champions Thameside enjoyed a fun morning of relay races, bouldering, rowing ergos and an obstacle course. The Year 5 boys and girls enjoyed themselves as they valiantly competed for the trophy and the winners were Buckland School.



Art and Design Technology

Art

Kate Byrne visited Buckland Primary school on six afternoons throughout September and October 2019 and ran a workshop based on Aboriginal art. Year 5 and 6 students made clay Australian animals and painted didgeridoo poles using Aboriginal symbols to tell a story. The students really enjoyed the activities, "it's better than football" one boy said. This was a new project that falls within our growing arts partnership.

~ Kate Byrne

Art Teacher, Abingdon School

"A huge thanks from us. Our children really enjoyed your specialist clay teaching today. They have not had this opportunity before. They will look forward to next time."

~Teacher, Buckland Primary School



DT

The project was a design, model and make project, with the product being a creative cable car, anything that could hang under a motorised carrier that moved backwards and forwards along a cable across the classroom. The project introduced them to isometric sketching, modelling in card and paper and then making in wood and card as their designs required, and to using drills and saws. They all used the tools and made a product that hung under the carrier and 'flew' across the room.

~Mike Webb

Design & Technology Teacher, Abingdon School



These projects allow Abingdon staff to teach in a very different environment to the one they are used to, thus helping professional development, as well as providing subject specialism to our partner primary schools.

Sport

Year 7 and 8 students were helped to develop the fundamentals of rugby over a 5-week course, the aim being to prepare them for a tournament at the end of the training. Training was led by a London Wasps representative which was engaging and fun for the students.

~ **Nat Reading**
ASiP Assistant

"The students have recently commented how much they enjoyed the activities and the calm manner of the coaches when they made mistakes! Some of the boys who committed to the club were then able to apply their new knowledge and skills in a Vale Schools festival. The students have benefited greatly - we are very grateful for the support and look forward to future links."

~ **Teacher, Fitzharrys School**



Teaching and Learning Professional Development

New staff (1-4 years in teaching) gathered at Abingdon School to discuss professional development and share good practice. Almost 30 staff from five different schools attended with the evening being led by Ronnie Reading and her team of Assistant Directors of Teaching and Learning.

~ **Robin Southwell-Sander**

"It is especially satisfying to attend a CPD event and feel that you have two or three take-away ideas."

~ **Teacher, Radley College**



Coming Up

Saturday 29 February 2020

Institute of Physics Teacher CPD day

14-22 March 2020

ATOM Festival of Science and Technology featuring:
Student Science Ambassadors and Buskers
Climate Solutions Student Conference
Family Science Fair

Monday 27 April 2020

Futures Fair

Lent Term 2020

Sixth Form Science Mentoring

Summer Term 2020

Sixth Form Peer Mentoring Launch
Oxford Playhouse 'Plays Out' for local primary schools

Theatre Technical Crew Collaboration
with Larkmead, John Mason and Fitzharrys on their productions

Screen Printing Sessions
at Abingdon with Fitzharrys

Ceramics Workshops
with Larkmead

Joint Sixth Form Monologue Performances
at Didcot Cornerstone



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