

The GALLERY TRUST

A community of special schools

Newsletter

Spring 2021

Tyler, a pupil at Springfield School

For pupils, families and staff of schools within The Gallery Trust





Welcome

Despite the incredibly difficult challenges of the last year and the continuing impact of the pandemic, our Spring 2021 newsletter shows that our school communities have much to celebrate. Our schools have remained open, our students continue to engage with their learning at home or at school, and our staff maintain their remarkable flexibility, dedication, and kindness. The commitment of parents and carers to work closely with schools and to support their children at home as necessary has been hugely appreciated.

There is now hope that we may be able to soon return to a more normal life. We will be vigilant in keeping our school sites as safe as possible, to work with parents and carers to meet the needs of every pupil, and to take the time to celebrate each and every achievement.

An important part of our recovery from Covid 19 will be to recognise the impact it has had on our students. We know that students learn best when they feel confident and happy. We will focus on listening to students, and supporting them to feel optimistic and hopeful about the future. Many will need help with rebuilding their relationships and reconnecting with their communities, and this will be our priority as we develop plans to catch up on disrupted learning.

As we cautiously move out of crisis into recovery, we have the opportunity to review the way we work, and to apply the lessons learned. The increased use of technology and digital platforms have encouraged creativity, and independent learning skills. We have seen the benefit of more frequent communication with families, and not least, continuing to appreciate our staff teams as our most valuable asset will help us to not only recover, but to flourish.

Above all, we must be proud of what we have achieved by working in partnership with each other.

A very exciting and positive development took place in November 2020, when Mabel Prichard School joined the Trust. Mabel Prichard School is a community special school for children and young people with complex special needs from the age of 2 to 19. With primary and secondary departments located on two different sites in Oxford, the school caters for 112 students with a range of profound learning and physical disabilities. I am sure you will join me in welcoming the staff and students at Mabel Prichard School to our thriving community of special schools.



Thank you for your support. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at office@thegallerytrust.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kay Willett,
Chief Executive,
The Gallery Trust

Trust update

Remote Education

Over the last 12 months, and particularly since the lockdown at the start of this year, remote education has become a familiar concept.

Across the Trust, the range of ways in which remote education is being offered is impressive. The focus has been that learning is in line with students' Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) outcomes, and that students continue to have access to a broad curriculum.

The range of approaches have included:

- Online face to face lessons and check ins
- Signposting to online lessons and learning (including the Oak Academy, an online resource)
- Work packs for pupils
- Individually planned and resourced activities in accordance with students' Education, Health and Care Plan Outcomes
- Feedback from teachers on work and open dialogue with parents on what is working, and next steps

Trust schools educate students with a wide range of abilities and recognise that some students may work on and consolidate the same skill for several weeks, whereas others will need new learning opportunities every week. Teachers continue to work closely with all parents and carers to ensure the balance is right.

Whilst we fully support and recognise the importance of a continuing education, the most important consideration during this time is that all children are supported to be happy and healthy. We know that some children will find aspects of the current arrangements, and returning to normality with a degree of uncertainty, challenging. We remain committed to working closely with parents, carers and other professionals to provide best support for all pupils.

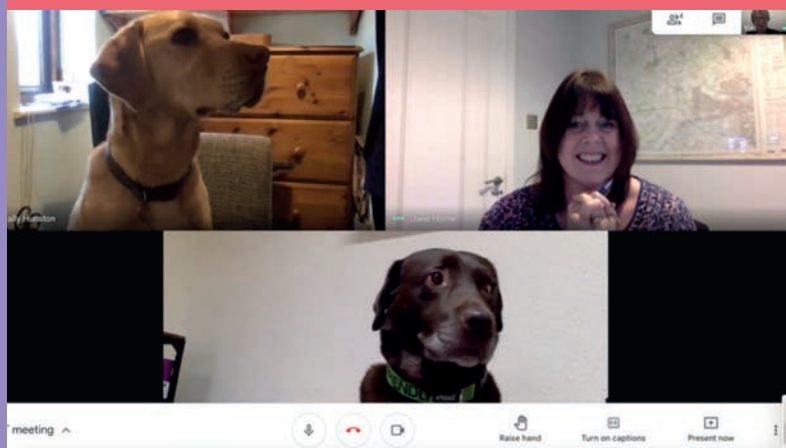
Thank you to all parents and carers and school staff who have worked closely together throughout this period as we learn what approach works best for each child across our schools.



A popular initiative at Iffley Academy is the online reading room, which is a Jackanory-style resource for all students, where Iffley staff have been reading their favourite story books. Mr Cornley's reading of George's Marvellous Medicine was popular. "Hello Mr Cornley... Me and my mum really enjoy listening to you. You are so funny and I love the funny granny voice so much. You made us laugh. Me and my mum said, can you read more of his funny books please and we will listen to them too."

Update from important meeting!

Teasel, who has worked at Iffley Academy and most recently at Northern House Academy, has been working from home for the last few weeks. Teasel misses being with pupils, but was discovered holding an online meeting last week with Dexter and Jane Horne, the Trust's Chief Operating Officer, to discuss important issues such as dog treat allocation, and how many walks with students they can expect each day.



Estates update by Chris Woodward, Estates Manager

I am very proud of the facilities we offer our students to enhance their learning outcomes. We are constantly looking for ways to improve and develop our buildings to meet the needs of students, from large-scale redecoration and upgrades, to extensions and new-build projects.

The building works at Iffley Academy have now been completed, and these wonderful new facilities provide great opportunities for the students.

Another exciting development is our new Orion Academy building. Contractors have been on-site since July 2020 and have made great progress. Roof sections and windows are now being installed to get the building 'dry', and we are only a few

weeks away before major internal works begin.

At Bardwell School, major upgrades to the Hydrotherapy Pool have taken place following a successful bid for funding from the Department for Education. The pool now has a much needed new lining, and behind the scenes a new plant room was installed to ensure that it has greater energy efficiency and resilience in case of breakdown. This upgrade will benefit students and community users.

We continue to work on the pre-opening phase of Bloxham Grove Academy which is co-located at The Warriner School site in Bloxham. The school is due to open in 2022 – 2023, and will be another fantastic addition to the Trust's estates.

In early February 2021, contractors broke ground on a £1.5m extension to Bardwell School. This exciting development will provide an additional 16 student places at Bardwell. The photograph shows the breaking ground ceremony, with Head Teacher Matthew Selsdon, with spade, and myself.



Academy updates

Iffley Academy

Students have been learning about Rome and Roman Gods. This has led to some really exciting activities, with students learning about Roman numerals and the history of how roads were made. Students have been enjoying making their own costumes, learning about gladiators and have even produced their own action movie whilst studying at Hill End! It has been great to see students both at home and at school getting involved, making their own Colosseums and staying connected with one another.



Sixth form students have begun a new and exciting adventure, as we are now running the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Students have been volunteering and learning new skills alongside beginning their expeditions (pre-lockdown) which included a visit to Boars Hill. With the naked eye students were able to see the new school building from 5 miles away!





Orion Academy

We value the links that we are forming with local employers in order to support the students to engage with meaningful work experience placements. We have been very fortunate to maintain some placements during lockdown, which have been carefully risk assessed and follow all Covid-19 guidelines.

One such opportunity, currently enjoyed by Year 10 student Kailan, is working at YES (Youth Engagement Service) to access work experience at a village garage, Automotive Extras Ltd. This gives Kailan hands on experience working as a mechanic in a calm, quiet and supportive

environment, where no two days are ever the same: one minute he will be changing a tyre for a local resident and the next he's raising the ramps and changing the alternator on a track race car!

Kailan will stay with YES until the end of year 11 in order to gain his qualifications and Orion Academy will then source and apply for a college course or apprenticeship. With the experience gained from YES and AE Ltd this will be a straightforward and seamless entry into Post 16 education.



Orion
Academy



**Northern House
Academy**



Northern House Academy

Online and remote learning is providing us with so many opportunities to improve the way we all learn and what can be achieved, not just during the pandemic, but into the future. Technology is enhancing our activities and is allowing students to access the curriculum in a variety of different ways.

The students have embraced the virtual celebration assemblies and love dancing all together on screen at the end. Having everyone together in their classes to sit down at lunchtime and enjoy a meal together is certainly a real positive consequence of the adapted measures we have made in order to

continue to reduce the risks of transmission of Covid-19.

Some of our classes have been lucky this term within the lockdown to continue to access the provision at Hill End. The children have been having a fabulous time taking part in a range of activities, as described by a student: "Our class had fun going to a witch's cabin. We made traditional broomsticks and left them as a gift. After returning to camp we had hot chocolate, a packed lunch and roasted marshmallows over the fire."

Being able to continue to enjoy the great outdoors especially at the moment is of significant benefit to everyone's wellbeing and mental health.



Bardwell School

Bardwell School has always focused on empowering students to go further in learning and in life by recognising their strengths, providing a positive environment to build confidence, and equipping them to succeed.

Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, recent months have not proved an exception to this focus, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on our amazing students - their resilience, focus, positive spirit, and successes, and the support given by our staff. We are all very proud of our students' achievements every single day that we work with them.

Class 1 have been creative in the lockdown restrictions to complete their "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" film. We were delighted with the finished film!

Class 7's Bikeability sessions have been an immense success, really showcasing the students' skills as they have pedalled across the school playground and around local roads.

Students in The Lodge have been finding safe ways to access the local community 5K routes as part of their weekly sports sessions.

As well lots of exciting teaching and learning in the classroom, the teaching team have been hard at work on the second edition of the Bardwell Curriculum. Along with the new curriculum, we now have Subject Advisers in post across all subjects.





Springfield School

Our Key Stage 4 students and staff have focussed on adapting their work for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (D of E) and the Spike Enterprise, which develop skills in planning, creating and implementing different projects.

As part of the D of E volunteering section, some students have learnt the signs to songs and videoed themselves so that other students in the school can learn the signs. Students also organised and ran some fundraising events for the MacMillan Coffee Morning, Children In Need and Christmas Jumper Day.

Spike Enterprise has been going for several years at Springfield. Students have to discuss, choose, agree, plan, produce and sell their products. These projects work on a wide range of skills from communication and maths to creativity and independence skills. All of the students in Key

Stage 4 are involved with one or more aspects of the project.

Usually students run a school tuck shop as well as a business where they sell a range of products. In the Autumn Term, they had to consider what they could safely make and sell. They designed a questionnaire to research what products people would like to buy and voted to make the final decisions before developing their order forms. Students have made various gifts such as key rings, cotton bags, bath salts and candles as well as Christmas cards and decorations.

Well done Key Stage 4 for being creative and being able to continue with your volunteering and business.



Springfield
School

Mabel Prichard School

We were very pleased to join the Trust late last year, and we look forward to being part of the Trust community of Schools.

Our topic of the term is 'Being Healthy', so we have been learning about the importance of good mental and physical health. This has included Makaton yoga sessions and indoor exercise when it has been cold and icy outside.

We are working on improving the learning environment on both sites and have just refitted our primary school library. This has now created a much more inviting learning space and we are very much looking forward to using it fully when everyone returns.

Our value of the term is 'Hope'. We have done a lot of learning about what hope means for us all and what our wishes and dreams are for the future. We are all agreed that Rupert and Becksy, our school dogs, are one of the things that make us happy and hopeful.





Spotlight on the Board of Trustees

The Trust is a charity dedicated to providing outstanding education and support for young people with special needs and disabilities. A single organisation and legal entity, the Trust has

653 pupils 449 staff
working across Oxfordshire

The Board of Trustees is the decision-making body of the Trust and is accountable and responsible for all the schools in the Trust. The Board is required to promote the Trust's charitable objective 'to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom'. The Board has three core functions: to ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic decision; to hold leaders to account for educational performance; and to oversee financial performance.

These are lofty words, but of course the Board relies on the Trust's Executive Team and Head Teachers to provide strategic leadership to enable the Trust to be a centre of excellence for SEND that secures outstanding outcomes for young people. In turn, these leaders depend on the energy and enthusiasm of all Trust staff to turn good intentions into practical actions. For the last year we have witnessed a truly remarkable effort from everyone to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the pandemic, and for this endeavour we are hugely grateful.

It has been a frustrating year for all, and for the Trustees it has been compounded by the lack of opportunity to visit schools and see at first hand the excellent work being undertaken daily to meet the needs of our students. We look forward to a time when we can come into schools to meet with staff and students in classrooms, staff rooms and playgrounds.

The Trust Board has recently completed a review of Trust governance, which has included a review of the local tier of governance in schools. Local Academy Boards (LABs) will replace Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) and some functions will change, but the Trust seeks to encourage and retain the strong commitment made by LGB members to support and advocate for their schools.

During the last year, three key Trustees reached the end of their term of office. Sian Rodway, Karen Shaw, and Gary Thomas were instrumental in the creation of the Trust in 2013, and they ensured that at the core of the Trust's work is the intention to improve the life chances of students in all the schools. We thank Sian, Karen and Gary for their commitment and contribution to the Trust. We shall be recruiting new Board members in the next few months.



Chris Scrivener,
Chair of Board of Trustees