

# The GALLERY TRUST

A community of special schools

# Newsletter

Summer 2021



Noah, a pupil at Ifley Academy, with Bear

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







# Welcome

Despite the pandemic and the challenges we continue to face, our schools are going from strength to strength. I recently received a letter from Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System. Baroness Berridge wrote that she was delighted to learn of the work which The Gallery Trust is doing, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, to support early intervention and ensure the sufficiency of high quality SEND provision for pupils with learning and physical disabilities across the county. Baroness Berridge asked me to pass on her thanks to all those involved in supporting our young people. I am very proud that the work undertaken by our staff, students and families, trustees, and those involved in governance at a local level, has been recognised and acknowledged in this way. This praise is very well deserved.

The importance of collaboration between the schools in the Trust has become even more apparent during the pandemic, as students and staff benefit from working together in many areas, sharing best practice, resources, and providing support and vital capacity to improve the quality of education and student welfare. The Government's ambition for every school to be part of a family in a strong multi academy trust is based on the advantages of a group of schools working together, and our recent experience has endorsed this approach. For me, the purposeful collaboration evident across the Trust has been consolidated during the last year, and is a positive and lasting legacy that we can continue to build upon.

The Trust continues to plan for its new free special school in Bloxham, near Banbury, and is working with the Department for Education and Oxfordshire County Council to find a location for a second new Trust special school in the South or West of the county.

A recent highlight was the 'topping out' ceremony held at Orion Academy. The ceremony was held to mark the new building reaching its highest point. We hope that students will be able to move into the building in September 2021, and in early 2022, we anticipate that the fantastic outdoor sports facilities, including an all-weather pitch, multi-use games area, and grass pitch, will be ready for students to enjoy.

I am grateful to students, families and staff for rising to meet the difficulties we have all encountered to ensure that learning and the wellbeing of our communities have remained our top priorities. As we approach the summer holidays, it is difficult to predict what the situation will be when you read this.

Above all, and whatever the circumstances, I wish you a safe and relaxing summer break.



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

**Kay Willett,**  
Chief Executive,  
The Gallery Trust



# Academy updates

## Iffley Academy

### Miles for Meals

On 26 May, the Academy supported the Miles for Meals campaign, an initiative set up to help provide healthy and nutritious meals to those in need during the Covid 19 pandemic. Around 500,000 meals have been supplied to over 100 charities for communities in need in the UK.

Pupils and staff all ran a mile at school, with Darren, our wonderful catering manager, running half a mile for every pupil who joined in at Iffley Academy. We had over 170 Iffley entries so Darren's target was a minimum of 85 miles! Darren exceeded this target, as he ran 100 miles.

The leadership team from Mabel Prichard School ran to Iffley Academy, completed a lap of our course, before running back to their school. So far, we have raised over £700 for Miles for Meals.



### Preparation for adulthood

Students in our Sixth Form have been working towards preparation for adulthood in their independence lessons and in small group interventions. One area of study is preparation for the skills needed to pass a driving theory test. These sessions are linked with our functional reading, speaking and listening curriculum, and are boosting student confidence as they work towards beginning their practical lessons.

We are celebrating the fact that Luca has recently passed his driving test and has been driving himself to and from school. Another student is having practical lessons outside of school. We also have independent travellers right across the school including students arriving on foot, by bike and one student who has recently passed his moped test!



## Orion Academy

Orion Academy's new school building continues to progress at a considerable pace. Each week we are able to stand on our current school field and watch all the action and hard work taking place; from the new sports hall roof being fitted to the flourishing landscape of the outside areas.

The students have enjoyed visiting the new school site and asking questions of the wide variety of tradespeople who are working hard to ensure that we are in our school at the start of the new academic year.

The building contractor for the new build, Morgan Sindall, has supported work experience placements, a 'try a trade' engagement experience, and a whole school initiative which involved every member of the school community visiting the site to sign a brick. Each brick was then laid as part of the new building. Not only has this been a fun activity for everyone, but will ensure a long-lasting legacy.

Students are also enjoying off site visits again, including to Hill End. The site provides the opportunity for adventure and learning for students, as they discover nature, living history, team building, science and technology and outdoor skills, such as building fires.

The satellite provision of Orion Academy, The Grove, will be based in the new building currently under construction on the Orion site. From September, the 12 students at the Grove will be taking advantage of the exciting facilities for four days a week, initially spending one day a week at The Warriner School Farm. The students will enjoy a range of activities, promoting a varied and tailored curriculum.



Orion Academy





## Northern House Academy

This half term, Dali Class are getting geared up to go on a summer vacation. However, before we embark on our journey, necessary planning needs to take place. Dali class have been working hard to get their travel passports ready and up-to-date. Our first stop, during this hot weather, is the sunny seaside. Dali class have been researching different activities we can do at the beach, and have made an itinerary which includes swimming, BBQing, and kite flying to name a few. We have also learnt about the different and fascinating animals that are found in the sea and have created them out of playdough. Next, we will be looking at different forests and national parks to get ready to go camping and explore the great outdoors.

All this planning and preparation is very tiring work and in this hot weather it will be great to have a cold, sweet treat. Dali class will be learning about ice creams and how it can change its state from a liquid to solid. We will also be making our

own delicious ice creams in the next few weeks, and they will be ready for sale at Dali's Ice Cream Parlour. Before we open for business, we need to make sure that we work out the correct price for each ice cream. To do this, Dali has been learning all about money and how to recognise different British coins. We have had fun playing shop and selling and buying food produces to help us learn about money and how we use it.

As a result of all this hard work, it is only right that we celebrate all the students' efforts and fantastic achievements. Many students have received Star of the week, Star of the Academy, Ace awards and the very special Dexter's Kindness Award. We celebrate their fantastic achievements every Friday during our whole school celebration assembly (which we now do virtually due to Covid-19).

Beau is continuing his training to be a therapy dog at Northern House Academy. He's been working on learning how to play with students and has made a lot of progress. We are very proud of him. Here he is playing with Kayum who loves working with the school dogs.



Some of the pupils in Picasso class celebrating their whole class Ace Award



Northern House Academy



## Bardwell School

This term has been one of exciting change and new experiences. The school site continues to change and develop, the new school hall is taking shape and the students can start to see the top of the new hall as the brickwork reaches the roof. The change in weather and the easing of restrictions has allowed for students to have their first outdoor assembly experience. This has been a great opportunity for the pupils to gather together in a safe space, share their successes during the week, see friends and celebrate achievements. They do not always go to plan, and we have had a few assemblies that have been a little wet with thunderstorms and rainclouds, but this has only made for a more exciting experience and brought laughter and smiles.

Class 2 are having lots of fun learning about different minibeasts this term. They are exploring and looking closely and finding different words to describe them.

Class 5 have been developing skills to understand maps and navigate to destinations. They did a superb job navigating staff to the local park using directional language and their map reading skills, while Class 7 have been developing their independence skills through Forest School sessions.







## Springfield School

Pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 cover a range of learning through different themes across the year. The themes cover areas of subjects such as History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology in a focussed cross curricula approach. Key Stage 2 classes have been exploring a range of activities to learn about aspects of Egyptian life.

Pupils learnt that clothes were washed in a river using heavy stones rather than a washing machine and after having a go at this, most decided it was much too hard! They have explored pyramid shapes and building pyramids with different materials and seen how hard it is to build one without it falling down. Pupils have followed recipes to make bread, have made a head-dress, designed ancient farming equipment and of course we have used lots of old bandages to wrap up like an Egyptian mummy. They have explored

hieroglyphics and looked at the different hieroglyphic that their names began with.

There has been a range of multi-sensory experiences with lots of sand and water for the river Nile. Some pupils benefitted from sensory story massage and a story based on a magic carpet ride.

It is always great to see how creative our teachers are in planning for and resourcing Theme based sessions to meet the needs of all of our pupils. For the 10 plagues of Egypt the resources ranged from strawberry shower gel and rice krispies to represent boils and red gloop for blood!



Springfield  
School



## Mabel Prichard School

Preparation for adulthood has a strong emphasis at Mabel Prichard School, and the theme is embedded within all our learning. Learners from 2 years to 19 years experience a range of areas, including opportunities to apply their learning beyond school, preparation for the next stage of life, social integration and independence skills.

We focus on different areas, including communication, physical and social development, life skills and independence, and areas such as mathematics, knowledge understanding, and English. As students progress through the key stages, they have the opportunity to participate in role play, discovery play, making choices, prefect duties, social opportunities, and community engagement. For example, in Key Stage 3, students undertake in-house work experience, and in Key Stage 4, students extend this to include work experience and placements in the community which are tailored to their individual interests. Students in Key Stages 4 and 5 also participate in enterprise and initiatives throughout the year, and KS 5 students have the choice of individual pathways which feature independence, supported living and work.

We have continued our outdoor curriculum work. As the topic of the term is 'Safety', which followed 'Being Healthy', the secondary site decided to hold a gardening day to learn about safety in the garden, the benefits of being outdoors and active, and how to keep plants healthy. This is linked to our Preparing for Adulthood curriculum as the students were able to experience gardening as a possible future job opportunity. Students had lots of opportunities to be independent, make their own choices, and soak up some sun.

As part of the 'safety' topic, primary students have been learning about people who help us, with lots of role play in Early Years and Key Stage One, with dolls, teddies and pupils dressing up as doctors, nurses and the police.





During the pandemic, the rainbow has been adopted as a symbol of hope, as they appear when the sun comes out after heavy rain, showing us that there is hope and light after dark and difficult times. People have adopted the rainbow to show support for key workers in the fight against Covid 19.

Jake in Year 3, Mabel Prichard School, wrote a lovely poem to celebrate the rainbow and key workers for a poetry competition:

**My Rainbow**  
**Doctors and Nurses stay in the hospital for 24 hours**  
**The rainbow is wonderful**  
**It is my favourite,**  
**It is happy.**  
**It is for people getting better.**  
**Stay home, protect the NHS, save lives.**



Jake is pictured with Head Teacher Mrs Wawrzyniak dressed as superheros for Children in Need Day, under his very own rainbow.





# 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 461 staff**  
**working across Oxfordshire**

A notable event for Trustees since the last newsletter has been an 'inspection' of the Trust Board. This is an important external judgement on the quality of governance. Our May 2021 Board meeting was attended by a senior Department for Education Adviser, who reports to the Department on the effectiveness of our governance arrangements.

I am delighted to report that the Adviser concluded that we had made very substantial progress in adapting our governance structure to provide clarity about responsibilities and accountabilities in our quest to promote the highest quality of education for our young people across the Trust. She was impressed by what has been achieved in a year overshadowed by the pandemic.

The credit for this achievement is shared by Trustees, the Senior Executive Team and Chairs of the former Local Governing Bodies (now Local Academy Boards), all of whom contributed ideas, asked critical questions and helped shape our current (and still evolving) plans.

A key quality indicator of the future effectiveness of the plans will be how the various tiers of governance can work well together. As Trustees we are looking forward to building a strong working relationship with Local Academy Boards (LABs)

at Bardwell School, Iffley Academy, Mabel Prichard School, and Springfield School (all of which have staff, parent/carers and community representation) in promoting excellence in teaching and learning.

The Rapid Improvement Boards at Orion and Northern House will evolve into LABs when we have external accreditation for the major improvements that the schools have made since joining the Trust.

As Trustees, we are keen to visit schools and to meet staff and students as soon as is safely possible and to encourage quality exchanges about our contribution to the Trust's aims and objectives. Remote meetings do not give us the real 'feel' of a school, nor staff and students the chance to meet us. We look forward to visiting soon in person, Covid-19 permitting.



**Chris Scrivener,**  
Chair of Board of Trustees