

Wallingford School Newsletter

Summer Edition - July 2026



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As we reach the very hot end of another academic year, we have a great deal to celebrate, to remember and to reflect upon.

There have been the exams and the revision, the lessons that have opened eyes and minds, the new content and experiences and much more within classrooms across our school; beyond the classroom, there have been trips and visits to destinations in the town, across the country and into Europe and North Africa; there have been fixtures and competitions, concerts, performances and productions, expeditions and a whole lot more.

All of these elements are fundamental to the fabric of our school. Our school ethos is built around sending every young person into the world able and qualified and that belief drives and informs each and every decision and development we make as staff as we review and refine what we do as a school.

We are fortunate to have great students – young people of whom we are very proud – fantastic staff and supportive families who have the highest aspirations for their children. Thank you to you all for your contribution to a memorable academic year.

It's time for a break now and we will return in September refreshed and revitalised and ready to do it all again.

Have a great summer Wallingford School.

- Mr J Marston, Headteacher





Spotlight Dance Show

On Thursday 16th April, the annual Spotlight Dance Show once again proved to be a spectacular evening of talent, energy and creativity. With a packed audience of over 200 people, the event showcased the incredible dedication and hard work of more than 50 students from across the school.

Performers included members of the KS3 Junior Dance Club, KS4 Senior Dance Club, Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE Dance students, as well as talented Sixth Form dancers. Behind the scenes, our student lighting and sound team worked tirelessly to ensure the evening ran smoothly and professionally, helping to create an unforgettable atmosphere for the audience.

The evening featured a wide variety of performances, each demonstrating the students' commitment, confidence and passion for dance. One of the standout moments of the night was the Junior Dance Club's lively and entertaining performance of 'Zoo' from Zootropolis, which delighted the audience with its creativity and characterisation.

Another highlight came from the Year 11 GCSE dancers, whose powerful performance piece to 'Titanium' captivated the audience. The dramatic choreography combined with colourful flashing lighting created a truly striking and emotional performance.

The audience also loved the upbeat boys' dance to 'Everybody' by the Backstreet Boys, which brought great energy, humour and enthusiasm to the stage and had the crowd cheering along.



The success of Spotlight is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all students and staff involved. Congratulations to everyone who performed, supported backstage, or helped organise such a fantastic evening of entertainment. We are already looking forward to next year's show.



Dance Students Inspired at ‘Move It’ 2026



Students from across the school recently enjoyed an unforgettable trip to the Move It Dance Exhibition at the ExCeL in London. A full coach of 47 students accompanied by 5 staff travelled to the capital for an exciting day celebrating all things dance and performing arts.

Throughout the day, students watched a range of incredible performances on the main stage from highly respected dance training centres and professional performers. The atmosphere was electric, with loud music, vibrant choreography and outstanding talent inspiring everyone in attendance.

Students also had the opportunity to take part in a variety of practical workshops led by industry professionals. Styles included Contemporary, Latin and Ballroom, Afrobeat and even rollerskating workshops, giving students the chance to try new techniques, build confidence, and experience different areas of the dance industry.





Alongside the performances and workshops, students explored the many exhibition stalls, where they were able to shop for dancewear, accessories and merchandise. The event gave students a fantastic insight into the wider world of dance, training and performance opportunities available beyond school.

The trip was a huge success, with students representing the school brilliantly throughout the day. Staff were incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, behaviour and participation shown by all involved. It was a fun, inspiring and memorable experience for everyone, and we look forward to attending again in the future.

- Mrs E Clarke, Teacher of Dance



Gliding Experience!



Last term, some of our Year 10s with an interest in aviation or the military had the opportunity to take part in a gliding experience. Over to Amelie, Year 10:

I was lucky enough to be part of a group of twelve Year 10 students who got the chance to experience flying a glider. Before we went up, we had a safety briefing where we learned about things like the abort process (which was a bit nerve-wracking to hear about!) and how to use a parachute in case of an emergency.

After that, we headed out onto the airfield. The weather was perfect, which made the whole experience even better. We got to look around the glider first and learned about the controls, as well as how to get in and out safely.

Then it was time to fly! One by one, we each took the front seat with a trained pilot sitting behind us. A powered plane towed us along the runway and up into the sky. When we reached about 2,000 feet, the rope was





released and suddenly we were gliding through the air - it felt amazing, soaring like a bird.

The best part was that we got to take control and try flying the glider ourselves. It was such an exciting and unforgettable experience.

Coming back down, some landings were smoother than others, but everyone really enjoyed it. Overall, it was an incredible day and something we will never forget.





Introducing Our Student Leaders



Founder's Day 2026

Following a highly competitive hustings season featuring more than 20 exceptional candidates, we are incredibly honoured to have been elected as your new Head Students and leadership team. To be selected by our peers and the teaching staff from such a talented field is a true privilege. We want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who voted for us; we are excited to represent your collective voice over the next academic year.

The wait for the election results was naturally a tense period for everyone involved. Standing as the largest group of candidates in recent memory, we want to look back and commend every person who ran. The standard of initiatives presented across the board was outstanding. We sincerely hope to collaborate closely with many of the other candidates in the coming months to help integrate and deliver your excellent ideas alongside our own.

One of our first formal responsibilities was speaking at the annual Founder's Day event, where we outlined our immediate and long-term milestones for the school. This occasion also marked a vital moment to recognise the immense effort of our Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts during the recent exam period. To Year 11: having been in your position, we know firsthand the intense pressure you faced, and we applaud your resilience throughout the exam season. To Year 13: your tireless work ethic was visible to all, especially in how seamlessly you transitioned from the energy of the Lakes trip straight back into dedicated, rigorous revision. You have set an exemplary standard for the rest of the school.

Before we implement our own objectives, it is vital to acknowledge the excellent work of the outgoing 2025–26 student leadership team. They have provided us with a fantastic platform to build upon, particularly through their impactful work leading the Pride initiative. Over the final weeks of this term, we will engage in the official handover process to gather their insights and advice.

We have already begun setting up the school councils for each year group and voicing their ideas and our own to Mr Marston in our weekly Friday meetings. Moving forward, we will be



Leadership Team

refining the strategic proposals that we will be presenting to him, and we are excited to have a dedicated afternoon with the previous team to prepare and plan for the year ahead. We hope to leave behind a meaningful legacy for the next group of student leaders and to shape the school in the way that those after us would like.

Furthermore, we have already begun establishing the roots of our key community projects. This past Monday, a delegation consisting of Harvey, Skye, Ruby, and myself held a highly productive meeting with the team at Barchester Waterside Care Home. We explored exciting plans for intergenerational storytelling and shared sports days to connect our students directly with the residents. We believe this partnership holds immense promise and represents the exact kind of positive community footprint we wish to leave behind. To ensure its success, we will be structuring timetables for our sixth formers over the summer break, ahead of the new academic year this September.

Charity forms a cornerstone of our campaign, and this year we are focusing our fundraising efforts locally by supporting Wigod Way Family Centre. Comprehensive planning is already locked in for our official fundraising week during the final week of the term. We have organised a series of engaging lunchtime activities designed to involve the lower school, ranging from getting teachers to face the ice bucket challenge to a non-uniform runway walk on the final Friday. This week is a brilliant opportunity to maximise our fundraising total while building a positive, inspiring image for the younger years to look up to.

Alongside these events, we are partnering with a former student who works with the charity Mind to support student mental health. This is a great way to show our students that mental health is a relevant and rising issue that the school hopes to both understand and help support.

Overall, we understand making big institutional changes is tricky with budgeting and realistic goals, but we want to make a genuine impact, leave a lasting legacy, and help make the voices of students heard!

- Harvey & Malee, Head Students

Representing the Blue & Yellow!

This year, I have found myself reflecting on the students who are proud to represent the Blue and Yellow of our school.

There is something special about those who wear our colours with pride. Perhaps it is the desire to be part of something bigger than themselves; perhaps it is the sense of belonging and connection that can only be forged through shared adversity, hard work, and celebration.

The students I want to recognise this year are those who not only love sport but love representing our school, whatever the sport may be, especially when it is not their main sport. They are the students willing to step outside their comfort zone, push themselves to their limits, and compete even when success is far from guaranteed. They embrace challenges for the good of the team and the wider school community.

We have these students in abundance, and always have.

As I write this, I am watching the Hyrox World Championships, where former student Charlie Botterill narrowly missed out on a medal by just one second. Earlier this term, we welcomed another former student, Mia Venner, back to school to speak about her rugby career, her England caps, her Premier Women's Rugby title, and becoming the league's top try scorer.



Ex-students, Charlie and Mia, Year 9



Both Charlie and Mia seized every opportunity available to them during their time here. They played every sport they could, and through each experience they developed resilience, teamwork, camaraderie, and a genuine love of being active and sharing experiences with others. Most importantly, they never made excuses. They embraced opportunities, and I believe that mindset has played a huge role in their success.

Our current students are equally talented, and it is a privilege to see what they are becoming. We have students who want to try everything, represent us in everything, and constantly challenge themselves. They wear the school badge with pride because they want to be part of something meaningful.

They understand that defeat can build resilience, teach valuable lessons, and strengthen friendships. They know that victory brings unity, joy, and memories that will stay with them for a lifetime.

Charlie at
Hyrox World
Championships

Like many of you reading this, I still remember playing sport for my school and the memories it created. When I meet old school friends, we do not talk about lessons or exams we talk about the County Cup rugby final we won in Year 9, or the penalty that slipped through my hands in a sixth form semi-final. These moments stay with us forever.

This term we had the pleasure of watching Mr Roberts' Year 9 football team compete in the County Cup Final. The boys were outstanding, winning 5-0. They represented the school with pride, humility, and class, and we could not be more proud of both their achievement and the young men they are becoming.

They have created memories that will last a lifetime, and I hope that when they meet again at 43 years old, they will still share stories from that special day.

However, I would also like to recognise the substitutes and the boys who narrowly missed out on the final squad. They stood behind the team every step of the way, supporting their teammates in everything they did. They were the heart of the group, and they represent exactly what is so special about the pupils at this school.

Earlier in the year, our Year 8 girls won both the County Cup and the County 5-a-Side competition, while our Year 7 girls finished as runners-up. This group is truly special. They demonstrate grit, determination, and excellence, and they are a force to be reckoned with.



In fact, our Year 7, 8, 9, and 10 girls are among the sportiest groups we have ever seen. At the South Oxfordshire Athletics Competition at Tilsley Park, every age group finished in the top two as a team. Our female athletes are exceptional, and their future excites us enormously.



Yet what makes us most proud is not simply their success. It is their willingness to say “yes” to opportunities. They may already be academy footballers, yet they are eager to try rugby. They are willing to run themselves to exhaustion in the Area Cross Country Championships. More than any trophy or medal, this is what makes us proud as a department: students who simply love to represent their school.

This year, we have awarded our Founders’ Day Prize to Alexa, a Year 13 student who embodies everything we value. Alexa is a workhorse, an opportunity-taker, and a team player. She would run through brick walls for her teammates and her teachers. She embraces every challenge, gives everything she has, and represents all that is great about the young women at Wallingford. We are incredibly proud of the small part we have played in her journey so far and even more excited about what lies ahead - because this is only the beginning.



The wonderful thing is that we have many students like Alexa. Here are just a few students I would like to recognise for embracing opportunities and representing our school with pride. Whatever path they choose in life, I have no doubt they will be successful:

Year 7	Ziva, Padra, Finley K, John S, Toby R
Year 8	Abbie S, George J, Harrison, Erin R, Emily B, Lana B, Fletch S, Devon H, Madeline M, Rebecca H
Year 9	Isobel P, Sennen, Jack Q, Ewan B, Connor K, Harry V, Jack JE, Oscar C, Armin M Sorrento, Abi JE, Lilly O, Ben CB, Charlie C, Oscar C, Fin L, Angus, Freya W
Year 10	Olivia R, Connie P, Harry Y, Bethany G, Jess K, Esther M
Year 11	Samui, Rocco, Nanu, Maia
Sixth Form	Nate, Alexa, Will A, Zoe E, Ella R, Stan S, Jessi C, Charlotte H, Eva S



Thank you to every student who has represented the Blue and Yellow this year. Whether you won, lost, played every minute, or cheered from the sidelines, you have contributed to something bigger than yourself.

And that is what school sport is all about.

- Mr S Dodson, Head of PE

Languages - Year in Review



Year 8 Boulogne

It has been another very busy year in the Languages Department.

This term we took a total of 179 Year 8 students on a day trip to Boulogne, France – no mean feat! Students got to practise their French in the town of Boulogne and the French hypermarket as well as enjoying time together with friends on the coach and the ferry. Our students were fantastic ambassadors for the school and the UK throughout the trip and the coach drivers complimented them on both their politeness to staff and their enthusiasm and motivation for language learning and travelling.

Our annual French and German exchanges continue to go from strength to strength. This year we took 41 students to Bad Wurzach, Wallingford's twin town in Germany and 25 students to Grenoble, Oxford's twin town. Some highlights of these trips were visiting the Christmas markets

in Munich and Lindau and sledging in the Vercors mountains on the French Exchange. We welcomed back our French and German visitors in Term 6 and they enjoyed trips to Oxford, London, Stratford and Bristol. Thank you to all the families who took part and made our visitors feel so welcome, we would not be able to run the exchanges without you! And to Mr Harpin, Ms Murison, Ms Haworth-Walsh and Ms Prince, all of whom hosted a French and/or German teacher.



In addition to our trips abroad there were a number of extra-curricular activities for our linguists to get their teeth stuck into. Speed Language Learning to celebrate European Day of Languages, the GCHQ National Languages Challenge and the A Level Languages Literature Masterclass were some particular highlights. The year culminated with the fantastic news that as well as commendations for Martha Redhead (Year 8, French), Callum Reynolds (Year 11, German), Isla de Wolf (Year 7, Spanish) and Ariel To (Year 8, Mandarin), one of our Year 8 students, Bethan M, had won a national prize in the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators for her translation of a French poem. This was an amazing achievement – more than 25,000 students nationwide took part in the competition this year! Huge congratulations to Bethan and a massive thank you to Ms Smette to coordinating the Translation Prize at Wallingford School.



Bethan, Year 8, with her prize and certificate.

Bonnes vacances! Schöne Ferien! Buenas vacaciones!

- Mrs T McGarrick, Head of Languages

Chasing Dreams



Meeting Mia and Maud, from the Red Roses, gave us a completely new perspective on what it takes to pursue and achieve your dreams. Listening to their experiences helped us understand the incredible level of dedication, commitment, and resilience required to become professional rugby players.

They spoke about the countless hours spent training, maintaining their fitness, and continually working to improve their skills. Their passion for the sport was clear, and it showed us that success does not happen overnight but is the result of years of hard work and determination.



They overcame stereotypes and challenged expectations within a sport that has traditionally been male dominated. Through their achievements, they have helped create more opportunities for women and girls in rugby, proving that talent, determination, and hard work are far more important than outdated assumptions about gender.

Mia and Maud also highlighted the importance of friendship and building strong relationships with teammates. As best friends who play rugby together, we could relate to many of the points they made. They explained how trust, communication, and support are essential both on and off the pitch. Their experiences deepened our understanding of how strong

World Champions



friendships can help players through difficult moments and make successes even more rewarding.

Another valuable part of their talk was their discussion about injuries. They spoke openly about the physical pain and mental challenges that come with being sidelined from a sport you love. They explained how injuries can affect confidence, motivation, and overall wellbeing, but they also emphasised the importance of staying positive, following rehabilitation programmes, and remaining patient throughout the recovery process. Their honesty helped us understand that setbacks are a natural part of sport and that overcoming them requires strength, perseverance, and a positive mindset.

- Holly Stratford & Jess King, Year 10



Ex-student Mia Venner with our proud PE team.



Year 13 Art!

Year 13 artists are a cut above.

Look what they can do with their hands. Look what they can do with their minds.

Art is about so many things. It can be about making marks on a piece of paper which represent a thing in front of you. Or something that's inside your head. This is called drawing.

Sometimes you use a stick with bristles (called a brush) to push wet coloured stuff (called paint) around on a surface. This, again, might, look like something in front of you or something only you can see when you close your eyes. Or, of course, a mixture of all of the above.

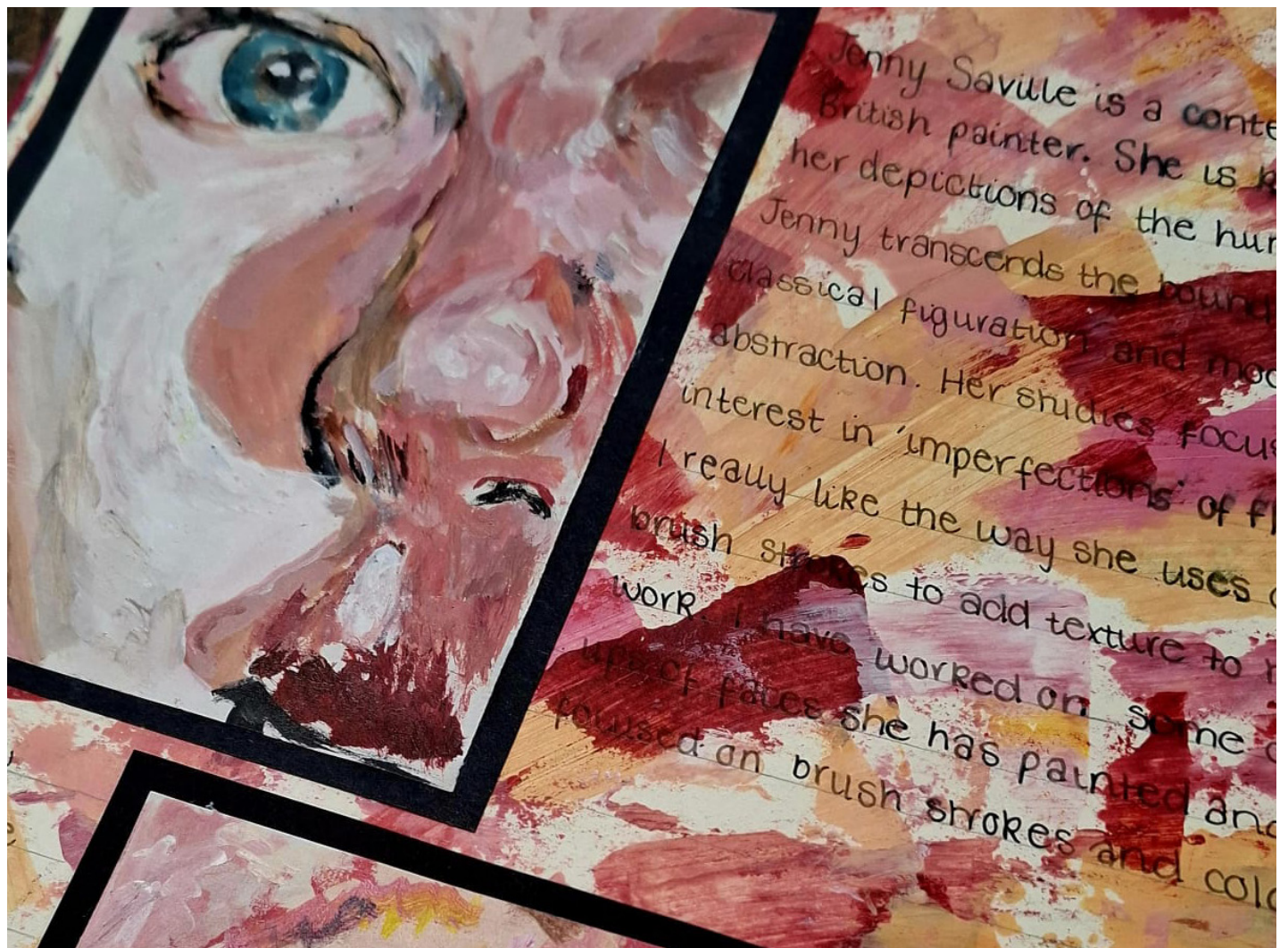
Or you might use clay or textiles or Modroc or wire or pastels or spraypaint or false teeth or plaster or pens or something entirely new and different.

These Year 13 artists have made work on Uniforms, Isolation, portraiture, sheep, the NHS, sad-looking girls in graveyards, homages to their mothers, Alice in Wonderland, pomegranates, Humanism, World War 2 and a lot more.

They have drawn, they have painted, they have torn teddy bears apart, they have made small houses, they have got their dads to dress up, they have been to train stations to make films and they have done a lot more besides. They have also INSPIRED US ALL.

Well done, Year 13 artists. Good luck in all that you do.

- Mr S Bowen, Head of Art



Owl Conservation Project



On Monday, 15th June 2026, two volunteers from the Owl Conservation Project came to tell us about their owls and how to protect them. They brought four different species for us to see.

First they showed us a barn owl, describing their flight as silent. This is because their feathers are streamlined allowing them to hunt down prey without being heard. Second was a tawny owl, which have the stereotypical owl hoot (Twit-Tuwoo) although we learned that this is one owl answering another, not just one owl giving the whole call. Next was the long-eared owl, which can camouflage against a tree trunk with no part visible except its eyes. Finally, there was the little owl, and they can hunt during the day unlike most owls, and they are one of the smallest owl species, standing at 20-23 cm tall.

Overall, they told us not to bring any owls we find to a vet or a rescue centre because as soon as you remove the owl from its natural habitat, there is a risk that they will never be able to return to the wild, because they become dependent on humans. With baby owls, the advice was that in general try not to interfere with them but lift them off the ground and put them in the tree they have fallen out of so that the parents can find them and continue to care for them by getting the baby owl back into the nest.

However, if an owl is hurt or stuck, then call the Owl Conservation Project, run by volunteers, on 07803 124777, and they will be able to help. Email: info@owlconservationproject.org.uk or visit their website: www.owlconservationproject.org.uk.

- Sophie, Niamh & Camilla, Year 7



Gold Award Celebration at Buckingham Palace



Miss Shine attended the Gold Award Celebration at Buckingham Palace Gardens Wednesday 20th May and was delighted by inspiring speakers: His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh KG KT GCVO, Ella-Mae Rayner (Comet from Gladiators), Angela Hartnett OBE, Ash Dykes, Ed Jackson amongst others.

The day allowed for Gold Award Duke of Edinburgh finishers to celebrate their landmark achievement and reflect upon their journey to this significant milestone.

The speakers were able to reflect upon their resilience, motivation, determination and the team around each person who helped them achieve their success, themes highly spoken about within the Wallingford School Community.

The stories they shared about their individual journeys were awe inspiring from the height of their careers and pathways for their lives and how their journeys took them away from this and how they navigated their next steps when this pathway was no longer available to them.

Miss Shine and Mr Harpin are looking forward to being able to celebrate alongside future recipients of their Gold Awards, who may only be just finishing their Bronze or Silver but have Gold in their sights.



- Miss M Shine, Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator

Duke of Edinburgh Expedition



On the weekend of the 25th April 2026, we completed our bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition, which involved a series of walks to our designated checkpoints, independent cooking, and camping in the evening. We were taught all the important skills we would need during our practice expedition. Many of these skills will be helpful not only for DofE but also transferable to everyday life, such as map reading, orientation, assessing potential danger, building tents, and cooking outside.



At the beginning of the expedition, everyone gathered at the meeting point with their bags packed, ready to go. We planned our individual group routes, with some guidance from our instructors (who were very helpful throughout the whole process!). We then officially set off on our walk, which would last most of the day, taking around 6 hours in total, with a few stops for

snacks. It wasn't an easy walk, with some rough terrain and us getting lost a couple of times, saved by our exceptional map skills.

Eventually we made it to the campsite after a long day of walking and had a quick rest before assembling our tents ready for the night. Each group had planned out their meals (we had gourmet super noodles!). Afterwards, we had some free time to socialise and catchup about the day's events. Following a not so comfortable sleep, we ate a simple breakfast. We independently planned our route back to the meeting point and started the journey, working as a team to overcome any problems we faced throughout the walk.

Overall, DofE was a very enjoyable experience where we learned many important skills and made memories.

- Lily Gier & Mia Sampson, Year 9

Environmental Centre Visit



On Wednesday 6th June, our Year 12 Biology class went on a trip to the Sutton Courtenay Environmental Centre, which is run by BBOWT. The main goal was to get the data we needed for our compulsory ecology practical, but it actually ended up being a really good day out.

We did two main investigations, looking at how light intensity affects thistle abundance, and comparing the species diversity in different parts of a pond. Pond dipping was definitely the best part of the trip. We caught pond snails, dragonfly larvae, and a few newts - including a massive one that Holly caught.

We also checked out some manmade ground covers, and when we lifted them up, we found grass snakes and a slow worm (which is actually a legless lizard).

- Lydia Gibson, Year 12

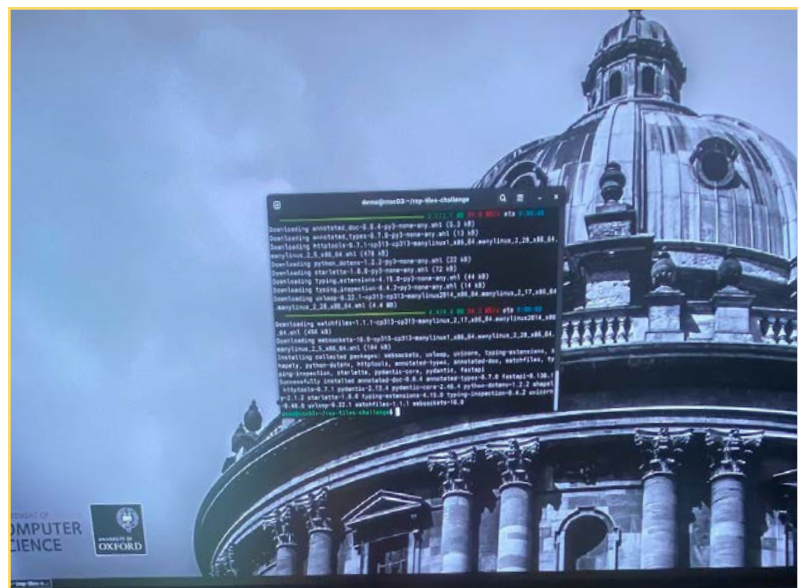
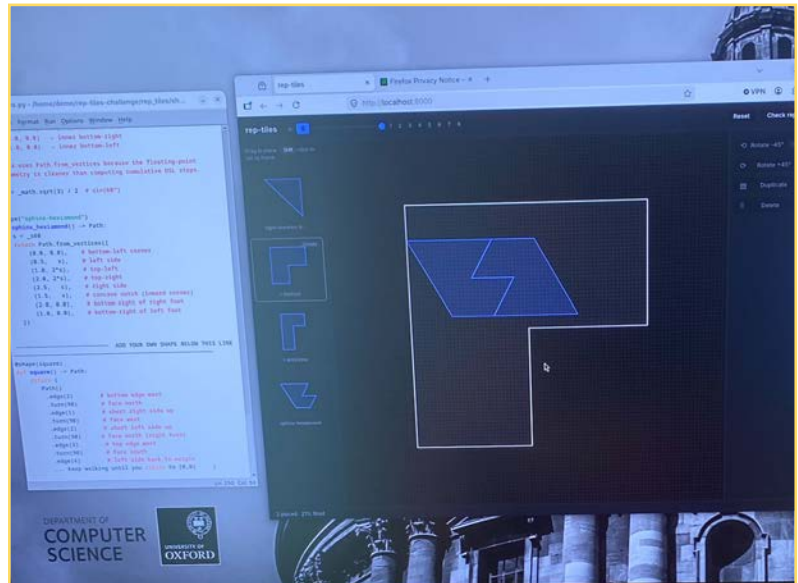


Computer Science Masterclass at Oxford University

Two of our Year 9 students have been attending the Oxford University's Masterclass in Computer Science. The aim of the Masterclass is to inspire and engage secondary school students in Computer Science. **Mrs. Blair-Gordon** our STEM Co-ordinator, was ecstatic about this opportunity, as she feels it is a great way of linking our PSHE and Computer Science curriculum to real world applications/experiences in areas such as programming, robotics, solving logic problems and, in the same breath, enabling them to develop their personal and social skills. Hear from our students themselves:

Jack Quedley: "I feel this workshop has greatly improved my knowledge of Computer Science and what it is like to study in a university. We covered many topics including using Sphero robots, the history of Computer Science (with real examples of the machines), learning about rep-tiles and then creating a program to identify them, and many more fun and interesting things. I have learned many things from this and hope to be able to use these to help me when I start studying them in more detail in GCSE Computer Science".

Lilith-Rose Stephens: "I found the programme to be very inclusive and educational. I was included in everything; the students were treated fairly and with respect throughout the programme. It was a wonderful experience last term, and I have even made a group of amazing people that I can connect and share humour and interests with. Overall, I am very grateful I was able to do the programme, and I am very excited to continue next year".



House Golf

The second annual House Golf Competition took place in June this year. We were incredibly fortunate to have this event established and funded last year by Mr Benarr. Following the very sad news of his passing, we sought permission from his family to continue the competition and create a trophy in his honour. We are grateful for their support in allowing his legacy to live on through an event that has already become a valued part of our school calendar.

This year's competition attracted an impressive 52 students from Years 8–12, with some Year 11 leavers even returning to take part in the event. Players were sent out every eight minutes from both the 1st and 10th tees, creating a fantastic atmosphere around the course. Once everyone was underway, we enjoyed trips around the course in the buggies, watching some golf of an exceptionally high standard.

The competition was played in a Texas Scramble format, where both players hit each shot before deciding which ball to play from next. This format encourages speed of play, teamwork and, often, some very low scores. That certainly proved to be the case this year, with the winning pair finishing an outstanding four under par over the nine holes.

The players also seemed to appreciate the cold drinks being delivered around the course from the golf cart as the day progressed, which was a welcome refreshment on a warm day.

As always, it was a hugely enjoyable occasion and a wonderful celebration of House sport. Congratulations to Jack C and Harry J in Year 11, who claimed this year's title with a superb performance. No doubt there are already students on the driving range honing their skills and dreaming of becoming the next House Golf Champions.

- Mr R Lyons, Head of House System





House Dodgeball



The sports hall was buzzing with energy as KS3 students took part in this year's Form House Dodgeball competition, with over 100 students from each year group turning out to represent their forms. The fantastic turnout was matched by the determination, enthusiasm and House pride on display throughout the event.

Students threw themselves into every match, demonstrating excellent teamwork, resilience and sportsmanship. Spectators were treated to some thrilling contests, dramatic catches and lightning-fast reactions as forms battled for bragging rights and valuable House points.

The Year 8 competition was particularly memorable, with a series of closely contested matches leading to some truly nail-biting finals. Every team fought hard, making for an exciting afternoon of dodgeball.

After a tense and dramatic conclusion, 8NBE were crowned Year 8 champions, showing exceptional teamwork, communication and composure under pressure. A special mention must also go to 8RRO, who pushed their opponents all the way and narrowly missed out on second place after an impressive campaign.





The Year 7 competition showcased some outstanding talent, with students displaying powerful throws, brave dodges and spectacular catches throughout the tournament. The enthusiasm and commitment from all participants made for a fantastic atmosphere and highlighted the strong sporting spirit within the year group.

Standing out from the competition were 7SBL, who delivered a dominant performance from start to finish and secured a clear victory with an excellent display of teamwork and determination.

Congratulations to all students who took part. The event was a fantastic celebration of participation, perseverance and House spirit!

- Mrs T Chamberlain, Christie House Leader





This year's Technology Day was celebrated on 12th May using the classic artform known as Shrinky Dinks! It was an outstanding success, bringing together staff and students for a lunchtime filled with creativity, experimentation, and hands-on learning. During planning, we had fun reminiscing about shrinking crisp packets in the oven back in the day, so thought it was about time to give Wally students a taste of the nostalgia! It was wonderful to see so many people eager to get involved with our shrinking plastic task. Participants created artwork on special shrinking plastic before watching their designs transform in the oven into smaller, thicker versions of their original creations. The shrinking process fascinated everyone and sparked plenty of excitement as finished pieces emerged.

As part of the activity, we investigated the impact of different drawing techniques by comparing the use of different pens and pencil. This practical experiment encouraged students to think about materials and processes while also allowing them to see how the plastic performed during the shrinking process. Watching them shrink before our eyes in the oven was fascinating, some students couldn't quite believe the magic of it!

We saw some really great designs; the ace of spades, beautiful bird illustrations, Freddo frogs! - every piece reflected the imagination and individuality of our students. It's always great to see their commitment to our creative events throughout the year. The commitment of our lovely DT team ensured a really successful event. Technology Day was a fantastic celebration of design and creativity, and we are already looking forward to next year!

- Miss R Robinson, Blackstone House Leader



The Big Draw: House Banner



This year's Big Draw was a fantastic success, bringing together an enthusiastic group of Year 7 students for an afternoon full of creativity, teamwork, and House spirit. In preparation for Sports Day, students worked together to design and paint vibrant House banners, proudly showcasing their House colours of yellow, red, blue, and green.

Each House had a brilliant turnout, with students enthusiastically picking up paintbrushes and working collaboratively to create bold, eye-catching banners that reflected the pride and identity of their House. It was wonderful to see so many Year 7 students getting involved, encouraging one another, and producing banners that will be proudly displayed throughout the year.

Held on the eve of Sports Day, the Big Draw proved to be the perfect way to build excitement and get everyone pepped up for the competition ahead. The energy, enthusiasm, and House pride on display





certainly set the tone for an unforgettable day of sporting action... and, well, we all know how the results turned out for that!

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and helped make the event such a success. The finished banners looked fantastic and were a wonderful celebration of creativity, teamwork, and the incredible House spirit that makes our school community so special.

- Mr G Hinchliffe, Matilda House Leader



A Quizzical Year!



There are many ways to challenge yourself in Wallingford School. In lessons, through homework, joining clubs, maybe joining teams and societies. From Art lessons to Science homework, from Rugby teams to Warhammer club, from the annual school production to Dodgeball tournaments... There is a LOT on offer.

However, some Students go the extra mile by putting themselves through the ordeal of a House Quiz. These are big deals.

Each year we host a Mastermind competition, a Weakest Link tournament and a University Challenge bonanza.

The questions can be tough. And only the bravest of students put themselves out there.

In the Mastermind competition, students choose their own specialist subject if they get through to the second round. These can be delightfully unexpected subjects. In the University Challenge bonanza, questions come thick and fast on some serious topics. And in the Weakest Link tournament, pupils vote each other out at the end of rounds. It can be, and often is, brutal.

Thank you to every, single student who put themselves forward to represent their house. You have ALL been inspirational!

- Mr S Bowen, Bigg House Leader





Authors, Theatre & Performances

It's been a busy term in English, with author visits, theatre trips and the national Performing Shakespeare competition, run by the English Speaking Union.

In Performing Shakespeare, we had two students – Isla, Yr9 and Martha, Yr8 – who made it through to the regional finals. They had to prepare a speech outlining the reasons for their creative decisions and explaining contextual links they had made, as well as performing their chosen speech from a Shakespeare play. Isla took on the role of Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice* and Martha performed as Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth*. Both students were phenomenal and were rightly praised by the judges for their efforts.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

We went on a trip to the Old Vic in London to see a production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. This adaptation explored themes of racial suppression in society through subthemes of sacrifice and freedom, giving us an amazing insight on contextual influences that linked closely to one of our own texts! The staging was especially mesmerising, with bright flashing lighting and conflicting sounds, that clashed with the illusions within the asylum setting. The theatre was rather small, which made the overall experience much more engaging - especially through the harsh sounds and lighting. Overall, it was a really thrilling experience!

- Jagoda and Ezra, Year 12



War Horse

It seems strange to first take your seats and be faced with a set that lacks any real props or backdrop. However, as the play progresses, the minimal staging, skilful acting and exceptional puppeteering completely immerse you in the story. The production perfectly captures the essence of Michael Morpurgo's writing in a way that is engaging for both those who have read the book and those experiencing the story for the first time.

Although the horses are operated by visible puppeteers, it's easy to forget there isn't an actual horse on stage. The intricate puppet designs and realistic movements were unlike anything I had seen in theatre.

Overall, the play is a massive success. Every aspect of the production flawlessly portrays the horrors of war, the strength of human connection, and the effects that conflict can have on both. The story was already stunning, and this adaptation does it the justice it deserves. It is easy to see why War Horse remains one of the most celebrated productions in British theatre.

- Mia Martindale, Year 9



Library News:

A Year of Reading



It's been another busy year in the library, particularly as it has been the **Year of Reading**.

Students have taken part in a wide range of reading and literacy activities throughout the year, including a **creative writing competition for World Book Day** and a programme of author visits that brought books and writing to life for our students.

Earlier in the year, Year 8 enjoyed a visit from World Book Day author **Nathanael Lessore**, while Year 7 welcomed author **Brian Dungan**, whose novel *Wintour's Game* has proved popular with readers. We rounded off our KS3 author programme with a whole day visit from author and screenwriter **Andy Briggs**.

Following a talk to the entire Year 9 cohort about his career as a writer, Andy led creative writing workshops for a number of students, who demonstrated impressive creativity in developing their own story ideas. Thanks to the support of Merchant Taylors', every Year 9 student received a copy of *Iron Fist*.

Summer Reading Challenge

Our **Summer Reading Challenge** launches this month and takes the form of a Reading Passport, available on Satchel One. Students can earn house points and other rewards by completing reading challenges over the summer and returning their passports to the library in September.

To coincide with this, we have a fantastic **summer reading display** in the library, featuring a range of recommended titles.



We have also compiled a **KS3 Summer Reading List (12+)**, featuring adventure, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, graphic novels, contemporary fiction and classics. Whether students are looking for action-packed adventures such as *The Recruit* and *The Ruins of Gorlan* (the Ranger's Apprentice), thrilling mysteries like *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, epic fantasy including *Skandar* and *Shadow and Bone*, science fiction favourites such as *Dune* and *Gone*, or popular graphic novels and manga including *Heartstopper*, *One Piece* and *My Hero Academia*, there is something for every type of reader.

The summer reading list will also be provided on Satchel One, while reading lists for each year group are available on VLE > Blackstone Library.

Disability Pride Month

July is **Disability Pride Month**, and we'd like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the excellent books in our collection featuring disabled and neurodivergent characters.

Many of these books are written by authors drawing on their own lived experiences, including **Elle McNicoll** (*A Kind of Spark*, *Keedie* and *Role Model*), **Libby Scott** and **Rebecca Westcott** (*Can You See Me?*), **Jenny Ireland** (*The First Move*), **Ella Dove** (*How to Roller-Skate with One Leg*) and **Rob Harrell** (*Wink*).

We are also pleased to have strong disability representation within our graphic novel collection, including ***Frankie's World*** by Aoife Dooley and ***Rune*** by Carlos Sánchez. Alongside novels, manga and graphic novels, these books offer a variety of perspectives and experiences while remaining first and foremost great stories.

Whether you're looking for a fantasy adventure, a gripping mystery, a graphic novel or an inspiring contemporary read, we hope you'll find something to enjoy this summer.

Happy reading!

- **Ms A Hanley & Mrs C Saunders, School Librarians**

Ending the Year on a High!



Another busy term for Music, ending the year on a high! The KS3 choir visited a professional recording studio in Oxford, where they were recorded in small groups and solos., and got the chance to rap with a local DJ. This gave them first-hand experience of the expertise of professional recording artists.

Last week, we had the KS3 Summer Musicals concert, which is for our younger students to gain experience in performing on a large stage with proper sound equipment. Thank you to Ollie and Jack from our Sound Team, who set up

microphones and the electric piano through the PA.

Bigg Band opened the Wallingford Carnival in June where they performed a set list for an hour, with some of our favourite pieces getting an appreciative audience to dance and clap along.

Look out for our vocalists performing on the Newbie Stage and Main Stage on Saturday and Sunday morning of BunkFest. Some of our vocalists are hugely excited to be performing on the Bob Wyatt (main) stage with the final act - the Pink Floyd tribute band - on Friday night, so look out for us!

- Ms Y Hammond, Head of Music

Young Carers!

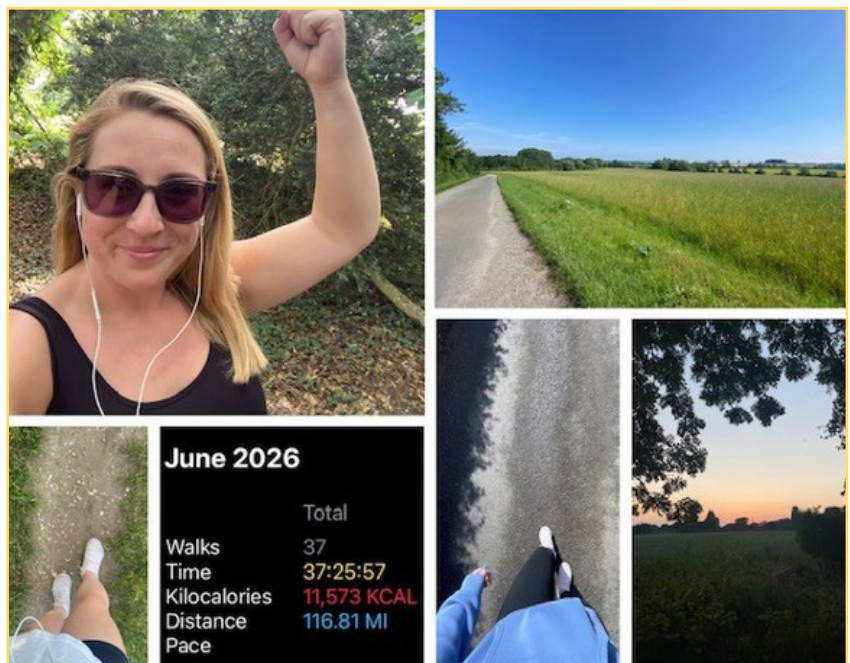


Young Carers Picnic!

On Monday 29th June, 32 young carers across 4 schools met for our annual summer picnic. Students enjoyed their lunch in the shade, followed by a play in the park, and made new friends. Crowmarsh, St John's and Brightwell Primaries joined us for this fantastic lunchtime to allow these wonderful students to switch off and be themselves!

Mrs Emmerson's Challenge

Throughout the month of June, Mrs Emmerson challenged herself to walk 113 miles, one for every young carer at Wallingford School. The extremes of torrential rain through to heatwave made it a real challenge, but she completed it! Mrs Emmerson raised a wonderful £1,135 for the young carers group at Wallingford School. This money will be used to create an inclusive support provision for students with a caring role for years to come!



June 2026

Walks	37
Time	37:25:57
Kilocalories	11,573 KCAL
Distance	116.81 MI
Pace	

Wallingford School Association (WSA)



Wallingford School Association (WSA) is a group of parents who volunteer in their spare time to raise important funds for the school. We are the PTA of the school and regularly run refreshments at school events and host our own events such as a *Winter Raffle* and *Quiz Night*. Please join our [Facebook](#) group.



Thank you to all parents/carers who purchased refreshments at events this year or bought *Winter Raffle* tickets because we had a fantastic year of fundraising in 2025-26. We have custom built and contributed 15 outdoor, wooden picnic tables and benches for students – you can see them in the sixth form garden and behind the Sports Hall and Science block. This is in addition to the 10 we provided last year which are in the Quad. We have also contributed funds towards plants and equipment for the Courtyard Garden. In the past, WSA has contributed towards the school minibus and stage microphones for school productions.

We hold informal, evening meetings at school to plan our events and discuss ideas. We are a friendly, welcoming team – you don't have to attend meetings but we are always looking for extra volunteers to help run refreshments and events.



You can meet some lovely people along the way and experience some wonderful school events whilst fundraising to enhance the experience of students at school. Please do consider joining us for the next academic year by contacting us at: wsa@wallingfordschool.com

Our current 2026 objective is to raise funds for the Expressive Arts Department to purchase refurbished cameras for GCSE Photography students. You can help us by donating at our new [WSA Just Giving site](https://www.justgiving.com/charity/Wallingford-School-Association).

You can also help by using [Easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.com) when you do online shopping, particularly when purchasing home and car insurance. Bigger search engines such as Go Compare, Money Supermarket, Confused.com all donate significant funds. Raise £15-£20 for school with just one insurance renewal!

- Louise Parkinson, WSA Chair



Year 9 Residential 2026





Have a lovely
summer holiday!



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