



AROUND THE PALACE

Dear all,



There is always so much to write about and such lovely news to share with you, and this week is no different. I hope you enjoy reading about and seeing the photos of just a few of the super experiences your daughters have been part of over the last couple of weeks.

It never ceases to amaze me the wonderful ideas for teaching and learning my brilliant colleagues keep conjuring up, but the Prep girls really do have such memorable and meaningful experiences.

The Natural History Museum visit from Dino Girl has inspired such a lot of

learning through play in the EYFS and the Reception Class Museum Gift Shop role play has facilitated excellent talk for learning, real-life opportunities for mathematical and literacy development and all while having fun!

We owe many thanks to our Senior School colleagues for the varied enrichment opportunities they provide the Prep girls with, through expert teaching and specialist facilities. We are so very fortunate to be part of the Old Palace family.

Mrs Jodene Panteli
Head of Preparatory

Pre School & Reception: Dinosaur Workshops



Prep Celebrates Chinese New Year



Last week, we celebrated Chinese New Year at Prep with a full day of workshops. We also enjoyed a fabulous festive Chinese lunch. Girls learnt how to draw Chinese letters and numbers. There were also a selection of exquisite, traditional children's dresses and headdresses for the pupils to look at.

Pupils had great fun learning how to make Chinese dumplings. They also made dancing dragons!





Pupils in Year 5 and 6 performed in a 'Young Voices' concert at the O2 Arena last Thursday 19th January 2023. Everyone agreed it was an amazing experience!

After lunch, pupils and staff enjoyed an energising three hour rehearsal inside the arena. The atmosphere was electric when nearly 8,500 children all sang together and met Andy Instone (creative director), the 'Urban Strides' dance group, the Beatbox Collective, Heather Small and a violinist called Anna Pheobe - keeping everyone entertained throughout. There was a great mix of solo items, dance

and songs and the conductor David Lawrence kept us informed of which parts we would sing and which parts we needed to practise a little more. One of the biggest surprises was that we were allocated seating in three VIP suites! This meant that we had luxurious chairs, much more space and a carpeted lounge area to eat our tea. Some parents arranged for us to have some hot pizza too which was another lovely surprise.

Whilst we were waiting for the concert to begin we did Mexican waves, cheered, and waved our Old Palace banners, hoping that the parents

would see us. It worked as they waved back! When the concert started, all the lights went off and it felt really exciting but also a bit nerve-wracking. There were amazing multicoloured lighting effects that swept over us during the songs and really added a 'wow' factor to our performances. Everyone sang their hearts out and loved singing and waving their torches with their friends.

Huge thanks to Mrs Elliot, Mrs Wallis, Mrs Bhatt, Mrs Stearn and Miss Jenkins for giving so generously of their time to make this trip possible and for joining in with such enthusiasm, *and lets not forget Miss Fitzgerald!*



Young Voices at the O2 Arena *continued*

Here are some recollections from the students:

Keyala "I could feel the air of excitement from the thousands of joyous children in the arena"

Moriah "The children and teachers from different schools all came together as one community"

Jeeva "The atmosphere was amazing and it filled me with joy"

Anokhi "When I danced to the songs it made me feel so happy"

Paavana "When everyone put their tiny torches on they looked like stars"

Fatima "When the violinist Anna Phoebe appeared I was thrilled as I play the violin and I wasn't expecting it. The arena went wild!"

Tamalia "As soon as the Beatboxers started, I was in awe"

Chloe "I loved Heather Small's singing"

Safa "When 'Rockstar' came on my heart skipped a beat. It was the best school trip I have ever been on".

Lottie and Arya "Our favourite was the 'Trolls' medley as it was really upbeat and the energy was wild. Arya got to swing her hair!"

Abi "My favourite song was 'Message' as it's slow and very moving"

Elissia "I loved 'Sing from the heart' as it had such a positive vibe and great actions"

Ariel "The O2 was the best because there were no rules, we just needed to sing!"

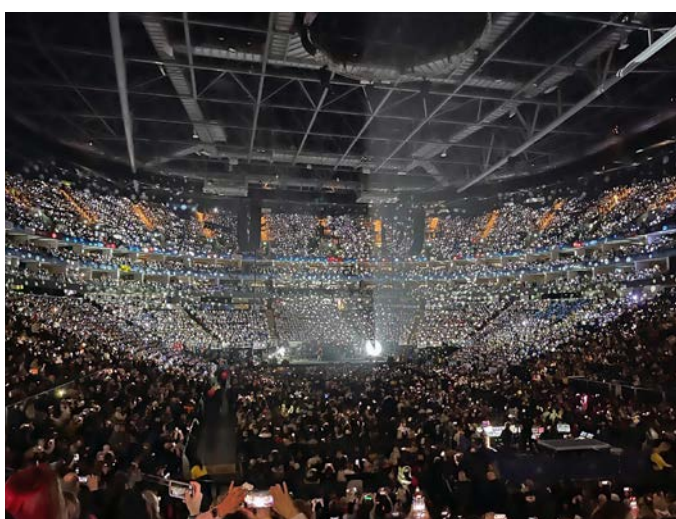
Hiru "The lights and our torches made it really spectacular. Everyone was filled with so much energy and it was a memory I will never forget"

Karlie "Although we were tired at the end, we were exhilarated to get the chance to go. All of the artists were so inspiring"

Jasmine "I never knew that I would get to take part in such a big event. It was probably the best time of my life!"

Aadhya "It was an incredible experience. We had an amazing time and we had all the fun in the world!"

Holly "I was able to brush my worries away and feel the bliss of being there in the moment"



Pre School & Reception: Dinosaur Workshops *continued*



TRAVELLING
NATURAL
HISTORY
- MUSEUM -

Reception had such fun taking part in an immersive Dinosaur workshop this week. They loved meeting Dino girl who taught us many fascinating facts about dinosaurs including which ones were herbivores and carnivores, how they became extinct and how their fossils were formed.

One highlight of the day involved handling a 150-million-year-old dinosaur tooth!



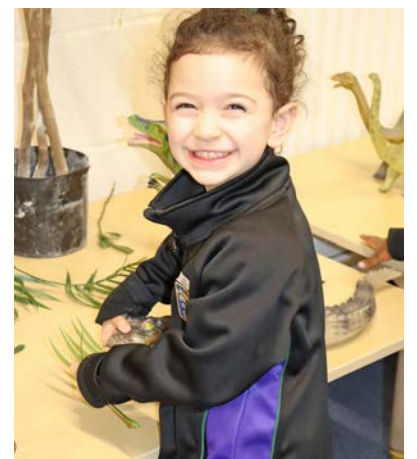
Pre School & Reception: Dinosaur Workshops



Pre School had a very exciting full day workshop when the travelling Natural History museum came to visit.

Dinogirl introduced them to some extraordinary dinosaurs, they were able to handle fossils including a real dinosaur's tooth and enjoyed plaster fossil casting. They loved the very lively information sessions which included seeing the shape of a full-size Pterodactyl taking up the whole floor of the hall! The workshop ended in a spectacular meteor strike finale and a special trip to the museum shop.

The girls have been very engaged in this half term's topic, Dangerous Dinosaurs and were quick to put their hands up and share some of the facts they had already learnt!



Year 1: History Trip to Seniors

Last week, Year 1 visited Old Palace Seniors as part of their half term topic 'School Days'. We were very lucky to have Mrs Moore, who is a former Deputy Head and History teacher, give us a tour of the most historical rooms.

We were all very excited to learn that Old Palace was once a palace and that Queen Elizabeth I had come to the school to stay in the exact room we were sat in! We also explored the Banqueting Hall, where we spotted our house shields. Then we climbed up a steep staircase to reach the Chapel. It was very special and we admired the stained glass windows.

Mrs Moore was kind enough to bring in some Victorian coins for us to look at. We compared these to the coins we have now. Many of the girls questioned why they haven't seen King Charles III on a coin yet. We learnt that Mother Emily Ayckbom built the school in 1889 and how school life would have been different in the past.

Old Palace has a rich history and we had a great time stepping back into time to learn about our school's history.



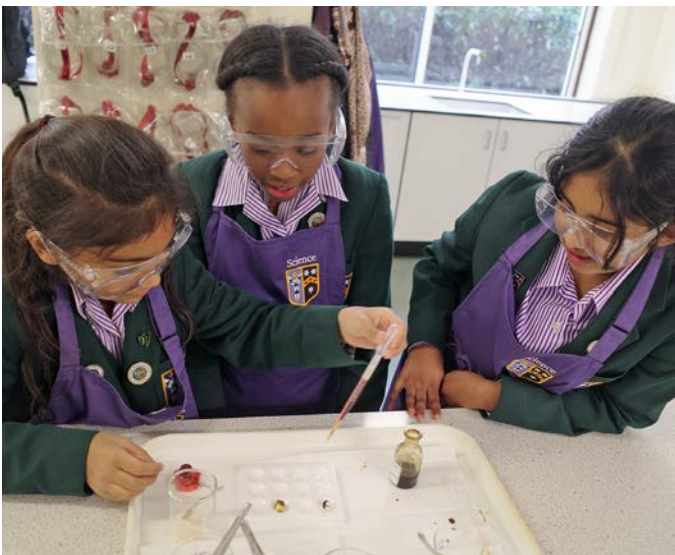
Year 4: Digestion Workshop

The girls in Year 4 have been studying digestion for their topic, *Burps, Bottoms and Bile*. They had a wonderful afternoon at the Senior School labs with Ms Sookdeo, Dr Edwards, Mrs Peplow and their team of Science students.

The girls enjoyed a demonstration of the digestive process and used a rubber pipe to see the extent of the small intestine. They then used iodine to test

different foods for starch, noticing that the yellowy brown liquid turns black on starchy foods like potato.

Finally, they examined the teeth in a horse and fox skull before using dental mirrors to compare their own teeth with carnivores and herbivores. It was a brilliant afternoon and we thank the Science Department for making us so welcome.



Years 2: Minibeast Workshop

As part of Wriggle and Crawl, this term's Cornerstones topic, Year 2 attended a fantastic minibeast workshop.

Andrew Smith introduced the class to a wide range of live reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates including Richard the Lizard, a firm favourite with Michaela and Aiyana. With the help of the animals Andrew demonstrated locomotion and variation.

Amelia: *The tortoise, terrapin and turtle are similar but they have different habitats.*

Emira: *I was surprised that the tarantula was so soft and hairy to touch.*



Years 6: Darwin Workshop

Year 6 students attended a Darwin workshop to support learning in their Frozen Kingdom topic. As well as experiencing a host of live animals, the students handled fossils, human and animal bones and animal artefacts.

They discussed and explored the importance of habitats, defence systems and time and extinction within the context of continuous biological change. Everyone enjoyed Andrew's personal stories of his adventures in the wild!



Year 1 & Year 2: Celebrating 'Burns Night'

Pupils in Years 1 & 2 spent Friday afternoon making shortbread to celebrate the Scottish tradition of 'Burns Night'. The girls handed out the delicious treat to staff and took some home to share with their families.



Year 4: Netball

All Year 4 had a wonderful afternoon at Royal Russell on Monday learning the rules of netball at a mini festival.

Super work everyone



Year 6: Darwin's Daring Discoveries

On Friday 27th January, Year 6 went to Down House, the former home of Naturalist Charles Darwin. With a unique place in the history of science and evolution, Down House was Charles Darwin's family home.

Year 6 stepped into the very rooms where Charles Darwin worked and lived, including the study where he wrote his book 'On the Origin of the Species'.

During the day, Year 6 ambled through the beautiful gardens that acted as Darwin's 'living laboratory'.

"We were able to wander through Darwin's green house where I saw lots of beautiful plants that I had never seen before. What surprised me was that some were poisonous!" says Aisha.

Year 6 also had a tour of recreated experiments and discovered how his observations helped him develop his ground-breaking theories.



Whilst on the Beagle, Charles Darwin travelled to the Galapagos islands and collected different finches. When he collected them, he looked at them and realised that although they were all finches, their beaks were different. He discovered that their beaks had evolved depending on which island they were on so that they were better suited to the terrain and could eat the food there.

Tamalia

In our workshop 'Darwin's Daring Discoveries', we carried out an experiment that was really fun because we tested different objects to see which was best suited for eating different foods. For example, my group tested whether chopsticks, tweezers, nutcrackers, nail clippers or cutting pliers were best for cracking nuts.

Michaela M



Prep Swimming Gala

Preparatory Squad swimmers participated in a very exciting friendly swimming gala against Cumnor House. The atmosphere was rapturous with both schools enthusiastically cheering on their teams.

Some were a little worried about competing; however, their nervous tummy butterflies were soon forgotten. They all swam really well, with Old Palace swimmers winning several events. The final result showed what a closely fought gala it had been with Old Palace and Cumnor House tying for first place with 77 points each! Well done Prep Squad swimmers!



Birdspotting

Our intrepid Be Wild Club members braved some very chilly temperatures after school to learn about the birds that they see on our school playing field.

In advance of the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch weekend (which took place at the end of January), Be Wild club started preparations by making some pine cone birdfeeders to attract birds to the school grounds. The girls also enjoyed looking at the RSPB flash cards which helped them name some of the more common varieties.

The birds we see in our gardens, from our balconies and in our parks, are

facing many challenges due to the nature and climate emergency. We encouraged all our pupils to take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch survey, which plays such an important role in helping us understand how our much-loved UK birds are doing.

The RSPB helps to protect habitats, save species, and is helping to end the nature climate emergency, the Be Wild Club are working towards their RSPB Wild Challenge Silver Award.

