

ISA Awards 2023 Case Study: Outstanding Engagement in the Community

CLAIRES COURT SCHOOL

MARCH 2024



History of the School

Claire's Court School, established in 1960, has a rich history of fostering academic achievement and personal growth in its students. Founded on the values of responsibility, respect, loyalty, and integrity, the school has grown into a thriving co-educational setting serving children from nursery to sixth form.

Originally catering to boys aged 6+ with both day and boarding options, Claire's Court saw rapid expansion. By 1970, the student body had swelled to over 180. Adapting to evolving needs, the school phased out boarding and welcomed a wider age range, from 4 to 16-year-olds. This shift saw the former boarding house, Ridgeway, transformed into a dedicated junior school site. A defining moment came in 1993 when Claire's Court acquired Maidenhead College for Girls, securing a future of co-education from the nursery level upwards. This marked the beginning of the school's unique "diamond model" – separate single-sex education for senior boys and girls, brought together for co-curricular activities and social events, culminating in a co-educational sixth form.

Claire's Court's dedication to this model makes it stand out in the region, offering families a well-rounded educational experience that balances focused learning with collaborative opportunities. The recent decision to introduce co-educational reception classes at the junior level further underscores the school's commitment to continuous improvement. Learning at Claire's Court extends far beyond the classroom walls. The school prioritises fostering well-rounded individuals by offering a strong focus on co-curricular activities like Forest School sessions and time spent exploring the natural environment. Recognising the importance of social interaction and emotional well-being, Claire's Court ensures students have ample time for unstructured play and building friendships.

Claire's Court plays a vital role within the local borough. Over 8,000 students have benefitted from its education, with a significant portion coming from the surrounding area. The school employs over



400 staff, many residing within the borough, and actively collaborates with local sports clubs and charities. Claire's Court's story is one of continuous development and a dedication to providing its students with the tools and environment they need to thrive. As the school embarks on a new chapter with co-educational junior classes, its commitment to excellence and its core values remain constant.



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Aims

- To provide educational opportunities and social integration for displaced Ukrainian children and mothers.
- To bridge the digital divide by equipping a local primary school with Chromebooks and ongoing support.
- To offer playing fields, facilities, and coaching to foster youth football and cricket programs, serving over 600 children.
- To collaborate with the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group to revitalise local waterways and promote recreational activities like kayaking and paddleboarding.
- To expand the Maidenhead & Berkshire Junior Chess Club, providing coaching and competition opportunities for all ages (5-18).
- To maintain and develop strategic partnerships with local sports clubs like Sailing Club, Rowing Club, Rugby & Cricket Club, and Cricket Club, benefiting a large portion of the community.



ACTIONS

- **Ukrainian Refugees:**
 - Offered 20 school places to Ukrainian children arriving in the local area through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and with support from local families.
 - Successfully integrated 17 students (Reception to Year 12) for the entire 2022-2023 academic year, providing academic and social support.
- **Promoting Educational Equity:**
 - Donated 80+ Chromebooks to a local primary school, equipping their Years 4-6 classrooms.
 - Followed up with the school and provided an additional 60 Chromebooks to ensure full coverage from Year 1.
- **Enhancing Youth Sports:**
 - Developed new playing fields on school grounds.
 - Hosted over 600 children aged 5-12 for a season of football matches on the new fields.
 - Rehomed the North Maidenhead Cricket Club and offered facilities and support for their activities.
 - Expanded cricket offerings for other junior players, providing two squares for weekend matches.
- **Community Development:**
 - Partnered with the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group, contributing over 600 volunteer hours.
 - Provided holiday activities teaching local children safe paddling techniques.
 - Secured a former Environment Agency office at Maidenhead Lock to serve as a base for paddling activities.

- Supported the expansion of the Paddleboard Maidenhead group by offering equipment storage and allowing extended access to the river.
- Developing Youth Programs:
 - Supported the continued operation of the Maidenhead & Berkshire Junior Chess Club throughout the year, even during periods with limited school access.
 - Ensured the club's operation every Saturday, including school holidays.
 - Provided coaching for players aged 5 and upwards.
 - Maintained three teams in the Berkshire League and one team in the Thames Valley League.
- Strengthening Long-Term Partnerships:
 - Continued collaborations with established partners like Sailing Club (45 years), Phoenix Rugby & Cricket Club (42 years), Maidenhead Rowing Club (40 years), and Boyne Hill Cricket Club (6 years).
 - Offered shared use of facilities and ongoing support to these clubs for their junior and adult programs.



OUTCOMES

- 13 Ukrainian refugee students returned to school in September 2024, demonstrating a successful integration experience.
- The local primary school now has full Chromebook coverage from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Over 600 children aged 5-12 participated in a season of football matches on the school's new playing fields.
- The North Maidenhead Cricket Club found a new home at the school, ensuring the continuation of their activities.
- Junior cricket programs saw expanded offerings with additional playing squares.
- Over 600 volunteer hours from Claires Court School were given to Maidenhead Waterways.
- Local children learned safe paddling techniques through the holiday activities offered by the school.
- The new paddling base at Maidenhead Lock facilitated the expansion of the Paddleboard Maidenhead group, increasing their access to the river and allowing them to offer 7-day support.
- Local waterways were revitalised, promoting kayaking and paddleboarding as recreational activities for all ages.
- The Maidenhead & Berkshire Junior Chess Club continued operation throughout the year, even during periods with limited school access.
- Chess coaching remained available for players aged 5 and upwards.
- Three chess teams competed successfully in the Berkshire League and the Thames Valley League.
- Established partnerships with local sports clubs continued to thrive, benefiting a significant portion of the Maidenhead community through access to facilities and ongoing support for junior and adult programs.



NEXT STEPS

- Continue to provide academic and social support for 10 of the 13 Ukrainian students returning in September 2024.
- Explore opportunities to offer additional support services to newly arriving Ukrainian families.
- Partner with other local schools to identify and address digital divide challenges within the community.
- Investigate grant opportunities to secure further resources for technology upgrades in underprivileged schools.
- Organise community sporting events on the school's new playing fields, encouraging wider participation across different age groups.
- Continue expanding partnerships with local sports clubs to offer a wider variety of youth programs.
- Collaborate with the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group on future projects to further revitalise the local waterways.
- Explore options for expanding paddling activities to include adult education programs.
- Organise chess tournaments and workshops to attract new members and raise the profile of the club within the community.
- Develop new collaborative initiatives with existing partner clubs to further enrich the lives of community members.
- Explore partnerships with additional local organisations to expand the school's reach and community impact.

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