Since 2016, the Oxford University Gardens Libraries and Museums (GLAM) have been working in partnership with the students and staff of The Iffley Academy, a local community special academy for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The partnership focuses on delivering a wide range of arts and creative projects including Arts Award qualifications to students.

2022 saw the launch of an exciting new strand of project work called Co-curate. A museum-grade display case has been placed at the heart of the school. The case hosts a series of co-curated exhibitions of loaned objects from GLAM. Students and the GLAM collections staff, curators and learning teams work together to co-produce each exhibition. Co-curate seeks to allow Iffley Academy students the opportunity to curate exhibitions for their school community in an accessible way that enables their own ideas and agendas to emerge.

In summer 2023 it was the turn of Miro Class to work with the Ashmolean Museum to co-curate an exhibition of Roman artefacts and give the rest of the school community a glimpse into the everyday life of the Romans. Students visited the Ashmolean Museum to look at the Roman Gallery. Curator Paul Roberts met with the group and brought to
labels and interpretation panels. Students think about how to explain the things they have learnt about the objects on display to their peers. Sometimes contemporary equivalent objects are added to the case to enable connections to be made.

For the launch of the exhibition Ashmolean staff visited the school and were given a talk about the objects in the case by two confident and knowledgeable students. In the Miro Classroom other students had a range of activities to show off their knowledge. Students showed a huge sense of pride in their exhibition and sharing their learning.

After the launch event, Dr Paul Roberts said, ‘It was inspirational this morning to see those students and what they’ve achieved’.

To find out more about the partnership with Ifley Academy please see www.glam.ox.ac.uk/iffley-academy-partnership

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