

## Remodelled Alex ready for life



**All smiles:** Alex Summers and his mum Kathleen are delighted with his new nose after four complex operations.

Picture: ANDREW GORRIE

# Doctors give boy new nose

**KELLY ANDREW**

ALEX SUMMERS is sporting a Harry Potter-style scar under his fringe and a new nose after enduring four complex operations.

The Christchurch 10-year-old was born with a type of birthmark called an arteriovenous malformation, which affects only a handful of babies born in New Zealand each year. It had to be removed from his nose because of the risk it could grow and cause life-threatening bleeding.

The growth was amputated last month, leaving Alex with only half a nose. Radiologist Trevor Fitzjohn blocked blood flow to the malformation during the operation so it could be removed safely.

Last week, in the last of four operations in Wellington, the final stage of his nose reconstruction was completed by plastic surgeon Charles Davis.

The process involved taking skin from Alex's thigh to create the nose lining, cartilage from his ear for the

bony structure, and skin tissue from his forehead moulded to match the other side of his nose.

He was bouncing excitedly around his Boulcott Hospital room the day after the surgery and asking for glasses and a wizard's broomstick to match the scar that Mr Davis told him was just like Harry Potter's. He boasted that he had eaten five lemonade popsicles after the operation — two below his previous record.

Alex was positive about his new facial feature but said: "I don't know

why, but I still miss my old one."

Mother Kathleen is happy with Alex's new nose. "I'm really pleased with the skin colour. Once the swelling has gone down it's going to look good, better than I'd hoped for."

Excited about returning home to Christchurch and having a party to celebrate the end of his medical ordeal, Alex said he was only "kind of" looking forward to going back to school.

The new nose should grow to keep pace with the rest of Alex's face.