



# Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 2nd February 2024

Dear Parents,

One of my weekly highlights occurs right at the beginning of the week when I visit Nursery to read to the children there. Concentration is not always what one is expecting from boys and girls of Nursery age, but as my hand reaches for a copy of a Hairy Maclary book or another adventure about Slinky Malinki, all eyes follow. They listen with great attention and clearly enjoy the stories. I am very struck by the power of words which have been carefully formed, to take advantage of the music of the English language to entrance, and of course, pictures - which we are told are worth a thousand words, captivate too. In one of the Hairy Maclary stories, the fearful cat Scarface Claw emerges to terrify the troupe of dogs which has gathered. His disembodied eyes are first seen peering from the deep shadows underneath a bush, and, every time we arrive at that part in the story, one of the children points to the eyes with horrified fascination, anticipating the petrifying form which is about to emerge. But it's always one of the first stories to be chosen!

Arriving at Nursery this morning, I noticed a striking picture of a red dragon on the door and the handle had been enveloped in a soft red cover. As I entered, I was met by a small group of parents who had come to make dumplings to celebrate Chinese New Year. Before our eyes, one of the children's Grandmothers rolled out thin pastry as quick as a flash and then filled the pastry with a colourful mixture of delicious ingredients. The pastry was then pinched together. Out of a bag came a hotplate and a few minutes later, I was brought a plate full of mouth-watering dumplings. I was interested to see that the focus which I had noticed when reading stories, was equally engaged by the efficient dumpling production line, and I'm certain that there were many full tummies in Nursery this morning. I'm sure that from now on Chinese New Year will be a very popular time of year.

Football seems to be captivating the minds of the older pupils. We're now well into the Football season and everyone seems to be enjoying it. Mr Pear is in charge of the coaching of this sport and I have been immensely impressed to see the manner in which the boys are playing. The ball flies from side to side, players retaining their positions. We just don't see that typical characteristic of many schoolboy Football games i.e. a whole horde of boys following the ball around, the rest of the pitch empty of players. It does strike me so forcefully that our boys are being coached impeccably. And I am delighted by the enthusiasm that all our boys seem to have for Games. I would recommend, very strongly, coming to Merton Field to support our boys when they are playing matches against other schools if it is at all possible.

We held our termly Eucharist in the Cathedral on Friday. It was held to celebrate the feast of Candlemas, the occasion when Jesus was taken by Mary and Joseph to the Temple in Jerusalem to be presented, as was the tradition at the time. An elderly man named Simeon recognises Jesus as the Messiah. He describes Jesus as the light of the world and so the Church celebrates this with a feast of light known traditionally as Candlemas when candles are lit. Of course, in the northern hemisphere, where 90% of the world's population lives, this time of year is associated with the return of lighter days and I have been very struck by the lighter mornings as I stand on Brewer Street in the mornings. On Christ Church Meadow, beautiful snowdrops are emerging. During the service, the whole of Forms 5 and 6 sang an anthem. They were sitting in the North transept, out of sight of the rest of the school who were in the nave, and as they started singing the wave of sound was extraordinary, almost as if the light had broken in through the darkness - I won't forget that experience in a rush.

I almost always write this letter at the end of the week. Today, by contrast, it is Monday morning. As I waited for people to arrive, I reflected upon the mood on the street, at the beginning of the week. Would the boys and girls be dragging their feet unwillingly to school? Not a bit of it. One boy I could see was running from the end of the street, another danced his way down the path towards the Walton Centre as if he were starring in Mary Poppins. Another pupil who had arrived in his car literally burst out of the vehicle, the door exploding open. I remember the words of a Pink Floyd song from my childhood - "We don't need no education!" Certainly that wasn't the mood on Brewer Street this morning!

Mr Murray  
Headmaster

## Hilary 2024

### Monday 5th - Sunday 11th February

MONDAY 5	
2.30	Forms 7 & 8 Football v d'Overbroeck's
3.30 - 4.30	After School Chess Club (Form 2)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Ancient Greek Club (Forms 7 & 8)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Football Skills Club (Forms 3 - 5) (WWH)
TUESDAY 6	
10.00 - 2.00	Form 4 Trip to Oxford Castle - Empress Matilda
10.00 - 2.00	Form 2 China Theme Day
WEDNESDAY 7	
	Form 1 Pirates Theme Day
	Forms 3 & 4 Swimming
9.15 - 11.30	Outreach Visit - St Andrew's Primary School
11.00 - 12.45	Forms 5 - 8 Play Rehearsal
2.15	Forms 7 - 8 House Matches
4.10 - 5.00	After School Chess Club (Forms 3 & 4)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Mandarin Club (Forms 7 & 8)
THURSDAY 8	
9.25 - 11.45	Forms 3 & 4 Talk on Japan
1.15	Form 4 Football v Cothill - Teams tbc
4.30 - 6.30	<b>Form 5 Parents' Evening (SchoolCloud)</b>
5.00 - 7.00	CC: Rehearsal for Bach St John Passion (WWH)
FRIDAY 9	
8.30	Cathedral Assembly, speaker Mr Pete Last, Headmaster, Kingham Hill School
11.30 - 12.30	House Quiz
1.45 - 3.50	Poetry Recitation
4.10 - 5.00	After School Multi Sports Club (Reception - Form 2)
4.10	<b>Half Term Begins (Return 19.02.24)</b> <b>CC: Half Term Begins after Evensong.</b> <b>Boys not required for services during Half Term</b>
SATURDAY 10	
SUNDAY 11	<i>The Sunday next before Lent</i> <i>University Fifth Week</i>

## Sports News

Forms 7 and 8 played away at Abingdon Prep School and had mixed fortunes in the A, B and C teams. Two victories and one defeat, with all the boys putting in some excellent effort and performances.

Forms 5 and 6 played matches at home against Chandlings, and although the results were not in our favour on this occasion, the teams all played with great spirit and pride, showing excellent sportsmanship and trying to play the style of football that we have been working hard on implementing in Games sessions. Well done to everyone who took part. DP

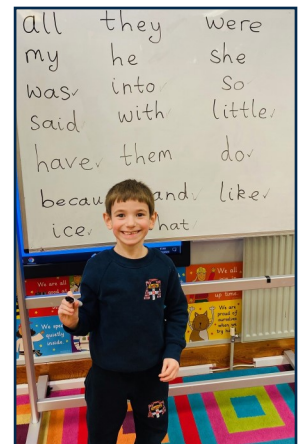


## Pre-Prep News

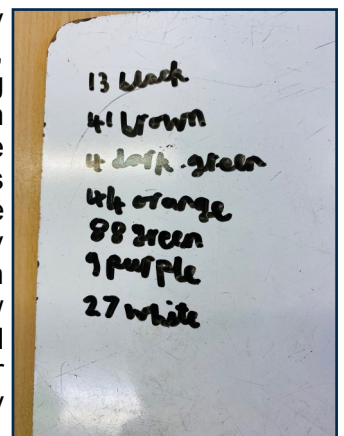
There is never a dull moment in Pre-Prep at CCCS! We adopt a creative, interactive, and dynamic approach to our teaching, which ensures that our pupils (and our teachers) are constantly engaging with learning challenges, and most importantly, having a lot of fun as we stretch our abilities and grow together.

In Form 1, in our Literacy lessons this week, we have been enjoying performing Pirate Poetry, writing and singing our own sea shanties, acting scenes with our class mascots, as well as finding time to master split digraphs and the spelling of 'tricky' sight words. Phew!

Underpinning everything we do in relation to Literacy across our Pre-Prep, and indeed across our whole school, is drama, performance, and above all, engendering a love of reading. This week, Form 1 and Form 3 came together for one of our regular 'Reading Buddies' sessions in which the older Prep School boys select and share favourite books with their Form 1 counterparts. It is always a lovely experience to be a part of, and a joy for the teachers to see the children so enthusiastically reading with one another. Our Pre-Prep pupils are very much looking forward to next week's visit from award-winning children's poet James Carter, and a few brave souls amongst our youngest pupils will be taking part in the Poetry Recital. It promises to be lots of fun!



In Numeracy lessons this week, Form 1 have not only been working on their 2s, 5s, and 10s times tables, they have been learning how to manipulate big numbers, including large groups of objects. I am always delighted when a concept captures the children's' imaginations, and the impact of learning is never greater than when it is child-led. This week, the pupils in Form 1 decided independently that they wanted to complete a class challenge in Maths, which involved them working as a team. As part of their new-found skills in working with big numbers, they wanted to work out how many shapes there were in our classroom, by colour. First, they sorted the shapes by colour, and then they grouped them in 5s and 10s.



They assigned a 'writer' in the group, and worked out exactly how many shapes in each colour group there were, all without teacher input. I was very impressed with their team work, their 'growth mind-set' in challenging themselves, as well as their proficiency in counting. What a talented bunch of pupils we have in our Pre-Prep! TR



## Nursery News



The children have been enjoying their freedom to use lots of different art materials this week in our Nursery Art Studio. It is interesting to see the older children painting in the morning and then returning to add collage materials and more paint in the afternoon. Paint sticks have been a big success this week with the Lower Nursery children - they make beautiful marks as the paint glides across the paper.



There have been new friendships developing, through chance encounters in the flow of our days.

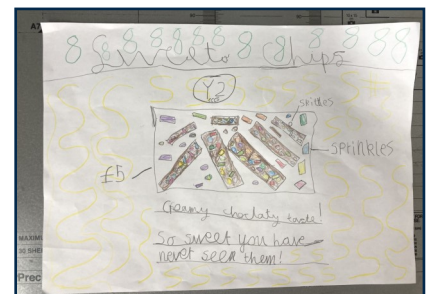
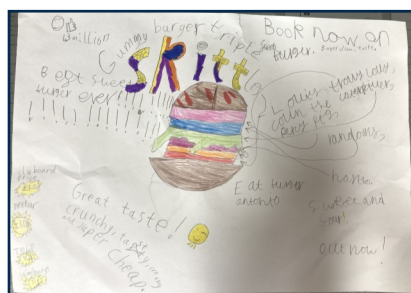
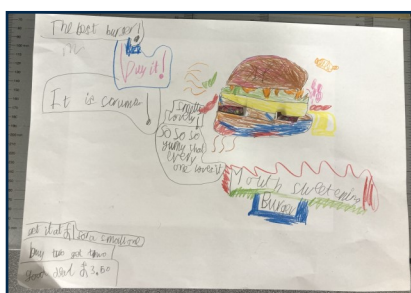
I particularly like the building collaborations between the Upper and Lower Nursery children. In these photographs, a castle and the developing friendships through the shared interests of drawing and talking about buses.

## Form 2 News

We had beautiful winter sunshine for our weekly Woodland School visit this week. The boys worked in small groups following a sensory winter trail. Two boys from Form 2 were particularly amazed that when they stood and listened - they could hear a robin singing. A group of Form 2 boys found two different types of moss growing on a tree, and lichen. We are so lucky to have such amazing countryside, right on our doorstep. HB and SB



In English this week, we have been creating a brand new type of chocolate or sweet. The boys have designed adverts to persuade people to try their product as part of our persuasive writing topic. They made sure to include persuasive language such as 'creamy', 'scrumptious' and 'gooey'. They explored how punctuation can be used to persuade customers, using exclamation marks; 'Great taste!', 'Buy one, get one free!'. Finally, they understood that exaggeration can help to persuade customers; 'Best sweet burger ever', 'Everyone loves it'. Well I don't know about you, but I have definitely been persuaded by them and would love to buy their creations! MH-W





## Music News

It was thrilling to host conductor Nicholas Cleobury at the weekend, who visited CCCS to work on ensemble and sight-reading skills with our most advanced instrumentalists. Mr Cleobury, who founded the Britten Sinfonia, works with orchestras and singers around the world and had come straight to us from teaching conducting at the Royal College of Music, although he has also had a very successful career as a cathedral organist too.

It was wonderful to see the boys evolving throughout the workshop, listening to each other increasingly carefully and becoming a far more effective musical organism. Mr Cleobury even made time to teach some conducting skills at the end! You can hear a clip of one of the pieces they covered - 'The Entertainer' by Scott Joplin - on our YouTube channel at the link below. SB

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZKpR4QWf4w>



## Upcoming Concerts

Parents of younger boys have two exciting performances lined up this term:

Forms 3 and 4 Concert (2.30 pm on Tuesday 27th February)

Pre-Prep Concert (2.30 pm on Thursday 29th February)

Any boy in these classes who plays an instrument is invited to play a piece, and there will be plenty of singing that involves everyone too. The emphasis is on providing a relaxed and enjoyable occasion for pupils to build their confidence, and both events will be held in the Walton Hall.

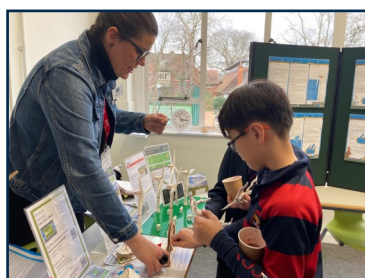
Please do join us if you can! SB

## Form 6 News

Eight boys from Form 6 spent a fascinating Wednesday at the Beyond COP-21 Symposium at Wychwood School. This is one of a series of international conferences for school pupils which began after the COP-21 conference in Paris: the one before us was in Paris and the next will be in Hong Kong.

We heard presentations from experts in a wide range of topics including hydrogen trains, wind turbines, the circular economy and biodiversity. The boys worked together to prepare and present their thoughts on Britain's progress towards the Global Sustainable Development Goals and on practical actions they can take.

I felt that our boys were particularly impressive in the quality of their questions, thoughts and confidence to speak in front of a large audience. We also took part in fun activities such as making people out of tin foil and making smoothies with the energy produced by riding a bike. We are very grateful to Wychwood School and Target4Green for organising the event, and we hope it comes back to Oxford soon! AF





## Making the Most of Oxford Club

This week, our Making the Most of Oxford Tuesday group visited the Bodleian Library.

We had a very entertaining and informative guided tour of the Divinity School and Duke Humfrey's Library.

The facts and figures associated with the library are astonishing. We learned that there is even a book in the library made of cheese! KS



## Form 8 News

Form 8 had a fantastic day out at the National Museum of Computing. We were able to see working machines from WWII to the present day, including having a personal talk about the replica of Turing's Bombe by the man who made it. We saw the first ever working robot (built by the founder of the museum at the age of 15 from parts of a Wellington Bomber) and the world's oldest working computer (the WITCH from 1951).

After an engaging demonstration and discussion of the pros and cons of AI, came the boys' favourite part – playing games on a huge range of computers and consoles from the 1980s and 1990s. This part made Mrs Fairhurst feel very old. Finally, the boys attempted to program a game of Snake in the museum's lab of working BBC Microcomputers – with no mouse! This was a considerable challenge but one to which the boys rose admirably. Our Form 8s represented our school very well, showing themselves to be knowledgeable and keen to join in and learn more. AF



## Book Club

Griselda Heppel (one of our School Governors) talking at our Book Club and signing copies of 'The Tragickall History of Henry Fowst' with boys from Forms 5 - 8. SS

