



Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 1st March 2024

Dear Parents,

I was delighted to attend two wonderful concerts this week, one, the Forms 3 and 4 Concert and the other, that involving Pre-Prep. Ms Biddell pointed out that, in the former, the names of the performers stretched onto a second side of A4, the first time this has happened in her memory. The concert itself lasted for one and a half hours, another record. But it wasn't just quantity – it was also quality, and the pieces we heard were exquisite. We heard a huge variety of instruments being played – piano, horn, trumpet, guitar, cello, violin, recorder, harp, oboe, bassoon and flute made their appearances, and these pieces were universally performed with skill and panache. Musically, the future of this group looks amazingly bright. When one hears about the crisis of music-playing in schools or the tendency of boys not to take up instruments, it seems a very great distance from what's going on at CCCS. It does make clear how important an institution's culture is and we are so lucky with the nature of ours. At the end of the concert, the massed group performed two songs, one of which, *Widdecombe Fair*, was performed in Cathedral Assembly this morning. I can still hear the ghoulish sound of the wind whistling around Dartmoor when the ghost appeared at the end.

Yesterday, I attended the Pre-Prep Concert. What struck me here was the way in which pupils who were so young were already handling their instruments with such confidence, as if they had been born playing them. At the School, we tend to start our instrument playing in Form 2 and so many of our Form 2 pupils are already performing. We have also started a new recorder club this term, which is already full. Wonderful seeds are being sown. At the end of the concert, we watched as the boys did some singing warmups, one of which involved choosing different types of ice cream – an ironic subject in a warmup but one which proved entirely effective! They sang two songs, one terrifying for the audience, a pirate song, where the whole choir warned us that a pirate ship was coming our way. This horrifying message was underlined by every pupil pointing their fingers directly at us! Fortunately, this was followed by a beautiful two-part song from Africa about putting a banana in a red hat (not the most obvious subject for a song) but it brought the concert to a harmonious and touching end.

Ms Biddell has clearly been very busy this week, but it doesn't end there as she is about to fly off to Antigua, in the Caribbean, to help promote classical music in that part of the world. She will be training the Inspire Youth Choir of Antigua and Barbuda, tutoring the clarinet playing of ABYSO (the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra) and conducting the junior orchestra. Ms Biddell will be working alongside members of the Kanneh-Mason family, players from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Grammy Award winning American Mezzo Soprano, J'Nai Bridges. This is illustrious company indeed and we are very proud that our Director of Music should play such an important part in this tremendous initiative. We are delighted that we should have such a link with ABYSO.

I am excited to be able to announce that, after a very considerable wait, we have been granted planning permission to build our new pavilion. This will mean that we will be able to begin building in the near future. I will let you know as soon as we have a timetable. This is thrilling news and will make a great difference to the School in terms of the sporting provision and the way in which we are able to use our playing fields.

I am very much looking forward to this evening when we are holding an event for CCCS parents in the Christ Church Picture Gallery. We will have drinks and then have a private tour from the Curator of the Picture Gallery, Dr Jacqueline Thalmann. The collection of artworks at Christ Church is, by a very long way, the finest held by an Oxbridge College and is the oldest publicly displayed collection of paintings in the Country. There are many places to which CCCS parents have privileged access and this is one of them. Do look out for similar events in the coming terms.


I have had to endure some inclement weather on Brewer Street this week. I was standing there on Thursday, sheltering under my umbrella, when a boy arrived who was also cowering below a smart black umbrella - of the sort used in the past by men wearing bowler hats. We looked at each other from below our respective pieces of canvas. "Morning Mr Murray," he said. "Nice Day for a Barbeque!" Making the most of a less than ideal situation is an admirable quality. Let's hope that the smell of charcoal will be wafting around the gardens of Oxford this weekend.

Mr Murray
Headmaster

Hilary 2024


Monday 4th - Sunday 10th March

MONDAY 4	
2.30	Forms 7 & 8 Hockey v New College (St Edward's)
3.30 - 4.30	After School Chess Club (Form 2)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Football Skills Club (Forms 3 - 5)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Ancient Greek Club (Forms 7 & 8)
TUESDAY 5	
9.30 - 12.30	Open Morning
4.10 - 5.00	After School Touch Rugby Club (Forms 3 - 8)
WEDNESDAY 6	
	Forms 3 & 4 Swimming
2.30	Forms 5 & 6 Football v The Oratory & Davenies (Away)
3.55 - 4.45	After School Chess Club (Forms 3 & 4)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Mandarin Club (Forms 7 & 8)
THURSDAY 7	
	World Book Day
	HPV Vaccine Catch-up
4.10 - 5.00	After School Football Club (Reception - Form 2)
4.30 - 7.30	Form 6 Parents' Evening (SchoolCloud)
FRIDAY 8	
8.30	Cathedral Assembly for Mothering Sunday including Nursery and Pre-Prep
1.30 - 2.30	Primary Schools Football Festival, including Form 2 (Merton Field)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Multi Sports Club (Reception - Form 2)
	EXAM RESULTS CC: OUT UNTIL SUNDAY 4.00PM
SATURDAY 9	
SUNDAY 10	<i>The Fourth Sunday of Lent - Mothering Sunday</i>
4.00 - 6.00	CC: Boys rehearsal (WWH)



Charity News

Each week, throughout term time, we will collect donations of food and essentials, which will then be distributed by Oxford Mutual Aid, a local organization that aims to confront food poverty in our city.



Please leave spare non-perishable items in the food crate in Walton Hall. We would be particularly grateful for any of the following items:

Loo roll, sugar, tinned vegetables/fruit, tinned/packet puddings, jams/other spreads, tinned meat, bottled sauces, coffee/hot chocolate

Thank you for your support.

WORCESTER AND PEMBROKE CHORISTERS

FORM 3 VOICE TRIALS 2024



We are very much looking forward to recruiting new choristers for our Worcester and Pembroke Chapel Choirs this term. Voice trials will take place at school during the morning of **Tuesday 19 March**, and I am delighted that we can offer this exciting opportunity to boys in Form 3. Being a chorister offers unrivalled musical training as well as the opportunity to develop team-work, make friends, grow in confidence, go on tour, make recordings, win music awards at Senior School and much more! Please do contact me at biddell.s@cccs.org.uk if you have any questions, or if you have a son in another year-group who would be interested in auditioning for a place.

You can find out about our two choirs on the school website:

<https://www.cccs.org.uk/private-prep-school-oxford/worcester-college-chapel-choir>

<https://www.cccs.org.uk/private-prep-school-oxford/pembroke-college-chapel-choir>

At voice trial, boys will be asked to sing a short, simple piece (something learnt in class, or a favourite hymn will do) and undertake aural tests. Everything will be done to ensure boys feel at ease... it really isn't scary at all.

Please do get in touch if you would like your son to have a voice trial this term. SB



Worcester Chapel



Pembroke Chapel



Making the Most of Oxford Club

This week our Making the Most of Oxford Club visited All Souls' College. We were shown around by Professor Seth, who took us to the chapel where we admired the ornate reredos and heard how it had been lost and found again.

We progressed on to the Great Quad where we saw the magnificent sundial. Designed for, and originally situated on, the south wall of the chapel, it no longer keeps good time since being moved! KS



Forms 3 and 4 Concert (Tuesday 27th February)

This year's Forms 3 and 4 Concert was a magnificent affair, with nearly 40 solo instrumental performances given on a huge range of instruments. It was excellent to see such a variety in the choice of music (everything from concerto movements to serious Bach to blues and reggae), as well as rarer instruments like the French horn, bassoon, harp and flute on display. The two classes joined forces at the end to perform Widecombe Fair, a Devonshire folk-song about a ghostly horse, and Hot Chocolate... a title which is probably self-explanatory! You can hear snippets of their fabulous performances here:

<https://youtu.be/-QHI491UKPo>

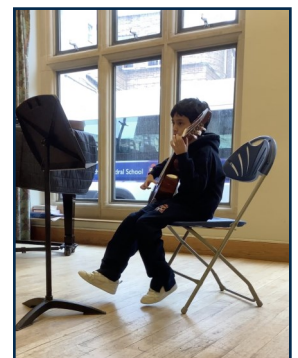
<https://youtu.be/GHRpNtpf018>

I thoroughly enjoyed preparing for this concert with these talented young musicians. They are a formidable musical team and I am so excited to see what they will achieve in the years ahead. Bravo, Forms 3 and 4! SB



Pre-Prep Concert (Thursday 29th February)

The boys in Pre-Prep put on a wonderful show for their annual concert on Thursday, with an array of confident instrumental performances as well as some impressive group singing. Keen to show off the different ways that they can use their voices, they warmed up with a series of music games before singing Lin Marsh's fearsome 'Pirate Song' and 'Banaha', a serene Congolese round. It was especially lovely to have two Cathedral choristers - Will and Martin - to lead the round and model a beautiful singing tone for us all. Well done to the musicians of Pre-Prep! SB



Trinity Music Exams

This term's Trinity music exams will take place in school on Monday 25th March. SB

Nursery News

We have been engaged in lots of mark-making activities this week, from making tickets, to writing the numerals around the edge of a clock face.

In group time we have been working with new Montessori activities, forming a maze with the long rods.

We have also been busy in the block room, creating enclosed structures using lots of loose objects, notably medieval figures and dinosaurs. The children worked well, negotiating the different structures and listening carefully to each other. HB



Young Art Oxford Competition

Lots of boys have been busy creating their entries for the Young Art Oxford Competition on the theme 'My Future World'. Good luck to all who have entered and we look forward to hearing who might have their work exhibited in the Ashmolean Museum in the spring. Here are just a few of the entries:



Form 2 News

In Form 2, we have been learning features of instructions and how they help us to follow them. We put our skills to the test by following a recipe for jam sandwiches. We had to make sure we listened carefully to the instructions as they were read out, so that we ended up with the best jam sandwich we could ever make. Incidentally, we have also been doing fractions so we followed instructions to cut the sandwiches in half and then in half again, into quarters. What a delicious lesson! MHW



Mini Sports News



Richard He, Form 4, attended the U9 Central and East Tennis Tour, winning all six games (beating even the older County player) to win Gold!

Tennis Oxfordshire informed Richard's parents that Richard has now been selected for the Boys' U9 County Training Programme for the Winter/Spring 2024 term. Well Done Richard! LK

Form 1 News

In between all of the impromptu musical interludes this week, as our pupils prepared for their wonderful Pre-Prep Concert, Form 1 were busily beaver away with their learning activities. In English, pupils wrote terrific and terrifying rhyming pirate poems. In Maths, we have been learning about doubling, using mirrors to double large numbers of everyday objects, and we have been working on measurement using standard and non-standard units.

As we build up to British Science Week, we have been learning how to conduct their own experiments in a fair way and measuring their results against their predictions. Super work Form 1! TR



Form 2 Art

The boys in Form 2 have begun creating Chinese vases with cherry blossom collages.

As you can see they have been doing a great job - they will be adding their initials to their collages, in Chinese, next week.

Well Done Boys! EE



D.T. Corner

