



# Christ Church Cathedral School

Tuesday 24th December 2024

Dear Parents,

I am so sorry that I was confined to my bed for the last two days of term. There was so much I missed – the Pre-Prep Nativity, the Christmas lunches, the Prep School Assembly, and a Cathedral Service – generally all of the final events of the term! I am delighted to say, though, that I managed to get back for the Carol Service. As ever, this was a memorable event, perhaps even the high point of the term. I never cease to be moved – however many times I have attended it before over the years – by the procession of choirs, all of whom have their different strengths and merits. This year I was particularly struck by the all-encompassing nature of the descants – in fact at times it was almost impossible to hear the tune itself, so glorious was the thrilling sound of the higher line – and yet never was it raucous or out of tune. To have so many people singing with such technical ability was a wonderful thing and a most inspiring way to draw the long Michaelmas term to an end.

I was struck too by the quality of the readings. For our Carol Service, we use the King James version of the Bible, i.e. the translation which was completed in 1611 under the watchful eye of King James I who wished there to be a version of the Bible in English translated by the finest scholars of the day. He also felt though that it should have a sense of grandeur and poetry which, unquestionably, it does. The passages read for Christmas are amongst the best known from the Bible and in the King James they are rendered particularly beautifully, even if they aren't always easy to read. So I was particularly pleased that our boys made such a wonderful job of them, doing something which I think is the best sign of a good reading, that they should sound completely natural. For a little over 400 years many of these readings have been heard at this time of year in this version and there is something very special, in my opinion, in hearing them again in the way in which they have been heard in churches throughout the country over such a long period. What a treat it was.

Talking of verbal communication, it was lovely to attend Mr Farmer's LAMDA recital on the last Wednesday evening of term. A small group of boys undertook individual solo recitals which showed a wide variety of genres. In the second half all the boys put on a version of Jack and the Beanstalk which seems to have been set, not in Mediaeval England, but in some rural part of the USA. The accents were tremendous and highly entertaining and shone a new light on that immortal rhyme, Fee, Fi, Fo Fum, I smell the blood of an ENGLISHMAN! Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread. I hope that the giant of this version of the story was happy to settle for the bones of an American.

I spoke to the School at my Monday morning assembly about the fall of President Assad in Syria and gave some thoughts as to why this had happened so swiftly, particularly given how fiercely contested had been the Civil War in that country which had lasted for more than a decade. In fewer days than the number of years for which the civil war had raged, the regime collapsed earlier this month. Throughout the next few days, I heard discussions between pupils about the situation in Syria – it seemed to have become a topic about which everyone was talking. I never cease to marvel about the interest taken by so many of our pupils in current affairs. It is very heartening. I am certain that many of them will keep an eye on the emerging situation over the coming few weeks.

Oxford at Christmas time is a beguiling place. The dark descends a little after 4.00 but it only has the effect of lending the streets a charm and magic often not there at other times of the year. The shop windows seem particularly enticing and the old buildings, hunched against the cold and the darkness, seem particularly bewitching. This is the time for gathering indoors round a fire to read a book or to be with one's closest friends or relatives. It's a time of year which I always love. I hope that you will all have a lovely Christmas with time to rest and be with family and friends. I look forward to seeing you in 2025!

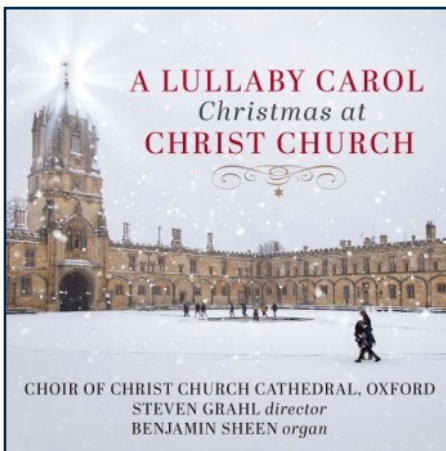
Mr Murray  
Headmaster

## Hilary 2025

### Wednesday 8th - Sunday 12th January

WEDNESDAY 8	Term begins - all pupils back in school
2.15 - 4.30	Forms 3-6 Trip: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat
THURSDAY 9	
9.00 - 12.30	Form 7 Trip: Geography field work around Oxford
6.00	CC: First Service of term
FRIDAY 10	
8.30	Cathedral Assembly
	CC: IN
SATURDAY 11	
2.30 - 7.00	Chorister for a Day
SUNDAY 12	

### Christ Church News



We are delighted to announce the release of the Cathedral Choir's latest CD, 'A Lullaby Carol: Christmas at Christ Church'. It includes traditional and contemporary music for the festive season, and a number of works by composers associated with Christ Church. The CD is available in person from Christ Church Shop and online from AVIE:

[www.avie-records.com/releases/a-lullaby-carol-christmas-at-christ-church/](http://www.avie-records.com/releases/a-lullaby-carol-christmas-at-christ-church/)

### Journey to Bethlehem: Children and Families' Service

Tuesday 24th December • 10.35 am

Come along with your children for this interactive service of music, play, and storytelling as we learn about the Christmas story and journey to the crib together

### Dates for the Diary



For any boys in Forms 2 or 3, interested in joining the 'Chorister for a Day' event on Saturday 11th January, please contact Mrs Johnson, the Registrar.

Find out more on our website:

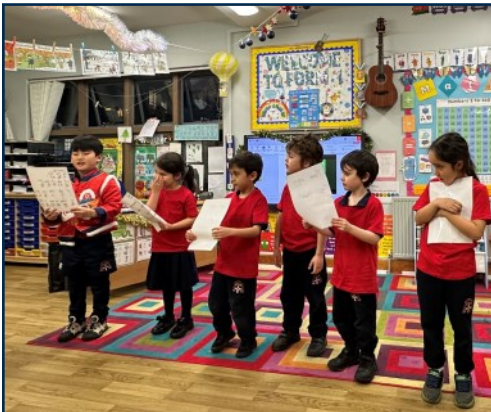
[Open Mornings and Visits- Christ Church Cathedral School](http://www.christchurchcathedral-school.org.uk/)

## Form 8 News



The Form 8 boys gave their friends an outstanding performance of Cendrillon. They would like to wish the wide community a very Joyeux Noël!

## Mandarin Club News



A few of our Pre-Prep children hosted a delightful mini Mandarin concert during the final session of the Junior Mandarin Club. Dressed in vibrant red T-shirts with their Chinese names, they proudly performed three favourite Mandarin songs for their parents.

The fun continued at our Language Corner, where parents picked their favourite foods, and the children became their 'teachers'. As well as introducing their own names in Mandarin, the young linguists taught their parents how to say the foods. It was heartwarming to see both children and parents sharing the joy of learning. The room was filled with laughter, pride, and a love for language. What a fantastic way to end the term! A big thank-you to all the parents for making this event so special.

## Chess News

Oxfordshire Junior Chess is excited to announce that we will be holding the annual county junior chess tournament on the weekend of 4th/5th Jan 2025 at Cumnor Primary School. As in previous years, there will be U9, U11, U13, U15/18 sections.

The [online entry form](#) gives full tournament information and rules can be accessed. The tournament caters for first time tournament entrants all the way through to experienced junior players. Queries are welcomed by email to Anna Bishop at [oxfordshirejuniorchess@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordshirejuniorchess@gmail.com).

## English News

Congratulations to two boys from Form 6 who have both gone through to the second round of the BBC's 500 Words competition. Alex M's story '*Wadoo and the Land of Weird Food*' and Chris Z's '*The First Contact*' were among tens of thousands of entries received by the judges of this hugely popular annual contest, so to be among the 5,000 through to the next stage is fantastic work. Well done boys!

## Nursery News

The Early Years Children have entered December with new calendar work, calculating the number of days to events, the end of term and Christmas. They add counters to each day of the week on the monthly calendar and then transfer the counters to five frames, calculating how many full frames and part frames we have.

The Nursery Nativity was enjoyed by family and friends on Wednesday, with fabulous audience participation of the songs. It will be remembered as being the Nativity where neither Joseph nor Mary wanted to hold the baby Jesus!

The children have been looking forward to their French petit déjeuner with Madame Williams. She brought two special guests to join us from Form 8. The children all asked in French for a croissant or pain au chocolat and chocolat chair, remembering their s'il vous plait and merci. Thank you to Madame Williams for spending time with the Early Years children. It's fondly looked forward to each week. HB



## Festive News



Pre-Prep and Nursery had a great trip to see *Hurry Up Father Christmas* at the Burton Taylor Studio



And here are Pre-Prep in their own performance of the Nativity



## Christmas Light Show



## The gorgeous depictions of the Twelve Days of Christmas at the Light Show

