



Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 7th February 2025

Dear Parents,

Our speaker today in Cathedral Assembly was The Revd Canon Professor Andrew Davison, Regius Professor of Divinity at Christ Church. He talked to us about the importance of caring about what sort of person you are, and directed our attention to the cardinal virtues which are pictured on the floor of the Quire in the Cathedral, and are well worth having a look at. He mentioned to us the great author of detective fiction, Dorothy L Sayers, who created the well-known sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey, who in his aristocratic and sophisticated way, solved huge numbers of crimes. Dorothy L Sayers was born in No 1 Brewer Street which was, at the time, the Headmaster's House, her father being Headmaster of the School. As befits someone born in the shadow of a cathedral and college, many of her detective works are set in religious and academic environments, including her most famous work "The Nine Tailors", which is partly set in the belfry of a church! It was particularly good to hear about Sayers as one of our houses – the yellow one – is named after her, along with Carroll and Wolsey. As it happens, it was Sayers who has most connection with the school even though she is the least well known.

Having rather dismissed Lewis Carroll above, may I draw your attention to the advertisement on the back page of this newsletter encouraging you to go to the latest exhibition in the Upper Library. Not only is this an opportunity to visit one of the finest rooms in Oxford, but also to see, for the first time, the hugely significant collection of Lewis Carroll papers which has recently been acquired by Christ Church. It is the first time the collection has been displayed in the UK. Entry is free. Please do make the most of your connection with the College. The Upper Library has so many rare and wonderful items to view, including a very early sketch of the solar system with the sun in its centre.

So much has happened this week, as may be seen from this newsletter, that I cannot cover everything I have seen. I was so impressed by the way in which our senior pupils took part in the crime solution workshop yesterday. The whole process ended in the trial of a suspect. Some pupils took the role of barristers and others of the jury. One person got to wear a very long and outlandish wig – he was a judge. The passion with which the pupils argued their case was extraordinary and many of them are already considering careers in the law or the police as a consequence. There is no end to the energy which our pupils display.

I always enjoy my visits to Pre-Prep Assembly but today was a particularly joyous occasion. Yesterday I had been going round school when two pupils from Pre-Prep had seen me and said, "Hello Mr Murray! You are in our song." People say all sorts of things to me in School and I did not take the comment very seriously. What a mistake! During Pre-Prep Assembly this morning, the pupils sang a sea shanty they had written, 'The Jolly Christ Church'. Imagine then my horror when I heard the following words!

"Through the keyhole in a Hurry,
There we capture Mr Murray
He tried some of our pirate curry
And then he walked the plank – SPLASH!"

I have told all the Pre-Prep that I will be doing lots of swimming practice over the weekend to ensure that I can survive the grizzly end that these young buccaneers have in mind for me!

Mr Murray
Headmaster

Hilary 2025

Monday 10th - Sunday 16th February

MONDAY 10	Nursery and Pre-Prep Hearing Screening Test
9.00 - 12.00	Forms 7 & 8 Poetry Workshop
1.00 - 3.00	French Play - WWH
TUESDAY 11	Form 1 Pirates Theme Day
9.05 - 3.30	Form 8 Computing Trip
4.15 - 5.00	Squash Club, Forms 5-8
4.15 - 5.00	Multi Skills, Rec-F4
WEDNESDAY 12	House Football
2.00 - 4.00	Mandarin Club, Rec-F2
3.30 - 4.15	Mandarin Club, Forms 3-5
4.15 - 5.00	
THURSDAY 13	Forms 3 & 4 Japanese Culture Workshop
9.00 - 12.30	Mandarin Club, Forms 6-8
4.15 - 5.00	
FRIDAY 14	Cathedral Assembly, Eucharist
8.30	House Quiz
11.25 - 12.45	Half Term begins
4.10	CC: Half term begins after Evensong
SATURDAY 15	
SUNDAY 16	<i>University Fifth Week</i>

Parent Coffee Morning

Save the Date! The Parents' Association will be hosting a coffee morning, 8.45-10am on Tuesday 25th February, in the Dining Room. This is a particularly good opportunity for all the new families who have joined us this term to come along and meet each other and the PA, but all families, new and old, are most welcome.

Confirmation

Every year, boys in Forms 6, 7 and 8 are invited to consider whether they would like to be confirmed; that is, make a commitment to the Christian faith. If you think this is something that might be right for you or your child, please look out for a letter from Mr Murray explaining how to find out more. The School confirmation will be in the summer term and preparation will begin after February half term.

Ski Trip 2026

The deadline to register your interest for the Ski Trip in 2026 is 28th February. This will take place during the first week of the Hilary Term 2026, Sunday 4th - Friday 9th January. This trip will be open to boys in Forms 5 to 8 who are over the age of 10 at the time of the trip.

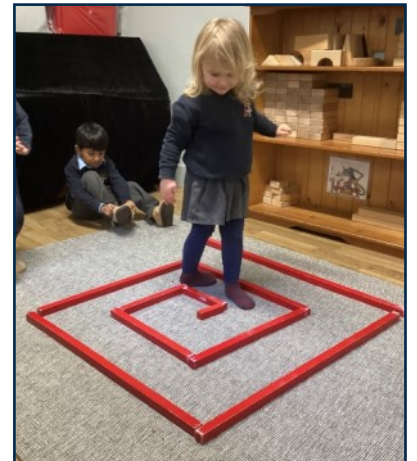
Please contact the [school office](#) to register your interest.

Early Years News

This week the Early Years children have been working with sensorial materials, activities that develop the children's visual and spatial skills. These materials have initial presentations which the children are drawn to practise repeatedly. There are also extensions to this work which rekindle an interest or spark a new exploration, seeing a child revisit these materials throughout their Early Years.

There have been new pairings this week, and members of the cohort showing new friends their favourite work.

The children were delighted to have the harp introduced during our weekly music sessions. Thank you to those older children who find time during their Thursday morning break to inspire the youngest members of our school community. HB



Pre-Prep News

This week in Form 2, we have been learning how to measure in millilitres. To test our knowledge so far, I challenged Form 2 to make their own mocktails. They were given a maximum capacity of 200ml and the choices of orange, apple, cranberry and tropical juice. They took the time to decide what amounts they would use of each juice. We talked about what colour they expected their mocktail to be with their chosen juices and they coloured their cup in the colour they predicted their mocktail would be.

After planning, it was time to measure out each juice and pour it into their cup. Some of them guessed the colour of their mocktail perfectly, whilst others were surprised by the results. The last job was simply to enjoy their drink. Ah, refreshing! MH-W



NSPCC Workshop

Following an earlier successful online assembly, Forms 2, 5 and 6 participated in an interactive workshop led by our friend Clare from the NSPCC.

During the workshop, the boys excitedly greeted 'Buddy', a green speech bubble-shaped mascot, representing "Speak Out, Stay Safe", recognising him as a friend to speak to if they were worried.

There were lively discussions during the workshop on topics such as recognising the role of Childline, how to contact them, and determining who is a Safe Adult both in school and at home.



The children then played a game of "What do you think?" This was an opportunity to form small groups and discuss different scenarios, such as, 'Is it ok to keep a secret?' They gave a thumbs up or thumbs down to each given scenario and confidently explained the reason for their answers.

These workshops are incredibly important and serve as a reminder to children to speak out if they have any worries or concerns; we are very grateful to the NSPCC for visiting us. MM

Form 3 News

On Thursday this week, Form 3 visited the Jewish synagogue in Jericho to support the pupils' growing understanding of our religious studies topic, Judaism. We were given an informative tour by John, one of the volunteers there, who pointed out some of the key features and main objects you might find in a synagogue.

The boys were lucky enough to see the sacred Torah scrolls and try on a kippah (worn by Jewish males, as many believe it is respectful to God to cover the head). They also learned about the Purim festival, and took it in turns to spin a gragger to make the loudest sound they could in order to 'drown out' the name of Haman.

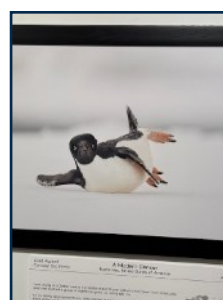
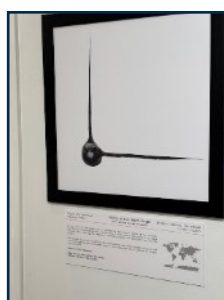
The boys had a wonderful time, asked and answered lots of questions, and were a real credit to the school. HB



Form 3 also visited the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock this morning to see the 'Bird Photographer of the Year Exhibition'.



We saw some amazing photographs of birds and the boys did some great drawings that we will work into in our Art lesson next week. Two of our favourite photos were the penguin dancer and the right angled bird! EE



Forms 7 & 8 News

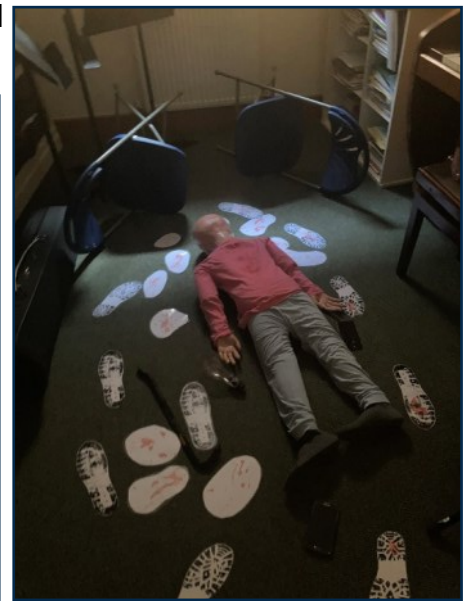
Who needs Inspector Morse when you have the CCCS boys to solve a gruesome murder case?!

Forms 7 and 8 came together to investigate a real-life murder case, courtesy of Simon Smith from Zakon, a crime and investigative skills training course provider.

Simon, who boasts 24 years as a senior police officer, shared his skills and knowledge to lead the boys through the murder investigation, from the initial 999 call from a key witness, all the way through to a Crown Court trial. The boys took on the roles of Call Handler, First Responder, Crime Scene Investigator, Detective, Forensic Scientists, Barristers, Witnesses, Judge and Jury and of course, the Defendant!

Working in teams, the boys worked out the next steps for the investigation and then regrouped to share their deductions and collectively decide on their next actions.

Once interviews were conducted, evidence gathered and forensics analysed, it was finally the moment of truth...would the jury find the defendant guilty or innocent of the crime? Well, due to the formidable work of the defence team, the defendant walked free! MM



History Man

Over the last week we have had two inspiring visits from the History Man, kindly paid for by the Parents' Association.

Last Thursday, he spent half a day with all our pupils in Forms 6, 7 and 8, focusing on the Industrial Revolution. They learned an enormous amount about this transformative period and had the chance to try out a range of objects, pieces of clothing and gadgets from the period. This included a windup system to create an electrical current which could then pass through flesh and make your arms jump, apparently the inspiration for Mary Shelley's Frankenstein when she saw it applied to a dead frog, and a real (miniature) steam engine.



This Tuesday he came back and it was completely different; Knights and Castles with Forms 1-5. The children learned about all aspects of life in the middle ages, including clothes, weapons and music, and how the castle developed and changed over the centuries. The children were able to dress up in medieval costume including full suits of armour (which they discovered was very heavy!) and try out weapons including swords, bows and arrows, catapults and the most advanced of medieval weaponry, the remarkable trebuchet (in miniature form of course). They also made clay horses and castles, played games from the period and created their own mini medieval cities with a range of defences. AF

Cont.

Here are a couple of quotations from our Pre-Prep children about their favourites bits:

“The catapult was fun because it went straight onto the carpet.”

“The armour because you got to try it on.”

“The knight dress-up.”

“The sword fighting.”



Chinese New Year - Pre-Prep

Recently in Form 2, we had a Chinese New Year Celebration. The children were invited to wear red (a colour considered to be lucky in China) or other traditional Chinese dress, and we decorated the classroom with lanterns, banners and other China inspired artwork done by the children in their art lessons. Our wonderful chef even cooked up a feast of pork stir fry, sweet and sour chicken, egg fried rice, noodles and fortune cookies.

We started the day by learning about Dragon and Lion Dances which are believed to chase away evil spirits and set the tone at happy occasions. We then performed our own Dragon Dance, whilst wearing Dragon masks that we had designed, at Assembly in front of Pre-Prep.

After Assembly, Form 1 joined us to learn about the Legend of Nian, a fierce beast with sharp teeth and horns who came to scare the villagers in China. They sought advice from a wise old man who told them to wear red, light lanterns, set off fireworks and play drums, as noise, light and the colour red all scared the Nian monster. With this, we made noisemakers to scare the beast away, covering them in red and gold sequins, ribbons and other crafts. We filled them with beans, rice, pasta and bells so that when they were all shaken, we made enough noise to scare him away!

Next, our Mandarin Club teacher came and taught us how to say 1-10 in Mandarin. For those who take part in the Mandarin club, this was easy, but for some of us it was a little trickier! The Mandarin club performed a song to wish us a Happy Chinese New Year in both Mandarin and English and we then attempted to write 'Happy Chinese New Year' in Mandarin characters.

After lunch, we revisited the story of the Nian monster and learnt more about lanterns at this time. The lanterns can symbolize the people letting go of their past selves and getting new ones, which they will let go of the next year. We carefully cut out our own lanterns to hang at home.

Lastly, we learnt about different foods that are eaten at Chinese New Year and rated them out of 10. Some foods were familiar, such as oranges (which bring good luck) and prawn crackers (a popular snack). However, some snacks were more intriguing, such as lychees (representing good fortune and family unity) and 'White Rabbit' sweets (a common gift given at celebrations, including Chinese New Year). MH-W



Chinese New Year - Prep

Children from Forms 3, 4, and 5 enjoyed a wonderful Chinese New Year session, which gave them a taste of Chinese New Year, featuring traditional piano music, poetry recitations, and exciting games. They also had the chance to try on traditional Chinese clothing, paper cuttings, and Chinese calligraphy - a hands-on way to explore this rich cultural tradition.

A special highlight was the beautiful dance performance by our parents, adding to the festive spirit. Huge thanks to our Oxford Chinese community for making this event so meaningful, giving our children a wonderful experience of Chinese New Year traditions. YR



Sports News

It has been another fantastic week over on the games field with all boys from Forms 5-8 playing in football fixtures.

On Monday, we welcomed d'Overbroeck's to Merton Field for our second U12/13 fixture against them this season. Having already faced them before Christmas, we knew it was going to be a tough test and a close encounter on all pitches.

I am pleased to report that all four of our teams ended up being victorious on an afternoon packed full of effort, skill, passion and teamwork. This shows just how far we have come in a relatively short space of time. On the 1st Team pitch, having been pegged back to 2-2 after racing into a two goal lead, our 1st Team rallied and kicked on in the final 10 minutes to win the game 4-2. The sports department were really proud of all the boys, with our 1st Team still remaining unbeaten so far this season.

On Wednesday it was the turn of Forms 5 and 6 to have a home match, this time against Manor Prep. Once again, all the boys were representing the school, playing across four matches. They were very well contested games, with scorelines close on all four pitches. The 'A Team' should have been out of sight by half time, hitting the woodwork five times in the first half. Both Ray and Raphael were causing the Manor defence problems, with endless running and some great footwork.

During the second half, Manor came back into the game and man of the match Arthur Hills made some wonderful saves to keep the opposition out. In the final minute, referee Mr Withers gave a debatable free kick on the edge of the box which the Manor midfielder struck into the roof of the net to make it 2-2. However, in a similar way to the Form 7 and 8 boys, the progress we have seen over the course of this season so far has been really impressive.

Keep up the excellent work boys! DP



Outreach News

Another week, another musical masterclass at CCCS

"Mr Moy is a brilliant teacher!" was the resounding praise from one of our visitors from St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School on Wednesday; and we couldn't agree more.

We were thrilled to welcome Year 3 pupils from the school as they joined Mr Moy and our Choristers Splendour, Eaton and Hugo for a 'Music Masterclass' in Christ Church Cathedral.

After chatting with our Choristers, they warmed up their vocals by singing in rounds in the school hall – it sounded splendid! Then off we all went to sing in the magnificence of Christ Church Cathedral where we were treated to the school's version of 'The Seagull'. The children have been working hard on this and it showed.

Just before they departed, Mr Murray spoke to our visitors to say how lovely it was to hear them sing and that he is very much looking forward to welcoming them back to Christ Church next month. MM

Writing Competition News

The Sir Philip Sidney Essay Competition is run every year by Shrewsbury School, giving children in Years 5 and 6 the chance to share their skill in expressing their ideas in written form. This



year, entrants were asked to explain the most important issues facing young people and how politicians, and others, should respond.

On Thursday, we were invited to take three finalists to a special event at Shrewsbury School. We had two insightful workshops, helping participants to think more clearly about what they wanted to say, and say it more insightfully. We also had a lovely lunch and plenty of cake before a prizegiving ceremony.

There were participants there from all over the country, so there is no doubt that all of our finalists (Uzay, George R and Jaden) had done very well. We had a lovely afternoon. Unfortunately, George was unwell, which was a particular shame when the winners were announced – George was the national Year 5 champion! Well done to all our boys who participated in this challenging competition: their effort and achievements are clear. AF

Elsewhere...

Forms 3 and 4 with their DT projects



The Cathedral Choristers in Tom Quad celebrating the final Epiphany Service of 2025





Roots

Poetry Competition

Submit your best poem on the theme of 'Roots' by 28th February to be in with a chance of winning!



CHRIST CHURCH
500 YEARS | 1525-2025



CHRIST CHURCH
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL



Pictures and Conversations: the Jon A. Lindseth Lewis Carroll Collection

Christ Church Upper Library, Oxford OX1 1DP

4th February - 17th April 2025

Opening hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10am-1pm; Wednesday 1-4.30pm. Admission free.
Please note there is no step-free access to the Upper Library.

The exhibition showcases some of the highlights of the magnificent Jon A. Lindseth Lewis Carroll Collection, recently donated to Christ Church. This donation makes Christ Church the pre-eminent Carroll collection in the UK. The Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898), better known by his pen name Lewis Carroll, was a mathematics tutor at Christ Church. In 1856 he became friends with Henry Liddell, the new Dean of the college, and his family. Dodgson's friendship with the Liddell children led him to create one of the most famous and enduring children's stories, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Manuscripts, rare editions and photographs explore Carroll's life and work and enduring impact and legacy. This is the first time the collection has been displayed in the UK.

[Pictures and Conversations: the Jon A. Lindseth Lewis Carroll Collection | Christ Church, University of Oxford](#)