



Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 14th March 2025 —



A message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

It was tremendous to see so many of you in the Cathedral this morning to welcome the Dean of Westminster, The Very Revd David Hoyle. I love the fact that parents come to the Cathedral and I would like to say again how very welcome you are. Dean Hoyle came to Oxford planning to give a talk about Lent but, at the last minute, decided to tell us about life at Westminster Abbey. The Abbey is a royal peculiar, a church which is under the direct control of the Monarch and so the appointment of the Dean is the Sovereign's personal choice. He talked to us about the preparations for the Late Queen's funeral. He was told that the likely audience for the event would be Four Billion, approximately half the population of the world, a rather larger congregation than was seated before him in the Cathedral this morning! It was the largest security operation ever mounted anywhere and one for which the Abbey, and indeed London, had ten days to prepare.

He pointed out that every building had its own story – and the story of Westminster Abbey is more colourful and interesting than almost any other. It was a building in which there were very many contrasts. It contains the tomb of Queen Elizabeth I alongside that of her Cousin Mary Queen of Scots whom Elizabeth had executed. It has the tomb of Archbishop Ussher who believed, after a study of biblical sources, that the world had been created in 4004 BC while there is also a memorial to Stephen Hawking who had a very different interpretation of the creation of the world. Despite their differences, the Abbey contains them all and the Dean wished to stress the importance, particularly in a world where there is much division, of coming together. Buildings such as the Abbey and Christ Church Cathedral were able to act as places where people of different beliefs could come together.

At the end of the service a number of boys gathered round the Dean to ask him questions. In the course of the interrogation, he told the story of how, during the Coronation, he had been privileged to be inside the screens during the most sacred part of the ceremony, and the part hidden from public view, that of the anointing of the King with Holy Oil. One can only imagine what an extraordinary and historical moment this must have been. It was he too who had to carry the Crown before handing it over to the Archbishop of Canterbury and indeed, he confirmed that it was pretty heavy. We are very fortunate that The Dean was able to afford us all so much time.

There are still a few places left for the tour of the Upper Library at Christ Church on Thursday 27th March. Do think of booking your ticket – the splendid and kind Head Librarian Gabriel has said that she will put out a few treasures of the library not normally seen by the public for us to look at.

This afternoon I attended the Forms 3 and 4 concert. It was a delightful and inspiring occasion. What was so striking was the way in which the music that the pupils played so fully mirrored their characters. There was the boy who was so keen to get going that he rushed into the piece way before Miss Biddell (on the piano) was ready! There was the lyrical calmness of a soothing melody as well as a staccato gallop which had us all bouncing with energy. The class songs at the end were charming. One was about a crocodile – “He wouldn’t say no to a body like yours!” we were warned. Certainly I will not be rushing to Egypt! Meanwhile, the second song was entitled potatoes! It was written for CCCS and contained another warning – when eating potatoes check them for worms! All of these warnings were conveyed with appropriate seriousness!

It was while I was talking about warnings at the end of the concert, that I learnt an important piece of information. A boy put up his hand. “Yes?” I asked. He responded, “When we were practising this song, Ms Biddell told us to look at the wolf (in the Christ Church Coat of Arms prominently displayed on the wall in the hall) and imagine that it was Mr Murray!” I am not certain what effect imagining that the wolf was me was supposed to have, but certainly the singing was wonderful! I am delighted that I can sometimes be of use to my excellent colleagues, even in absentia.

Mr Murray
Headmaster

Parent Social

WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH

Starts from 7PM at the Oxford Wine Tavern
on South Parade, Summertown

Come and join us for an evening of fun!

You're invited!

The Parents' Association warmly invites you to join us for a soiree on Wednesday, 19th March.

Time: From 7:00 PM

Location: The Oxford Wine Tavern, South Parade, Summertown.

We look forward to seeing you there!

School Calendar



School Diary: Monday 17th March - Sunday 23rd March

MONDAY 17

2.00-3.30: Cathedral Singing Festival (Schools Outreach)

2.30: Forms 7/8 Hockey v d'Overbroeck's (Away)

4.00-4.30: Second-hand sports kit sale

TUESDAY 18

1.30-4.00: U8/U9 Football and tag Rugby Festival v Cothill (Away)

2.30-3.30: Pre-Prep Concert, WWH

WEDNESDAY 19

1.30-4.30: Form 6 Football v Cokethorpe (Home)

2.15-4.00: Form 8 Football v Cokethorpe (Home)

4.30: Form 8 Parents' Meeting

7pm: Parents' Social Evening, Oxford Wine Tavern on South Parade, Summertown

THURSDAY 20

4.30: Pre-Prep Parents' Meeting

FRIDAY 21

8.45: Cathedral Assembly, Speaker: The Revd Canon Peter Moger, Sub Dean, Christ Church, Oxford

9.00: Forms 3 & 4 Fromagerie Visit

6.30pm: William Wilton School Play, WWH

SATURDAY 22

6.30pm: William Wilton School Play, WWH

Dates for your Diary

Stay & Play

Wednesday 19th March

We're looking forward to welcoming families with children aged 1-4 to join us for our Stay & Play event next week.

Please feel free to extend this invitation to friends or family who may be considering sending their children to Christ Church.

For more information or to register to attend, please [click here](#).



Here's a reminder of the daily after-school clubs and events taking place at school.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
4.15 - 5.00: Football, Forms 5-8	4.15 - 5.00: Squash Club, Forms 5-8	3.30 - 4.15: Mandarin Club, Rec - F2	4.15 - 5.00: Cricket, Forms 3-8	
4.30 - 5.30: Real Tennis, Forms 6-8	4.15 - 5.00: Multi Skills, Rec - F4	4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, Forms 3-5	4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, Forms 6-8	

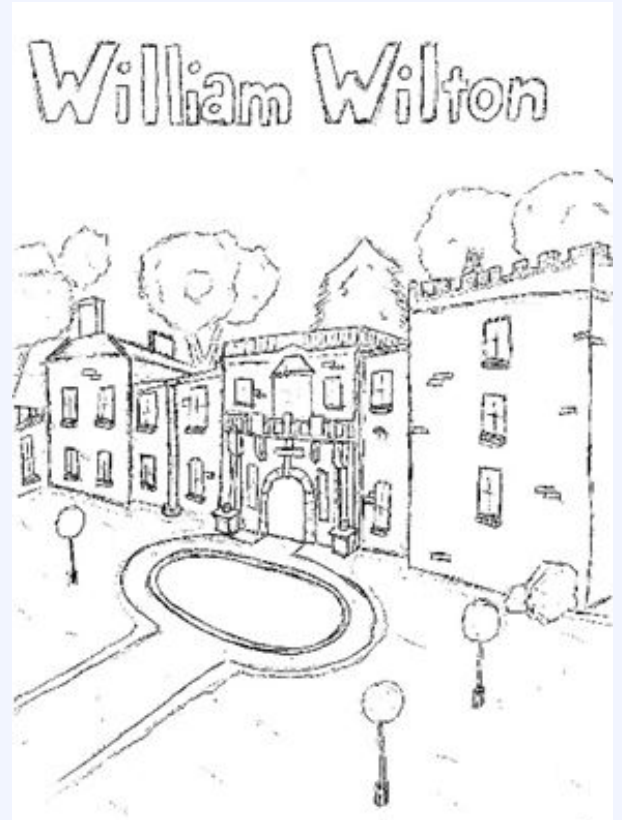
Upcoming School Events

Friday 21st March and Saturday 22nd March

William Wilton

There will be two performances of the School Play next week: Friday and Saturday 6.30 pm.

Tickets are available from the Office.



Tuesday 25th March

Joint concert with Winchester String Orchestra

You are invited to join us on Tuesday 25th March in Christ Church Cathedral for a spectacular concert.

Our senior string players will be accompanying the Winchester College String Orchestra for part of the concert programme.

The concert will be held in Christ Church Cathedral from 3.30pm.

If you would like to attend, please contact the school office to book your ticket.

Pre-Prep celebrate British Science Week

This week in Year 1, over the course of British Science Week, we have been talking about various experiments including an action-packed rainbow experience. We have been discussing the importance of fair testing and Cows Moo Softly – control something, measure something, keep something the same. MB



In Form 2, we have been learning about parts, needs and life cycles of plants. We planted our own sunflower seeds and decorated the pots. We have been watching them eagerly each day to see how they are growing. Most of them now have a stem, roots and leaves but no flowers yet. We also planted some onto wet paper towels in clear bags. This allowed us to see when the seeds started germinating and all the roots growing. We have been monitoring these changes and hope to end up with some beautiful sunflowers. MHW



Early Years News

The Early Years children enjoyed a bracing Spring walk on Christ Church Meadow this week. The children sat with Miss Helen and practised sitting, looking at and listening to what was around them. We saw a mutation of thrushes flying through the Woodland School, talked about why the daffodils had flowered in one part of the Broad Walk but not another, and heard a gull calling. 'It sounds like the seaside,' observed one of the children.

The children went off to explore. They collected lots of long sticks which they graded from shortest to longest. The Lower Nursery loved running in and out of the emerging daffodils, telling each other to be careful not to stand on them.



Finally, Mr Berry read 'Mr Mole I'm Home' to the children whilst we ate snacks.
HB

Pre-Prep Spring Walk

This week, the Pre-Prep set out for a Spring Walk on Christ Church Meadow. Armed with a checklist of Spring features to find, we explored the local surroundings and walked down to the river.

After a brief, but rather dramatic hail storm, the sun came out and lit up the idyllic setting.

We were delighted to find an array of wildlife, and were hugely impressed by the group's knowledge of different bird species. On our walk, we saw thrushes, Canadian and White-Fronted geese, crows, pigeons and ducks.

We finished the afternoon by warming up back in the classroom, looking through the photographs we had taken, and enjoying hot chocolate and delicious homemade oat and raisin cookies; the perfect end to a chilly but memorable Spring adventure. MB



Form 2 News

Pizza-Mania in Form 2

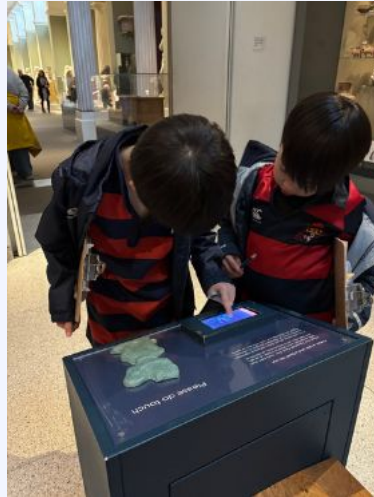
Making pizzas in a French lesson?! Actually the kids have been hard at work with the topic of fruit and vegetables, learning how to say what they like and dislike, and learning how to identify and ask for a whole variety of pizza toppings – in French. Much fun was had in our lesson this week as we put theory into practice; working the dough into a base, and then choosing the pizza toppings. “Non, Madame Williams, je n’aime pas les champignons – j’aime le fromage et les tomates!” Well done, ‘les chefs’ from Form 2 and ‘merci beaucoup’ to all CCCS kitchen staff who turned the kitchen into a pizzeria on Thursday!

A E-W



Form 3 News

On Wednesday afternoon Form 3 visited the Ashmolean Museum to explore the Ancient Egyptian galleries and view some of the artefacts we have been learning about in our history lessons. It was fascinating to see the mummies (including a mummified cat!); hieroglyphics scribed into tombs and scraps of ancient papyrus and many other objects which gave us an insight into how the Ancient Egyptians used to live.



In Religious Studies, we have been learning about Judaism.

On Thursday 13th March, we learned that it was the Purim festival, which remembers and celebrates the survival of the Jewish people after they had been condemned to death by Persian rulers. It comes from a story in the Book of Esther, which can be found in the Old Testament and also the Torah.

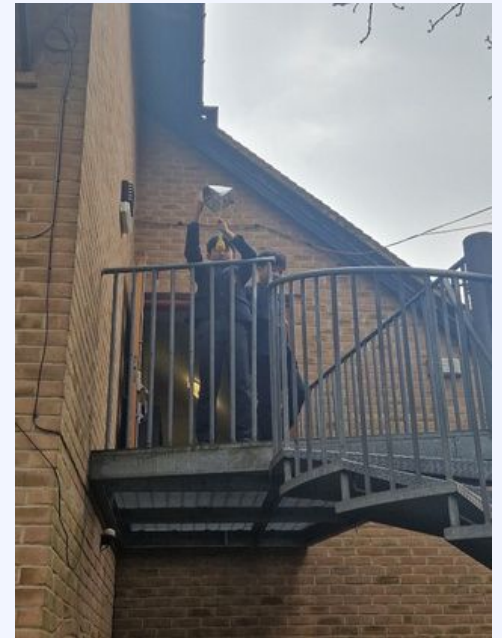
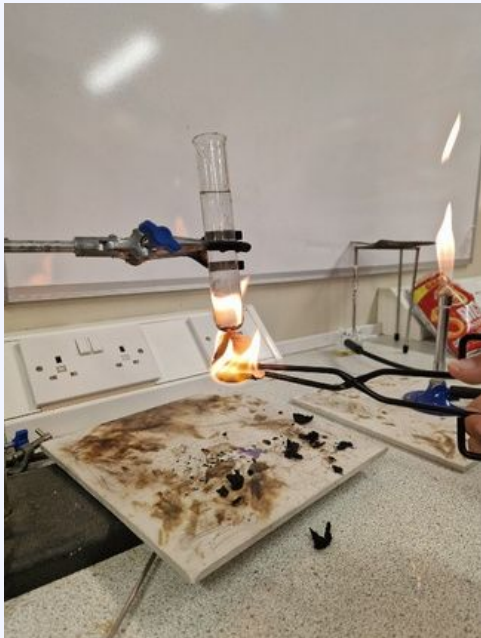
The most well known food eaten during Purim are pastries called 'Hamantaschen', which are filled with poppy seeds. We had great fun making and eating our own 'no-bake' version using bread, jam and rainbow sprinkles! HB



Prep celebrates British Science Week

There has been much excitement in the Prep School this week as boys have embarked on their annual British Science week challenge run by the Science Oxford centre in Headington.

They were tasked with formulating and then testing ideas and finally presenting their work in creative and eye-catching ways. I have been hugely impressed by the variety of imaginative ideas the boys have come up with. Much enjoyment has been had growing mould on bread, adding mentos to different fizzy drinks, launching a variety of parachutes off the fire escape and finding out which brand of crisp contains the most energy. One group even combined science with their love of music, wanting to know if different genres of music affect the ability to memorise sequences. The music department will be encouraged to hear that classical music had the biggest positive impact on cognitive function!



To mark the end of British Science Week today all pupils from Forms 1 to 8 enjoyed a visit from Alice from the Science Oxford centre in Headington. The Pre-Prep children took part in a fantastic, hands-on workshop entitled Floaty Boats, whilst the Prep School boys were treated to entertaining science shows exploring the Science of Magic and Fantastic Forces. A big thank you to Alice and Science Oxford for making the end of Science Week so enjoyable and informative. CS



Music News

Jazz Day at The Oratory

Three of our senior instrumentalists attended an energetic day of jazz workshops given at The Oratory School by Mark Armstrong, the professor of jazz at the Royal College of Music and trumpeter extraordinaire. The entire day was taught by ear, which really stretched the boys as so much of their day-to-day playing is done from the pages of books. During a session on improvisation, Henry P volunteered immediately to be the first soloist and gave several impressive performances using the blues scale - no mean feat!



It was especially thrilling to hear a performance at the end of the day given by Mark alongside Oratory's star sixth-form musician, Alex (once a Worcester chorister and gifted trombonist here at CCCS).

Hearing jazz trumpet and trombone played by top-level musicians was genuinely inspiring for the seventy prep school children listening. We all learnt such a lot throughout the day and The Oratory is always a wonderful musical environment to visit.

Well done to Ludo, Henry and Gintas for representing CCCS music so well. SB

Music chair available

We have received a very kind donation of a music chair. Due to space, we are unable to make use of it, but would love to see it go to a new home. Please contact the school office if you are interested.

Music News

Years 3 and 4 Concert

Bravo to the boys of Forms 3 and 4, who made a terrific impression at this year's Form 3 and 4 Concert on Friday afternoon. We heard over 20 instrumental solos - covering everything from folk tunes to tangos to musical hits to Bartók! - and to finish, everyone joined forces to sing 'The Crocodile' and 'Potatoes' (a wonderfully jazzy piece commissioned for CCCS several years ago). Each performance was given confidently, and the variety of repertoire and styles was so much appreciated by all listening. A huge thank you to the boys, and to everyone who supports them, for making this annual event such a success. SB



Sports News

It has been a very busy week in the sports department, with Hockey, Football and Cross Country fixtures and tournaments taking place in various locations around Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

On Monday the whole of Forms 7/8 went over to St Edward's for a Hockey fixture against New College. All the boys enjoyed the challenge of coming up against a school that plays lots of Hockey. Everyone put in a real shift to learn and experience playing a competitive match, continuing our development in a sport that we have only really worked on briefly at CCCS for the past couple of years.

On Tuesday it was the turn of some boys in Forms 3/4 to go out of school, and all the way down to The Oratory School, near Reading for a football tournament. Both the U8 and U9 teams did the School proud with some battling performances against a number of the larger prep schools in the area. We had a mixed set of results with a couple of notable victories, some hard-fought draws and some narrow defeats. Everyone really enjoyed playing as part of the team.

On Wednesday afternoon we took one team from Form 5 and one team from Form 6 to Bruern Abbey for their annual football tournament. Once again both teams played excellently and represented the school in the right way. Both teams finished their tournaments as runners-up. The minibus was certainly weighed down all the way back to CCCS with the silver medals that they had won, proudly hanging around their necks.

Thursday was the annual cross-country tournament, held back at The Oratory School. We took a team from each year group from Years 3-8. With around 80 runners in each race. It was certainly a challenging event for our boys, who once again performed admirably and showed great effort and character. Our best result came courtesy of Qi Heng in Form 3 who ended up crossing the line in 9th position. Well done to all our boys who took part.

One final reflection from me this week is about a wonderful moment that happened on Tuesday afternoon after our final match in the Form 3 football tournament. A parent from another school came over to speak to me, having just watched her son play against our CCCS team. She wanted to tell me what a credit to our school our team had been in their final match. She mentioned the sportsmanship, kindness, politeness and effort shown from our boys during the fixture, and said she was really impressed at their attitude, even though they had not won the match.

This made me prouder than any of the victories or other achievements that we have seen out on the sports field this week, as I think it's certainly something we try to instil in our boys here at Christ Church.

Well done to everyone who has been involved this week.

DP

Sports Photo Gallery



Sporting Stars

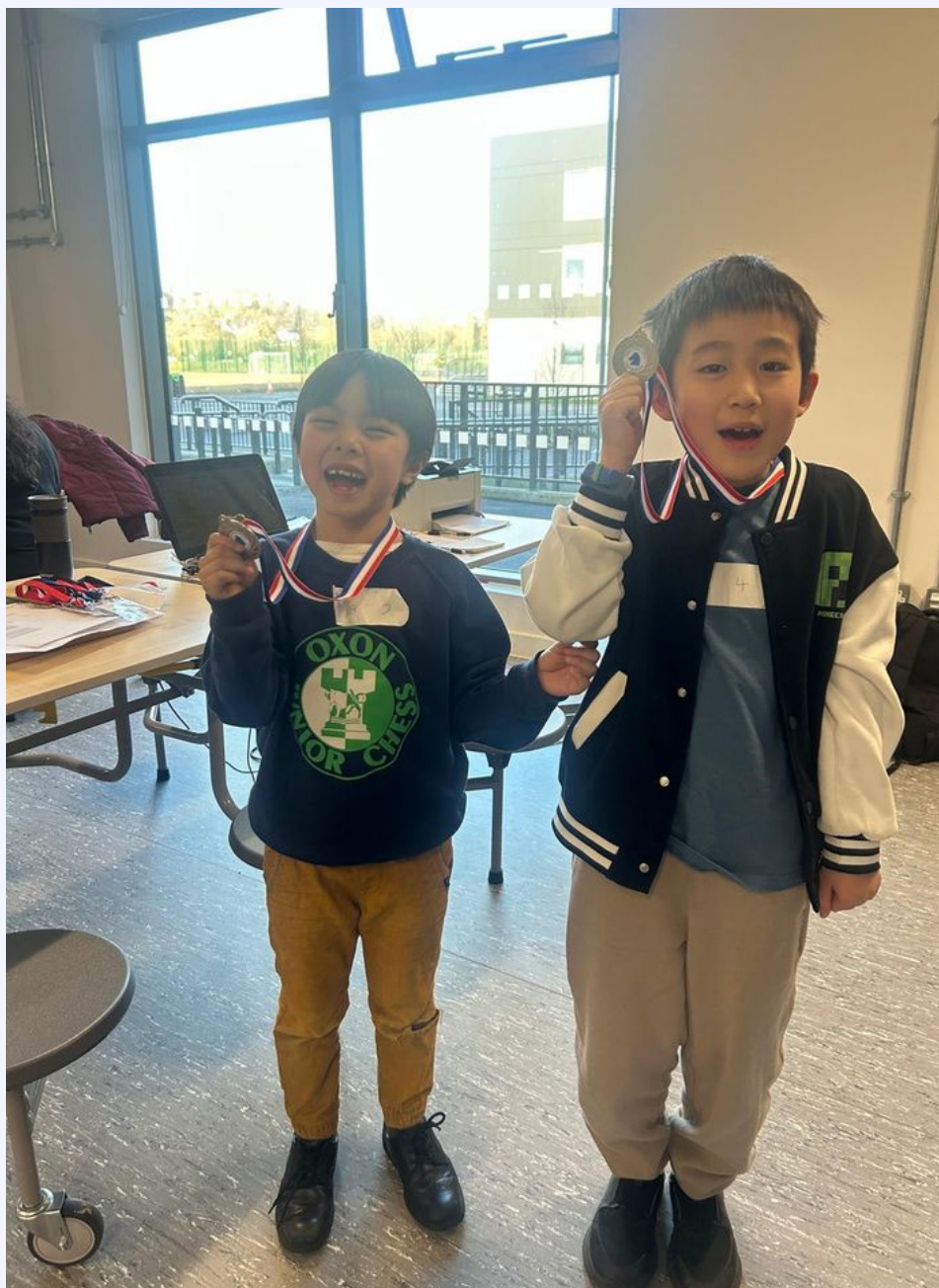
Chess News

2nd Place - EPSCA U9 Zone South 2025

Two of our boys, Jing (F4) and Qi Heng (F3) were invited to play on the county team at the U9 EPSCA Zone South chess tournament held last weekend.

Oxfordshire Juniors came in a close 2nd and qualified for the 2025 EPSCA National Final, putting us up with the best county teams in the country. The full results are [here](#).

Congratulations to all!



From the Boarding House

So, how do our Boarders unwind after a busy day at school?

They drink homemade smoothies from espresso cups, like the fine gentlemen they are, of course!



Our Boarders welcomed a very special guest on Wednesday night when AJ joined them for a 'Boys night in'. He had a great time, enjoying a sneak peak at Chorister life and a sleepover at the school!



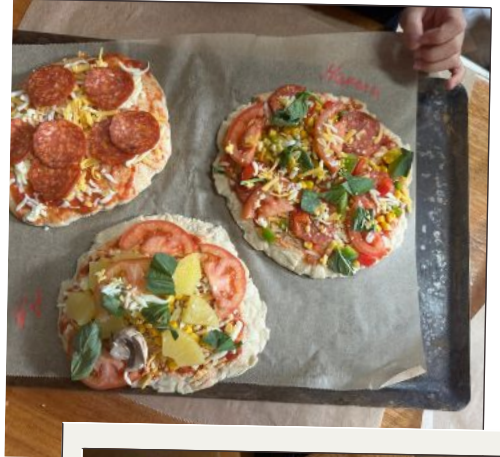
Photos from around the school



Henry P's portrait of Matron Debbie...



Can you see the likeness?



Et voila! Pizza masterpieces from Form 2



More fun during British Science Week!



British Science Week Experiments



Some of the DT gang's creations!

Pre-Prep Concert

Tuesday 18th March at 2.30pm

Walton Hall



A selection of instrumental and vocal performances
given by the Pre-Prep children.

Refreshments afterwards. Please join us!