



Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 2nd May 2025 —



A message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

The extraordinary 19th Century Oxford poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, in a sonnet entitled *Spring*, wrote:

“Nothing is so beautiful as Spring

When weeds in wheels grow long and lovely and lush.”

This year, more than any other, I have been so struck by the overwhelming sense of the natural world bursting with fresh colour. As wonderful day has followed wonderful day, the whole country seems consumed by loveliness and lushness and our pupils seem to have been at their best, entering into everything they have been doing with huge commitment and energy. I very much hope that they will take time to notice the extraordinary natural display going on around them.

Indeed, I am delighted that an “Out and about” club has been introduced in Pre-Prep. Going out and about seems to be something thoroughly to be recommended. To notice what is round and about is one of the most important skills one can nurture. It is the antidote to Satnav culture. I remember vividly one day when I was having my hair cut, the hairdresser asked me where I was going on holiday. I mentioned a name which clearly rang no bells. I then asked her where she was going. “I’ve just been!” was the response. “Where did you go?” “I don’t know,” she said – I just followed the satnav.” Oxford has so very much to offer and I am determined that our pupils should be aware of the gems around them and learn the habit of looking and noticing. If the habit is engrained early enough, life will be a constant stream of excitement and engagement.

I also note that some of the Pre-Prep visited the tree which has very sadly fallen over in the meadow. It was always one of my favourite trees, a vast collection of parallel trunks which looked like a pillar in a gothic cathedral. I notice that they attempted to use their “super strength” to push it back upright – I’m so sorry that they didn’t succeed – but nonetheless one must believe in the power of communal activity.

Communal activity was on the agenda at Wells, in Somerset, where I attended the Choir Schools Association conference. One of the most interesting talks we had mentioned a study which had been done about the effect of singing. Choristers were asked to provide some saliva delivered before they started to sing. This was checked for levels of Cortisol, the stress hormone, and for levels of Oxytocin, a hormone which lends us a sense of deep contentment. The choristers then sang for twenty minutes and, at that point, more samples were taken. The results, apparently, were striking. Levels of Oxytocin rose hugely following the singing while those of cortisol dropped significantly. There was also an increased sense of comradeship created during the course of the singing. Interestingly the more time someone had been part of a choir the more dramatic the results were. Clearly singing has hugely positive effect on mood and mental well-being. I am certain that choral singing in particular and indeed most communal activities, have an immensely beneficial effect and I am certain that one of the most important routes to mental health is communal activity.

Form 7s have clearly had a splendid trip to Downside and Bath. As with many Geography fieldwork, the boys had to approach members of the public as part of a survey. I am thrilled that they were complimented for their politeness. Politeness is desirable anywhere, of course, but in Bath, the most elegant of our cities, I am certain it was particularly appreciated!

Have a lovely bank holiday and see you on Tuesday.

Mr Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar

School Diary: Monday 5th May - Sunday 11th May

MONDAY 5

BANK HOLIDAY - SCHOOL CLOSED

TUESDAY 6

9.30 - 12.30: Pre-Prep Trip to the Botanical Gardens

2.00 - 4.00: IPQ Presentations (Form 7A) in WWH

2.30 - 4.30: U8 and U9 Cricket v New College (Away)

WEDNESDAY 7

9.30 - 11.00: Nursery Stay & Play

10.30 - 12.30: Form 4 Trip to Mosque

2.15 - 4.30: U12 and U13 Cricket v Cothill (Away)

2.30 - 4.15: U10 and U11 Cricket v MCS (Home)

THURSDAY 8

2.00 - 4.00: IPQ Presentations (Form 7B) in WWH

2.50 - 4.30: U8 and U9 Cricket v Chandlings (Home)

FRIDAY 9

8.45: Cathedral Assembly with Pre-Prep - Speaker: The Chaplain

SUNDAY 11

Town and Gown Race, University Parks, Oxford

Dates for your Diary

Nursery Stay & Play

Wednesday 7th May

This is a great opportunity for pre-school children to come and see our lovely Nursery!

If you know a family looking to place their child in Nursery, please ask them to contact us to book a place at our Stay & Play - visit the school, meet new friends, and have fun!

[Stay & Play Registration](#)



REMINDER

Pre-Prep Cathedral Assembly

Friday 9th May at 8.45am
Christ Church Cathedral

The Pre-Prep children will be joining the rest of the School for Assembly at the Cathedral and we would love to welcome you all to join us.

Following Assembly, we would be delighted if parents would join us in the **The Priory Room at Christ Church** for coffee and refreshments. It's a lovely opportunity to connect with other parents and staff at the school.




We look forward to seeing you then!

After-School Care and Clubs

Here is a reminder of the after-school activities running this term

After-School Activities

<p>Monday</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Football, Forms 3-8</p>	<p>Tuesday</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Squash, Forms 5-8</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Multi Sports, Rec - F4</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p>3.30 - 4.15: Mandarin Club, Rec - F2</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, Forms 3-4</p>
<p>Thursday</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Cricket Club, Forms 3-8</p> <p>4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, Forms 5-8</p>	<p>Friday</p>	



Booking a place for your child

Please remember to book places for clubs and after-school care **in advance by emailing schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk**. This is important so that we can ensure sufficient staffing and that we cater for the correct number of pupils.



Collecting your child after Prep

If you are collecting your child by car or bike after 5pm, please call us on **07719 109 433** when you arrive and we will arrange for your child to meet you at the front gate. Due to the very limited parking on Brewer Street, this will help to maintain a steady flow of traffic on the one-way street.

Thank you so much for all of your support.

Early Years News

Fun in the sun!

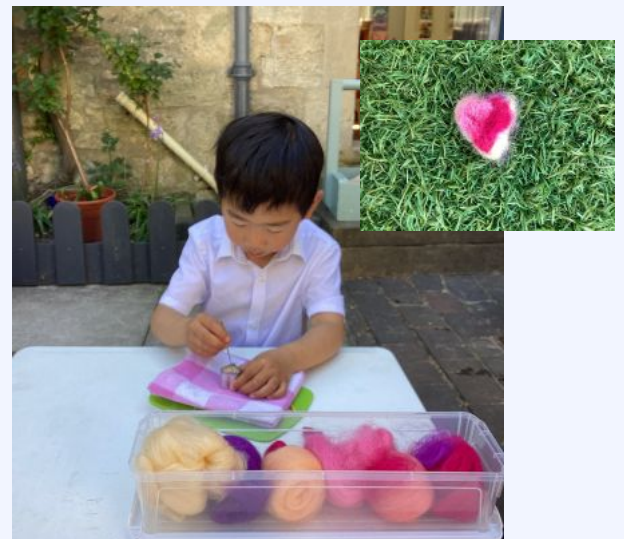
It has been particularly interesting this week to observe how the children's games have evolved, using new props and exploring new ideas with water.

The reading tent has been popular, to stop and sit a while and to retell a story with a friend.



Needle felting hearts has been a popular activity on the outdoor shelf this week. This young gentleman patiently worked for about 45 minutes, felting the colours together in deep concentration. I particularly like the way he has combined the colours, teasing the wool apart to mix colours together.

As the temperature has risen the children have begun to transplant their seedlings and some very healthy cosmos plants have appeared outside Nursery.



This painting shows the progression of a Lower Nursery child learning how to work with watercolour paints, from just painting with water, to painting with different shades of one colour by adding more paint or more water to their brush. This sequence is a skill that helps to build satisfaction in what they are creating. The young gentleman who painted this was very proud of his achievement.

HB



Pre-Prep News

Introducing 'Out and About' Club

In Trinity Term, Pre-Prep will be enjoying a new club as part of our Enrichment Programme. Each week, we will be setting off on exciting adventures in our 'Out and About Club'. We are incredibly fortunate at CCCS to have the wonders of Oxford right on our doorstep, and it is so important to inspire the children and to make them aware of the rich fabric of the world going on all around us.

In the coming weeks, amongst other things, we have organised a much-anticipated visit to the Police Station, and a tour of Christ Church, including Harry Potter locations and the famous Jabberwocky Tree.

This week, we went on a long walk all around the boundaries of Christ Church Meadow, taking in the river, the bridges, and all manner of flora and fauna.

We have had a lot of new joiners in our Pre-Prep over the past term, so it was wonderful to help them to get their bearings and to realise just how lucky we are to have such extraordinary and beautiful environs.



Pre-Prep News

On our walk, we saw punting on the river, university rowing crews flying past, and a vast collection of water birds, including some friendly ducks and some not so friendly geese!

Along the banks, in amongst the swathes of bluebells, we saw a gargantuan uprooted tree and pretended to use our 'super strength' to push it back upright!

A delightful sight for the children was that of a family of ducks with their tiny ducklings, who waddled across our path and 'splashed' into a little rivulet, before scooting off at high speed.



Woodland School



On Thursday, we enjoyed a fantastic afternoon at Woodland School. It was incredibly hot, and we were glad of the shade amongst the trees, along with some cool refreshments.

The children built their own dens to play in and we also tried out some 'Wild Reading' in our new outdoor reading tent.

Phew! What a busy week 'Out and About' in our Pre-Prep!
TR



Forms 3 and 4 News



Forms 3 and 4 held a mini wedding shower for our lovely Miss Browne to celebrate her forthcoming marriage to Mr Pear!



We made a card with personal pictures and messages, and decorated fairy cakes. Everything was a big secret until we welcomed her into Form 4 with a rousing rendition of that well known tune 'Happy Wedding Day to You!' We hope you have a very special day Miss Browne and Mr Pear :)

EP



Form 7 News

Downside School Visit

On Monday, the Form 7 boys set off for an exciting residential trip to Downside School. Upon arrival, the boys settled into their rooms before enjoying an afternoon packed with sport. They began with a hockey session led by Downside's Head of Hockey, followed by cricket in the sunshine with the Head of Cricket. In the evening, the boys joined Downside pupils for supper and took part in a variety of activities, including football, rugby, chess, and an adventurous exploration of the woods.

The next morning began with a tour of Downside's impressive 500-acre site and its very own abbey. This was followed by a tennis session with the Head of Tennis.

After leaving Downside, we headed into Bath to complete our Geography fieldwork. The boys conducted themselves with such politeness and enthusiasm that several members of the public took the time to compliment them to Mr Harrison and me.

To round off a fantastic trip, we visited the Roman Baths, where the boys learned about the rich history and physical geography of the site.

Overall, it was a wonderful experience, and I look forward to running the trip again next year!

FB



Special mention goes to Ludovico, our 'Hockey Player of the Day' who won the in-house Mini Hockey Tournament.

Sports News

CCCS Hosts Oratory for Cricket



This week, Forms 5 and 6 took part in their first cricket fixture of the season against Oratory Prep School.

The conditions could not have been better – glorious sunshine and freshly prepared wickets set the stage for an enjoyable afternoon of sport.

The boys performed exceptionally well, showing great promise in both batting and fielding. While there are areas to develop as the season progresses, this opening match was a strong start.

Across all four games, the boys demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and represented the school with pride. Overall, it was a fantastic afternoon of cricket and a brilliant way to begin the season!

FB

Enrichment

Woodland School

During Enrichment on Friday, the boys practised their den-making skills at Woodland School.



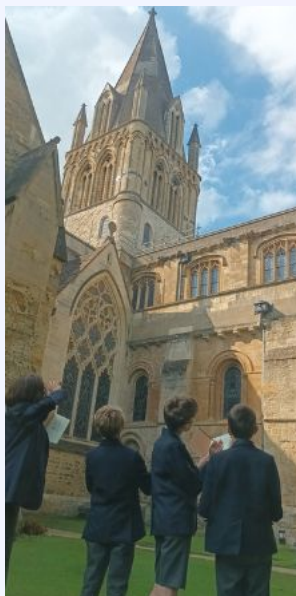
Life Skills

Last week's mocktail mixologists are now turning their hand to button sewing and ironing.



Architecture

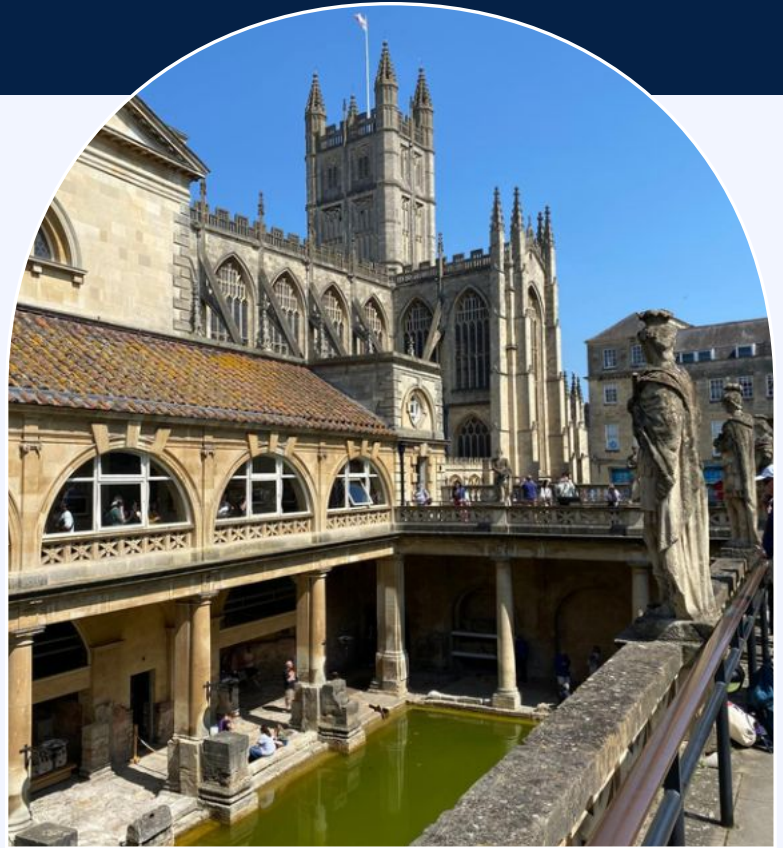
Architecture Club admiring Norman tower and spire of the Cathedral.



School Photobook



School Photobook





Town and Gown 2025

Sunday 11th May



We've got our trainers and we've got the running gear but there's still one thing missing...you!

We need our brilliant CCCS Cheer Squad to help us power through the 3K and 10K courses at this year's Town and Gown.

We can't do it without you, so come and give us a cheer! You can find all the information on the event, including course maps and timings [here](#).



House Music Competition Deadline

Please remind your sons that the deadline to audition for an instrumental place in our House Music Competition is **Friday 9th May**.

The competition takes place on Friday 16th May

If boys would like to gain a point for their house and try for a spot in the final, they must play a piece to Ms Biddell by then. This might be something to work towards over the long Bank Holiday weekend...! SB