



Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 20th June 2025 —



A message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

I can rarely remember it being so hot for so long. It reminds me of that magnificent opening passage to Charles Dickens's great novel, *Little Dorrit*.

"Far away the dusty vines overhanging wayside cottages, and the monotonous wayside avenues of parched trees without shade, drooped beneath the stare of earth and sky. So did the horses with drowsy bells, in long files of carts, creeping slowly towards the interior; so did their recumbent drivers, when they were awake, which rarely happened; so did the exhausted labourers in the fields. Everything that lived or grew, was oppressed by the glare; except the lizard, passing swiftly over rough stone walls, and the cicada, chirping his dry hot chirp, like a rattle. The very dust was scorched brown, and something quivered in the atmosphere as if the air itself were panting."

Unlike the inhabitants of Provence described above, our boys have managed the whole situation brilliantly. They have remained calm, purposeful and in good spirits while the teachers have juggled all their usual balls with the skill and panache that we are so used to.

Really this week started with that remarkable day on Saturday when we opened the Pavilion. It was one of the most joyous occasions that I have attended for a long time and I'm so pleased that so many of you were able to be there. We were very fortunate to have Johnny Searle opening the building for us and it was lovely that he gave time afterwards to the pupils who wished to meet him and to hold his gold medal.

One boy told me that he had even bitten the medal. Apparently, he had been unable to make any impression upon it! The Pavilion has already come into its own this week by providing a place for the hosting of match teas. I have always thought about the Pavilion as providing shelter from the rain. This week, of course, it's been a shady and cool place to which to retreat while watching cricket being played in the baking sun.

On Sunday I had the pleasure of attending evensong at Pembroke. The preacher was the Russian Orthodox priest, Stephen Platt, a father of three former Cathedral choristers. He has preached at Pembroke every year for as long as anyone can remember. He said that this year he had never heard the choir sing so well, now there's an objective and experienced judgement. The boys who sing there should be very proud of what they have achieved.

On Tuesday I went with a number of parents on a tour of the Christ Church Gardens. The new Head Gardener showed us round his new place of work. It's difficult to imagine a more attractive office! The pure variety of the gardens at Christ Church is breath-taking. There are formal gardens in very public places, there are gardens only open to members of the College, with incomparable vistas of the buildings of Oxford, and there are some very private gardens open to the fellows only, with hidden nooks and crannies and, up against the old city walls, subtropical areas where figs and bananas grow in profusion. All in all it was a fascinating tour behind some of Oxford's most secret walls. Afterwards we retired to the Buttery bar, just next to the Great Hall, and had a very pleasant drink together. I cannot recommend these events more highly so please look out for next term's trip to Christ Church.

I'm very sorry to let you know that Mr Bagnall, our DT teacher, has decided to retire at the end of this term. It was particularly poignant, therefore, to see the wonderful creations that his pupils had made in last week's art exhibition. We will speak about him properly at Speech Day in two weeks' time. We will miss him very much.

I have just been out to the playground to see a huge pile of rucksacks and bags lying in a huge heap. Their arrival denotes the return of Forms 3 and 4 from the trip to the PGL camp near Swindon. By all accounts it seems to have been a hugely successful trip despite the epic temperatures. It's always a very important trip this because it will be the first time that some of the campers have ever been away from home for any length of time. I get the impression it's often more of an issue for parents than for the boys but I very much hope that everybody has a lovely weekend together!

I was just teaching earlier when I heard some banging and a great scream. I rushed to the window to see what had happened only to discover that everything was all right and that I was observing a rehearsal for Macbeth! From what I have seen (and indeed heard) I think it's going to be extremely exciting experience. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to come on the final Wednesday of term. There will be some time to see the play, have a picnic on the field and then move back to the School for the Friends and Family concert. Can anyone imagine a more entertaining evening? I know where I'm going to be!

Mr Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar

School Diary: Monday 23rd June - Sunday 29th June

MONDAY 23

TUESDAY 24

11.00: Confirmation Service at Christ Church Cathedral - All parents welcome

WEDNESDAY 25

2.30 - 5.30: U10/U11 (A&B) Cricket v Bruern Abbey (Away)

2.30 - 5.00: U12/13 Cricket v Oratory (Home)

THURSDAY 26

AM only: Move Up Day

FRIDAY 27

8.45: Cathedral Assembly with Pre-Prep - Speaker: The Revd Charlie Kerr, Diocesan Chaplaincy Advisor

7.00: Ticketed Event - End of Year Parent Drinks

Dates for your diary



Pre-Prep Assembly

Friday 27th June

The Pre-Prep children will be joining the rest of the School for Assembly at the Cathedral, and all parents are warmly invited to join us. Following the service, refreshments will be served in The Priory Room and we would love it if you could join us.



End of Year Parent Drinks

Friday 27th June, 7PM

Tickets for the Parents' Association End of Year drinks are now available. The PA warmly invites you to join them in our Pavilion on Merton Field to celebrate the end of the school year. Tickets are priced at £10.00 and can be purchased by emailing messenger.m@cccs.org.uk

Pre-Prep News

A la glacerie

It was hot, but we could not have wished for better weather for the Pre-Prep treat on Thursday!

While the younger children were having lunch, a group of Form 8 boys crept into the Nursery garden and turned the climbing frame into a colourful French glacerie. Dressed authentically with berets and dapper moustaches and with jaunty French music playing in the background, they handed out ice-creams to the Pre-Prep children who had to ask for their chosen ice-cream in French (of course). Luckily the older boys were there to jump in with any words that might have been forgotten and everybody walked away with a big smile and a welcome cold treat in hand – teachers and children alike!

Thank you to the Year 8 boys who led the experience, supported by Mme Loyer and Mme Williams. Thank you for making it one of the memorable moments in the Trinity calendar for the Pre-Prep children.

AEW & HB



Teddy Bears' picnic in Woodland School

If you go into the woods today....

you would have been greeted by a host of teddies and youngsters enjoying our 'Teddy Bears Picnic' themed Stay and Play.

We welcomed a host of nursery aged children to join us in the grounds around our new Pavilion for fun, games and a teddy bear themed snack.

We hope that everyone had a lovely time and we look forward to welcoming them back to CCCS very soon.



Out and About Club

Red Watch Crew, assemble!

On a scorching hot Friday, our eager Pre-Prep pupils assembled with much excitement for the latest in our 'Out and About Club' odyssey of discovery, exploration, fun, and learning. This particular trip brought with it the sort of barely contained anticipation usually reserved for a birthday party, or the opening of a bulging stocking on Christmas Day!

We had received a special invitation from the 'Red Watch' team of firefighters to go and visit the Rewley Road Fire Station.



Following an uncharacteristically brisk walk across Oxford, we were welcomed into the station by the genial crew of firefighters. As we entered, we were treated to a medley of 'oohs and aahs' that grew in volume and frequency as the children's eyes took in the many wonders all around them. We passed a real-life firefighter's pole, a beautiful vintage engine, and all manner of equipment, gizmos, and gadgets. Just when we thought that the children's eyes could not get any wider with awe and wonder, we entered the cavernous space that housed the active fire engines.

The Community Fire Team began by schooling the children on all aspects of fire safety, and I am pleased and proud to say that our CCCS Pre-Prep children were veritable fountains of knowledge, answering the questions with maturity, thoughtfulness, and verve. Next, to the children's delight, Ms Merriman was volunteered to dress up in the protective equipment that a firefighter would wear on a typical call out. She was decked out from head to toe in thick, heavy layers, with tools and torches, humungous boots, a helmet, and breathing apparatus. It is a good job that Ms Merriman is an active gym-goer, as lesser mortals may have buckled under the enormous weight!



The children were given an opportunity to explore the hidden compartments on the fire-engine and taught how the equipment was stored and employed in the field. We even had a chance to hop aboard ourselves and to experience how difficult it must be to get all the equipment on whilst traveling to a fire in such cramped conditions. We were told that they have to work very closely with colleagues to help each other to get the kit on quickly and safely so they are ready to jump out as soon as they arrive at the scene.



Firefighter Ruth then demonstrated some of the gigantic and extraordinarily heavy tools that they use for traffic fires and to gain entry to buildings, including giant 'scissors', and Halligan bars. The children were then given a mirth-inducing first-hand demonstration of a Large Flow Mobile Ventilation Unit. In other words, an incredibly powerful fan, used to fight large scale fires. It was touch and go whether a few of them may have been blown all the way back to school!



Last, but by no means least, we were let loose on the powerful fire hoses, with children and staff being tasked with training the jets onto a model house with flames inside. Every child had a go, and all delighted in spraying the water high into the air and creating rainbows in the water mist, with the sun beating down from above. I am in no way ashamed to admit that the adults enjoyed this task just as much as the children!

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the 'Red Watch' team who went above and beyond to give our children a first-rate experience at the Fire Station. We have no doubt that our Pre-Prep will take so much away from this experience, and it is humbling that the Fire Team invest so much time and effort in supporting and teaching the very youngest within the Oxford Community. TR



Form 3 News

AI Presentation

Form 3 had a fantastic presentation from Mr Hu and Qi Heng about Artificial Intelligence (AI). We found out that AI systems learn from data, and can identify patterns, make choices and solve problems.

Qi Heng recently visited the Philippines to distribute aid where AI systems had helped ensure the aid reached the people that needed it most.

Thank you Qi Heng for representing CCCS so well and helping to make such a difference. SG



Forms 3 and 4 Residential

Boys Adventure Trip!

The boys of Forms 3 and 4 have headed to PGL Liddington for outdoor adventures. Here is a sneak peak at what they have been getting up to this week.



Form 5

Super soakers at the ready!

While some may think that a water fight is not an obvious team building activity, here at CCCS we disagree - it's the perfect way! Fun in the sun was the order of the day as the boys headed to Merton Field to let off steam and do what they do best - have fun together.



Form 6 News

Town and Country in the Land of the Dobunni

On Tuesday Year 6, with Mr Richards, Mr Boarder, Mr Moffitt and Mirko, visited Corinium Roman Museum in Cirencester and nearby Chedworth Roman Villa.

Cirencester is a well-to-do town, but its Romano-British antecedent was at one time the second largest town in Roman Britain, a prosperous centre of trade, a centre of mosaic production, and probably the capital of the south-west province of Britain.

The boys explored with diligence and enthusiasm the museum, which has a rich collection of arresting mosaics and a wealth of artefacts from coins to massive capitals; and I was impressed by how much information Year 6 had managed to garner from our limited time there. A competition to see which trio could answer most questions was very close: congratulations to the winning team of Theo, Kailuo and Harry.

A snaking journey through beautiful Cotswoldshire took us to Chedworth, where lunch was eaten in what had been once the courtyard of a large and opulent villa – one of at least fifty in the Cotswolds.

We saw one of the villa's two bathhouses with its elaborate hypocaust and the expansive triclinium with the famous figure of furtive Winter in Birrus Britannicus. At the corner of North and South ranges was the Nymphaeum, sacred to water spirits and which still provides water for the site. We also saw the room where was discovered a mosaic from the 5th or even 6th century – long after the received end of the Mosaic Age.

All told, a worthwhile trip. We did not have time to see the amphitheatre; and if you are ever near Cirencester – itself always worth a visit – I recommend you take your boys there.
NR





Immersion Trip to France



Dates: 6th - 10th July 2026

Price: £650

Pupils: Open to boys in Forms 5, 6 and 7

Deadline: 23/06/25

We are delighted to be launching a full immersion trip to Normandy, France next July. We will be staying at “Le château de la Baudonnière”, a 19th century château with 100 acres of woodland, which boasts a lake, orchard, farm and stables.

All activities, visits and tours will be led in French. The pupils will be encouraged to speak French at all times, even during meal times. They will receive worksheets to reinforce the French they have learnt and be provided with key phrases, vocab, exercises and puzzles to complete at the end of each activity.

Please contact **schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk** should you want to book a place for your son on this trip.

SL

Scholarship Spotlight

Hugo

We are delighted to announce that Christ Church Cathedral Chorister, Hugo B has been awarded a **Music Scholarship at St Edward's School, Oxford.**

Since joining the Prep School, Hugo has thrived and it has been wonderful to watch him develop into the lovely young man he is.

As an accomplished chorister and musician, musicality runs through his veins, and we are thrilled that St Edward's School has recognised his talents!

Well done Hugo, on such a fantastic achievement. We are all so proud of you and cannot wait to see all of the amazing things you go on to achieve.



Music News

London Primary Schools visit CCCS

We were delighted to welcome children from several London primary schools to CCCS this week, joining our pupils for singing sessions and a performance in the Cathedral.

The children spent the morning in school, where they listened to performances given by a group of choristers and heard all about their lives (and how much music practice they do every day!). The schools then crossed over to the Cathedral, where they rehearsed their own repertoire alongside the choristers, practising English folksong 'The Ash Grove' as well as modern music written by Errollyn Wallen - with the added excitement of participating in a warm-up run by Splendour.

I was so pleased that the staff who accompanied the children said they had found CCCS to be a warm and friendly place, and especially happy to hear that their pupils felt inspired after hearing our boys sing. Well done to William, John, Splendour and Henry for their hard work at this Outreach event. SB



More Music News

Worcester Chapel Choir Showcase

It was tremendous to hear the Worcester choristers at their Showcase concert in the Walton Hall on Monday, with a wide range of styles, voice types and musical personalities on display. All twenty boys performed with total fearlessness, which is always such an impressive aspect of this splendid event. I'm very grateful to Mr Hallam for preparing the boys to sing so impressively at this concert, and for the careful work he does to nurture their musicianship in individual lessons each week. SB



Sports News

Game, Set, Match

On Wednesday, some of our boys headed to NCS for a tennis match.

The boys really enjoyed the competition and worked hard to achieve great results.

Well done to all of the boys who worked very hard, particularly with the afternoon sun beating down.

Well done to Richard who won his singles match with a very impressive 6-0 victory!

Thank you ever so much to Mrs Wei, who very kindly escorted the boys to the match and took these lovely photos.



Enrichment

Wrap, Fill, Fold: Mastering the art of Chinese Dumplings

Our Cookery Enrichment Club teamed up with the Life Skills Club for a fun afternoon making Chinese dumplings. Pupils made the dough, rolled out the skins, added fillings, and folded each dumpling by hand. After boiling them, they enjoyed tasting their own creations!

It was full of teamwork and laughter. The session truly captured the spirit of Chinese festive gatherings. A big thank you to our wonderful kitchen staff, teachers, and parents for all their help in making the afternoon feel so special, just like a real festival!

YR



More Enrichment

Blooming Marvellous!

In today's Enrichment Life Skills class, the boys watched a video to learn how to arrange a flower display. They discovered that they should ensure there is a good variety of flowers, and to try to use an uneven number of flowers, and have a green base.

All of the arrangements were beautifully displayed, and the Nursery were gifted some beautiful blooms for their return next week.



Architecture Club



The Architecture Club and friends at the Bodleian...



...and sketching in Radcliffe Square.

Super Saturday Sports Day!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Sports Day and the official opening of the new Pavilion. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!



Super Saturday Sports Day!



Super Saturday Sports Day!



Super Saturday Sports Day



Old Boys Cricket Match

Thank you to the boys - old and young - who donned their cricket whites for the Old Boys Cricket Match. It was great to see so many 'Old Boys' return to CCCS for the afternoon. Thank you to chef Peter and his team for the glorious match tea!



Getting ready to welcome the new CCCS Old Boys alumni

At the end of term, our current Year 8 boys will automatically enrol into our alumni.

We look forward to inviting you back to CCCS for various events and special occasions, so please do keep in touch.

School Photobook



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