



Christ Church Cathedral School News

—— 7th November 2025 ——



Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

We were visited today by Mr Semmence who is the Headmaster of Repton School in Derbyshire. Repton was founded in 1573 by a local landowner and knight Sir John Port who had been given the old monastery in Repton following its dissolution by Henry VIII. He had no children of his own so he founded a grammar school which would have the use of the buildings. It is still those buildings which form the core of the School which Mr Semmence runs today. Mr Semmence started by telling us the extraordinary story of what happened when the school decided to start building a new Sixth Form centre. Digging began but no sooner was it underway than construction was halted by a grizzly discovery – a corpse. The telephone call was made to the police who were round in an instant, blue lights flashing! Experts from Humberside Constabulary were called and it was quickly established that the body was not a recent one, but most likely that of a monk from the former monastery. A Roman Catholic priest has been asked to rebury the monk near where the high altar of the monastery church would have been. These are some of the hazards of having an institution based on one of the most ancient sites in England.

I thought this was a rather touching reminder that the past and the future often exist very closely together; Repton is building for the future – a new Sixth Form social centre and café. Elsewhere, close by, Repton is about to construct a Real Tennis Court – this will make it only the fourth school in the country to have such a court – and given that we are one of the only prep schools in the country where Real Tennis is an option, this may be of interest.

Indeed it's wonderful to have heard one of our boys describing lawn tennis as "False tennis!" (as opposed to the real thing which is played at CCCS!) At any rate, Repton's building for the future brings them into contact with the past in the form of the body of the monk. Mr Semmance quoted Henry Chadwick, a famous and illustrious former Dean of Christ Church, who said once, in the Cathedral, that in order to understand the future one had to understand the past. Historic institutions which look towards the future, seem to me to be in a very strong position – we are very fortunate that our School is in precisely this position and I am delighted that so many of our boys have such an interest in history. One of the greatest dangers today is summed up by the chilling words from George Orwell's 1984: "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past." One weapon we have against the manipulation of the truth in this way is to have a good knowledge of the past – I am certain that this is of great importance and in this school, therefore, we take history very seriously.

The senior school test season is underway and many boys, particularly in Form 6, will be busy over the next month. We heard back from Abingdon this week that all of the boys who have applied there this year have been given interviews and that their performances were very good. They have received a great deal of teaching for the test from Mrs Fairhurst. Their interviews will be next week so they have all had a mock interview with me. One of our most important roles as a Prep School is to help people prepare for senior schools. We help parents to choose a school for their children, we help prepare the pupils for entrance tests and interviews and, most importantly, we prepare them to thrive at the senior school in which they have obtained a place. With this in mind, we are hosting a Future Schools Event next Thursday and have a number of wonderful schools joining us for the afternoon. I strongly recommend that you join us so you can learn more about them and see if they may be a good fit for your son.

I am delighted that to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Cardinal College we have decided to expand the chorister fireworks display to the whole school. May I thoroughly recommend this event. The fireworks have been chosen by Mr Robson himself who, with the help of a former parent, Mr Branderhorst, will ignite them. Not only have the resultant displays always been hugely exciting but witnessing the glee with which Mr Robson goes about the business of creating explosions is a display in itself. Indeed Mr Robson has told me that he has "refined his technique", something which seems to involve coordination of watches and other such important details. Over the years we have had some truly memorable experiences – I remember a moon-lit night when the Cathedral became completely shrouded in smoke - fortunately Mr Robson has always returned from the depths of the post-apocalyptic, fog-filled confusion that he has created with a jaunty sense of accomplishment. I very much hope that this will be the case this year too. Do join us if you possibly can.

We had a governors' meeting last night in the William Walton Hall. We are very fortunate in the quality of our governors - Deans, former and serving heads, bursars of major schools, canon professors, chief executives of major companies, authors – a remarkable collection of talent. As we were gathering, one of our younger pupils appeared at the door. He took one look at this eminent assembly and asked: "What's going on here?" I wanted to take the opportunity to thank our governors for everything they do in their own time for the benefit of our school and to say that without all this "going on" we wouldn't be the school that we are. We owe the governors a great deal!

Mr Richard Murray,
Headmaster

School Contacts

School Office - Tel: **01865 242 561** (8am - 5pm) Email: **schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk**

Prep - **07719 109 433** (After 5pm and/or collecting your child from Prep and unable to park)

Minibus on the North Oxford route with Mr Mirko - **07736 148199**

Minibus on the East Oxford route with Mr Quen - **07346 224937**

School Calendar

Monday 10th November - Sunday 16th November

MONDAY 10

Odd Socks Day (Anti Bullying Week)

5.00: Parent Pastoral Seminar on Neurodiversity (WWH)

TUESDAY 11

9.00 - 4.00: Cardinal Scholars visit to Marlborough

11.00: Remembrance Service

2.30 - 4.00: U9 Rugby v Dragon (Away)

WEDNESDAY 12

9.30 - 11.00: Nursery Stay & Play

2.30 - 4.30: U11 Rugby v Oratory (Away)

2.30 - 4.30: U12/U13 Rugby v Oratory (Away)

THURSDAY 13

Form 8 Mock Speaking Exam

9.00 - 10.30: Forms 1 and 2 trip to the Cafe

9.30 - 12.30: Form 4 visit to the Ashmolean

1.00 - 2.30: Form 2 Teddy Bear Hospital

2.00 - 4.30: U8 Tag Tournament at Abingdon Prep School

2.00 - 4.30: U9 Tag Tournament at Abingdon Prep School

3.30 - 5.00: Future Schools Fair

FRIDAY 14

8.45: Cathedral Assembly, speaker TBC

Flu Vaccinations (Whole School)

Upcoming Events



Parental Pastoral Seminar: Neurodiversity

Monday 10th November
5.00pm - 6.00pm
William Walton Hall

There is still time to join us on Monday for our first Parental Pastoral Seminar.

The talk will be lead by Magda Bouwman, an experienced and qualified Clinical Psychologist registered with the HCPC, on Neurodiversity.

To book your place, please email harrison.n@cccs.org.uk



Nursery Stay & Play

Wednesday 12th November
9.30am - 11.00am
CCCS Nursery

We will be opening our doors for a Nursery Stay and Play session next Wednesday, so make sure you tell any friends and family who may be looking to start their little one's school journey.

This is a great chance to explore the Nursery, meet the team and see what makes the school so special.

Please [click here](#) to book your place - we can't wait to see you!



Christ Church Picture Gallery Tour

Thursday 26th November
6.00pm - 7.30pm
Christ Church
£12.00 per ticket

Start the festive season early and join us for a private tour of The Picture Gallery, Christ Church.

Enjoy a child-free evening with a drinks reception, stunning art pieces and good company.

Tickets are priced at £12.00.
To book, simply email messenger.m@cccs.org.uk



Upcoming Events (con't)



Future Schools Event

Thursday 13th November

3.30pm - 5.00pm

William Walton Hall

Join us for our Future Schools Event in the Walton Hall. Running from 3.30-5.00pm, this is a fabulous opportunity to meet heads and admissions staff from a variety of senior schools.

Although primarily aimed at pupils in Years 5 and 6, anyone is welcome to come along and discuss future options.

The schools who will be attending are:

- Abingdon
- Bloxham
- Cokethorpe
- d'Overbroeck's
- Harrow
- Marlborough College
- MCS
- Rugby
- St Edward's
- St Peter's, York
- Winchester



Fireworks Night

Saturday 8th November

7.15pm

CCCS Playing Field, Christ Church Meadow

You are warmly invited to join us for a spectacular fireworks display on Saturday night at our Pavilion, beside Christ Church Meadow.

A suggested cash donation of £10 per family may be made at the entrance gate.

Enjoy complimentary hot chocolate or mulled wine (available for a small charge) as you watch the Oxford skyline light up.

The display will follow Evensong, which you are, of course, very welcome to attend, before making your way to the Meadow.

We look forward to seeing you there!

After School Clubs

After School Club Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3.30 - 4.15: Chess Club, open to Form 2	4.15 - 5.00: Squash, open to Forms 5-8	3.30 - 4.15: Pre-Prep Mandarin Club, open to Rec - F2	4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, open to F5 - F8	4.15 - 5.00: Greek Club
4.15 - 5.00: Football, open to Forms 3-8	4.15 - 5.00: Multi Sports Club, open to Rec - F4	4.15 - 5.00: Mandarin Club, open to F3 and F4		
4.15 - 5.45: Real Tennis	4.15 - 5.00: Chess Club, open to F3 - F6			

To sign your child up for a club, please email schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk with your child's name and form, the name of the club they want to join and the day.



Let's make Match Day special

The CCCS season is warming up nicely, and you can be too... in our new Pavilion!

Help us cheer on our boys whilst keeping warm with creature comforts, a hot drink and delicious match tea.

Parking will be available at the School between 2pm - 4pm on match days.

Nursery News

Nursery engineers bring Tom Tower to life

One of the children arrived in the Nursery with a clear idea of creating Tom Tower, the majestic entrance to Tom Quad. With the image of Tom Tower from Matthew Rice's book, 'Oxford,' open before him, a structure complete with dome and attendant Porter soon arose from the brick room mat. 'The Porter's role, is to keep the Troll away from the College and Cathedral!'

Not satisfied with this magnificent recreation of the Tower, the member of Upper Nursery went on to recreate the Cathedral, complete with the new celebratory window and recreate the assembly led by Mrs Fairhurst whilst Mr Murray was away. Later, worried that Mr Murray was absent from his construction he added Mr Murray's Office, complete with a view of Tom Tower.

Whilst this historical construction was being recreated, two other members of the Upper Nursery were working with blue bricks and scarf to create a very busy aquarium complete with viewing platform for visitors.

HB



More from the Nursery

Helicopter Stories

Since October, we have been having a weekly Helicopter Story session. All of the children are invited to take part. They tell Miss Rebecca a story which is written into a special book. It can be about absolutely anything.

Later in the morning, the children are invited to perform their own story on our stage as Miss Rebecca reads out their exact words. They can choose which character to be, with the rest of the children taking on the roles of the other characters in the story. We clap after each performance.

The children have really enjoyed sharing this new experience together and it is a wonderful way to build confidence, increase vocabulary and to understand that the written words have meaning, leading to an interest in writing. We will discuss the sentences, capital letters and punctuation as the term progresses.

The children can bring their stories home at the end of term to share with you all.
RDC



Reception News

Pompoms and programming

This week in Reception we have continued to explore our topic of colour by using a multitude of multicoloured pom-poms. This activity was open-ended and the children have had great fun sorting, categorising and also practising their ability to sort and count groups of varying sizes.

We also introduced this week our Botley robots, a fun way for the children to learn the concept of simple coding and the importance of clear and efficient commands. A busy but colourful week!

MB



Early Years Wednesday Wander

Remember, remember the Fifth of November...

The first wander of the new term, saw the Nursery and Reception children take part in a Bonfire Scavenger Hunt, all set up by Miss Helen.

The children wasted no time at all in finding the clues hidden amongst the trees and foliage of Woodland School, and demonstrated great teamwork in solving the clues.



Form 1 News

Superheroes, assemble!

Form 1 had a 'Super' time before Half Term celebrating our superheroes topic with a themed dress-up day.

From capes to creativity, our little heroes had a great day filled with colour, imagination and adventures.



Form 2 News

Form 2 Measure Up!

This week, Form 2 have been busy exploring measurement. With rulers in hand and curiosity in full swing, the children have been learning how to measure in centimetres (cm) and metres (m), discovering just how useful these skills are in everyday life.

Their first task took place right inside the classroom. The children measured a variety of objects, from the width of the piano, to the length of their pencils and even their own height. It was a fantastic way to understand how different items can be measured and compared, such as choosing when to use a ruler or a measuring tape.



Next, the learning moved outdoors. On the playground, Year 2 used a Venn diagram to sort objects based on their measurements. They carefully decided whether each item was more than 30cm, less than 30cm, or exactly 30cm. The children showed great teamwork and reasoning skills as they placed each object in the correct section.

MH-W



Woodland School

Design & Technology in Nature

This week at Woodland School, our creative team of Pre-Prep fashion designers went busily to work, making their own crowns out of the mattress of leaves currently covering the woodland. Like our unique children, no two crowns were the same, and the variety of patterns, shapes and colours drawn from the beautiful autumn leaves were extraordinary.

Not content merely with designing their own trendy headwear, the children were then taught how to safely use hammers and nails, creating fantastic colourful pictures, representing the fireworks that will be going off on Merton Field on Saturday evening for the CCCS Fireworks Display.

We finished with a group sing-along and our customary hot chocolate, before wending our merry way back to school, resplendent in our leaf crowns, drawing smiles of approval from the tourists walking along the Broad Walk.

TR



After School Care at CCCS

What do your little ones get up to in After School Care?

At CCCS, we offer After School Care each day for our Nursery and Pre-Prep children in the Reception Classroom.

Each session starts with sandwiches and snacks, followed by free-flow play and then structured activities.

We encourage the children to play with friends of all ages and relax in an informal and fun environment.

In the summer months, we enjoy the use of the playground, where we have bikes, ball games, and much more on offer.

We always follow the children's lead and interests and we encourage them to wind down after our action-packed days of learning.

MM



What do our children love about After School Care?

**"I like eating up
the ham
sandwiches and
playing with my
friends."**

Jason, Form 2

**"I like to do
drawing and
playing with
the Play
Doh."**

Monty, Nursery

**"I really enjoy
going to After-
School Care
because I like
playing with all
the different
games."**

Dougie, Form 2

Form 3 News

Building 'Biscuit-Henge'

This week, Form 3 had a fantastic time learning about one of Britain's most famous landmarks - Stonehenge! The children discovered that Stonehenge is a giant circle of enormous stones found in England, some as heavy as four elephants and taller than a double-decker bus. They learned that people built it a very long time ago, and even today, no one knows exactly why - which makes it all the more fascinating!



To bring history to life, the boys created their very own 'Biscuit-Henge' using biscuits to recreate the stone circle. It was a fun (and delicious!) way to explore this mysterious monument and imagine what it might have been like to build the real Stonehenge.

CZ



Forms 5 and 6 News

Visit to Cotswold Wildlife Park

Just before we finished for Half Term, Forms 5 and 6 were lucky enough to spend a rather chilly Tuesday visiting the Cotswold Wildlife Park near Burford. The boys took part in two workshops linked to their current science topics, Habitats and Adaptations and Life cycles - the workshops gave the boys opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and apply it up close.

There was also plenty of time for the boys to explore the park in small groups. Favourite animals, (certainly amongst my group!) were the wolves and capybaras! Another highlight of the day was being introduced to two-week-old rhino calf Markus, the first white rhino born in the UK this year! We were also interested to learn that the collective noun for rhinos is appropriately a crash!



The boys then enjoyed visiting the farm animals and spent lots of time petting the goats. The day ended with the obligatory trip to the gift shop where much debate over the best way to spend their £5 spending money ensued, topping off a brilliant day out.

CS



Form 6 News

Safety First - Learning how to avoid an unplanned trip to the hospital

On Tuesday morning Form 6 visited the JR hospital to take part in the annual I.M.P.S (Injury Minimization Programme for Schools) session. The boys were first lucky enough to be able to visit the Emergency Department of the hospital (thankfully not as patients!) where they were shown some equipment that may be used if you visit the children's ED. They then headed to the Learning Centre where they had a practical first aid session, learning the basics of CPR, how to use a defibrillator and how to put someone in the recovery position.

The morning ended with a session in the classroom, learning more about how to keep safe and avoid injuries whilst cycling, playing and in the home. This visit was, as ever, extremely enjoyable and very useful for the boys. Mme Loyer and Mrs Simpkins were very impressed with how sensibly the boys behaved and by their mature approach to this important visit. I hope they were able (as they were instructed to by the trainers) to go home and practise putting family members into the recovery position!

CS



FRENCH CHALLENGE 2025

Are you ready to take on this year's challenge?

Our pupils have until **Monday 10th November 2025** to submit their French challenge entry. We've suggested 9 categories but we are open to new initiatives!

Why don't you ask your child what he is planning to do?

Our tasks include:



A French Bake-off

Choose a recipe, follow it and present it in French and don't forget to send us photos/videos. (We'll happily taste a sample too!)



Lights, camera, action!

Choose a scene from a sitcom or a film and re-enact it in French. Why don't you help your child do the French voice-over?



Holiday Adventure

Become a holiday ambassador! Design a 5 day tour around a country or region of your choice, in French obviously!



Ancient Tales

Research and choose a folktale, myth or fable from another culture. How will you present it in French?



Science Experiment

Choose a science experiment and make a presentation with all the props!



Sing it your way

Choose one of your favourite songs and rewrite it in French. Or, why don't you sing a famous French song with your friends?!



Game Player

Choose a traditional game from another culture or make your own game where participants are required to play in French.



Programming

If you are into computers and/or games, you may already know about Scratch, Kodu and Microbit. Can your characters speak French on Minecraft?

Or, why not create your own task? Whether it involves drama, art, Lego models... the choice is yours!

Bonne Chance!



Music News

Organists visit St Peter's College, Oxford

Before Half Term, three CCCS boys - currently preparing for their Grade 4 and 5 organ exams - loaded up with their organ shoes and music, before heading to St Peter's College to try out its famous Willis organ. The current senior organ scholar, Sebastian, used to be a Worcester Chorister and started learning the organ whilst still at CCCS. It was wonderful to see him, to hear him play some fiendishly hard Messiaen and Howells, and to get his advice and tips for the boys' playing. It's always exciting when old boys take up organ scholarships at Oxbridge, so I hope some of our current organists will find themselves in Sebastian's position one day!

SB



More Music News

Bassoon Recruitment at CCCS

Forms 3 and 4 were thrilled to be visited by Mrs Watson, our bassoon teacher, who gave a fantastic demonstration of this marvellous instrument. She showed us its amazing range, played tunes just by using the reed, and - most impressively of all - proved that you can inflate a rubber glove by playing the lowest notes! Everyone enjoyed learning about the bassoon, and I hope that we might recruit some more bassoonists for next term. This is an incredibly rare instrument that senior schools are always keen to see at scholarship auditions, so - if you think your son might be interested in having lessons - please do let Ms Biddell know.
SB



BBC Young Musician of the Year 2026

Could your child be the next BBC Young Musician of the Year?

Applications are now open for this prestigious award. This could be the start of an extraordinary journey which has been a launchpad for some of the country's leading performers, including Sheku Kanneh-Mason, the older brother of Jeneba, international pianist and one of Classical FM's 'Rising Stars' who you may remember visited CCCS in February to run a masterclass with eight of our pianists.

Click the button below to find out more and apply - good luck to all of our aspiring musicians!

[Click Here](#)



THE ORATORY

CROSS COUNTRY



SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER

We're delighted to be hosting a cross country race on Saturday 29 November for children in Years 1–8 from any school.

Approximate Race Timings:

- Year 1 – 1.00pm
- Year 2 – 1.15pm
- Year 3 – 1.30pm
- Year 4 – 1.45pm
- Year 5 – 2.00pm
- Year 6 – 2.15pm
- Year 7 – 2.30pm
- Year 8 – 2.45pm

Please arrive **at least** 15 minutes before your race starts.



Please note that by competing in the race, you give consent for your child to be photographed and shared on social media and in any associated press coverage.

The Oratory Senior School
Woodcote
Oxfordshire
RG8 0PJ

- Car parking and start line will be signposted.
- Refreshments available throughout the afternoon.
- No need to pre-register, we look forward to welcoming you on the day!

FOR ANY QUERIES, PLEASE EMAIL S.TOMLINSON@ORATORY.CO.UK

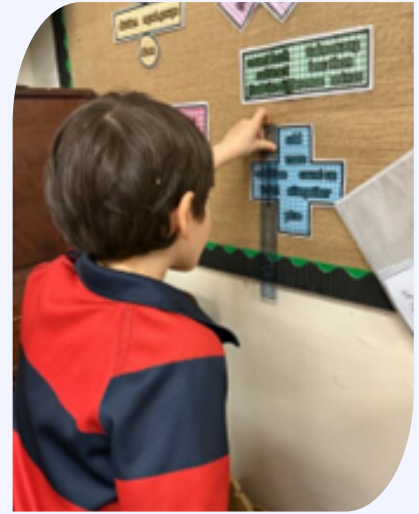
School Photobook



School Photobook



School Photobook



Help us keep the school community safe

If your child has an upcoming birthday and would like to celebrate with their CCCS friends, please place a cake order with our Chef, giving at least three days' notice. You can email Chef Peter directly at franks@cccs.org.uk

Please do not bring any outside food into the School.

CHRIST CHURCH

FIVE CENTURIES OF MUSIC | 1525 – 2025

Wednesday 1 October 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

HAYDN THE CREATION

Carolyn Sampson – soprano; William Balkwill – tenor; Thomas Humphreys – bass

Christ Church Cathedral Choir and Frideswide Voices

THE ENGLISH CONCERT conducted by Peter Holder

Thursday 9 October 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

VIOLIN AND PIANO RECITAL

Charlie Lovell-Jones – violin; Julian Chan – piano

Works by Mozart, Walton, Respighi

Thursday 30 October 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

ORGAN RECITAL

Peter Holder

Works by J S Bach, Brahms, Wallen, Swayne, Farrington

Saturday 1 November 2025 at 14.00

Christ Church Upper Library

ERROLLYN WALLEN CBE

Master of the King's Music

in conversation with Dr Leah Broad

Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

ALAMIRE SINGS TAVERNER

directed by David Skinner

Works by John Taverner

Thursday 20 November 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

LITTLE KITCHEN

to include works by

Bobby McFerrin,

Phoebe Bridgers

and João Gilberto

Saturday 22 November 2025 at 20.00

Christ Church Cathedral

DOWLAND LACHRIMAE

Phantasm Viol Consort

Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 18.15

Great Hall, Christ Church

WALTON FAÇADE

conducted by Nicholas Cleobury

performance followed by dinner

**PIANO RECITALS IN
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL**

Tuesday 28 October 2025 at 20.00

LOUISE GUY

Works by Mozart, Schubert/Liszt, Chopin, Liszt

and Louise Guy

Sunday 16 November 2025 at 20.00

JUDITH VALERIE ENGEL

Works by Josepha Aurnhammer,

Maria Theresia von Paradis,

Helene Liebmann and others

Friday 21 November 2025 at 20.00

LIBBY BURGESS

Works by J S Bach, Bach/Busoni,

Clara Schumann, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

and Christ Church composers and visitors

BOOKING INFORMATION

Tickets for all main events starting at £10
available from:



Music at Oxford

www.musicatoxford.com

Cornelia Norie-Miller Tel: 01865 244 806

boxoffice@musicatoxford.com

Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday and Friday
2pm until 5pm

The Upper Library has no step-free access



CHRIST CHURCH

500 YEARS | 1525 – 2025

