



# Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 5th December 2025 —



## Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

The influential 20th Century German playwright Berthold Brecht was responsible for developing a theatrical technique called *Verfremdungseffekt*, or in English, "Alienation." The idea is that, throughout the course of the play, the audience should be forced to engage with the drama intellectually rather than emotionally. This was achieved by the characters stepping out of their roles to address the audience, thereby breaking what he thought was the dangerous theatrical illusion that one was watching something real rather than a dramatic performance. Brecht would have been proud of the splendid Nursery Nativity which occurred this week during which *Verfremdungseffekt* was much in evidence. No sooner had the curtain opened upon the glorious technicolour scene of the stable in Bethlehem, when one of the shepherds waved heartily at his parents. Meanwhile the Angel Gabriel, beaming at the audience, started to direct some of the other performers. At one point the baby Jesus was slung forwards from behind one of the character's back, landing somewhere near the crib, and on another, the donkey had to catch up rapidly with Mary and Joseph who had already set off for Bethlehem without him. But this, I have to say, added to the charm of the occasion and I, like everyone else watching, loved this wonderful performance. Indeed, it was the first time that Nursery has performed its nativity in the Hall. The costumes were brilliantly done and all the performances were full of character and life. It was an unforgettable start to the Christmas festivities.

Between Saturday and Tuesday, I went to three Advent Christmas services, one in the Cathedral on Saturday, one in Pembroke on Sunday and one in Worcester on Tuesday. The Cathedral was extremely busy, as indeed it will be day after day between now and Christmas Day.

Indeed it will be completely full for the Christmas Carol Services on the 23rd and 24th December so do get tickets if you can. Meanwhile there was, like the inn at Bethlehem, no room anywhere in Pembroke or Worcester chapels where every possible step and pew had been taken. In all places candlelight reigned. In Pembroke we were plunged into complete darkness, a haunting moment, while in Worcester someone's service sheet caught fire! There was a wonderful sense of celebration and all of the choirs were in magnificent form. It's perhaps worth remembering that more than 50% of our pupils in the Prep School are members of one of these choirs, a statistic unequalled in any school in England other than Westminster Abbey Choir School where there is no one educated in the school except for the choir. All in all, our choristers between them affect so many people in Oxford through their singing.

Talking of singing, may I remind you that our School Carol Service is on Saturday morning at 10.30. It is the culmination of the longest Term and is the most important event of the term when we gather as a whole community in the Cathedral - our school chapel of course. All our pupils should be there, please, and we very much hope that you will all attend with as many friends and relatives as you can bring. You will be most welcome. It is very much worth saying that it is an unforgettable occasion and an opportunity to come together as a school community and to do the thing for which we are best known in the outside world – to sing.

One of the greatest pleasures that I have as Headmaster is when one of the teachers comes into my study to let me know that they would like to award one of their pupils a Headmaster's merit. These are worth having for all manner of intrinsic reasons, but they are also worth winning because they are worth five merits! Almost always the piece of work concerned will be spectacularly good and in its own way out of the ordinary. The pupil will appear in my room with his or her work and I look through and discuss it with them. This week the boy who appeared had been awarded a Headmaster's merit for a piece entitled "How to wash a woolly mammoth." I have to confess, I have never wondered how one washes a woolly mammoth, nor, you may be surprised to hear, have I ever had occasion to do so. But should this occasion ever arise, I now know what I would do. The instructions were neatly laid out and numbered. They began:

1. One enormous bath
2. One woolly mammoth

"Oh!" I said, I'm glad you've included the woolly mammoth. "Well!" he responded, looking at me rather sceptically, "If you don't include the mammoth, you're not going to get very far, are you?" I have to say, upon reflection, that I cannot argue with that!

**Mr Richard Murray,**  
Headmaster

## School Contacts

School Office - Tel: **01865 242 561** (8am - 5pm) Email: [schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk](mailto: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 8th December - Sunday 14th December

## MONDAY 8

9.00 - 12.30: Form 4 Trip to Elms Farm

2.00 - 4.00: U12/U13 Football v d'Overbroeck's (Home)

## TUESDAY 9

9.30 - 12.30: Forms 3, 4 and 5 Trip to the Panto

## WEDNESDAY 10

## THURSDAY 11

10.00 - 11.00: Pre-Prep Nativity, The Not-So-Silent Night

11.00 - 12.00: Worcester Choir Photos

2.00 - 3.00: Pre-Prep Nativity, The Not-So-Silent Night

## FRIDAY 12

8.45: Cathedral Assembly, Speaker, The Sub Dean

**No After School Care, Prep or Minibus Service for any pupils**

## SATURDAY 13

10.30 - 11.30: School Christmas Carol Service, Christ Church Cathedral

## Upcoming Events



**Pre-Prep Christmas Nativity**  
**The Not-So-Silent Night**  
**Thursday 11th December**  
**10.00am and 2.00pm**  
William Walton Hall

Pre-Prep are proud to present 'The Not-So-Silent Night'. Our young performers have been working hard and are excited to share this with you. Please join us for what promises to be a joyful and memorable festive performance.



**School Christmas Carol Service**  
**Saturday 13th December**  
**10.30 to 11.30am**  
Christ Church Cathedral

Parents and families are warmly invited to join the School at Christ Church Cathedral for our annual Christmas Carol Service to mark the end of term.

It would be wonderful to see you there and support our wonderful children, some of whom will be dazzling us with their magical musical performances.

# 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, open to Forms 7-8
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](mailto:schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk) with your child's name and form, the name of the club they want to join and the day.

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## Merry Christmas from the Mandarin Club

The children in the Mandarin Club were very happy this week, and I am so proud of them for achieving excellent results in their little test. I hope they will grow to love the activities in the Mandarin Club more and more, and learn about Chinese culture in the process.

I look forward to seeing them again in the Mandarin Club next term, and I hope more children will join us.

Wishing the children a Merry Christmas and a pleasant holiday!

Best wishes,  
Lele



# Oxfordshire County Junior Chess Tournament



Oxfordshire Junior Chess is excited to announce that we will be holding the annual county junior chess tournament on the weekend of Sat 3rd and Sun 4th January 2026 at Cumnor Primary School.

As in previous years, there will be U9, U11, U13 and U15/18 sections. The tournament caters for those competing for the first time, all the way through to experienced junior players. There are trophies and cash prizes for those who do well, and the opportunity to represent Oxfordshire in county teams. All primary aged participants receive a small prize.

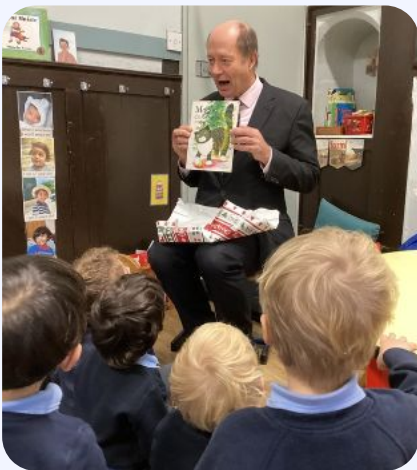
The online entry form is <https://forms.gle/V6r1nkxk5ZDwC2jA8>, from which full tournament information and rules can be accessed.

Queries are welcome by email to Anna Bishop at [oxfordshirejuniorchess@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordshirejuniorchess@gmail.com).

# Christmas magic arrives in Nursery

The Nursery children waited excitedly for Mr Murray's Monday visit with even more enthusiasm than usual. His Monday morning visit happened to be the first of December, and time to introduce our Christmas book advent calendar. Mr Murray opened the first parcel. He said that it was the first parcel he had opened this year and he was excited too. The book, 'Mog's Christmas' by Judith Kerr, was enjoyed by all. I wonder what Mr Murray will open next week.

Other photos are of the children getting ready in their costumes for the Nursery Christmas performance and making decorations for our red Christmas tree for the Light Show.  
HB



THANK  
YOU

A massive thank you from the Nursery to the Parents' Association who very kindly bought us sand toys. Thank you so much. The children absolutely love them!

The Nursery would also like to thank Mme Williams, Adam and William for hosting a French Breakfast for us - Merci Beaucoup!



# Winter Walks and Festive Fun

## Early Years Walk

On the first Wednesday in December the Early Years team headed out to the Broad Walk and Merton Field. On the way we saw the Christ Church gardening team planting tulips and violas to bring winter colour to the stunning Gardens, and we stopped to look at the Meadow building, beautifully lit in the sunshine.

In the beautiful winter sun, with not a cloud in the sky, the children raced around the meadows playing Dragon Tails where they caught chiffon scarfs from the collars of their coats. After exhausting ourselves, the children settled down for a digestive biscuit before walking back to school. A wonderful way to enjoy our incredible surroundings.

MB



## Christmas Crafts

This week the Reception children threw themselves into creating Christmas crafts not only for our Light Show Christmas tree, but also for home. We also explored the Nativity story and The Polar Express, looking at the sequence of the story, use of adjectives and key vocabulary. We explored various mediums with our crafts including paint, salt dough, pipe cleaners, and paper. Copious amounts of biodegradable glitter were in use and the children had a wonderful time surrounded by colour, sparkle and excitement. No better way to kick off the festive season!

MB



# A Jurassic walk through the ages



Form 3 had an exciting visit from the fossil expert Mr Scott last week! We carefully observed fossils from different geological ages including the Ammonites and Echinoids from the Jurassic Era, plant fossils from the Carboniferous Era and the Trilobites from the Devonian Era. Sadly, we did not have any dinosaur fossil remains, however, we did have dinosaur fossil poo (Coprolites)! SG



# CCCS Musicians kick start advent

## Informal Christmas Concert

A huge thank you must go to our peripatetic music staff, our pupils and the vast, supportive audience for a wonderful Informal Christmas Concert this week. The evening featured nine school ensembles - from a double bass trio to a jazz band to our Pre-Prep recorders - as well as nine Form 8 soloists, who will all be applying for music scholarships next term. There will be more photos to follow in next week's newsletter, but this picture gives a taste of the atmosphere (featuring, as ever, a festively-clad Mr Wilson). This was the largest gathering ever for our Christmas concert and it was excellent to see so many eager attendees squeezing into the Walton Hall and foyer. I am forced to conclude that we need a bigger hall for our next concert - a wonderful problem to have! SB



## Advent Carols at Pembroke and Worcester

Many congratulations to our Pembroke and Worcester Choristers, who have sung exceptionally well at their chapel carol services over the past week. Both choirs are on top form at the moment, fielding wide-ranging repertoire spanning hundreds of years and in multiple different languages. It is such a busy time of year for our choristers, but also the best time of year - and one where we really feel knitted into the musical community of our three Oxford colleges. Many congratulations to all those involved in making these services such a success! SB



## Orchestral Workshop with Nicholas Cleobury



Our most advanced instrumentalists gathered in the Walton Hall on Saturday for a workshop with Nicholas Cleobury. Mr Cleobury is globally renowned as a conductor, having spent his career working with orchestras and opera companies around the world, as well as teaching conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. We spent the morning tackling two movements from the Capriol Suite by Peter Warlock (a Christ Church alumnus), which allowed the boys to explore a range of different playing styles. It was excellent to hear everything come together under Mr Cleobury's direction, with some really valuable work done on sight-reading and ensemble skills. It's so important to find opportunities outside the busy school week to bring our instrumentalists together, and I was delighted by the way in which they handled this demanding repertoire. Well done, all!

SB



# Match Report

## Christ Church Vs New College

On Tuesday afternoon Merton Field was looking utterly glorious in the late autumn, early winter sun. A chill in the air, high clouds swirling intermittently, sunlight glowing off the college buildings and long shadows stretching over the perfectly cut green grass. It was an ideal afternoon for some football.

Our Form 3 and 4 boys were scheduled to take on New College in our first home football fixtures of the season. We were certainly ready, even though we had only had a couple of training sessions prior to this match. New College arrived having been playing football since September, and we had been warned previously about how strong their Form 4 team was! Both games started at a fast pace with chances a plenty. Our Form 4s were more than holding their own and were creating chances with Louis, Isaac and Jasper battling hard in the midfield and Qi Heng chasing everything up front. Both AJ and Teddy were defending brilliantly, not allowing the New College attack to test Lucas in the Christ Church goal. Over on the Form 3 pitch it was also very even with Reggie and Edward blocking lots of the New College threats. Thomas in goal made several excellent saves to keep the scores level at half time. With no goals on either pitch at the break, the team talks were about ensuring that we tried to score in the second half with some attacking play, trying exploit the spaces on the pitch through passing earlier and making the right decisions.

Early into the second half the goals did come. On the Form 4 pitch Teddy latched onto a Louis pass and fired into the bottom corner to give us a deserved lead. I'm afraid on the Form 3 pitch the breakthrough came for New College, but there was certainly more attacking intent from the Christ Church team with Fraser and Aaran putting in lots of effort. 1-0 on both pitches soon became 2-0, with Louis adding a second for the form 4's, and New College doubling their lead on the Form 3 pitch.



Then the tide seemed to turn in both games with New College Form 4s coming on strong. Thankfully Alex, who had been put in goal for the second half made a string of good saves, Lucas blocked several shots and Yang almost added a third for Christ Church on the counterattack. Over on the Form 3 pitch Christ Church were suddenly in the ascendency with Harrison coming really close to halving the score when a shot rebounded off the post. No more goals went in, but it was a fine display from both the Form 3 and the Form 4 teams, and something to build on moving forward in the new year.

Form 4 player of the match – AJ

Form 3 player of the match – Harrison

It was great to see so many parents in attendance, enjoying the wonderful football on display as well as the coffee, sandwiches and cakes on offer in the Pavilion.

We hope to see more of you on the sidelines in January.

Have a great weekend.

Mr Pear.



# Enrichment

## Making the most of Oxford's finest treasures

Last Friday, the Making the Most of Oxford and Photography enrichment groups went in search of yet more treasures on our doorstep in Oxford. First, we battled through the cold, relentless drizzle to that place of eternal wonders, the Bodleian Library, this time to the Weston Library and its special exhibition, fittingly called 'Treasured'. Having been introduced to this by Mr Richards in a fascinating assembly, it was wonderful to be able to discover it for ourselves and find our own favourites amongst the breath-taking variety of artefacts from the Bodleian collection.

Time went too quickly, and we would have loved to have stayed longer, but we did manage to find a second treasure on our way back to school in the form of the magical Christmas market on Broad Street! The atmospheric fairy lights and intoxicating aromas enticed us to explore, and Madame Williams succeeded in procuring steaming hot chocolate for all as a special treat. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...!

EP



# Fun Saturday morning activities for boys in Forms 5 and 6!

## SUMMER 2026

### SESSIONS FOR CHILDREN

### PARENTS

25th April	The World's a Picture... Let's Capture it!	Coffee & Conversation
2nd May	Outdoor Skills- Let's Go For a Walk Together!	
9th May	Book Illustration	Open Morning- Come and See Us!
16th May	Going Out with a Bang! African Drumming	Coffee and Conversation

For more information about  
Wychwood Inspires

Contact: **Mr. Phil Humphreys** at:

[p.humphreys@wychwoodschoo.org](mailto:p.humphreys@wychwoodschoo.org)



A large, vibrant poster for 'WYCHWOOD INSPIRES SATURDAYS'. The background is a colorful, abstract splash of paint in shades of purple, blue, orange, and red. At the top, the text 'WYCHWOOD INSPIRES SATURDAYS' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below the text, a young boy with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white lab coat, is shown from the chest up. He has his right arm raised, holding a small object. In front of him is a piece of laboratory equipment, possibly a Bunsen burner or a similar setup. To the right of the boy, there is a large, stylized 'W' logo inside a circular frame. Below the logo, the word 'FREE' is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath 'FREE', it says 'Years 5&amp;6' and '10am - 11:30'. At the bottom of the poster, there is a smaller version of the 'WYCHWOOD INSPIRES SATURDAYS' logo.

# School Photobook

## Santa Claus is coming to town...

Well, he's already made his way to the Choristers Common Room via the fireplace, but it seems he's exhausted! Let's hope he recovers in time to bring us our pressies on Christmas Eve... Thank you so much to Magical Matron Tina for adding a festive touch and Christmas Sparkle around the Boarding House!



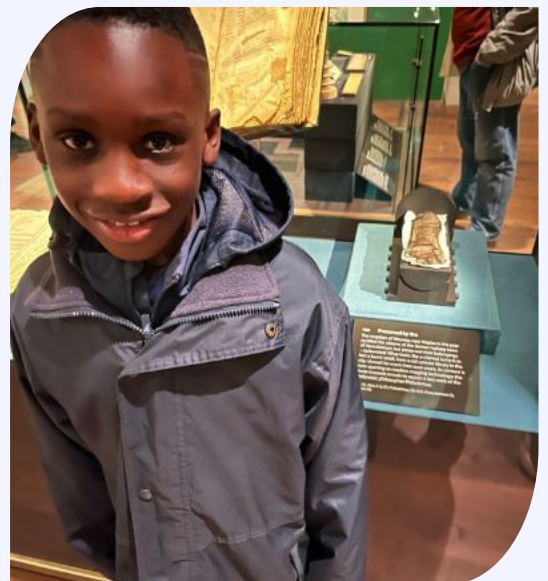
The Christmas elves have also been working hard in Form 1 dressing the Christmas Tree and adding lots of colourful festive touches - Thank you!



# School Photobook

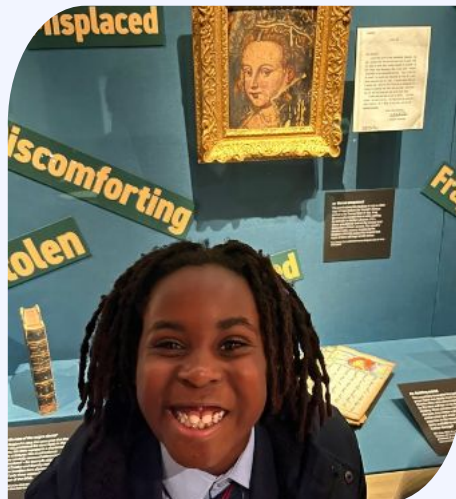
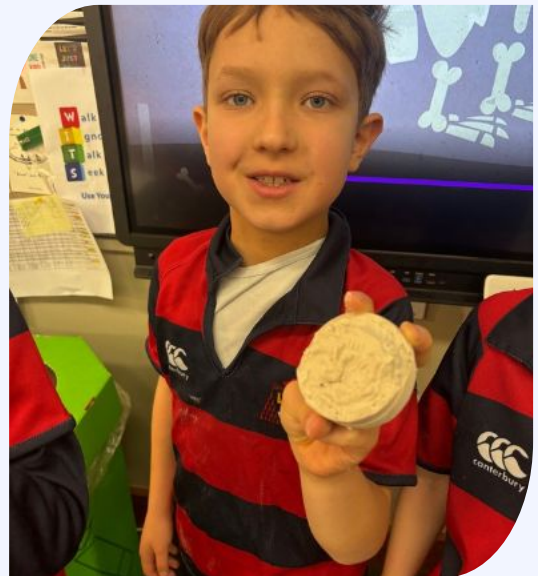


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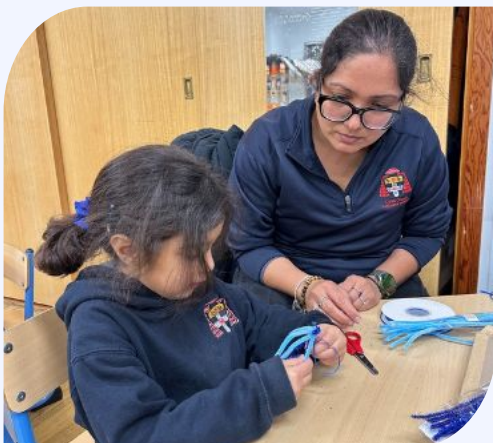
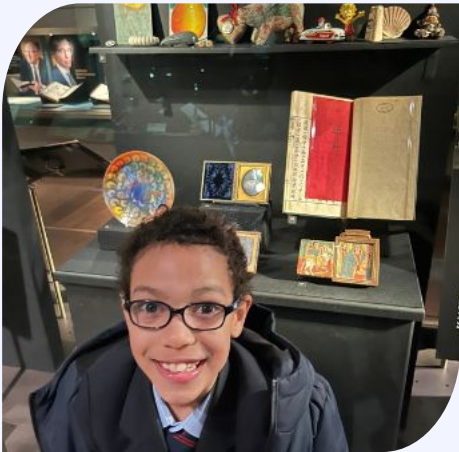


# School Photobook

WHERE THY  
TREASURE  
IS, THERE  
ALSO THINE  
HEART IS



# 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](mailto:franks@cccs.org.uk)

Please do not bring any outside food into the School.