



Christ Church Cathedral School News

16th January 2026



Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

It was lovely to see so many of you in the Cathedral this morning to hear The Master of Magdalen College School, Helen Pike, speak to the School. The reading she had chosen was the one about Jesus calming the Storm. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith." says Jesus before causing the wind to drop. The Master had read some important research about which factor is the most important in causing people to succeed in an activity. She was expecting, and I suspect hoping, that it would be diligence, always a useful message to deliver to a pupil body, but in fact it was confidence. If a person was confident they would be much more likely to succeed. Clearly success in anything worth doing requires diligence but without confidence it is rarely even embarked upon. I had not heard this research but have always believed that a School in which pupils feel happy, is a School where pupils will succeed, and I suspect that is because happiness tends to breed confidence and unhappiness causes one to doubt oneself. Miss Pike, never someone to rest on the very many laurels that being the Master of such an excellent school as MCS might allow her to, has made it her mission to try five new things every year. Last year one of those was to take up "Improv" a type of comedy, so we learnt, which is entirely unscripted and involves reacting wittily to the comments of another. We are lucky to live in a City where the head of one of our schools practises improv comedy! What an example she present to us all! Improvisation has, of course always been an important tool for teachers because one never quite knows what is going to happen in a lesson – it's one of those things which makes teaching and indeed lessons exciting.

In fact it's been a very exciting day today as we were visited by a wonderful band called the Brass Funkeys - as it turned out, an utterly appropriate name, given the funky nature of what they played. Mr Green, the husband of Mrs Green, and happily also a school parent now, played in the band. It was a joyous occasion and could be heard all round Brewer Street. This was fortunate as I had a long-standing meeting in my study at the time and so had to rely upon hearing it from there. Given the excitement of what I experienced from afar, it must have been electric in the playground.

The school is a member of the Choir Schools' Association, a wonderful organisation which represents choir schools in the English speaking world. The vast majority of these schools are in England, though there are a few other schools elsewhere. Interestingly there are as many choir schools in Oxford (three) as there are in the Southern Hemisphere! This year the Choir School's Association is holding its annual conference at Christ Church an event which will coincide with a Broadcast of Choral Evensong from the Cathedral to mark the 500th anniversary of the choir and the 100th anniversary of Choral evensong broadcasts, making it the longest running live broadcast programme in the world.

The Choir Schools' Association is part of a campaign to have the Anglican Choral tradition listed on the UNESCO Intangible cultural Heritage List, ensuring its protection and its formal acknowledgement as a jewel of British cultural heritage. It would be magnificent if this campaign succeeded. This school and the choristers who are educated here are a vital part of the maintenance of this unique heritage.

We are having a Be a Chorister for a day next Saturday and have a large number of pupils coming. Many of those pupils are internal, a really very gratifying fact. Pupils who become choristers from within always start at an advantage as they have had a very good music training within the school. If you would like your son to experience what it is like to be a chorister, do please get in touch with the Registrar.

Talking of confidence, one boy in Pre-Prep has already completely mastered his scooter and arrives every morning at great speed. He has enjoyed pointing out to me that his mother just cannot keep up with him now. "My Mummy is so slow!" he explained. I remember being just like this boy when I was young but, I have to acknowledge that my sympathies no longer lie with the speedy scooter operative!

Mr Richard Murray,
Headmaster

School Contacts

School Office: 01865 242 561 (8am - 5pm)

Prep Line: 07719 109433 (5pm to 6pm)

Mr Mirko Minibus: 07736 148199

Mr Quen Minibus: 07346 224937

School Calendar

Monday 19th January - Sunday 25th January

MONDAY 19 JANUARY

TUESDAY 20 JANUARY

2.30 - 4.15: U9 Football v The Manor (Away)

WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY

2.30 - 4.30: U10/U11: Football v Oratory (Away)

2.30 - 4.15: U12/U13: Football v Oratory (Home)

THURSDAY 22 JANUARY

2.30 - 4.00: U8 Football v Manor (Home)

4.00: Second Hand Uniform Sale, Dorothy L Sayers Library

FRIDAY 23 JANUARY

8.45 - 9.15: Cathedral Assembly, Speaker - Headmaster

All Parent are welcome to join us in the Priory Room for coffee following the service, 9.15-9.45

1.30 - 4.00: MCS Hockey Tournament at Oxford Hawks Hockey Club

SATURDAY 24 JANUARY

3.30 - 7.00: Chorister for a Day, Christ Church Cathedral School and Christ Church Cathedral

After School Clubs Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Football (Forms 3-8) 4.15 - 5.00pm Squash Court	Squash (Forms 5-8) 4.15 - 5.00pm Squash Court			Greek Club (Forms 7-8) 4.15 - 5.00pm
Chess (Form 2) 3.30 - 4.30pm Form 1 Classroom	Multi Sports (Rec - Form 4) 4.15 - 5.00pm School Hall			
Real Tennis (Forms 3-8) 4.15 - 5.45pm Real Tennis Court	Chess (Forms 3-6) 4.15 - 5.15pm Darwin Classroom			

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.

Upcoming Events



Second Hand Uniform Sale **Thursday 22nd January 2026** **4.00pm**

Dorothy L Sayers Library

Are you on the lookout for new uniform items? Then come along to our Second Hand Uniform Shop, run by our wonderful parents' Association to see what treasures you might find.

All donations are gratefully appreciated, so please drop off any unwanted items to the School Office.



Be a Chorister for an Afternoon **Saturday 24th January 2026** **3.30 - 7.00pm**

Christ Church Cathedral

If your son is in Year 2 or 3 and curious about Chorister life, then you should sign up to our upcoming 'Be a Chorister' event.

Our esteemed Director of Music, Ms Biddell and Christ Church Organist, Mr Holder, will lead an afternoon of fun, new songs and a performance at Evensong with our Cathedral Choristers.

To sign up, simply complete the form [here](#).



Parental Pastoral Seminar: Screentime **Monday 26th January 2026** **5.00 - 6.00pm**

William Walton Hall

Please join us for an insightful session where we will discuss how we can manage screentime for our children.

Further details will be shared next week, in the meantime, please [click here](#) to book your place.

Teaching and Learning in the EYFS



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that we follow at CCCS in both our Nursery and Reception classes. It is used in England to set the standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to five years old, and applies to all Early Years settings, including nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, and Reception classes in schools.

The framework explains **what children should be learning, how they learn best, and how adults should support them.** It focuses on helping every child to develop at their own pace while building confidence, curiosity, and a love of learning. The curriculum is broken into seven areas of learning which, in turn, are broken into **Prime Areas and Specific Areas.**

Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language:** Developing spoken language, listening, and understanding.
- **Physical Development:** Gross (large movements like climbing) and fine (small movements like writing) motor skills.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):** Managing feelings, self-regulation, and building relationships.

Specific

- **Literacy:** Reading, writing, and comprehension.
- **Mathematics:** Counting, shapes, and numerical patterns.
- **Understanding the World:** Exploring people, communities, the world, and technology.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating and using media, music, dance, and role-play.

At Christ Church Cathedral School, we believe the best way to deliver this framework is through creative practice. The EYFS is central to supporting young children's holistic development, and we believe creativity underpins how children explore, communicate, and make sense of the world. For children under the age of five, creative experiences foster **curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning**, while supporting key areas such as communication and language, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development.

One important approach to creative practice within EYFS is Woodland or Forest School provision. We are very fortunate at Christ Church to have access to Merton Field Woods and over the next six months we plan to develop this further with Early Years' children in mind. Woodland School offers children regular opportunities to learn outdoors in natural environments, encouraging imaginative play, problem-solving, and independence. Through activities such as den building, storytelling around natural materials, mud play, and observing wildlife, children engage their senses and develop creativity in an open-ended way. These experiences allow children to take managed risks, collaborate with peers, and express ideas freely.



Art and music are particularly vital in early childhood, as they provide young children with powerful ways to communicate thoughts and emotions before they have fully developed language skills. Music plays a significant role at CCCS, and from the outset of their time with us, we immerse and encourage children to develop a passion and appreciation for creating music.

Art activities such as painting, drawing, collage, and sculpture, support fine motor development, creativity, and self-expression. Process-focused art, where the emphasis is on exploration rather than the final product, allows children to experiment with materials, textures, and colours without fear of getting things "wrong." This builds confidence and encourages creative thinking.

Creative practice in the EYFS is essential for nurturing well-rounded, confident learners. By combining approaches such as Woodland School and rich experiences in art, storytelling, and music, we aim to create an inclusive, engaging environment that supports children's development and creativity during the crucial early years of their educational journey.

Mr Berry

Early Years Lead and
Reception Teacher



Birthdays galore in Nursery

Parents are fabulous at sharing photos of the children for their timelines and we display these pictures of them as a baby, at one, at two and take a picture when we celebrate their third or fourth birthdays at school.

When it is their birthday we play the sun game with the children. We show the photo of the child as a baby and then discuss the characteristics of a baby. Many of the children in the Nursery have young siblings and we were able to discuss babies with some clarity, from a baby a few days old, to one a few months old. We then sing a song marking the child's journey once around the sun. We repeat this for each of the birthdays until we have the child standing in the classroom with a new birthday and then we sing 'Happy Birthday' to them. We develop this game as we develop our knowledge of the Earth, the months of the year and seasons.

On the topic of babies, congratulations to Teddy on the arrival of his new baby brother Tristan this week!

The children are enjoying developing their interest in our planet, continents and maps. They like to work with new activities in a morning which then move to the shelves for them to work with independently. The continents map and cards have been a particular favourite this week.

HB



Watercolour Challenge

This week in Reception, we have been looking at African animals and the story *Handa's Surprise* by Eileen Browne.

This book is beautifully illustrated with watercolours and so the children created some wonderful observational drawings of the exotic fruit in the story.

Our first task was to draw the fruit in pencil before using watercolours to fill in the details. We spoke about colour mixing and the technique of not adding too much water to create effective results.

The children were brilliant at following the instructions and not rushing the activity, taking great care with choosing the right colours, and looking closely at the details in the subject matter.

MB



Form 1 have a roaring good time in Maths

Learning about Direction and Position in Maths was a lot of fun this week, especially as we had a little help from our Jurassic friends!

TR



Maths Challenges

Every year, we enter every pupil in Forms 5-8 into a National Maths Challenge. The challenge consists of problem solving questions, requiring the pupils to use their Mathematical skills and knowledge to find the answers. Pupils work by themselves in test conditions. There is no pressure involved, and we treat it as a fun activity rather than a formal examination.

Pupils in Form 5 and Form 6 take the Primary Maths Challenge. This is done in the Michaelmas term. Pupils can achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, based on nationally set benchmarks. We will soon be sent the score boundaries and then be able to award the pupils accordingly. The pupils with the highest scores in the country qualify for the Primary Maths Challenge Bonus round. This will take place in the middle of February and we will inform the pupils who have qualified for that very shortly.

Pupils in Form 7 and Form 8 are entered into the Junior Maths Challenge (run by the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust). This challenge is taken by over a quarter of a million pupils every year. It is designed for pupils in Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9).

The Junior Maths Challenge takes place at the end of April, and again involves Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, as well as a Best in Year Award, and Best in School Award.

The pupils with the highest scores in the country qualify for a bonus round called the Junior Kangaroo (several thousand pupils qualify). There is a further follow-on round, the Junior Mathematical Olympiad, for the pupils who score very highly on the Junior Maths Challenge. The Junior Olympiad is longer than other challenges, and involves fewer, bigger problems. Entrance into the bonus rounds is by invitation from the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust.

The Intermediate Maths Challenge (also run by the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust), is designed for pupils in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11). We always like to stretch and challenge our pupils in maths. We encourage ambition. This year, we have decided to enter a select few of our most able pupils into the Intermediate Maths Challenge to see how they find it.



It is likely that pupils will continue to do UKMT Maths Challenges in their chosen senior school. There is also a Senior Maths Challenge, aimed at Sixth Form pupils (A-Level or International Baccalaureate qualifications) as well as a Team Maths Challenge which some schools enter.

Our motivation to run these challenges is to promote Mathematics across the school and to have activities that are different to our normal program. It is also an advantage when applying to senior schools, as pupils can discuss the challenges they've taken part in when applying to schools, or during an interview. Maths is a subject which is judged just on examination scores (there is no coursework or project work involved at Common Entrance, GCSE or A-Level), so it is also a good opportunity for pupils to practise doing Maths independently in examination conditions without the pressure of worrying about a grade.

The pupils at CCCS perform very well in these challenges every year and we expect even more success moving forwards.

Mr Withers

Head of Maths



Ski Fun in Flain!

What a week it's been! Fourteen boys decided to get out of their comfort zone and go abroad to the French Alps to learn new skills and enjoy a week with friends. It was a fantastic week filled with challenges and laughter. Not only did the beginners learn how to ski, and intermediate and advanced skiers improved their technique, they also learnt about mountain wildlife, avalanche and rescue effort, joys and risks of extreme environments.

We were lucky to start skiing under the sun, i.e.. in extremely cold conditions (-24 when looking at Mont Blanc!), and finish the week under fresh snow, meaning whilst there was no visibility to ski, we enjoyed looking at beautiful sceneries that you would normally only see in Christmas movies!



The resort had a lot of indoor activities for the boys to enjoy after skiing, and the food was simply amazing. The chef was from the area, so tartiflette, croziflette, raclette and fondue were on the menu - plenty of hearty food with melted cheese! The sous-chef was from Brittany, so crêpes, sausages, mussels were also there for the boys to taste.

The atmosphere amongst the group was incredible - everyone supported each other.

On Wednesday, in Assembly, I encouraged all the boys to get out of their comfort zone, try new experiences and keep an open -mind when going abroad. The boys who enjoyed a week in the Alps with Mr Boarder, Mr Davies and Mme Loyer couldn't agree more!

SL



There are *far too many* photos to share in the newsletter, so please visit the [online photo album](#) to check them out! You can also view some short video clips [here!](#)

News from former choristers - Music successes at Oxford and Cambridge

Being a chorister in one of the school's choirs brings with it many benefits, and it is often the case that skills learnt at CCCS form the foundation for success far beyond the Prep school. I was thrilled to hear this month that two former pupils have been accepted to read Music at Oxford University in September. Alex Somerville (an ex-Worcester Chorister, trombonist and current music scholar at The Oratory) will be studying at The Queen's College, and Luca Taylor (an ex-Cathedral chorister, harpist and current music scholar at Bradfield) will be at St Peter's College... where he will join the current organ scholar, ex-Worcester Chorister Sebastian Murray!

Both Luca and Alex have also won choral scholarships alongside their academic places, and I hope that the whole school community will be very proud of them. On a similar theme, anyone who watched 'Carols from King's' on BBC One at Christmas will have seen ex-chorister Alex Winnifrith on the back rows of the choir. Alex is in his first year at Cambridge as a choral scholar, and follows in the footsteps of Binath Philomin: another CCCS chorister who sang at King's whilst studying at Cambridge. Do spot their names on our scholarship boards when you are next in the dining hall!

I wish both Alex and Luca a fantastic time studying at Oxford, and hope they enjoy taking their musical skills to the next level. Alex Somerville has kindly written about his success below:

'On Tuesday, I was delighted to receive an offer from The University of Oxford to read Music. This was the culmination of the development of my musical and wider academic abilities through study within school and outside of it. The foundations for all of this were laid here at CCCS, where I was introduced to a high level of music by being a Worcester Chorister and by participating in school choirs and playing trombone for the wind and brass bands and the school orchestra. Since moving to my senior school, The Oratory, I have nurtured these talents as I have continued my singing within the chapel choir and through numerous school ensembles. Additionally, I am excited to continue my choral singing as I have been awarded a Choral Scholarship at The Queen's College. I am grateful to both schools for the opportunities and teaching that I have received, particularly to the foundation laid by Miss Biddell at CCCS, as without it, I find it unlikely I would have developed such a passion for music at such a young age.'



Match Report: CCCS v Oratory Prep



Years 3-4 A Team

The Years 3-4 A team had a great start to 2026 showing great grit to defeat Oratory Prep. Due to Oratory having far more students than us on the afternoon, they were able to lend us a couple of players. The team were able to score some nice goals coming from good passing plays and great teamwork. Man of the match was Lucas, whose passing and communication helped his team significantly. Overall, the boys had great fun and got a win against a challenging opponent.

Mr Rowland

Years 3-4 B Team

With the first Football fixture of 2026, against Oratory Prep, the CCCS Years 3-4 B team applied a great amount of effort and determination, eventually going down 4-3. CCCS started with 2 goals towards the beginning of the match with excellent teamwork and effort being shown. Although there was strong persistence, the CCCS students started to tire after playing four 10 minute quarters. With Oratory able to switch students around constantly, the tiredness told in the end. However, there were some excellent performances during the match with a special mention for AJ who worked his socks off throughout.

Mr Gordon.

Years 3-4 C Team

On Tuesday the CCCS Years 3-4 C team had a great game at home against Oratory Prep School. Reggie started our scoring with a screamer from outside the box before going in goal where he saved multiple shots. Also, a special mention goes to Fraser who held up the defence nicely, tackling well throughout. However, man of the match went too Thomas Khoo who had an outstanding performance at striker, scoring a couple goals and keeping the team in the game. Despite just falling short of the win, the whole team put up a great fight and never looked like giving up.

Mr Morgan

Upcoming Fixtures

We have an exciting week of football ahead and would love to see parents on the sidelines cheering on our boys.

Home Fixtures

Wednesday 21 January

U12/U13 Football vs Oratory Prep

Thursday 22 January

U8 Football vs The Manor Prep

Away Fixtures

Tuesday 20 January

U9 Football vs The Manor Prep

Wednesday 21 January

U10/U11 Football vs Oratory Prep



Parents are always welcome at the Pavilion where a warm welcome, refreshments and a delicious tea await, so come and support our boys!

Embroidery Club: Learning Skills for Life

The embroidery club offers our children a calm and creative environment where they can learn a traditional craft while developing important learning skills. The club allows pupils to work at their own pace and enjoy the process of creating something by hand.

Each project begins with planning. Children think about their design, choose colours and stitches, and decide the steps needed to complete their work. This helps them understand the importance of planning and organisation. By breaking a project into smaller steps, children learn how to manage their time and stay focused until the task is finished.



Embroidery also helps children develop patience and concentration. Working with needle and thread requires care and attention, and children quickly learn that rushing often leads to mistakes. The club encourages pupils to slow down, focus on their work, and enjoy steady progress. Many children find embroidery relaxing, and it provides a peaceful break from busy school routines.

Mistakes are treated as a normal and valuable part of learning. Threads may tangle or stitches may not look as expected, but children are supported to try again. They learn that mistakes are not failures, but opportunities to improve. This helps build resilience and confidence, as children see that effort and practice lead to success.

Creativity plays a key role in the Embroidery Club. They are encouraged to add their own ideas and personal touches. Each project is unique, giving children a strong sense of pride in their finished work.

Overall, the Embroidery Club supports children's creativity, patience, focus, and confidence. By planning projects, learning from mistakes, and completing their work, children gain skills that are useful both in school and in everyday life. We are delighted to see how much the children enjoy the club and the progress they continue to make.

Mrs Ye

Maths Teacher and Club Leader



School Photobook



School Photobook



School Photobook



Today we were treated to a lively gig by the **Brass Funkeys** in the School Playground...More on that next week!



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.