



# Christ Church Cathedral School News

23rd January 2026



## Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

In the last few days I have done 18 mock interviews for boys going for interviews to senior schools. It has been a most engaging process which I have much enjoyed. I have asked each of them if there is anything in the news recently that has interested them. Every single one of them has elected to talk about President Trump, Greenland and Venezuela. Clearly these are matters which are exercising the minds of CCCS boys, and indeed, all of the boys were able to say something interesting. The most striking comment about these issues occurred at lunchtime, however, when one of the boys announced that he had "solved the issue of Greenland!" I was, of course, all ears. "Donald Trump has promised that if he takes over Greenland, he will make all residents of the island US citizens. What I would do, if I were the Danish Government, is to offer citizenship to a very large number of refugees and then see what Donald Trump would do." We are always encouraging our pupils to think outside the box.

I have also had a number of interesting conversations during the course of these interviews about literature and there is clearly a great deal of involved reading going on despite the fact that the number of boys who read books is declining nationally. CCCS is a reading- friendly zone with boys desperate to bury themselves in a book. Boys are also telling me about the poems they are learning by heart in preparation for the poetry recitation at the end of this half of term. I hope very much that you will be able to come to this wonderful event. There is little more moving than hearing people recite poetry that they have made their own by committing it to memory. Part of the magic of poetry is that, once committed to the mind, it rarely leaves us and having become part of us it changes us for the better.

This almost certainly sounds sentimental but I am certain it is true. Remembered poetry increases our sensitivity and shapes the way we see the world. So often it gives us a heightened sense of the world's value and of the importance of our fellow human beings.

It was a great pleasure to be able to discuss Persian poetry with Miss Hajar earlier this week. She teaches in a small and seemingly inconsequential room at the top of the Walton Centre, but as in all our rooms, great and inspiring work is done. Miss Hajar would like to name the room – all our other teaching rooms have names – and she has asked if it could be named after one of the Persian poets. We talked through the poets together and we have agreed to make a decision after the weekend. One of the poets we discussed was Saadi from the city of Shiraz, a place known for being the origin of one the most popular of all grape varieties. He wrote some words which are often placed above hospital and school doors in Iran and which seem to be, even in the rather halting English translation below, words of great profundity:

“Human beings are members of a whole,  
Of creation of one essence and soul  
If one member is afflicted with pain  
Other members will uneasy remain  
If you have no sympathy for human pain,  
The name of human you cannot retain.”

I suspect my Easter reading will include some of these great poems.

I suspect that few of you, fortunately, remember one of the most inelegant feats of British engineering, the Morris Marina, a car which it is impossible to believe was the product of human design, so uninspiring was it in every way. The fact that it had been produced in 1970 to replace one of the greatest cars ever to grace the road, the Morris Minor – I still have a Morris Minor steering wheel in my study at school as a tribute to that great car- makes the Marina's appearance even more dispiriting. It was with a mixture of amusement and horror then that I heard Coleridge's great epic Poem, one of the gems of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic poems, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” described by a pupil who had talked brilliantly about its profound effect on him, as “the Rime of the Ancient Marina.” Conversations with pupils often bring new perspectives upon things you thought you fully understood!

**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 26th January - Sunday 1st February

## MONDAY 26 JANUARY

5.00 - 6.00: Parental Pastoral Seminar - Screentime (WWH)

## TUESDAY 27 JANUARY

2.30 - 4.15: U8 Football v Chandlings (Away)

## WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY

12.30 - 4.30: U11 5-A-Side Football Tournament at St Edward's, Oxford

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

## THURSDAY 29 JANUARY

9.15: HPV Vaccinations - Form 8 Only

## FRIDAY 30 JANUARY

8.45 - 9.15: Cathedral Assembly with Pre-Prep, Speaker - The Headmaster

*9.15 - 9.45: All parents are welcome to join us in the Priory Room for coffee following the service*

## After School Clubs Timetable

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

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.

# Upcoming Events



## Parental Pastoral Seminar: Screentime

**Monday 26th January 2026**

**5.00 - 6.00pm**

William Walton Hall

Please join us as we welcome special guest, Dr Nick Ballou, a psychologist at Imperial College London researching the effects of digital media on children's health.

Please refer to the email sent home on Monday 19th January for further details on the session. To book your place at the seminar, please [click here](#).



## Nursery Stay & Play

**Wednesday 4th February 2026**

**9.30 - 11.00am**

CCCS Nursery

We are excited to welcome new friends aged 1-4 to our Nursery Stay & Play. Meet other families, take in the school surroundings and explore our playrooms or venture out into the Nursery garden.

Come along and get to know us in a friendly space. To book your place, please [click here](#).



## Blue Blood Birthday Discount

**Friday 23rd January - Monday 26th January**

**Blue Blood Shop**

In celebration of their 7th birthday, Blue Blood is giving parents a 17% discount on orders placed between 23rd - 26th January.

The discount will be automatically applied at checkout: No codes, no forms, no fuss!

Simply [click here](#) to take advantage of this discount and stock up on any new items you may need.

# Budding Friendships in Nursery

It is lovely to watch the new children settling into the Nursery and following their interests. We have been so impressed with the way the new children are settling with us and thank our new parents for their support with this.



We foster in the children the idea that we go outside every day, as well as encouraging the children to come outside and explore with different children. As a result new friendships are formed. These photos show some of these new pairings across the Upper and Lower Nursery.

Thank you to Form 3 who came and spent time with us on a wet afternoon this week. The Nursery children shared some of their favourite activities with them and the Form 3 children read to them. Come and visit again soon.

HB



# Pre-Prep visit Woodland School

The incessant rainy weather finally showed Pre-Prep some mercy, and we were able to enjoy a lovely afternoon over at our Woodland School on Merton Field. The children were fascinated to see a lot of changes within the wood since we last visited, with four wood-chipped seating areas having been constructed for us, the beginnings of an attractive perimeter hedge partially assembled with Christmas trees from our 'School Light Show', alongside natural changes such as the first snowdrops, and hazel trees heavy with delicate catkins.

The children had a fabulous time building camp fires with sticks and leaves, and roleplaying creating delicious meals using a range of cooking utensils. We also went on a 'minibeast hunt' throughout the woods, finding worms, snails, slugs, woodlice, and earwigs, examining our discoveries using our brand new insect kits with magnifying glasses.

We are tremendously excited by the forthcoming projects that we will be undertaking this year to develop our Woodland School, in partnership with the Christ Church Gardening Team (as outlined by Mr Murray in last week's newsletter). In February, we will be assembling and hanging bespoke hand-made bird boxes, bug hotels, and hedgehog houses, throughout the woods, to encourage more wildlife for us to study. I am extremely grateful to our incomparable Parents' Association, who have provided a donation to help us facilitate this. In March, we will be having a 'Planting Day', when our new hedgerow and saplings arrive, courtesy of The Wildlife Trust. I promise to share plenty of photos as these wonderful projects take shape.

TR



# Pre-Prep go to the Movies

Forms 1 and 2 had great fun at Mr Robards' 'Film Club' this afternoon. We had ticketed entry and refreshments, including popcorn, from the cinema's 'Front of House Team'.

We watched seven age-appropriate short films from around the world, on all manner of topics and in different genres. Some were funny, some were exciting, some made us think, and some made us want to watch them again straight away! At the end of the session, we voted for our favourite films, discussing why we liked them, and giving them a star rating out of 5.

The children went away with special Film Review sheets and I am looking forward to reading the reviews of the next generation of CCCS film critics in the coming days and weeks!

TR



# A New Chapter: The Heart of Literacy at Our School

There is a particular kind of magic in the quiet hum of a library, and at our school, that magic is currently unfolding in real-time. The English Department is thrilled to announce the opening of our brand-new school library - a project that has been a labour of love and a testament to our commitment to fostering a lifelong passion for reading among our boys.

While the shelves are still being meticulously organised and the final "finishing touches" are being applied to the reading nooks, the space has already become a vibrant hub of activity. It is heartening to see the boys gravitate toward the new facility; whether they are hunting for the latest graphic novel or rediscovering a classic, the enthusiasm is palpable. For a small independent school, this space represents more than just a collection of books - it is a sanctuary for imagination and a cornerstone of our academic life.

## **The Power of the Spoken Word**

The library isn't the only thing creating a buzz this term. From Form 3 upwards, the corridors are echoing with the rhythmic cadence of verse. Our annual Poetry Recitation Competition is fast approaching, and the boys are deep in preparation.

Learning a poem by heart is a rigorous intellectual exercise that builds memory, vocabulary, and confidence. Our students have been exploring everything from the whimsical rhymes of Roald Dahl to the stirring imagery of war poets. The competition will culminate in a grand showcase the day before half-term, where the boys will take to the stage to perform. This event is always a highlight of the calendar, proving that in a world of digital screens, the power of the spoken word still holds incredible sway over a young audience.

## **Celebrating World Book Day: March 5th**

As we look ahead, the excitement continues to build for World Book Day on March 5th. We believe that reading should be a sensory and immersive experience, and our plans for the day reflect exactly that.

To celebrate, the English Department has curated a day focused on the "joy" of the story:

- **Cosy Reading Sessions:** The library and classrooms will be transformed into comfortable retreats. Boys are encouraged to bring in their favourite books for dedicated periods of quiet, relaxed reading.
- **Drama Workshops:** Bringing text to life is a core part of our curriculum. We will be hosting drama activities where the boys can step into the shoes of their favourite characters, using improvisation and performance to explore narrative structure and character motivation.

## Looking Ahead

The opening of the library marks a new era for English at our school. As we continue to settle into the space, we look forward to hosting author visits, book clubs, and collaborative study sessions. We want every boy to see themselves as a reader, and by providing a dedicated, welcoming environment, we are giving them the tools to explore the world through the pages of a book.

We are incredibly proud of how the boys have embraced these new opportunities so far this term. From the brave recitations of Form 3 to the thoughtful browsing in the new library, the future of literacy here looks brighter than ever.

## Mr James Farmer

Head of English



# Book Readers, Assemble!



## World Book Day 2026

Thursday 5th March

In the lead up to World Book Day on the 5th March, we have some exciting events taking place, so please save these dates in your diary:

### **Friday 13th February - Poetry Recital**

Pupils are required to choose a poem of at least 6 lines or write a poem of their own and learn it off by heart.

### **23rd - 27th February - Bookswap**

Pupils are invited to bring in books that they no longer wish to read and receive a token in return. These tokens can be used to purchase a new book (maximum of three tokens per child).

Please see the email sent by Mr Farmer on Wednesday for details on these events.

# From discovering the depths of rainforests to our own superpowers



This term, Form 3 have been learning all about 'Rainforests'.

After exploring the different layers of the rainforest and the animals that live in each one, the boys created this fantastic piece of artwork. They also discovered that although rainforests are full of plants, very little sunlight reaches the forest floor because the canopy blocks most of it.

The boys now know that life in a rainforest can be very busy - especially when you're trying to find sunshine under all those leaves!

CZ

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In History, Form 3 have been travelling back in time to Ancient Egypt - right from their desks! They created their own cartouches on tea-stained paper, writing their names in hieroglyphs. Fun fact: Ancient Egyptians believed names had magical power... so don't be surprised if your child suddenly develops super-strength!

CZ



# Form 3 set sail with their DT Boat project

Form 3 have been busy in the DT workshop, where they have been designing and making their own boats using card. After careful planning, the boys tested whether their boats were watertight and able to float - with great success!

ES



# Form 6 brave the weather for a river walk

In Geography this term, Form 6 are studying the River Thames. Yesterday, they went for a walk to see what evidence there is for how people have made use of Oxford's waterways. We saw the castle mill stream, an old waterwheel, weirs, locks and the modern hydroelectric power plant at Osney. It is fascinating how people are using one of the oldest water-based technologies, the water wheel, in the 21st century to generate electricity.

The boys particularly enjoyed getting hands-on experience of how a lock works. We saw the lock on the Thames at Osney, but we are not allowed to use that without a boat, so we also visited the canal lock and had a go with Mrs Fairhurst's windlass.

AF



# CCCS Gets Funky With The Brass Funkeys

CCCS welcomed the amazing Brass Funkeys to school last Friday! They ran an awesome workshop for the Jazz band, focussing on learning tunes by ear and improvisation.

They then performed on the playground to the whole school, with infectious energy, marrying the vibrancy of New Orleans with pop and jazz! Solos included the sousaphone (a tuba like instrument that can be played whilst marching), saxophone, trumpet, trombones and drums. The CCCS audience had some great moves and sound effects to add to the fun. Thank you Brass Funkeys – check out their album launch tour dates at [www.brassfunkeys.com](http://www.brassfunkeys.com).  
SG



See more of the fun in the Photo Gallery [here](#).

# Composer Nico Muhly visits CCCS

It was fantastic to welcome New York-based composer Nico Muhly to school on Saturday, running a session on harmony and composition with some of our senior boys. Mr Muhly is a highly sought-after composer known for blending modern classical music with electronic styles, and he has worked extensively with artists including Steve Reich and Björk. Parents may recognise some of his superb film music - particularly the score for 'The Reader', which won a World Soundtrack award in 2009.

Mr Muhly was a chorister at an Episcopal church in Providence, Rhode Island, so has a deep understanding of choristers and their world. It was such a joy to hear him talk through his own music as well as some key minimalist pieces with the boys, finishing the morning with some one-to-one work to look at compositions. He found them to be a 'really eager and extremely musical group', which is a serious compliment! I hope that we will be able to welcome Mr Muhly back to see more pupils later in the year, so any boys with an interest in composition should start working hard...

SB



# CCCS Football Focus



## U9 v The Manor

The Form 4 team travelled away to The Manor Prep School on Tuesday afternoon to play three games.

The boys started well, gaining a well deserved 3-1 win against Hatherop Castle, showing great teamwork and focus to keep possession and score some great goals. With goals to three different players - Lucas, Teddy and Louis showed the overall performance by everyone in the team.

In the second game, CCCS came against tougher opposition, being the home Manor team. The boys showed glimpses of great passing play, and created some great chances, but the game ultimately finished 1-1 with a goal from Lucas.

In the final game against Cokethorpe, the boys put in a fantastic performance to win 2-1. Both goals were scored by Louis, one coming with the last kick of the match. Overall, the boys tried their best and played with a positive attitude throughout the afternoon. Alex was named player of the afternoon, with some great saves as goalkeeper, including one in the second game in a 1v1 situation, where an outstretched leg allowed CCCS to stay undefeated for the day.

The boys played great football, and everyone is excited to watch them play again next week.  
Mr Rowland

## Forms 5 and 6 take on Oratory Prep and Chandlings

### CCCS A Team

On a tricky surface, in difficult conditions, CCCS struggled as they came up against two well organised and capable teams. The players worked hard until the end and Raphael Lambert produced some excellent saves to keep the scores down, but there are a few areas in which the team can improve and these will be the focus in the upcoming coaching sessions.

Mr Withers

### CCCS B Team

Forms 5 and 6 B team had a great time playing some muddy football at Oratory Prep on Wednesday afternoon.

They played two games, the first one was against hosts Oratory, where the team put on a great performance, getting their first win of the year, 1-0 with the goal coming from Andy T.

In the second game, the team struggled slightly in the tough wet conditions, unfortunately losing narrowly against Chandlings. Overall, it was a great afternoon, with Andy being a player of the matches with his great goal and never give up attitude. Many players performed well, leading to a fun couple of games with many good moments.

Mr Rowland

### CCCS City

On Wednesday afternoon the CCCS Forms 5 and 6 'City' team played away at Oratory. Despite the miserable weather throughout the afternoon the boys turned up with a great attitude, and this was reflected in their 3-0 win. They all worked very well as a team and made sure they kept the ball out of their own half which allowed them to control possession nicely. Shoutout to Thomas who scored two very nice goals as well as Artie whose dribbling was on point and for also scoring our third goal.

Mr Morgan

### CCCS United

CCCS 'United' travelled to OPS to play in a competitive fixture. Despite the very English weather, the boys battled on throughout the whole match, motivated by their team manager, Terry Z. Special mentions go to Shaun C for scoring three goals and Alexander S for scoring two. Overall, it was an excellent fixture for the boys despite the challenging playing conditions.

Mr Boarder



## Forms 7 and 8 take on Oratory Prep and Ashfold

### CCCS A Team

Wednesday afternoon saw Forms 7 and 8 A team take part in two matches, hosting both Oratory and Ashfold here on Merton Field. The heavy rain and swirling wind made for quite a testing afternoon of football. However, our boys were brilliant, and although they went down 2-0 and 2-1, could easily have won both games had we converted the chances we created. Ludo deserves a special mention with his close control and calmness in possession really standing out. Patrick scored our goal against Ashfold after a great team move. There were other chances created, last ditch blocks made, and 10m long slide tackles, but overall it was a fantastic, very entertaining afternoon of football. Well done to all involved.

Mr Pear

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### CCCS B Team

Despite two narrow defeats the CCCS B Team had a fantastic afternoon out on Merton Field. There were plenty of positives to take from the performances, with prior learning in games sessions being clear visible on the pitch. The boys defended well and managed to create good chances, and with sharper finishing, the results could have been in our favour. Eaton de Brun was excellent throughout the afternoon, performing with grit and determination. Overall, it was a great team effort from CCCS.

Mr Crucioli

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### CCCS C/D Team

On Wednesday, the Form 7 C/D football teams faced up against Ashfold at home in some miserable, wet, muddy conditions. The boys combined into one team and used a number of skills learnt earlier in the week during their games session, combined with teamwork, to effectively score some very impressive goals and successfully win 6-1. Special mention goes to Adam C, who scored 2 very impressive goals. This came about through excellent communication with fellow teammates whilst moving off the ball, creating space and taking his chances. The whole team performed brilliantly to secure an excellent victory.

Mr Gordon

## Upcoming Fixtures

There are no home fixtures next week, but parents are welcome to support the boys at their away games:

### Tuesday 27 January

U8/U9 Football v Chandlings

### Wednesday 28 January

U10/U11 Football v Chandlings



# Silent Movie Club



“That’s another fine mess you’ve gotten me into!”

I have always been a fan of the stars of early cinema. They took a brand-new technology and used it to combine what they knew already (in many cases, clowning) with new ideas, creating a whole new genre of creativity. Of course, for the first generation of cinema actors, it was not possible to synchronise pictures with sound – but if you watch their films you really don’t need it. They developed a method of acting in which they communicated everything they wanted to say through tight plotting, gestures and some wonderful facial expressions. There was also the new, and related, profession of being a cinema pianist or organist, who had to improvise music to accompany the film, often with added sound effects (literal “bells and whistles”) stuck to the top of the organ. Some silent movie stars stopped work in the 1930s, when sound arrived, but others kept going – and I love that even into the 1940s, Laurel and Hardy movies don’t really need the dialogue.

The other thing about silent movies is that they had to be short because they could not fit more than about 25 minutes’ worth of film onto a reel. This was the inspiration for my enrichment activity: we can watch a whole movie every week and then have a go at making one. In these early weeks we have been exploring how to use gestures to communicate and make people laugh, and how comic shorts are structured. Over the weeks we will plan, rehearse, perform and film our own short movies in the style of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton; if we have time we can also compose our own music to go with them.

## **Mrs Anna Fairhurst**

Deputy Head - Academic  
Silent Movie Club Leader



# Friday Fun in Enrichment Clubs

## Dough much fun in Cookery Club!

The boys cooked up a storm in Cookery Club today, showcasing their pizza perfect skills - Bellissima!

They look good, smell great, but how did they taste... well if your son managed to take his home tonight, please do let us know!



## Anyone for Table Tennis?



# From St Mary's Tower to the Bodleian Library



Last week, the Making the Most of Oxford gang headed to the top of St Mary's Tower to take in the sights of Oxford and city skyline.

Today, the gang headed to the Bibliographical Press at the Bodleian Library, where Dr Alexandra Franklin very patiently allowed us to set our names in different type faces and print the result.

EP



# Your Year 8 HPV vaccination is due in school on 29.01.2026

The Human Papilloma Virus vaccine is the best way for you to protect yourself against an infection with HPV. It gives 98% protection against the 9 main types of HPV that cause genital warts and cancers caused by HPV. Your parent/carer has also been sent information about the vaccine and a link to the Consent Form to give their permission for you to have it.

**Click below  
for more  
information**  
[HPV Leaflet](#)

Why vaccinate now? The body has a stronger immune response when the vaccine is given at a younger age, so the vaccine gives better protection for when you need it. Remember It is to protect you not just now and in the immediate future, but over the course of your life.

## On the day of the vaccination

Wear a short-sleeved shirt or loose clothing. The vaccine will be given, by injection, in the top of your arm and so we need to be able to reach it!

The vaccine is an injection; it is quick and will feel like a little scratch.

If you would like a chaperone – please just ask!

Remember to have breakfast in the morning and a snack and a drink at school.

Tell the vaccinator if you are worried, nervous or if you have ever fainted.

Your health and well-being are important to us, and we are here to help answer any questions you may have.

If you are not having the vaccination, you are still welcome to come and talk to us and get further information about the vaccine and the benefits of having it.

After the vaccination Most side effects are mild and do not last long.

They may include a sore achy arm and redness or swelling at the injection site. Some people, only about 10%, may feel sick and/or have a temperature.

This vaccine does not contain porcine gelatine

# School Photobook



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

Please do not bring any outside food into the School.