



Historic Oxford prep school celebrates new facilities

28TH APRIL EDUCATION



By Andrew French
Reporter

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Staff, pupils and parents at an Oxford prep school are celebrating the completion of a new sports pavilion.

Christ Church Cathedral School (CCCS) is an independent day and boarding preparatory school for boys aged 3–13 and girls aged 3–7.

Founded in 1546, it serves as the choral foundation school for the Christ Church Cathedral Choir.

Sport as well as music is a key extra curricular activity for pupils, and last summer, a new sports pavilion was completed at Merton Field, close to Christ Church Meadow.



Richard Murray, Headmaster of Christ Church Cathedral School with pupils (Image: Christ Church Cathedral School)

Richard Murray, headmaster of the school since 2014, worked closely with a team featuring governors and trustees of Christ Church, as well as school staff and the architect, to bring the new pavilion to life.

He said: "It really is a beautiful design, and sits perfectly nestled among the glorious views of Christ Church Meadow.

"We're so pleased to have such a multi-purpose resource that serves our pupils and wider school community, while still being in keeping with the aesthetics of one of Oxford's most popular tourist attractions."

Set in 10 acres of grounds on Merton Field allow children to play a variety of sports, including rugby, football, cricket, tennis, swimming, squash, athletics and hockey

Parents have also welcomed the new facilities.



The new sports pavilion (Image: Christ Church Cathedral School)

Michael Crooks, parent of Adam and chair of the Parent Teachers' Association, said: "In the 10 years we have been at the school, the entire experience of going to Merton Field has improved immeasurably, both for the children and the parents.

"Not only do we now have a stunning sports facility to be proud of, but its additional spaces mean it can be enjoyed by the school community as a whole."

Slavo Balaz, parent of Milan and Sergey, both choristers at the school, described the new pavilion as a "welcoming hub".

He said: "Before the new pavilion was built, matches were already thrilling -full of tension, excitement, and nail-biting moments that kept spectators on edge.

"With its construction, however, the ground has evolved into something far more than just a place for sport.

"It is now a welcoming hub where families gather, new friendships are formed, and parents come together to celebrate the boys' achievements both on and off the field.

"More than simply a structure, the pavilion has given the space a true sense of identity and warmth - transforming it into a community with a soul."



The new pavilion (Image: Christ Church Cathedral School/Jackson@topshotimages.co.uk)

A spokesperson for the school said there were many generous donors who helped to fund the pavilion, from among current and past families.

As well as changing areas for home and visiting teams, the finished pavilion includes catering facilities and displays of artifacts and photos from the school and choir's 500-year history.

Previously Merton Field was used almost exclusively for sports, but with the new facility the school now hosts a fireworks display, leavers' teas, teddy bears' picnic, and other social and educational activities.

The spokesperson added: "These events bring together our existing and future families, as well as being enjoyed by many passing tourists."

The school in Brewer Street has housed and educated the younger members of the Christ Church Cathedral Choir since the reign of Henry VIII, during which Thomas Wolsey established Cardinal College, later Christ Church.

Parts of the school are still located in Wolsey's residence, and older pupils have English lessons in the Cardinal's study.

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