Christ Church Cathedral School News

8th May 2026

Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

I am very late writing this newsletter as I was completely captivated by the art and DT exhibition in the William Walton Hall. There was so much beautiful art and inventive design that I just couldn't leave. Really so much talent was on display. As I approached the room, I heard a bouncing ping-pong ball which turned out to be part of the table football experience; I've never seen quite such an interactive exhibition before! Highly suited to a musical School, one wall was covered in wonderful deconstructed instruments, the sinuous windings of horns lay next to piles of violins stacked on top of one another. There was a collection of beaming Pirates, all seemingly with eye patches and, if anyone was unsure of the time, there was a wall of operating wooden clocks one with a cuckoo! I enjoyed a collection of exotic zoo animals, the snake towering over all the other animals, his red fangs hanging provocatively from his massive head. A cardboard Colosseum sat in amongst other carefully constructed models, while a momento Mori in the form of the Grim Reaper hovered alarmingly in the background. Rather more reassuringly, one remarkable picture showed a skull growing out of a tree which had a heart coloured shape showing various Christian symbols of love and peace. There was a lovely collection of self-portraits painted by the nursery children. I was fascinated to observe how they saw themselves! I could go on and on but have just tried to give you a sense of some of the artistic works on display. I would like to thank Mrs Elias and Mr Stacey so much for all their hard work. They have both been a great inspiration to the pupils and I'm thrilled by the standard of work on display this year.

It was a great joy to find myself on Merton Field on Wednesday where I was able to watch some cricket again. Life always seems better when our boys sport their whites again and despite some cold weather, it was thoroughly memorable scene. As ever members of the public stop to watch the

boys something that tends only to happen during the cricket season. It occurred to me that cricket is such a brutal game. The long walk out to bat is often followed by a rather hasty return walk as another wicket falls. It's a game that requires a real sense of maturity about it and I am certain that our boys learn so much from it. One often finds oneself having to move so rapidly from a rather slow-paced period to a moment of high drama in a matter of seconds.

This morning in Cathedral we had the whole school including Pre-Prep and Nursery. The previous night I had been to vote, an act which involves putting a pencil cross on a piece of paper. I told the pupils that small insignificant looking things like putting a cross on a piece of paper can be great significance and I quoted Saint David who said "do ye the little things." I suggested that doing certain little things like small acts of kindness or of Care were very powerful. I told the boys and girls that like one of the superheroes they too had superpowers. I asked them what superpowers they thought they possessed. One boy in Reception suggested that one superpower might be kindness. I told him that he might as well take over giving the talk as he had so clearly understood my message. It was only Mr Robards putting his hand on the boy's shoulder that prevented him from getting out! Meanwhile, another of our boys put their hand up "Yes," I prompted, "what superpower do you have?" A loud voice responded "backflips!" I suspect he rather misunderstood what I was getting at but I have to say I would love that superpower myself!

Have a gymnastic weekend!

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 11th - Sunday 17th May

MONDAY 11 MAY
ALL DAY: Form 5 Leadership Challenge Day at Cheltenham College
2.15 - 4.30pm: U12/U13 Cricket v d'Overbroeck's (Home)

TUESDAY 12 MAY
9.00 - 10.25am: Form 8 CE French Listening Exam
10.00am - 12.00pm: Whole School Photo (Merton Field)
Please remember that children need to be in smart school uniform (white shorts for Prep boys). There will be no PE today for Nursery & Pre-Prep. Forms 3 & 4 will need to come to school in smart uniform and change into cricket whites at School.
2.15 - 4.30pm: U8/U9 Cricket v MCS (Home)

WEDNESDAY 13 MAY
2.00 - 4.00pm: OPEN AFTERNOON
2.15 - 4.30pm: U10/U11 Cricket v Cokethorpe (Home)

THURSDAY 14 MAY
ALL DAY: Form 8 CE French Speaking Exam

FRIDAY 15 May
8.45 - 9.15am : Cathedral Assembly, Speaker, tbc
9.15 - 9.45am: Parents are welcome to join us in the Priory Room for coffee following the service
10.45 - 12.00: Forms 3&4 and Young Art Oxford winners visit: Young Art Oxford Exhibition, Ashmolean Museum
1.30 - 4.00pm: House Music Competition (Cathedral), Adjudicator: Richard Dawson, Director of Music at Oundle School
Parking will be available on the Broad Walk from 1.00pm.

Upcoming Events

School Open Day
Wednesday 13 May

Christ Church Cathedral School
2.00 - 4.00pm

If you have ever wondered what lies behind the gates at 3, Brewer Street, come along to our Open Day to find out.

Whether your child is starting their school journey, relocating or looking for a fresh challenge, we would love to welcome you to our School.

To book your place, please click here.

Upcoming Events

House Music Competition
Friday 15 May

Christ Church Cathedral School
2.00 - 4.00pm

You are invited to join us for our annual House Music Competition at Christ Church Cathedral.

Under the watchful eye of our adjudicator, Richard Dawson, Director of Music at Oundle School, our instrumentalists will deliver wonderful performances, alongside ensemble pieces, as we discover which House will be crowned Champions of 2026!

Parking will be available on the Broad Walk from 1.00pm.

Can't make it in person? No problem, you can livestream the competition here.

Fun Run
Friday 22 May

Merton Field, Christ Church
10.45 - 12.30pm

We are taking over the School Playing fields yet again, for our Fun Run!

Children from Nursery to Prep will be taking part in a range of fun activities and races, and we warmly invite families to come along and join in the fun.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Save the date

The CCCS Parents' Association
invites you to our spectacular once in a lifetime

FORMAL SUMMER BALL

To be held at Christ Church Great Hall

We look forward to seeing all the parents on the evening of

Friday, 3rd July 2026

Approx. cost: £80 per person, TBC.

Drinks Reception in the Masters' Garden
Dinner in the Great Hall
Dance in the Undercroft

Christ Church Cathedral School

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.
FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE CIRCULATED SHORTLY.

School Clubs

After School Club Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Mandarin Club Reception - Form 2 Form 1 Classroom 3.30 - 4.15pm	**Multi Sports Club** Reception - Form 4 School Field 4.15 - 5.00pm	**Chess Club** Form 2 Form 1 Classroom 3.30 - 4.30pm	**Table Tennis Club** Forms 3 - 8 School Playground 4.15 - 5.00pm
Cricket Club Forms 3 - 8 School Field 4.15 - 5.00pm	**Chess Club** Forms 3 - 6 Darwin 4.15 - 5.15pm		**Mandarin Club** Forms 3 - 8 Form 4 4.15 - 5.00pm
Real Tennis Forms 3 - 8 Real Tennis Court 4.15 - 5.45pm	**Squash Club** Forms 5 - 8 Squash Court 4.15 - 5.00pm		**Little Musketeers** Reception - Form 2 WWH 3.30 - 4.15pm
			Little Musketeers Forms 3 - 8 WWH 4.15 - 5.00pm

To book your child in to one of our clubs, please email schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk and confirm your child's name and Form group.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

NINTENDO SWITCH

The Switch is a hybrid console released by popular video game company Nintendo in 2017. It's classed as a hybrid because it's designed to be played both at home on a television, like traditional consoles (think a PlayStation or an Xbox) or out and about like a portable console, such as a GameBoy. It uses two detachable and wireless 'Joy-Con' controllers on either side of the console's screen, which can be used by one or two players. The Switch can be played on the internet with the purchase of Nintendo Switch Online, in the living room together or on the go during long journeys, but bear in mind it needs to be charged just like anything else!

AGE RECOMMENDATION 6+

What parents need to know about NINTENDO SWITCH

NINTENDO SWITCH ONLINE

Nintendo Switch Online is a paid service that allows the console to be played (you guessed it) online, by linking to other Switch consoles around the world. It can be purchased through the Nintendo eShop for a single account on the device, or with a family membership plan which covers 2 accounts. The purchase options come in three tiers; 1 month, 3 months and 12 months but be aware these auto-renew unless you specify otherwise.

ONLINE DANGERS

While online, your children will be able to play with and chat to people on compatible games, which will mostly be good-natured fun, but could potentially expose them to vulgar language, indecent images or worse. There are options to limit this though, which are detailed below. It's worth remembering that many games can be played offline, so while it's not essential to get Nintendo Switch Online, it is certainly something to consider.

NINTENDO eSHOP

The Nintendo eShop is where games can be purchased over the internet and downloaded directly onto the device. If you choose to enter your bank details (or PayPal account) onto the Switch, you can save them for easy access later on. Do note however that these can be viewed by anybody with access to the console, unless you specify otherwise. A child might accidentally purchase a game or item from the shop if these details are left improperly protected, which could leave you with a nasty surprise.

NINTENDO'S VIDEO GAME SELECTION

Nintendo as a company offers some of the most entertaining and safe video games on the market. Games featuring characters like Super Mario, Donkey Kong and Yoshi are always a safe bet for a child-friendly experience. It's always prudent to check each game before you buy it (especially if the game hasn't been made by Nintendo) but as a rule of thumb, anything official containing well-known names like these will be great for your children, giving you peace of mind while they enjoy them.

PORTABLE GAMING

Being able to take the Switch anywhere is a huge bonus when travelling. What's more is that almost every game can be enjoyed without the need to 'dock' the console with a television. Battery life on the Switch varies depending on what it's being used for but typically it will last around 3 or 4 hours before needing to be recharged. When the time comes, any USB-C charger will be able to do the job, but it's best and quickest to return it to the dock, which requires a normal plug socket.

National Online Safety #WakeUpWednesday

Top Tips For Parents

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Nintendo released a free downloadable app that can be used in tandem with the Switch called Nintendo Switch Parental Controls. Once you've got the app on your mobile device, it's a simple process to pair your two devices, giving you a suite of options to help make sure your child is having fun in a safe and structured environment curated by you.

ONLINE RESTRICTIONS

Another major inclusion in the app is the ability to block your child from seeing anything to do with age restricted games. There's also an extremely helpful feature that restricts access to games that have free communication features between strangers on the internet. This includes things like private messages and unsolicited images. Should you be concerned that strangers might be using the games to talk to your child, a simple press of a button will disallow any access they might have.

PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD

One of the wonderful things about the Switch is that there are an abundance of great games you and your child can enjoy together, and even with the whole family. Nintendo has a long history of making and supporting fun, family friendly games like Mario Kart and Mario Party, both of which can be played with two or more players using the Joy-Con controllers.

NINTENDO ESHOP SETTINGS

In the Nintendo eShop you can set up a password to help stop your child or somebody else from accessing any sensitive information, such as bank account details. The options here include entering a password to access the eShop to begin with, when any saved credit card information access is attempted, or when PayPal is accessed. Choosing which areas are password protected helps ensure you're deciding what level of access is given on the device. For example, if you're happy to have your child browse the shop for games they might want, you can allow access to the eShop but introduce the password before a purchase is made ensuring no mishaps occur.

LIMITING PLAY TIME

By linking the app with the Nintendo Switch, you can set time limits and reminders when you think enough time has been spent playing. It also lets you see if a game is still being played and gives you the option to automatically put the console into sleep mode if the message is ignored. This should only be used as a last resort though as it could cause some friction between you!

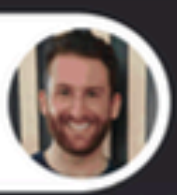
SET PLAY TIMES

Another handy feature is the ability to set different playtimes for days of the week, allowing you to tailor play time around you and your child's schedules. This is great for setting boundaries and encouraging gaming as part of a healthy routine. It will also help your child organise with their friends when they can all be online.

SEE PLAY HISTORY

The Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app can also send a report telling you how much time your child spends playing each game. This is a great way to spot their favourite or most played games and might be a nice way for you to find out more about a title before talking to your child about it. It could also help identify any possible issues around playtime before they arise.

Meet our expert



Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

https://www.nintendo.com/switch/system/, https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Support/Parents/Safety/Keeping-your-child-safe/How-does-Nintendo-keep-your-child-safe-680083.html, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLzRRYHOWSoqc, https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Nintendo-Switch/Nintendo-Switch-Online/Nintendo-Switch-Online-1182143.html

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 31.07.2019

Nursery visits Modern Art Oxford

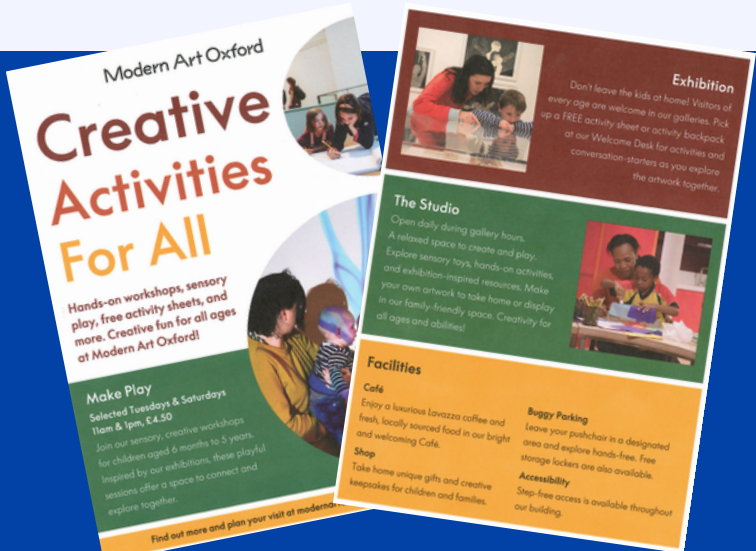
Last Friday, 1st May, the Nursery children went to visit the 'Foraging Connections Exhibition' at Modern Art Oxford in Pembroke Street. The Exhibition featured the work by artists, Lilli Tranborg and Arbie Edward who have been working with children from local charity, 'Children Heard And Seen.' The current exhibit shows the work created in both Wytham Woods and the Museum over the last 12 months. These pieces of art were very appealing to the children looking at the uses of familiar natural materials to create land art. We particularly liked the way they reflected the seasons and the importance of trees and forests. It was fascinating to see the way that some of the work was suspended from the trees using natural cordage. I can imagine the children recreating some of these ideas throughout the seasons in our Woodland School sessions.

The ‘Make Play’ session that followed our gallery visit sparked so many ideas for us all. We worked with water, clay, loose parts and fabrics. There were lots of 'why' questions as we mixed clay, soil and moss to create hanging kokedama's. Suspending loose parts on special parcel tape was very popular with the children, as was mixing water over a colour changing light table.

Thank you to the Museum team for such an immersive experience and to Mrs Hajar, Mr Charlie and Mr Tom, who joined us on the trip.
HB

Visit Modern Art Oxford for yourself

The children love our visits to Modern Art Oxford. They also offer fantastic family activities during weekends and school holidays, and encourage you to plan a visit. Find out more here.



Help us create a magical role-play space

Dear Parents,

We are currently updating our Nursery classroom role-play area to create an exciting, immersive space for the children to develop their imagination, communication, and social skills.

Role play is a vital part of early learning, allowing children to explore the world around them. To help us create an inviting, low-cost, and sustainable area, we are looking for donations of items you might no longer need at home. We are specifically looking for:

- **Small dressing-up items:** Hats, scarves, handbags/bags, briefcases, sunglasses
- **Open-ended Materials:** materials like silk scarves, pieces of fabric and natural materials that can become anything (a cape, a skirt, a blanket).

If you have any of these items in good, clean condition, please send them in with your child or bring them to Miss Helen or Miss Emma in the Nursery.

Thank you for your continued support in making learning exciting for our children.
EC

Reception’s water adventures begin!

In Reception this term we have started exploring our topic on water. So far this has involved looking at rivers and oceans as well as volume and capacity and the water cycle.

In art we have been looking at watercolours and marbling ink as well as looking at shells & rainbows!

This week we have also been listening to Handel’s water music and discussing ocean conservation. It’s been busy but brilliant and we have lots more to discover. Next week we look at submarines!
MB

Pre-Prep Explore the Oxford Science Centre

Our Pre-Prep children enjoyed a hands-on day of discovery at the Oxford Science Centre, filled with exploration, imagination and scientific thinking.

We began outdoors with a Woodland School walk, where the children transformed into busy bees and the adults became colourful flowers. With Velcro-covered gloves acting as “pollen collectors,” the children buzzed from flower to flower, gathering ping-pong-ball pollen from bags that opened like petals in the sunshine. After a few minutes of pollinating the garden, the “flowers” closed their petals for the night.

Next, the children paired up and set off on a mini-beast hunt, each equipped with a small collecting pot. Their keen eyes spotted an impressive range of creatures: spiders, slugs, centipedes, woodlice, a cardinal beetle, worms, snails, ladybirds and even millipedes.

Inside the Exploration Zone, familiar to some and brand-new to others, the children were encouraged to think like scientists: What will happen if I do this? Some activities came with instructions, while others required a bit of problem-solving and experimentation.

One of the most popular exhibits was the scarf shooter, which whisked scarves through tubes at high speed. The children quickly learned how turning a silver knob changed airflow and experimented with where to place the bucket to catch the flying scarves. The wonder wheels were another favourite. After weighing them and comparing their speeds, the children concluded that heavier wheels often spun faster, though weight distribution sometimes changed the outcome. They were amazed to discover that the wheels could even travel upwards with just a gentle push.

At the parachute station, the children designed their own mini parachutes and tested them over an air table. By adjusting the airflow, they timed how long their creations took to fall. Some floated gracefully to the ceiling, others spun or plummeted, and they thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with altering their designs.

The Curious Camera, a thermal-reaction screen, offered a fascinating look at heat and temperature. Ice packs appeared blue, warm hands glowed red or white, and the children predicted what colours warm water, ice and melting ice cubes would show. Watching the colours shift as temperatures changed was a highlight for many.

A balancing challenge awaited at the spitting table, where the aim was to stand as many wheels upright as possible before they toppled. The record stands at five, not beaten this time, but the determination to try again was strong.

After a busy morning, we enjoyed a well-earned lunch break, chatting about our favourite moments while tucking into delicious packed lunches prepared by our wonderful Chef, Mr Kilby.

The afternoon took us to the Water Lab, where we explored floating and sinking. The children discussed buoyancy, weight and shape, and experimented with pipettes, measuring containers and different types of vessels. They compared tall, narrow containers with short, wide ones to predict which would hold more water. Using fishing nets, they discovered that some ducks floated, some sank and some hovered in the middle, prompting lots of theories about why.

Working together, the children built dams and redirected water flow, constructed Lego boats, and created channels to guide waterfalls. Spinning wheels and pink discs added extra excitement as the children tested what happened when water flowed over them.

It was a day full of curiosity, teamwork and joyful learning. Our Pre-Prep children returned to school tired but inspired, buzzing with new ideas and eager to share everything they had discovered.
MH-W

Woodland Wanders

At our Woodland School session this week, Pre-Prep had oodles of fun, playing a range of interactive team games. First, we played a game of 'Tail Grab' in which children wore belts with tails and were tasked with moving around the field in the style called out by the Leader. Ideas included: creeping downstairs to find the last piece of chocolate cake from the fridge; astronauts floating around in space; ballet dancers pirouetting and leaping on the stage; cheetahs chasing their prey on the savannah; scoring the winning goal in the World Cup Final; playing the trumpet in a marching band; and fighting in the Battle of Hastings! When Mr Robards called 'Tail Grab!' the children had ten seconds to capture the tail of a friend, until, after several rounds, the final participants were victorious.

Next, we played a large-scale game of 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' in teams, with exaggerated physical actions. Creative twists included 'Giants, Fairies, Wizards', in which the wizards could cast a spell on the giants, the giants could quell the fairies, and the fairies could win by tickling the wizards' feet!

We also played a trust game of 'Blindfold Fetch' in which children were tasked with supporting and instructing blindfolded friends to collect lost figurines scattered around the field.

It is a gift indeed to have such glorious facilities available to us in our Woodland School on Merton Field, and it is rewarding to see the CCCS children building positive values and skills for life through outdoor team games, such as sharing, communication, strategic thinking, teamwork, creativity, and above all, kindness towards our friends and colleagues
TR

After School Care

This week in After School Care, the children made the most of the warm weather by enjoying extended access to the Pre-Prep garden. The outdoor environment provided a range of exciting opportunities for both EYFS and Key Stage 1 children to explore, create and develop key skills through play-based learning.

The children particularly enjoyed the water play activities, where they worked together to pour, measure and transport water using a variety of containers. This supported early mathematical development, communication and language skills, as well as encouraging teamwork and problem-solving. The coloured chalks were a popular activity, allowing the children to express their creativity through mark making, drawings and imaginative games, supporting fine motor development and early writing skills.

An obstacle course was set up to encourage physical development, coordination and balance. The children showed great determination and confidence as they climbed, jumped and navigated their way through the different challenges. Climbing activities also helped to build resilience, spatial awareness and gross motor skills, while encouraging the children to take safe risks and challenge themselves.

Throughout the session, the children demonstrated excellent social skills by sharing resources, taking turns and supporting one another in their play. The afternoon was filled with laughter, creativity and active learning, making the most of the sunshine while supporting development across the EYFS areas of learning and Key Stage 1 personal, social and physical development

Marie Merrimen
Wraparound Care Co-ordinator

Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

At Christ Church Cathedral School we believe that it is really important for all our pupils to be able to be happy, make progress and feel valued, whatever their strengths and difficulties. Of course, as a gently selective school, we do not have children with very significant Special Educational Needs. However, we have plenty who need a little more support than others do, and we are proud that we can give them the attention they need – probably more than in other schools which have a wider range of needs.

For many pupils who might struggle in other schools, the very nature of CCCS gives them what they need without much further intervention. Our small class sizes, and ability sets from Form 5, guarantee plenty of individual attention for academic needs. Our teachers know the pupils really well and can support them with their emotions and relationships. Some pupils really benefit from the routine of our School, including learning in different places and from different adults across the day: regular changes and clear routines can help them to keep their concentration going.

We also have the advantage that at CCCS, talents of all kinds are celebrated. A pupil who finds reading difficult may be a star sportsman, and another who struggles with Maths may be a cathedral soloist or the star of the school play. This is in contrast with some other schools in which the core subjects have most of the attention.

Of course, there are pupils who still need more support. That is where I come in as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator). I work with parents and staff to identify what support individuals need and make sure it happens. This might be arranging for external assessments, ensuring a quiet space or extra time for exams, or timetabling 1:1 or small-group support. I help teachers to share their expertise, so that we all support each child in the best way we can. We are very lucky to have a team of talented support staff who are available to provide support. For pupils who are struggling with their emotions or relationships, time with Mrs Wellesley, the School Counsellor, or with Ms Hajar can make all the difference. We have staff throughout the School, including our class teaching assistants, Mrs Roope, Mme Williams, Ms Hajar and Mrs Leeson, who can offer that little bit extra to help pupils keep up with their learning.

If you are worried about how well your child is progressing, please do get in touch.

Mrs Anna Fairhurst
Deputy Head - Academic

Form 4 step back in time during visit to MOX

On Thursday, Form 4 visited the treasure trove that is the Museum of Oxford on St Aldates, taking part in an Anglo-Saxon workshop to support our History topic.

During a packed couple of hours, we got to dress up Anglo-Saxon-style, handle artefacts and make brooches, as well as discovering more about St Frideswide, Oxford's most famous Anglo-Saxon, learning about the St Brice's Day massacre when many unsuspecting Viking settlers met a miserable end, and finding out how the heart of our bustling, beautiful city has roots even more ancient than Christ Church.

Thank you to Lisa, Scott and Oliver at MoX for a wonderfully informative morning: we learnt so much and would have loved more time to explore the galleries!
EP

House Music Competition 2026

It's been immensely enjoyable to hear auditions for our House Music Competition over the past few weeks. Boys in the Prep department have offered over 200 performances on a dizzying array of instruments since the beginning of term, and many pupils have taken the opportunity to teach each other new pieces - both inside and outside the classroom - in order to win extra points. The final of House Music will take place in the Cathedral at 1.30pm next Friday, and every boy from Forms 3 to 8 will be involved in our House choir performances at the end. A list of instrumental finalists has now gone up in school and you will receive an email if your son needs to perform on his instrument as well as sing.

Parents are warmly welcomed to attend, but if you can't make it to the Cathedral in person then you can watch the competition via this link https://www.youtube.com/live/51tLompnw7c either during the live-stream or afterwards.

Please note that pupils in Forms 3 to 8 must wear their white shirts and smart school uniform to school next Friday.

Parking will be available on the Broad Walk from 1.00pm.

I'm delighted that the Director of Music at Oundle School, Richard Dawson, will be joining us as this year's competition adjudicator. Mr Dawson runs one of the top Music departments in the country, and I am delighted that he will be giving helpful advice to our instrumentalists and singers. I am looking forward to seeing very many of you at this celebration of Music at CCCS!
SB

Instrumental music at CCCS

Why do children learn musical instruments? At CCCS this is our most popular extra-curricular activity, with the majority of pupils learning at least one instrument and 50% learning two or more. Mastering an instrument is a complex activity that draws on a unique set of skills, including literacy, memory, rhythm, posture, listening and spatial awareness,and it confers long-lasting cognitive advantages. Data suggests that these benefits continue long into adulthood, with disorders like Alzheimer's and dementia less likely to occur in a person who has learned to play music.

Musicians are rightly wary of using non-musical evidence to justify their craft, but it is worth acknowledging these benefits before moving on to the main rationale.... enjoyment! Instrumental music offers a new way to communicate with others, the release of being able to explore different emotional states, the connection experienced in ensembles, and the satisfaction of technical mastery achieved through diligence. By practising 'little and often' - just 10 minutes a day at the beginning – children feel tangible improvements that unlock the learning process in a unique way.

At CCCS we have a team of skilled peripatetic staff who guide pupils on their instrumental journeys, whether this might be playing for pleasure, tackling grade examinations, or working at the most competitive levels. Lessons are offered on the full range of string, woodwind, brass and keyboard instruments, with an astonishing half of the school choosing to play the piano. Equally we are always keen to encourage 'rare' instruments like the bassoon, oboe, harp, viola and horn, as these are always demanded at senior schools and can create excellent pathways towards scholarships.

Pupils participate in a rich ensemble programme (ranging from an advanced String Quartet to a Pre-Prep Recorder Club and a Jazz Band), popular termly exam sessions, and solo performance opportunities at every level. Our instrumentalists play in the Cathedral each Friday and at large events like Prizegiving, but at the heart of the department are our regular Class Concerts which take place during Music lessons. These are completely voluntary, offering the chance for boys to share whatever they choose of their current repertoire. Just yesterday I heard pre-Grade 1 pieces receiving just as much praise and support from classmates as advanced repertoire by Bach and Debussy. This approach ensures that pupils of every standard can showcase their talents and develop confidence.

The best litmus test for instrumental music at CCCS is, of course, our House Music Competition. This year's final will take place on 15th May, but the month leading up to it is where the real drama lies. Boys win points for their houses by auditioning, but – with a point for each instrument, not each piece – the structure is calibrated to incentivise co-operation and value every level of ability. Pupils spend breaks teaching friends to play simple pieces on new instruments, meaning that we suddenly find 'Hot Cross Buns' and 'Three Blind Mice' echoing from every corner. There is nothing that helps a horn player understand his instrument better than teaching a beginner how to make the correct embouchure!

This is truly the best time of year for all our instrumentalists, and I rejoice in their enthusiasm to play as much, and in as many places, as they can. If you would like to discuss finding the right instrument for your child please do get in touch, and I hope that very many of you will be able to join us in person or online at this year's House Music. It should be a spectacular event!

Ms Sophie Biddell
Director of Music

ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ESO Youth / Rugby School - Woodwind, Brass & Percussion Day

Our musicians have been invited to attend a music day at Rugby School on Sunday 17th May 2026, 9.30am-4.00pm.

Attendance is free.

For more information and to sign up, please click here.

Art & DT Exhibition 2026

Thank you to everyone who visited the Art & DT Exhibition this afternoon. We hope you are as impressed by the talent as we are!

Recycled Architecture competition

Every entry was amazing, well done to our winners:
Zoya - Reception
Okyanus - Form 1
Aaron - Form 3
Thomas and Oliver (joint) - Form3
Max - Form 7

Sports News

CCCS Cricket

Oratory v CCCS

The Form 3s travelled to Oratory Prep to play on Tuesday afternoon. We lost the toss and were sent into bat, with Harrison and Ashhvith getting us off to a good start without losing a wicket. The middle pairs continued to get a few runs, with a few overthrows leading to boundaries. Edward and Yang finished the innings with some great running between the wickets including a three off the last ball. We then had some great energy in the field, mostly coming from Oliver who continually got to the ball fast and threw it in with pace. We had a great direct hit run out from Ashhvith as wicketkeeper and a clean bowled from Qi Heng which put us right in the match. Unfortunately, we narrowly lost by 12 runs, but there was great improvement from last week, and I'm sure the boys are excited for next week's fixture.
Mr Rowland

On Tuesday the Form 4 cricket team put on a tremendous performance against Oratory, highlighting their quick improvement from previous fixtures and games sessions. Their clear use of communication when running between the wickets allowed them to score 61 runs, and their energy and relentlessness in the field limited Oratory to only 39 runs. Christ Church's ability to encourage and also celebrate their peers significantly helped them to gain a competitive advantage. Special mention to Arlo who took two wickets in his over, and Teddy who hit a number of excellent boundaries.
Mr Gordon

CCCS v MCS

On Wednesday, the Forms 5 and 6 A cricket team hosted MCS in their first hard ball match of the season! Winning the toss and bowling first was a great decision, with our captain Ted picking up 3 wickets to put MCS on the backfoot, with some unreal fielding efforts, Christ Church conceded 94 runs in 20 overs. Unfortunately, the boys couldn't quite chase MCS' total down, and despite the loss, our boys showed a great amount of determination, especially Shaun who was like a brick wall and batted the whole 20 overs!
Mr Gordon

The Forms 5 and 6 CCCS B's were narrowly beaten chasing down the score set by MCS. There was some strong bowling and fielding throughout the side, and an excellent batting performance from Gustav, who got the team very close to securing the win. The result was made more impressive by the fact that MCS outnumbered the CCCS boys 10 to 8.
Mr Withers

Forms 5 and 6 Rockets team took on MCS in a thrilling encounter over on Merton Field. MCS batted first, hitting some nice shots, but being limited by some excellent bowling and fielding form the CCCS team. After taking 6 wickets, MCS finished with a total of 206. After practising 'sensible batting' last week, that was the discussion before we went into chase their total. I am pleased to say, the boys batted very sensibly, looking after their wickets and attempting to play shots at the right time. This led to a slow but successful chase, with CCCS only losing 3 wickets and positing a total of 208. A two-run victory which was very well deserved. Shout out to Jayden who hit a couple of excellent shots with the bat and Daniel who took a brilliant wicket during his bowling spell.
Mr Pear

On Wednesday the Forms 5/6 Lightning team hosted MCS for a great afternoon of cricket. Alex T won the toss and chose to bat first. Alex and Alexey opened the batting, getting a strong opening partnership of 17 all within 3 overs. Virtue and Dave then went in, getting a crucial 26 runs between them which would set the team up nicely for the win. Jedi and Sergey then went into bat also put up a strong partnership, as did Sooyeon and Alexey to finish off the inning.

Most importantly, last week we practised the importance of protecting your wicket, and the boys took that into the game as they did not lose a single wicket! We also bowled and fielded very well as a team, with Sooyeon bowling someone out as well as getting two runouts! Jedi also managed to bowl someone out, and the whole team's fielding was on point! We ended up winning the match by 13 runs! Well done to all the boys who played.
Mr Morgan

Cothill v CCCS

The match started at around 2:10pm, with CCCS deciding to bat first. The opening partnership of Patrick DD and Eaton DB lasted a short amount of time before Patrick was replaced with John BE. At the end of ten overs, the score for CCCS was 36 for 10 overs, with Navraj S stepping in to bat at no. 4. The partnership of Navraj S and Eaton DB lasted approximately 6 overs, with Navraj S getting caught at a total of 74. There was then several wickets taken by the other team in a row, ending at numbers nine and eight batting for the last overs. The score was a final total of 77.

The next innings proceeded with four opening overs by Matthew N and Harshadeep N with sixteen scored total from the opposing team. Across the next overs bowled by Ludovico MC, Patrick DD and Henry P, Cothill's score was 35 at the end of ten overs with one wicket taken by CCCS. In the second half of the innings, the opposition's run rate increased with the game ending at Cothill 78 runs for 18 overs, and CCCS 77 for 20.
Matthew N, Form 8

On Wednesday, the Form 7/8Cs travelled to Cothill to play a paired cricket match. The boys batted first and started well, with Soori hitting a 4 off the first ball. They continued, not losing a wicket for the first few overs, and good running between the wicket put the pressure on the fielding team. Even though one Cothill bowler got three wickets in one over, we put up the challenging total of 241. We then came into bowl with Theo and Kailuo getting us off to a good start. The focus from the fielders dwindled throughout, but with constant wickets the chase was getting close. In the end, Cothill finished on 237, meaning we had won by only 4 runs.
Mr Rowland

On Wednesday, the Form 7/8 2nd XI travelled to Cothill for a T20 cricket fixture. CCCS bowled first and delivered an exceptional performance in the field, conceding only 10 extras in 20 overs through wides and no balls. A special mention goes to Max C, who claimed a superb hat-trick with his spin bowling. Cothill finished on 66 runs, leaving CCCS with a manageable chase. The boys batted confidently and reached their target in the 13th over, finishing on 67. Kalel L played an excellent innings hitting one of the only sixes, while Robin F-J struck multiple boundaries and top scored for the team. It was an excellent afternoon of cricket and a well-deserved victory for the boys.
Mr Boarder

Sports News

Form 3 Swimming Gala

On Wednesday, all of our Form 3 and 4 boys took part in our fun swimming gala - an opportunity for the boys to showcase the swimming progress they have made throughout the year.

They began with some fiercely contested relay races in each stroke, followed by a fun retrieval game focused on building confidence both in and under the water. To finish, the boys enjoyed a game of water polo, during which they demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and enthusiasm throughout.
FB

Enrichment Clubs

Photography

This term in enrichment photography we have been taking photos around the other enrichment groups. Today we spent some time thinking about photo editing and how to make the photos we've taken look even better.

Here are some of the results - more to come next week.
DP

School Photobook

Pre-Prep
explore Science
Oxford

School Photobook

Form 4 at MoX

More from the Art & DT Exhibition

School Photobook

House Music is nearly here!

More Woodland Wanders

School Photobook

More fun with the After School Gang!

Reception's water adventure!

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.