



Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 2nd October 2026 —



Dear Parents,

One of the most remarkable things about being in America is to witness the result of the belief that is so evident here that things can be done. This is not the land of HS2! We spent a great deal of yesterday inside the Chapel of the University of Princeton. It is a remarkable building. Its height is almost exactly the same as that of Westminster Abbey, England's highest mediaeval building. It is immensely long. It seems to stretch on into the far distance and the arches that span its width seem almost industrial in size. And that is all before one even starts to think about the stained glass windows which are a marvel. The sensation I felt, sitting in that wonderful building, was the same that I got all those many years ago as a boy sitting in Chartres Cathedral in northern France, seeing for the first time the exquisite windows there. The overwhelming colour is blue and so it was in Princeton too. Clearly the glass in Princeton is not mediaeval, but unlike a great deal of 19th and early 20th century glass in England, the makers had gone to the greatest trouble to make the glass look mediaeval; the figures are very slightly distorted as they so often in old glass and the colours were just right. The building was beautifully carved again, unlike many 19th and 20th century buildings where beauty of detail gives way to speed of construction.

Princeton itself is charming. The university radiates from the chapel, on and on in a glory of Hogwartian extravagance, all set within the context of an elegant North American town. No wonder the great scientist Einstein settled here for so long after his stay at Christ Church between 1931 and 1933. The concert yesterday evening was a triumph. The choir sung music written by composers associated with Christ Church, in particular a wonderful piece written for us by our present composer in residence, Nico Muhly, an American based in New York who attended the concert. It was the

second public performance ever, the first in the US. It was rapturously received. It was a piece of extraordinary complexity and difficulty. It was another reminder of what our boys are able to do. Wherever we have been, people have marvelled at the quality of their work and have been impressed by their behaviour. Yesterday we drew admiring glances and comments as we walked in formation through the quads and lawns of Princeton. One should never underestimate what young people are capable of doing when they are believed in. I really do have great admiration for the boys with whom I have the pleasure of being on tour, as of course I do for the remarkable adults without whom they would not be able to achieve what they have.

This morning we are leaving small town Princeton to travel to New York where we will be singing in America's foremost concert venue, the Carnegie Hall. The boys are hugely excited about the prospect of being in one of the world's most exciting cities.

I am delighted that Stephen Jones has been appointed as the Interim Head from next term. As you will have heard from The Sub Dean, Stephen has been a governor of the school since 2011 and, as such, could not know the school better. Throughout his time in this role he has been extremely hard-working, wise and committed, and one could not have anybody with a better understanding of the place. He also has great experience of running schools having been the Headmaster of Dover College and, of course, St Edward's where he was my boss! He has also taught at a number of Prep Schools. Furthermore, there are very few people that he does not know in the senior school world and so will be a brilliant advocate of your sons who are seeking to gain places in these schools. Stephen is also an immensely warm and positive person whom you will very much enjoy getting to know.

The only downside to being on tour is that I am missing being in School. Very kindly Mrs Fairhurst sends me a daily update and it has been lovely to hear of all the wonderful things going on back at base. I wanted to thank all my colleagues in Oxford who are ensuring that everything is running so smoothly in my absence.

I would like to remind you all that Mr Harrison will be away on shared parental leave for the next nine weeks, returning on Monday, 11th December, with the exception of Wednesdays when he will be in school, mainly to help with Games. In his absence, Mr Robson has kindly agreed to handle Pastoral and Disciplinary matters and Mr Withers has kindly agreed to be the Form 8 Tutor.

I very much look forward to seeing you all next week. Have a good weekend.

Richard Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar

Monday 5th October - Sunday 11th October

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER

2.30 - 4.00pm: U12 & 13 Rugby v MCS – Home

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER

2.00 - 4.3.0pm: U8 & U9 Rugby v Ashfold - Away

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER

2.30 - 4.30pm: U10 & U11 Rugby v Oratory Prep – Away

2.30 - 4.00pm: U12 & U13 Rugby v Oratory Prep – Home

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

9.05am - 4.00pm: Form 7 Trip: Silchester

FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER

8.45 - 9.15am: Cathedral Assembly with Nursery and Pre-Prep, Speaker, TBC

9.15 - 9.45: Parents are welcome to join us for coffee and refreshments in the Priory Room following the assembly

ALL DAY: Individual pupil photos - Please ensure your child is smartly dressed in full uniform and brings their sports kit with them if they have Games during the day.

SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER

9.30am - 12.00pm: Whole School Opening Morning

School Clubs Timetable

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mandarin Rec - Form 2 3.30 - 4.15pm Form 1 Classroom	Multi Sports Rec - Form 4 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Chess Forms 1 & 2 3.30 - 4.30pm Form 1 Classroom	Rugby Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Greek Club Forms 7 & 8 4.15 - 5.00pm
Football Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Chess Forms 3 - 7 4.15 - 5.15pm Darwin		Mandarin Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm Form 4 Classroom	
Real Tennis Forms 5 - 8 4.15 - 5.45pm Real Tennis	Squash Forms 5 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm Squash Court		Little Musketeers Rec - Form 2 3.30 - 4.15pm Squash Court	
			Little Musketeers Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm Squash Court	

Upcoming Events



Nursery & Pre-Prep Cathedral Assembly

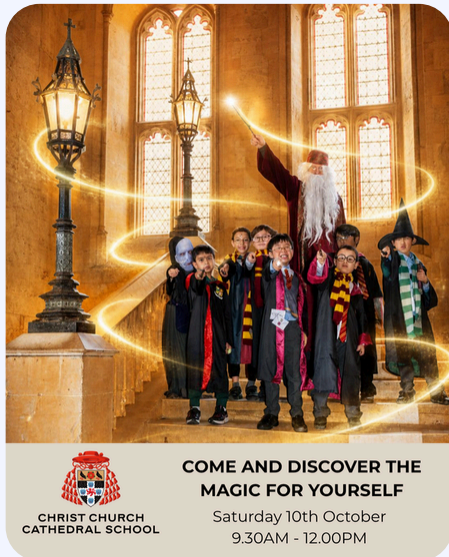
Friday 9th October

8.45am

Christ Church Cathedral

We are looking forward to the Nursery and Pre-Prep children joining us for Cathedral Assembly. As always, all parents are welcome to attend the service and join us in the Priory Room for refreshments afterwards.

On Friday SPLAAT will be in school to take individual pupil photos. Please ensure your child is smartly dressed in full uniform and brings their sports kit with them if they have Games during the day.



Whole School Open Morning

Saturday 10th October

9.30am - 12.00pm

CCCS

Come and discover the magic of Christ Church Cathedral School for yourself at our Open Morning on Saturday 10th October.

Prepare to be spellbound as you enjoy a tour of our grounds, meet our staff and chat with our pupils.

Register your place today [here](#).



Nursery Stay & Play

Wednesday 14th October

9.30 - 11.30am

CCCS Nursery

**Curious minds lead to big adventures...
And that's what makes our Nursery so special!**

Our Stay & Play sessions offer a nurturing environment where children can make new friends, learn through play and follow their curiosity.

Come and discover for yourself why families trust us to start their little one's school adventure!

To book your place, simply [click here](#).

Appointment of Interim Head



We are delighted to announce the appointment, subject to statutory pre-employment checks, of Mr Stephen Jones as Interim Head of Christ Church Cathedral School. He will take up the role on 1 January 2027 and will hold the post until the newly-appointed permanent Head is in place.

A graduate of Grey College, Durham with postgraduate qualifications in both Philosophy and Mathematics, Stephen has extensive teaching experience, most recently as Warden (Head) of St Edward's School, Oxford, Head of Dover College, Housemaster at Radley College, and Head of Maths at Berkhamsted School. Since leaving St Edward's, Stephen has undertaken several interim roles, including that of Principal of Junhwa International School in Zhejiang Province, China. He is also a Governor of the Rugby School Group.

Stephen is no stranger to Christ Church Cathedral School, having served as one of our Advisory Governors since 2012. He is a tireless advocate for the school: he understands its uniqueness, and knows the independent school sector through and through. Stephen lives locally, and Richard Murray will therefore be able to hand over to him before he retires. Stephen plans to be present in school on a number of occasions this term, and is very much looking forward to meeting and building relationships with parents. He has strong connections with leading senior schools and so is well-placed to help pupils gain senior school entry.

The Sub Dean and Vice-chair of the Governing Committee, Canon Peter Moger, said: 'I am absolutely delighted that Stephen has agreed to step into this role. He brings an enviable wealth of experience and already has a deep knowledge and understanding of our School. I am very much looking forward to working with him.'

Nursery storytime goes full circle around europe

Our Monday morning reader is...



With Mr Murray with the Choristers in the USA, we suddenly had a prize slot open for a Monday morning reader in the Nursery. The hot seat was eagerly taken by Madame Loyer, who came and shared a story that she used to read to her boys. The children were captivated as Madame Loyer read the story, in English on this occasion. The youngest member of school was particularly enamoured with the story and Madame Loyer. She took the book and eagerly retold it back to Madame Loyer and then promised her a picture of the wolf.

Please come and read to the Nursery children again soon.

Helen Backus

From bonjour to hallo

During Friday breaktime we welcomed Hugo to the Nursery to share two tortes in German. The children listened attentively whilst Hugo read in German and then translated the story as he read. One of the children whose father speaks German was particularly delighted with this special experience. 'My papa speaks deutch,' he proudly told us.

Helen Backus



Christ Church Meadow Explorations



Thursday was a beautiful morning for the Nursery children's first exploration around Lime Walk. With the spirit in the group high, the children were delighted to encounter the Head Gardener's John Deere 'tractor.' The children were excited to show just how child sized it is, so we had our photograph taken with it. Next time we must ask Mr Steve if he can join us in a picture.

We were greeted by not cows but geese on the Meadow. What a perfect spot to share 'Old MacDonald had a farm.' Not forgetting it was National Poetry day the children enjoyed a snack with a collection of poems including a seasonal one about the changeable weather. Our final landmark was the huge willow tree. Its majestic branches enclosing the children's games. What a memorable adventure that brought many smiles to the faces of passing visitors as we passed the Meadow Building and the memorial gardens on our way back to school.

Helen Backus



Pre-Prep go bonkers for conkers!



The gauntlet was truly thrown down in Pre-Prep this week, as Mr Robards challenged the children to collect 1,000 conkers! Resolute in their collective aim, Pre-Prep marched across Christ Church Meadow, with determination writ large on their faces. As we arrived at the fabled unharvested trees (location classified), we were met with a vast carpet of glistening conkers, just waiting to be gathered. When the starting whistle blew, our busy band of hunters went to work with a fervour usually reserved for a chocolate factory! As the collecting sacks began to bulge at the seams, the long-horned cattle on the meadow gazed on in wonder. On returning to school, we realised that such was the extraordinary weight of our swag, that our trolley had in fact broken under the colossal strain. A timely reminder to never set Pre-Prep a challenge that you may live to regret!

Tom Robards

Cogges Manor Farm – Victorian Time Travel

Our Pre-Prep children stepped back in time this week as they travelled to Cogges Manor Farm for a fascinating day of Victorian life!

We began our day by learning that Joseph, a Victorian farmer, lived at Cogges with his wife, Elizabeth, and their eight children. With such a large family, there was certainly plenty of work to be done around the farm!



Our first activity took us into the old farmhouse kitchen, where we explored the traditional cast-iron kettle, oven range and stove. The children discovered that cast iron was particularly useful because it holds and insulates heat. We then became Victorian bakers and made Welsh cakes for afternoon tea. We mixed flour, sugar, milk, margarine, mixed spice, currants and raisins before kneading the mixture into dough. We then flattened it with our fingers, cut out circles and cooked them on the old stove. Along the way, we discovered where Victorian families would get their ingredients. The farm's cows provided milk, which could be churned into butter, while wheat could be turned into flour. Sugar was very expensive and was not produced on the farm, so it had to be bought at the market and kept safely under lock and key. Luckily, the farm also kept bees, meaning honey could be used instead!

We next visited the parlour, where afternoon tea would be eaten at 3 O'clock. We explored the furniture, tea set and Victorian games. We also visited the pantry, which was rather like a Victorian refrigerator! It was wonderfully cold inside and was used to store vegetables, eggs, spices and dried fruit. Meat such as ham and bacon was kept in the cold room and preserved with salt.

We climbed some wonderfully rickety, winding stairs to explore the bedrooms. The children discovered that one room had once been used as a school dormitory, complete with old-fashioned slates and desks. Another bedroom showed us what Victorian life was really like at bedtime. We saw an oil lamp, a fireplace, an old hot-water bottle, an eiderdown and even a chamber pot. The children learned that they would have been responsible for filling their own hot-water bottle before bed and carefully emptying and washing the chamber pot each morning!

Before lunch, we walked around the house to the back kitchen, or wet room, to experience Victorian laundry day. The Victorians were developing a greater understanding of sanitation and the importance of clean water, particularly because diseases such as cholera could spread through contaminated water. Laundry was a huge weekly task, and Monday was traditionally washing day. The children compared modern washing detergent with carbolic soap, which had to be grated before it could be used. They then added it to a large tub called a dolly tub, plunged the clothes with a traditional posser and finally used a mangle to squeeze out the water. It was certainly much harder work than putting clothes into a washing machine!

After lunch, we headed into the barn to learn about the crops grown on the farm. We investigated barley, oats and wheat, discovering that barley could be used to brew beer, oats were used for foods such as porridge and flapjacks, and wheat was ground into flour. The children had a go at threshing wheat with a traditional flail, just as people would have done before mechanical threshing machines were invented. We then separated the wheat from the lighter chaff by blowing it across a plate. The chaff would have been collected and used as food for the horses. We also tried grinding wheat into flour using stones. This was hard work and gave us a real appreciation for just how much effort went into producing food before modern machinery!



Of course, no visit to Cogges would be complete without meeting the animals! We saw Shetland ponies, turkeys, guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens, ducks, goats and sheep. The children particularly enjoyed feeding the Pygmy goats (Hop, Barley and Rye), as well as meeting some very young Welsh sheep, Aled and Owain. We also discovered the larger goats, who had wonderfully long ears! We wandered through the kitchen garden, past the model honey-bee hive, and visited the Victorian privy before heading into the orchard, where we spotted apple, pear and cherry trees.

After a very busy day of Victorian adventures, we finished with some time in the adventure playground. It was a wonderful day of learning, exploring and getting our hands dirty, and the children did a fantastic job of immersing themselves in Victorian life. They came away with a much greater understanding of how different everyday life was over 100 years ago, and perhaps a new appreciation for washing machines, refrigerators and hot running water!

Molly Hopkinson-Woolley



[Click here for more photos](#)

Forms 3 and 4 return from Hill End triumphant!



Dear Emperor John,

Thank you so much for teaching lots of history about the Romans and the Celts. We hadn't learnt about Boudicca and the Iceni tribe yet!

We really enjoyed getting dressed up and using props.

We loved finding out how different people fought, especially the Roman testudo! It was really fun doing the intense training!

The Iceni loved finding secret weapons and having face and hair paint to make us look scary!

We loved being in the woodland and learning axe throwing, javelin throwing and archery.

Thank you for letting us handle your priceless artefacts. We enjoyed holding the heavy lead and the letter seals. The helmet and the armour was really interesting and we loved seeing Sebastian look so cool as the Roman centurion!

It was really funny when you showed us how the Romans cleaned their bottoms!

We loved trying to work together, having battles and protecting Boudicca and our general.

THAAAAAAAANK YOOOOOOOOOU!!!!!! Hill End was excellent!

From
Forms 3 and 4

Chess Club Champions

On 28th September eight boys from Summer Fields School visited for a friendly Under 12 chess match against CCCS. The aim was to provide experience of competitive chess without the pressure of league or tournament play. A wide range of age groups was therefore represented on both sides.

The teams were well matched and all games were hard fought, although CCCS eventually emerged victorious, winning by five games to three. Congratulations to all boys who participated and played so well in the match

This was the first inter school chess match for CCCS for many years, and it is now hoped that opportunities to play against other schools will arise.

Richard Dodd



Bikeability



We were delighted to have our Bikeability Course running early this year, as it means that more of our pupils are safer on the Road. OCC offers to deliver the Bikeability Course, levels 1 and 2, to boys aged over 9 years old, in Forms 5 to 8.

After going over simple instructions in the playground, the 12 boys and their instructors went onto busier roads in Oxford. Well done to our CCCS boys for becoming better and safer cyclists!

Gentle reminder

We expect all boys cycling to school to be wearing a helmet, a hi-Vis jacket and have some lights, ready to use when the days become shorter.

Sophie Loyer



CCCS Sports - Rugby Ruck

CCCS v MCS (Form 3)



The Form 3's played their first ever tag rugby fixture on Wednesday. They came up against two teams from MCS, so actually got to play games during the afternoon.

After working hard in the previous few weeks' games lessons the boys were able to showcase some of the skills and knowledge they had learnt. Getting in a strong defensive line, tagging opponents with the ball and running forwards when in possession.

The first game was a tight contest with both teams finding space and scoring tries. Jason, Enzo and Abraham all went over for CCCS who ended up winning 4-3 with the final play of the game.

The second game was tougher and our opponents were able to repel our waves of attack and also then find gaps to exploit in our defence. However, Sam, Dougie, Harvey and Thomas all played their part in organising the defence and making some last ditch tags. Although we were narrowly beaten, it was an incredible effort from our boys in their first ever game representing CCCS.

Well done to all the boys involved.

Dan Pear

CCCS v MCS (U9)

On Tuesday, our U9 contact team played their first fixture of the year against MCS. Unfortunately, due to the ground being too hard, the boys had to play tag instead, but it still proved to be a very competitive and enjoyable fixture. The boys started slightly rusty and went into halftime trailing 5–2. However, after finding their rhythm, they produced a fantastic second half performance, showing great determination and teamwork to fight their way back into the match. The match finished 6–6, a brilliant result and a fantastic first fixture of the season for the boys.

Finlay Boarder

CCCS v MCS (Form 5)

On Wednesday, our Form 5 rugby team came upon a strong and skilful MCS team of both Forms 5 and 6. Although the difference in age, our boys put in a great effort, using skills learnt in previous games sessions to their advantage. A slow start for CCCS put our boys slightly behind the 8 ball, which soon changed towards the end of the first half. With a strong chat at half time, our start to the second half was unbelievably strong. Unfortunately the boys slightly dropped off which allowed MCS to catch a last-minute try to win a very close game of 5-4!

Tom Gordon



CCCS v MCS (Form 6)

On Wednesday, the Form 6 boys put on a dominant performance against MCS. Captain Andy started the game well for CCCS by jumping on a loose ball and scoring a runaway try on the first play. The boys worked well as a team in defence, suffocating MCS's attack and not allowing them any space. Mr Harrison's refereeing masterclass was a lot stricter on our boys in the second half, but that didn't stop Sooyeon from scoring another few tries. Man of the match was Giorgio, who scored two solo tries, despite the fact that he has only played rugby for a few weeks. It's a great start to the year from this team, and their continued effort in training is sure to benefit them in their fixtures.

Toby Rowland



REAL TENNIS

OPEN DAY

Try the original racquet sport at Oxford's oldest sporting venue

SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER | 10AM - 5PM

OXFORD REAL TENNIS CLUB | MERTON STREET



***PARENT
INVITATION***

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BEGINNERS
WELCOME



EQUIPMENT
PROVIDED



COME READY
FOR A GAME!



School Photobook



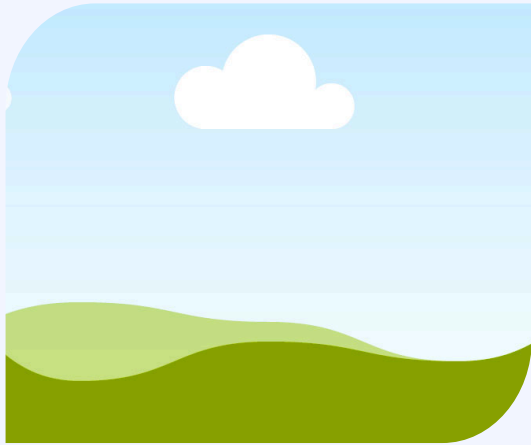
Storytime in
Nursery



Nursery & Pre-
Prep explore
Christ Church



School Photobook



Pre-Prep
visit Cogges
Manor Farm



School Photobook

Hill End
2026



[Click here to view the Hill End photo album](#)



Let battle commence!

School Photobook

Cathedral Choir Tour USA

As our Cathedral Choristers prepare for their final two shows in New York this weekend, here are some highlights from their tour. We can't wait to hear all about it when they get back!



Incase you missed last week's live Evensong from Washington National Cathedral, you can [watch it here](#).



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.

