



Christ Church Cathedral School News

9th October 2026



Dear Parents,

It's been lovely to be back at School again following my visit to the United States. Everything looks smaller! The buildings seem very low, the plates of food minimalist and the cars resemble vehicles from Toy Town. But it's home and it's lovely to be surrounded again by our wonderful pupils, staff and parents.

I particularly enjoyed Cathedral Assembly today at which we had Pre-Prep and Nursery in attendance. I mentioned that my son had a pet which he kept in a glass cage. I asked the congregation what sort of pet they thought it was. One person suggested that it might be a tarantula – I was relieved to be able to say that they were wrong. Another suggested that it might be a giraffe. I know for certain that my son's room would not fit such a creature. In fact the answer was a snake. The reason why I mentioned this was because it is very close to Saint Michaels Day - the Michaelmas after which this term is traditionally known. In the colourful window of the North Transept of the Cathedral is a beautiful depiction of the moment when Saint Michael defeats the serpent and I was able to tell the pupils that it was important for them, in their lives, to try also to defeat serpents, to defeat evil whether enacted by others or perhaps more importantly, by themselves. I asked if any of them would admit to having done anything naughty in their lives. Immediately a few hands shot up but, almost as quickly, the hands were withdrawn when the implications of the question became apparent! I was on the verge of having to ask the parents for any suggestions when a couple of brave pupils volunteered. You will be relieved to hear that the naughtiest thing that any of our pupils admitted to having done was letting off a party popper at an unexpected time! I'm not sure on the evidence of this survey, that CCCS this can be described as a crime black spot!

Thank you so much to all those people who have agreed to their sons coming into School tomorrow to help with the Open Morning. This afternoon I took a trip round the school to check that everything was in order and I was struck again by what an exciting place the School is. The classrooms are full of colour and life, the teachers are exceptional in their energy, engagement and ability and the pupils so polite and enthusiastic. Sadly, I don't have any more children of my own to send here, but I'm not surprised that my sons flourished here and look back at their time at the school with such affection. Indeed one of my sons asked me a little while ago what my biggest regret in life was. I'm not sure I gave him a very good answer. In turn, I asked him what his was and he said "Coming to the end of my time at Christ Church!"

It's come to that time of the year when my diary is busy with parents coming to talk to me about future schools. It is one of the most important aspects of a school like Christ Church that we are able to talk through with parents the schools that they should go to after Christ Church. We are so fortunate in England in having the greatest schools in the world and schools which are of such variety. There is, therefore, as I always say, a School which is perfect for everyone and finding that school has always been one of the favourite aspects of my job. Of course we are so lucky that Stephen Jones will be with us next term as his contacts with senior schools are second to none. There can be very few people who know their way around senior schools better than Stephen.

As you know, one of my favourite parts of the day is when I eat with the pupils. Today I went and obtained my food and set it down quietly on a table on which there were already a collection of pupils. I carefully set down the knife and fork and sat down. Without looking up, the boy next to me said "I knew it would be you without even looking." I asked why. He said "It had an atmosphere of you." I asked him what characterised an atmosphere of me. He attempted to explain. "When it's Madame Loyer you hear a "Bonjour!" and everybody else says 'Hello!' before they sit down but you sit down first, quietly and then ask a question!" I'm always impressed by how much children know about us and how acute their observations often are!

Richard Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar

Monday 12th October - Sunday 18th October

MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

8.45 - 11.05: Jo Marsh - Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (WWH)

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER

2.10 - 3.55pm: Form 3 Tag Rugby Tournament - Home

2.10 - 3.55pm: Form 4 Rugby v Cokethorpe - Home

4.30 - 7.30pm: Pre-Prep Parents' Evening

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER

9.30 - 11.30am: Nursery Stay & Play

2.30 - 4.10pm: Forms 7&8 Rugby v Ashfold – Home

2.30 - 4.30pm: Forms 5 & 6 Rugby v Cokethorpe – Away

4.30 - 5.30pm: Pre-Prep Information Evening for Upper Nursery

THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER

8.45 - 9.15am: Cathedral Assembly, Speaker, Professor Helen Moore, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford

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

2.00 - 3.00pm: Nursery & Pre-Prep Harvest Festival (Christ Church Cathedral)

Kindly note, that there will be no After School Care for Nursery and Pre-Prep children. Please collect your child from the Chapter House following the Harvest Festival celebration.

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 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 children's school adventure!

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



Pre-Prep Information Evening

(Upper Nursery Parents)

Wednesday 14th October

4.30 - 5.30pm

CCCS

Upper Nursery parents are invited to attend this discovery evening to learn more about life in Pre-Prep. This is the perfect opportunity to meet the Pre-Prep staff and ask any questions you may have about the transition from Nursery to Pre-Prep.



Nursery & Pre-Prep Harvest Festival

Friday 16th October

2.00 - 3.00pm

Christ Church Cathedral

Parents are welcome to join the Nursery and Pre-Prep children as they celebrate Harvest Festival at the Cathedral.

Following the service, please join us in the Chapter House for refreshments.

Kindly note, there will be no After School Care for the Nursery or Pre-Prep children, so please collect your child from the Chapter House. Thank you.

'Bistromathics' or just making a cup of tea in the Nursery?



It has been fascinating to watch the Nursery children this week engage in a new role play area in the 'Meeting Room.' We have introduced the area to help to develop the children's language skills, focusing on the familiar setting of a kitchen and ready to serve pasta and pizza with a cup of tea. Listening to the children as they seat themselves at the table, we have heard familiar games of families preparing food and eating together. The area is still in its infancy, but already we are seeing new engagements and conversations.

Many of the older boys have been joining us first thing in the morning and observing these encounters. At times, the children have every item on the table, someone answers a telephone and another child is included in the game, food is prepared, tea poured, pieces of pasta transferred between bowls and overall, the communication between the participants seems at best chaotic - despite the learning which is clearly going on. I discussed with the older boys that their play, especially as a 'birds eye view' reminded me of 'Bistormathics,' a fictional, powerful computational and propulsion force introduced in chapter 7 of Douglas Adams novel 'Life, the Universe and Everything.' There was much sighing at this reference, a lot of thinking and a recollection of what I was talking about.

I think that when we often look at small children's games, we are amazed at the multiple layers of their games. Observing the children will help us to gather samples of their language, to observe their understanding of everyday activities and by changing the props or provocations for play we will be able to develop and enrich their games. We can also add descriptive commentary or 'sportscasting' to develop phrases, help the children to share and take turns, developing connection with their new peers in the Nursery.

Helen Backus

Reception Churn their way to success

Following our recent trip to Cogges Manor Farm, we were excited to bring our learning about traditional farming back into the classroom. During our visit, we explored the Victorian dairy and discovered how butter was made in the past. We were then inspired to have a go ourselves!

Though in theory simple, it took us three attempts to make butter! On our first attempt, UHT cream did not split. On our second attempt, we did not have enough muscle power, but on our third attempt, we had success using a heavy duty KitchenAid.

This clearly was my intention, as it taught the children about dealing with disappointment and built their resilience as we kept going until we succeeded!

The children thoroughly enjoyed making their own butter, taking turns to shake and mix the cream, whilst watching carefully as it changed. This provided a wonderful opportunity to talk about different states of matter and observe how the cream transformed as we worked with it.

To link our learning with our colour of the week, Green, we added fresh basil to half of our butter. The children enjoyed smelling and tasting the basil and discussing how herbs can be used in cooking to add different flavours and depth.

This hands-on experience supported a range of EYFS learning and development areas, particularly Understanding the World, as the children explored changes in materials and made connections between their visit to the farm and life in the past. It also supported Communication and Language, as the children learned new vocabulary and talked about what they could see, smell, and taste. Through making and tasting our butter, the children also developed their Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development as they took turns, worked together and followed the steps of a simple process.

It was a wonderful example of how a trip can inspire further learning back in the classroom, and it cemented our belief that impactful local visits really enrich and enhance the children's learning.

Miles Berry



Little People, Big Dreams at Woodland School

It was a case of 'Little People, Big Dreams' for our Pre-Prep children this week at Woodland School. We talked about habitats and set the children a mission to build miniature homes in the woods using natural materials for model people to live in. They were asked to use their imaginations, but to consider shelter, comfort, food, safety, leisure, and somewhere to sleep. The results were fantastic, with bespoke dwellings popping up around the woods, complete with cooking areas, playgrounds, splendid front doors, and the finest feather beds in Oxford!

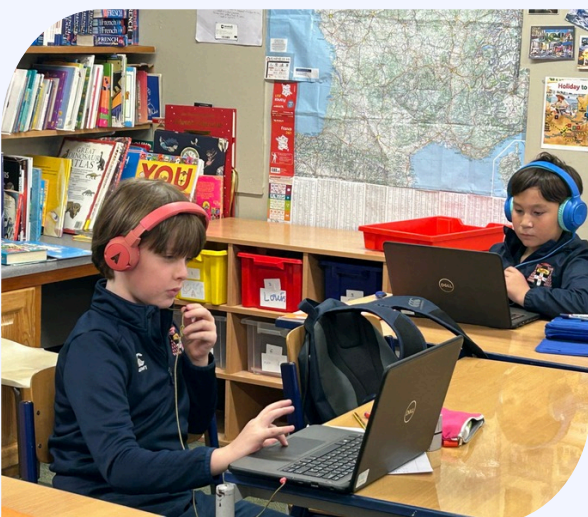
Tom Robards



Language learning in action!

Form 5 boys were deep in concentration when using laptops to complete individualised listening, reading and speaking tasks in French. They love being able to work at their own pace, having a different focus! Language learning isn't all about grammar!

Sophie Loyer



Walking through time in Silchester



Leaves turn early these days and swallows may linger; but you know autumn is truly come when you read about Form 7's trip to Reading Museum and Silchester. Once again Guja Bandini of the museum's education staff gave us an overview of the Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum* with the aid of the museums' splendid model; and she explained, and let us handle, a selection of the many artefacts from the town, including a gritty mortar, beautiful lamps, oyster shells, pottery shiny red and greyly dull, knife, strigil, and a delightful toy-size amphora. We then hared about the Silchester Gallery in a hunt for answers to such questions as *How many legs has the Silchester Horse?*

Afterwards we had time to visit the replica Bayeux Tapestry (which, paradoxically, is now awkwardly crowded since the real one came to Britain; but do take your sons back to revisit at leisure when the fuss has died down).

And then to Silchester to walk around the northern half of the 3rd century walls of flint and limestone, and to stage our annual gladiatorial mimes in the amphitheatre where thousands once cheered and yelled at even more savage doings.

Altogether a worthwhile day – helped by the kindness of the gods of traffic and weather.

Nicholas Richards



Grandmaster in the making

Last Saturday, Arlo (F4) competed in the 10th Swindon FIDE Rapidplay U1600 chess tournament. The competition is open to players with a rating under 1600 FIDE.

Arlo put on an extraordinary performance across six games against opponents of all ages. Beating a number of seasoned players, all of whom are rated 3-400 higher than him, Arlo ranked sixth out of 44 players. As a result, his own rating will go up to 1300+ which he is very excited about!

And that's not all - Arlo also took home the "Rating Prize" which is awarded to players who excel beyond their rating. What a formidable achievement!

Here is a photo of Arlo, standing proudly with Grandmaster Pete Wells who competed in the Open Section.

Well done Arlo, we are very proud of you!



Courtesy of Mr.Fetiveau

Cathedral Choir's 500th Anniversary Tour to USA



The cathedral choristers have returned from nearly two weeks on tour in the USA, celebrating 500 years of music-making in a series of unforgettable locations. Beginning in the Midwest with a concert at St Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Minneapolis, the choir has focused on repertoire connected to Christ Church; from pieces by John Tavener (the first 'Informator Choristarum' at the cathedral) to music by living composers like Errollyn Wallen (Master of the King's Music), via Harris, Harwood and of course our own ex-chorister William Walton.

There were some exciting collaborations, including a joint evensong with the choir of Washington National Cathedral and a concert with the musicians of St Paul's, Harvard Square in Boston - America's only Catholic boys' choir school. The focus of the final leg of the tour was the US premiere of 'The Shadow of the Sun', a new cantata commissioned from Nico Muhly which received its US premiere at a performance in Princeton... ready for a second outing at Carnegie Hall three days later. The choir was greeted with such warmth at every venue, with standing ovations from audiences and some memorable performances for alumni, too.

The choristers were very fortunate to be invited to Reservoir Studios in Manhattan, where they were able to compose and even make some of their own piano recordings in a space that has hosted Mariah Carey, and on equipment once used by Miles Davis. There was time for some memorable sight-seeing, including the Lincoln Center and Times Square in New York - not to mention the clearest, sunny day at the top of the Empire State Building. Mr Murray, Mr Robson and I were immensely proud of the boys' musicianship throughout, and hope that this 500th anniversary tour sets the stage for another half-century of magnificent music-making at Christ Church!

Sophie Biddell

CCCS Sports - Rugby Ruck

CCCS v MCS



On Monday, our Form 7/8 contact rugby team came up against MCS in their first semi-contact match of the season. The boys played with a fantastic amount of effort and enjoyment throughout and showed excellent communication as a team. This was particularly evident in their support play, with the boys working well together to create space and to score a number of tries. The second half was even more positive, as they quickly organised their attacking and defensive structures and applied increasing pressure to the MCS team. Overall, it was a very positive fixture, with the boys coming away with a well-deserved win. A special shoutout goes to Ray, who made some incredible runs and showed excellent support play to score some brilliant tries!

Tom Gordon

On Monday, some of the other Form 7 and 8 boys played a touch rugby fixture against MCS at the beautiful Merton Field. It was a valuable learning experience for the team, who have shown clear improvement since the start of the year. Defensively, the boys worked hard and did an excellent job of closing down the middle of the field, allowing very little space for the opposition to break through. However, when MCS moved the ball out wide, their speed proved difficult for our boys to contain. In attack, we worked hard to make progress through the middle and also found success when a few quick passes created space on the outside. Harry scored an excellent try after racing down the line before calmly converting his own score. Jaden also showed great determination, slipping past multiple touches to score several tries of his own. Overall, the boys are still developing and learning, but there were plenty of positive signs to take from the game. With their continued effort and teamwork, we look forward to seeing further improvement in the next match.

Toby Rowland

On Monday, the U12/U13 B team hosted MCS at home for two thrilling games of rugby. The first 15 minute game the boys played really well and managed to get the win 2-0 which was a great effort. Shoutout to Harry X for an outstanding try running down the side-line, and he also converted it! However this only happened because of the overall team effort by spreading out, catching and passing which is what the boys have been practising in training over the past couple of weeks. The second game the boys fell short to another MCS team, losing 2-1, however they still played outstanding and are improving out of sight. They just need to learnt to spread out a little more and they will be a very tough team to beat. Shoutout to Soori who was too quick for his opponents and also scored a nice try running down the side-line.

Charlie Morgan



CCCS Sports - Rugby Ruck

Ashfold v CCCS

On Tuesday, the Form 3 boys took the long bus trip into the countryside to play Ashfold. Even though they have only recently started playing rugby, their effort was exceptional, diving around to make tags and showing great determination throughout the game. Their defence was solid, with the boys occasionally forcing their opponents to turn over the ball through the pressure they applied. With tries from Enzo and Harvey, their attack is also continuing to improve, with the boys stringing together some good passes and running straight. With their constant improvement in both games and training, the boys are sure to pick up some wins in no time.

Toby Rowland

Oratory Prep v CCCS

On Wednesday afternoon the Under 11's travelled to Oratory Prep School for a thrilling game of touch rugby. Despite the surprisingly cold weather, the boys were ready to go and give it their best. Oratory came out all guns blazing and scored three tries to start the game off, however, the CCCS boys didn't drop their heads, with Andy and Sooyeon both scoring tries with their brilliant footwork and speed. The score at halftime was 4-2 to Oratory, however, the boys and coaches were very confident they could get the job done in the second half. The boys defensive effort throughout the whole game was amazing considering how fast some of the Oratory players were. Daniel's quick passes kept the opposition on the back foot, and special shoutout to Alexey whose dummy pass tricked the whole Oratory team and sent them flying up! Andy and Sooyeon once again delivered, scoring another try each, both of which were full field tries and were great to watch. Despite an excellent effort in the second half, they just fell short of the win, but it was a very valuable learning of experience as they were reminded that when you spread out, pass at the right time and run straight, you will score tries!

Charlie Morgan

On Wednesday, Forms 7 and 8 played their second fixture of the week, looking to improve on their result earlier in the week against Oratory Prep. The game started at a fast pace, with both teams' defenders rushing out of the line and allowing the attackers very little time and space. Despite the strong defensive pressure, Oratory scored a number of early tries. However, Gustav provided a spark on the wing, using his impressive pace to break through the defence and score his first of two almost identical tries. Harry also continued his strong form, showing excellent footwork as he weaved through the defence to score a well-deserved double. Man of the Match was awarded to Max, who was outstanding in support throughout the game. He consistently provided an option for the ball carrier, often being the first receiver and moving the ball on quickly. His work rate and decision-making were excellent throughout the match.

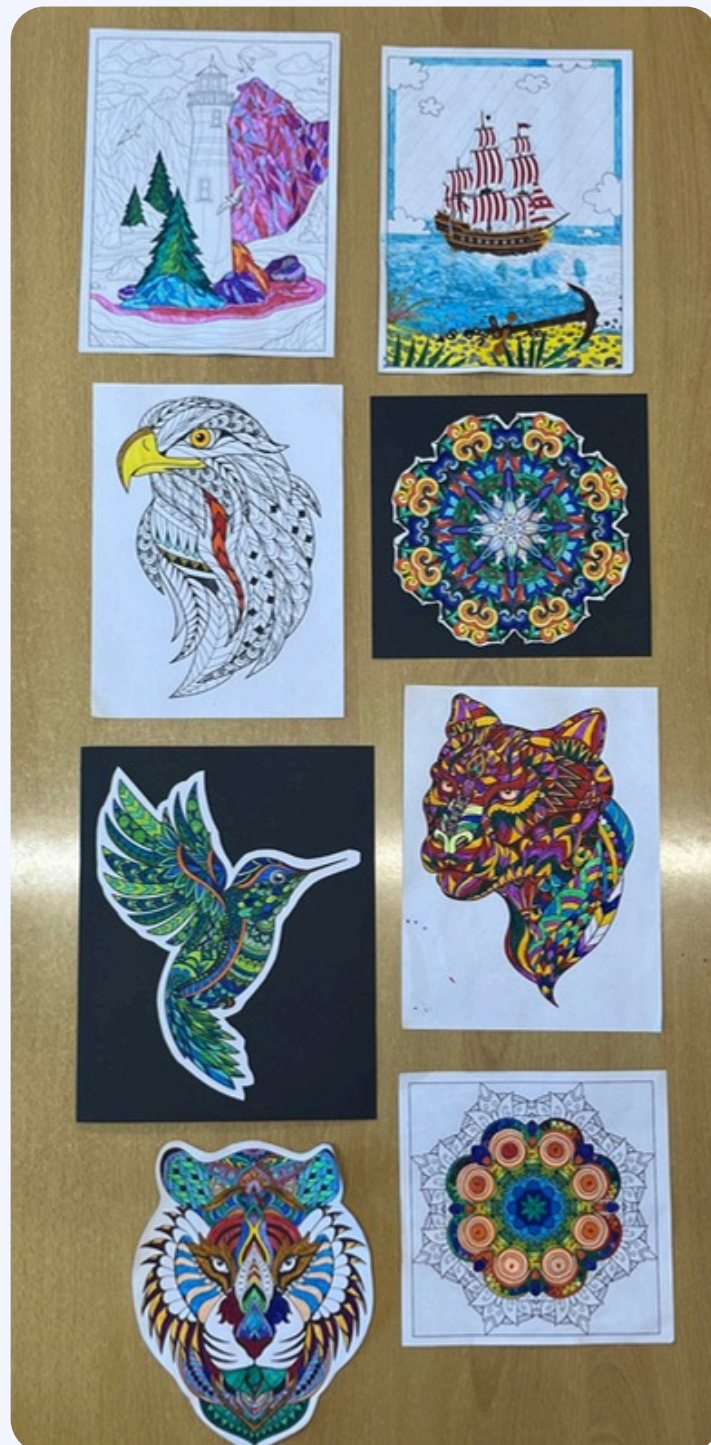
Toby Rowland

Enrichment

Art Mindfulness

This term the Art Mindfulness group have been working really hard on some incredible colouring projects. Some are finished, and others are almost finished, but the boys, as well as Mr Pear and Mrs Elias, have all been working really hard. All whilst enjoying some relaxing music and a calm end to each week.

Dan Pear



School Photobook

Nursery's woodland adventures, puddle fun and 'Bistromathics'



School Photobook



Form 7 visit
Silchester



Little People,
Big Dreams



We've added some new photos to the Hill End photo album. [Take a look 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.