



St Catherine's School & College

*Specialists in Speech, Language and
Communication Needs*

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Issue 164

13th February 2026

Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding half term, I would like to begin by offering my sincere thanks to everyone who supported us during our recent Residential Ofsted inspection. The professionalism, commitment and teamwork shown by staff, governors, students, families and our wider community were a real strength, and we are incredibly grateful for the encouragement and reassurance you gave throughout the process. We hope to receive the report early next half term, and I very much look forward to sharing it with you then.

This half term has been full of learning, creativity and memorable experiences across the school and college. Our classrooms have been alive with curiosity — from pupils exploring the Arctic and Antarctic, to older students tackling complex scientific concepts, literature studies and exam preparation. Reading, writing and communication skills have remained a strong focus, with many students showing real pride in their progress and achievements. Beyond the classroom, enrichment opportunities have continued to play an important role. Forest School sessions, educational visits, sporting activities and clubs such as Around the World have helped students build confidence, teamwork and independence. Highlights this term have included visits to Quay Arts, participation in enterprise and vocational projects, wildlife and conservation workshops, and creative work showcased through art, music and photography.

We have also been incredibly proud of the positive attitudes and resilience shown by our students. Attendance across the half term has been encouraging, and weekly celebrations have recognised kindness, effort, character and learning behaviours. These moments remind us that progress comes in many forms and every success deserves to be celebrated.

I wish you all a restful break and look forward to welcoming back residential students on Sunday 22nd February and day students back to school on Monday 23rd February.

Thank you for your continued support.

With best wishes

Sarah Thompson
Principal

COMMUNICATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to ensure that we at St Catherine's are as inclusive as possible, we are asking parents and carers to complete our communication questionnaire.

This will help us make sure that we are contacting you in a way that best suits your needs, and that important messages from us are not missed.

Thank you for taking the time to support us in improving communication between school and home.

2025-2026 TERM DATES

FEBRUARY HALF-TERM	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday 22nd February 2026 Day Students: Monday 23 th February 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 13th March 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 15th March 2026 Day Students: Monday 16 th March 2026
End of Spring term	Friday 27 th March 2026
EASTER HOLIDAY	
Start of Summer term	Boarders: Monday 13 th April 2026 Day Students: Monday 13 th April 2026
Quarter term weekend including Bank Holiday	Friday 1st May – Monday 4th May 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Tuesday morning 5th May 2026
Break up for half term holiday	Friday 22 nd May 2026
SPRING BANK HOLIDAY HALF-TERM	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday 31 st May 2026 Day Students: Monday 1 st June 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 26th June 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 28th June 2026 Day Students: Monday 29 st June 2026
End of Summer term for students	Friday 24 th July 2026
Staff Development Day	<i>Monday 27th July 2026</i>
SUMMER HOLIDAY	

2026-2027 TERM DATES

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

TERM DATES 2026 – 2027

Bank Holiday	Monday 31 st August 2026
<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Tuesday 1st September</i>
Start of Autumn term for students	Wednesday 2 nd September 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 25 th September 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 27 th September 2026 Day Students: Monday 28 th September 2026
Break up for half term holiday	Friday 16 th October 2026
OCTOBER HALF-TERM	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday evening 1 st November 2026 Monday 2 nd November 2026
Quarter term weekend	Friday 27 th November 2026
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 29 th November 2026 Day Students: Monday 30 th November 2026
End of Autumn term for students	Friday 18 th December 2026
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY	
<i>Staff Development Day</i>	<i>Monday 4th January 2027</i>
Start of Spring term for students	Tuesday 5 th January 2027
Quarter term weekend	Friday 22 nd January 2027
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 24 th January 2027 Day Students: Monday 25 th January 2027
Students break up for half term holiday	Friday 12 th February 2027
FEBRUARY HALF-TERM	
Return after half term holiday	Boarders: Sunday evening 21 st February 2027 Monday 22 nd February 2027
Quarter term weekend	Friday 12 th March 2027
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 14 th March 2027 Day Students: Monday 15 th March 2027
End of Spring term	Thursday 25 th March 2027
EASTER HOLIDAY	
Start of Summer term	Monday 12 th April 2027
Quarter term weekend including Bank Holiday	Friday 30 th April 2027
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Monday evening 3 rd May 2027 Day Students: Monday 4 th May 2027
Break up for half term holiday	Friday 28 th May 2027
SPRING BANK HOLIDAY HALF-TERM	
Return after half term holiday	Monday 7 th June 2027
Quarter term weekend	Friday 25 th June 2027 (Summer Fair)
Return after quarter term weekend	Boarders: Sunday evening 27 th June 2027 Day Students: Monday 28 th June 2027
End of Summer term for students	Friday 23 rd July 2027
<i>Staff Development Days</i>	<i>Monday 26th - Wednesday 28th July 2027</i>
SUMMER HOLIDAY	

Please note the above are based on the Isle of Wight Council Maintained Schools Holiday dates.

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

100% ATTENDANCE

Congratulations to the following students for 100% attendance this half term.

Sean
Sophia
Mia
Jamie
Halle
Eddie
Fletcher
Jaden
Sonnie
Nicholas
Charles
James

Riley
Ted
Tim
Jim
Jasmine
Luis
Kaelan
Sam
Francesco
Toby
Kayan
William
Cosmo

Brooke
Evie
Darcy
Seth
Toby
Alex
Emilia
Shaun
Edward
Bella
Maddie
Caitlin

AMAZING ATTENDANCE

Congratulations to the following students for amazing attendance this half term.

Tristan
Finley
Keagan
Holden
Olivia
Charlotte
Elliot

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

The Behaviour for Learning award has been presented to:

Burton class
Radcliffe class
Olivia
Liam

Byron
Maddie
Elliott
Fletcher

Bailey
Lukas
Sam
Maisey

BEHAVIOUR FOR CHARACTER

The Behaviour for Character award has been presented to:

Jaden
Selene
Eric

Gracie
Kristen
William

READING AWARD

Mia

PRINCIPAL'S PRAISE

Harri
Lydia

FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT

On the College's Fundamental British Values calendar, this February we have several important dates to Celebrate. We have:

Safer Internet day: we are concentrating on AI, its uses and dangers, including pictures that the students can try and work out if they are AI generated or real.

Random acts of kindness and Children's Mental health week: the students will be asked to think about what random acts of kindness they could do at college or at home, to cheer someone's day. We discussed that doing something kind for others also has a positive effect on our own mental health.

Other special days are Women and Girls in Science and Charles Darwin day.

ST CATHERINE'S ROUND UP

Martina Jelinkova has joined the team as our Director of Finance and Operations. Martina comes with a wealth of experience gained both in education and commercial settings and is settling into her role. Martina's role covers all the operational aspects of the organisation, overseeing our buildings and grounds, fundraising and marketing, IT, and HR functions as well as the finances for St Catherine's.

SCHOOL MENU

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pasta/Quorn Bolognese or Jacket Potato with choice of filling	Jumbo Sausage/Cheese & Onion Roll or Tomato Pasta	Roast Lamb/ Vegetable Burger or Jacket Potato with choice of filling	Pizza with Wedges or Tomato Pasta	Battered Cod/ Fish Fingers/ Quiche with Chips or Jacket Potato with choice of filling
Salad Bar Tuna or Mackerel	Salad Bar Cheese & Egg or Mackerel	Salad Bar Ham or Mackerel	Salad Bar Tuna or Mackerel	Salad Bar Cheese or Mackerel
Fresh Fruit Platter	Rice Pudding	Fresh Fruit Salad	Fairy Cake	Pudding of the Day

Fresh vegetables and salad are available with all main meals. Fresh fruit and yoghurt are always options for dessert.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

3rd March - Young Enterprise Isle of Wight Final at the Island Riding Centre for this year's Young Enterprise team Happy Fidgets.

18th April - Gala at Northwood House (Tickets are available now, so be sure to secure yours soon).

10th August - Wing Walk

18th August - Skydive

BLOOM CLASS

Max:

I have really enjoyed building things and learning about the tools in DT. We got to use a saw! We, of course, used it safely and learnt how to make sure we held it correctly. In History this term, we have been learning about Kings and Queens. Queen Elizabeth was the queen for a very long time! We have learned about the royal homes and what some of the jobs are that the King has to do. It's a lot! We had a visitor who came into school to talk to us about being an architect. Last term, we looked at architecture and buildings in Art and so it was great to draw and design more buildings. We put everyone's together and made a big town. It was great fun!

RADCLIFFE CLASS

Madeleine:

We have been learning about 'icebergs'. It's cold, ice. We made 'igloo, ice'. We've been learning about 'Arctic'. 'It massive ice, polar bears live, ice. White rabbit (Arctic Hare), white fox, deers (reindeers). In Art, 'We drew the plants and paint'. 'Make mushrooms, glue the glitter'. In PE 'handball, I throw the ball on the goal, it was fun'. In Maths, we are learning multiplication, 'equal and not equal' groups. In music 'we do' Boomwhackers, 'colourful'. In Chapel Landing for OT 'I did folding my clothes, fold legging'.

HOPKINS CLASS

Jim:

In Art, I have done 'starry night' made by Van Gogh. I made a starry night picture. In Maths, I have been making clocks, and telling the time, it's been fun. In English, we have been looking at Captain Scott, he wanted to be the first person to go to the South Pole, but he wasn't, he was the 2nd, he was there for 3 years and died. For PE, we have been doing circuit training and handball. We did laps of doing different moves in circuit training, in handball we practised our throws and the rules of the game. It was ok. Forest school; we spent playing games, made a fire, ate melted marshmallows and drank hot chocolate. This half term has been alright!

PACKHAM CLASS

Jaden:

I have enjoyed Music this term. We have been learning how to play the keyboard and read music. I feel my skills in handball have improved and I have liked playing the games in teams. Science has been interesting, we have learnt a lot about animals. Some things I already knew but I learnt that bats are the only flying mammal in our country. I have also learnt what cold and warm blooded means. I know reptiles are cold blooded, this means they need some heat to warm them up to eat and humans are warm blooded so we make heat ourselves. Any animals with ear holes are mammals including humans. In English, I chose to write about a Boa Constrictor. I thought about why the Great Kapok Tree was important for the Boa because it is where it sleeps on a branch and finds its food. If the tree was chopped down then the snake might be poached and die.

OLIVER CLASS

Jamie:

I have enjoyed my club this term, I have been going swimming. I have enjoyed writing about my dragon, Thunderbolt, in English. I have enjoyed PE, we have been learning about circuit training, we have been learning about doing burpees in circuit training and we have also been learning about Handball in PE too. I like speech therapy group because I've been doing decisions. In Science, I have been learning different facts about penguins which I like. I like Maths. In Art, I am making a sun like a Minecraft one. In DT, I loved making my keyring. I love ICT because I like typing.com. I love Music because I'm learning about Tina Turner and her song 'Simply The Best'.

AUSTEN CLASS

Eric:

My favourite lesson this term has been SALT and we have played Dungeons and Dragons and would like it to be a longer lesson. PE has been good and Maths has been ok. In OT, we have been going shopping and walking into town. In Science, we have learnt about creatures and where they live. I have enjoyed using my knowledge to test Mrs Williams. Music is good learning about my favourite singer.

GOLDBERG CLASS

Harri:

I have enjoyed cooking in OT, we had to make things with just potatoes and it was so much fun. I have loved Forest School this term because Alison is so chilled and we did some knife skills. I have enjoyed English and reading 'Journey to Jo'burg' and 'Holes'. We had to do diary entries for both books and I did really well with these. In PE, we have been doing Handball, it was super competitive which I liked. Maths has been relatively easy for me this term and I have enjoyed the various topics. Overall I have really enjoyed this half term and looking forward to next half term.

BURTON CLASS

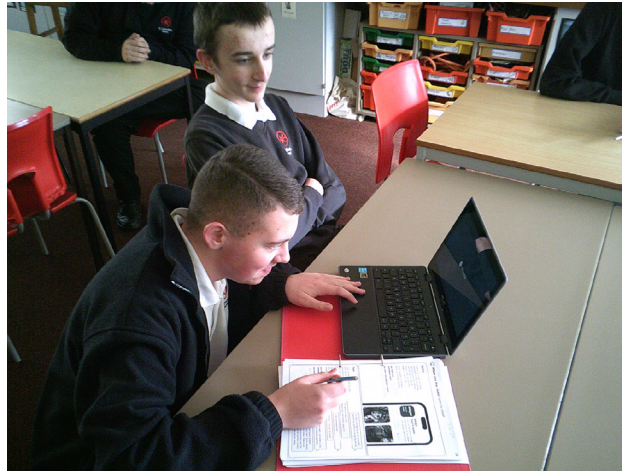
Sonnie:

We have been making a tourist information leaflet about the Thor's-day Thursday Celebrations. I have really enjoyed making the map and creating 'Dragon Uber' transport to the island. In Maths, we have been learning our times tables. I have been learning my 2s & 5s. In DT, we have been making key chains. I have designed a red and purple transformer key chain. In OT, we have been cooking and I have enjoyed using herbs. I have really enjoyed using the herbs in my tomato pasta and cooking chips. In Music, we have been listening to Blues Music and have been learning to play Blues Music on the keyboards. In Science, we have been learning about habitats. My favourite part has been learning about how plants adapt to different habitats.

NEWTON CLASS

Fletcher:

In English, we have been writing a newspaper report about Stanley from 'Holes'. In Science, we have been learning about Space. We also had a talk from Wildheart Animal Sanctuary about White Tailed Eagles... it was an absolute squawk! In Music, we have been learning about the Blues. Maths has been OK. I think we're ready for our exams. In PE, we have been doing so much stuff... badminton, dodgeball, handball. Building robots in communication group has been really interesting. We work great as a team!



BRANSON CLASS

Darcy:

We have worked hard in DT to make and finish our design movement clocks which we designed -they are all so wonderful. I'm really happy with how my Pop Art clock looks and now it's finished hanging up in my dance studio. In Science, we have been learning about space and doing some experiments with bunsen burners and cans which was really fun. In English, we have been able to write a witness account about who saw Stanley stealing the shoes in 'Holes'.

WATSON CLASS

Junior:

We have been doing Badminton with Mr Clark to practise teamwork. I enjoyed hitting the shuttlecock and photography in Art. In English, we have been finishing off 'A Christmas Carol'. I enjoyed this book as it was very Christmassy. In Science, we learnt all about The Solar System and The Big Dipper. I am really looking forward to DT next term so that I can finish making my clock. In Humanities, we have been looking at the Eco System, which I enjoyed more than Science.



6JG CLASS

Summer:

This half term I have been busy practising for a mock English exam. In OT, we went down to the Better Days Cafe this was to help with life skills and learning how to make a reservation. In food tech, this term we made our own pasta from scratch. I was surprised that it was quite easy to do. My mum also said it was very tasty.

6AMD CLASS

Charles:

This has been a busy term completing coursework for BTEC and revising for exams. With OT, we went down to the Better Days Cafe for life skills, learning to be independent in leisure time. In Vocational, we have been learning about storyboards and planning our own to make a mini film. On Safer Internet Day, we started the day with a Safer Internet Day quiz looking at aspects of AI—we did well and got most of the answers right!

6ILP CLASS

Edward:

I have worked hard this half term. I have particularly enjoyed taking part in work experience. I have been aiding some of the maintenance team as they ensure the school environment is tidy and safe. I have been painting and getting some tips to remain safe whilst using different tools. I have enjoyed going off campus and visiting the Quay Arts centre, I liked the exhibition that exhibited paintings and chicken bone sculptures. Finally, I am very proud to conclude a number of Life and Living units. With my new art unit I have been able to create interesting traditional print outcomes as well as oversized bright whole class paintings.

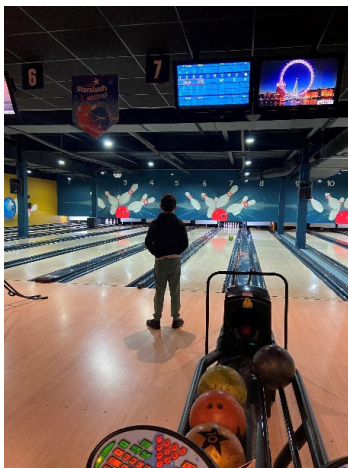
OT PROJECT

One of our students has done a brilliant job in OT creating his very own bird box! He followed the instructions, hammered and screwed it all together and even embossed his name on it. He worked with the maintenance team to choose the perfect spot and got it safely installed. We can't wait to see some little birds making it their new home—what a fantastic achievement to be proud of!



ST CHRISTOPHER'S UPDATE

This term, our students have continued to develop essential life skills that support their independence and personal growth. Emphasis has been placed on practical skills such as washing up and understanding the importance of maintaining cleanliness. Students have also been learning to organise and put away their clothes appropriately, reinforcing personal responsibility and daily routines. In addition to these life skills, students have actively participated in activities. These have included visits to the driving range, crazy golf and bowling, regular swimming lessons, and weekly football practice. The students have also been practising travel skills, successfully using the public train from Shanklin to Ryde.

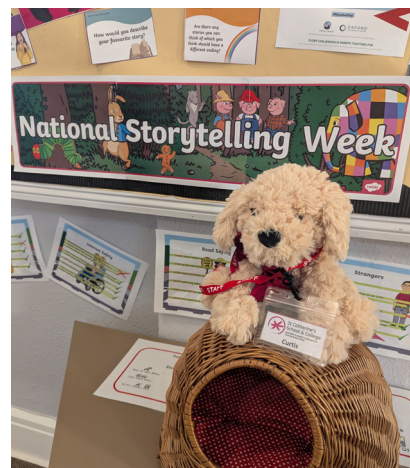


ST MARGARET'S

This term St Margaret's have been concentrating on their life skills, helping with cooking and other jobs that need to be done around the house; these include setting and clearing the table for meals, loading and unloading the dishwasher and putting things away in the correct places. Sweeping and mopping the kitchen floor and emptying the bins, these are all skills they can take with them as they move forward. They have also enjoyed going out on activities such as bowling, swimming, crazy golf and celebrating housemates' birthdays. In their down time they have enjoyed watching DVDs and some have been practising their guitar skills. Two students spent the evening at a music workshop in Newport and are looking forward to the next event. On Sunday the 8th Feb a group of students went to Slough to take part in a friendly football match with Sporting Opportunities, they all had a good time showing determination and resilience and great sportsmanship and, as always, they were a credit to the team and themselves.

MEET CURTIS – OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Curtis, our much-loved social media dog, plays a special role in sharing the life of our school with the wider community. Whether he's popping into classrooms, attending events, or joining staff and students on special days, Curtis helps capture the moments that make our school so unique. Curtis isn't just a mascot — he's our four-legged reporter, helping us celebrate achievements, showcase activities and highlight the wonderful experiences our students enjoy throughout the year.



FUNDRAISING

We have lots of exciting fundraising opportunities coming up and we'd love your support!

New for 2026 – Challenge 100

We're excited to launch Challenge 100, which can be completed at any time during the year. The aim is simple — raise £100 by doing a sponsored challenge you love. This could be running, swimming, walking, cycling, baking, or anything else that inspires you. It's flexible, fun, and open to everyone.

For more information or to get involved, please email Tanya at smitht@stcatherines.org.uk. Thank you for your continued support — every challenge and every donation makes a real difference.

St Catherine's

A registered Charity no. 288148

Recognised by the Department for Education (DfE)

Grove Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 1TT

T: 01983 852722 E: general@stcatherines.org.uk

www.stcatherines.org.uk

Fundraising Enquiries

For further information about our fundraising activities, contact our Fundraising Team on: 01983 852722 or

email: smitht@stcatherines.org.uk

August 18th – Skydive

Get ready for an adrenaline-filled adventure with purpose! On 18th August, brave fundraisers will be taking on a tandem skydive from Sandown Airport to support St Catherine's.

Whether you're an experienced thrill-seeker or ticking a bucket-list challenge off your list, this is your chance to soar 10,000ft above the Isle of Wight and make a meaningful impact. Every jump helps raise vital funds so that St Catherine's can continue providing life-changing education and therapy.

Don't miss this unforgettable experience take the leap and help change lives! Please use the link below to register any interest in the event.

<https://forms.gle/pgbyE5RKves4BhsZ9>

August 10th – Wing Walk

Ready for a sky-high challenge with heart? On 10th August, you can take part an unforgettable wing walk to support St Catherine's.

Strap yourself to the wing of a vintage biplane and soar above the Isle of Wight — facing fears, ticking off a bucket-list moment, and raising funds that help St Catherine's continue its life-changing work.

Whether you're an adventure lover or looking for a meaningful way to make a difference, this wing walk is a once-in-a-lifetime experience with impact! Please use the link below to register any interest in the event.

<https://forms.gle/umjyjD3KjCX2ba3fA>



**WINGWALK FOR
ST CATHERINE'S**



April 18th – Gala

Join us for a night to remember! On 18th April, the St Catherine's Gala returns for an elegant evening of great food, entertainment and community spirit — all to support St Catherine's.

Your ticket includes a welcome drink, a delicious three-course meal, and live entertainment, plus the chance to make a real impact for students who benefit from vital education and therapy services.

Whether you're looking for a lovely night out or a meaningful way to give back, this is the perfect way to support local children and young adults in reaching their full potential — all while enjoying an unforgettable evening.

April & May - Abseil

Join the St Catherine's Abseil challenge and test your nerve on an adrenaline-fuelled descent to raise vital funds for St Catherine's

Ready to step outside your comfort zone for something truly meaningful? Join the St Catherine's Abseil Challenge and experience the thrill of descending from new heights — all while raising vital funds for St Catherine's.

This exciting event is your chance to do something unforgettable while supporting the specialist education and therapy that helps children and young people with speech, language and communication needs thrive. Whether you're conquering a fear or simply love a challenge, ever step down makes a life-changing difference.

Be brave. Go over the edge. Make an impact.

Abseil The Spinnaker Tower for St Catherine's School



Dates available throughout April and May 2026

For more information or to book a space
please email
smiht@stcatherines.org.uk

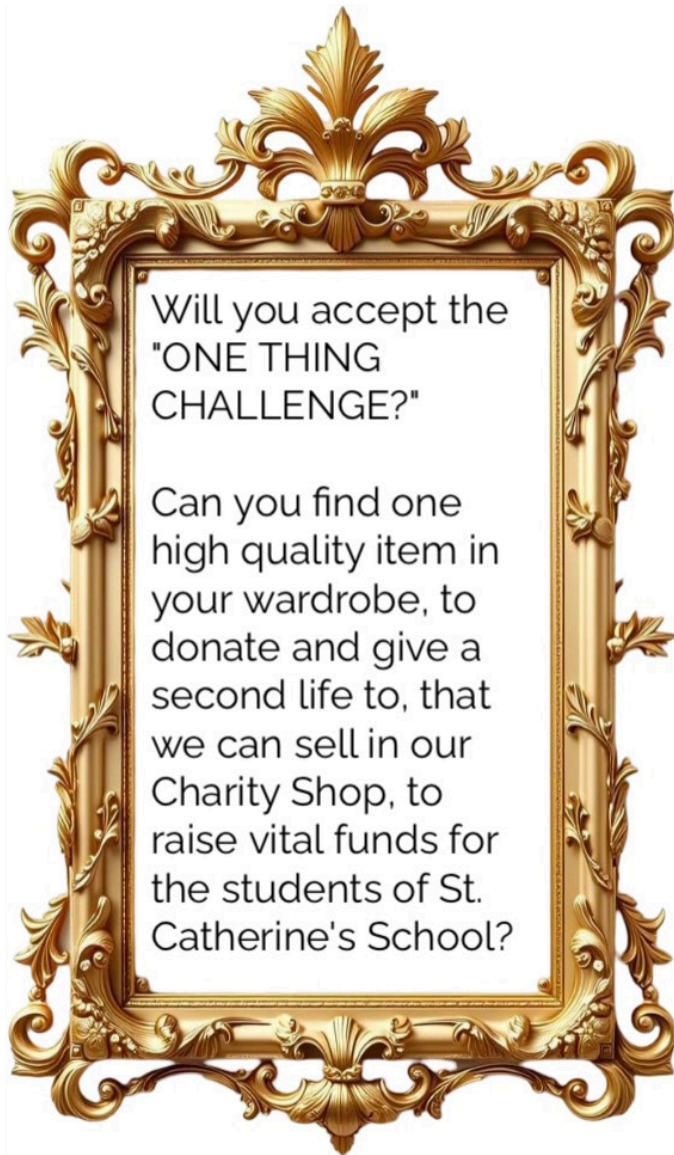
Fundraising Target of £300

ST CATHERINE'S CHARITY SHOP

We had an amazing end to 2025, and so far, 2026 looks set to be even better! Our focus is "The One Thing Challenge." Can you donate just one quality item from your wardrobe that we can sell for a good price?

This February, show the love with our "Love, NOT Landfill" Clothing Donation Drive. Any donations would be greatly appreciated, and thank you for your continued support and dedication to the students of St. Catherine's.

Love Amanda
Charity Shop Manager



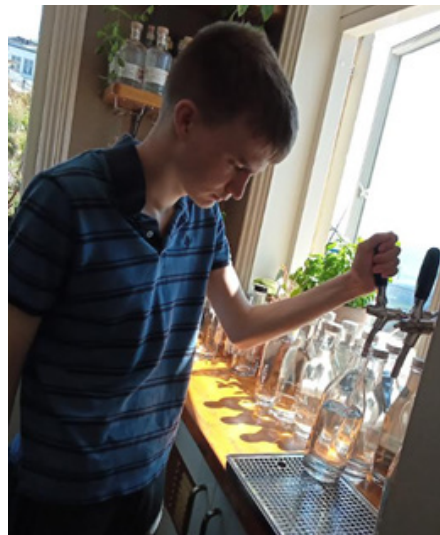
**LOVE
~~NOT~~
~~LANDFILL~~**

CAREERS – WINTER TERM

We have had the opportunity to take students to a range of work placements where they have been able to develop their skills and confidence. Since September our students have had placements in the St Catherine's Charity shop, The Limes Residential Home – laundry room, Nettlecombe Farm, Knight Tree Care, Carisbrooke Priory - Tea Room, St Catherine's Maintenance Team, St Catherine's PE Department and St Catherine's Gym and after half term we will be starting a new childcare placement as well. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Island Roads Foundation for donating a significant amount of money, as a grant, which enabled us to hire a Job Coach in April 2025 to support our students on their placements. We are also very grateful to the employers in the community for providing invaluable placements for our students. Our range of employers have included:

- St Catherine's Charity Shop
- Teams within our school (Maintenance, PE, Gym)
- The Limes Residential Home
- Nettlecombe Farm, Cottages and Fishing Lakes
- Knight Tree Care
- Carisbrooke Priory Tea Rooms
- Isle of Wight County Press
- Bliss – Hairdressing
- Sunshine Radio
- Donkey Sanctuary
- EM Cars
- Liz Earle
- The Terrace
- The Wildheart Sanctuary
- Berry Hill Nursery
- Dinosaur Isle
- The Shipwreck and Maritime Museum

Here are some photos of students, from both school and sixth form, completing tasks while on their placements:



CAREERS INFORMATION

The year 11's attended the Your Futures careers event at Medina Leisure Centre which was organised by the Solent Careers Hub and Island Futures Partnership. They were able to watch presentations from further education providers. The students also had the opportunity to talk to education providers, employers from a range of industries and organisations to inform and inspire them. Stands at the event included; The Isle of Wight Council, Mountbatten Hospice, Wight Shipyard Co, Captiva, Network Ryde, The Isle of Wight College, HTP, Brockenhurst College, to name a few. We have also had IOW college come in to do a talk in school, and the same is due to happen this month for College. We are waiting on dates from HTP to deliver a presentation as well to school and college.

Our careers department are always on the lookout for new placements in particular within the mechanics and graphics industry.

If this is something you can offer, please contact Bekki on wilsonr@stcatherines.org.uk

CAREERS GUIDANCE

1:1 Careers Guidance for Year 10s on Tuesday 03/03/26 and 10/03/26

1:1 Careers Guidance for Year 9s on Tuesday 05/05/26 and 12/05/26

Each student will have a 1:1 with an independent careers advisor on one of the above dates. The

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

9 – 15 FEBRUARY 2026

National Apprenticeship Week is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the positive impact apprenticeships have on individuals, organisations, and the wider community. At St Catherine's, we've truly enjoyed welcoming apprentices into our team. They bring enthusiasm, fresh perspectives, and a real commitment to learning, while gaining valuable hands-on experience in a supportive and nurturing environment. It's been a pleasure to watch them grow in confidence and skills, and we're proud to play a part in developing the next generation of dedicated professionals.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2026

Sarah,
Principal



St Catherine's

Specialists in Speech, Language and
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We have been fortunate to support three apprentices this year, and the impact has been significant. In particular, watching both a member of staff and a former student progress through the apprenticeship programme has been incredibly rewarding. Their development—both professionally and personally—has been clear to see, and their growing confidence has had a positive influence on the wider team.

Bringing in an external apprentice has also added real value. Their fresh perspective on our day-to-day practices has challenged us to reflect more critically on how and why decisions are made, prompting us to review processes and strengthen the way we work.

Beyond these operational gains, there is a deeper impact. Supporting apprentices reinforces our commitment to people, not just outcomes. It reminds us that the charity exists to develop skills, build confidence, and create long-term opportunities—helping individuals grow while ensuring the work we do is sustainable for the future.

Barry, Estates Manager



Employing an apprentice from the employer's position benefits St Catherine's in many ways. Oran's Maintenance apprenticeship covers many different roles from painting and decorating, carpentry and general maintenance tasks all the way through to compliance testing.

The apprentice can work effectively alongside a member of the team while assisting and learning at the same time,

This helps to increase productivity and at a lower cost to St Catherine's, we can also tailor their skills to fit the role we require.

Investing in an apprentice also improves morale amongst the staff and from an employer's perspective we can also learn new skills from what the apprentice learns at college this can also bring a fresh perspective to the way we do things.

Oran Property Maintenance Apprentice (Former Student at St Catherine's)



My name is Oran and I am currently on the property maintenance apprenticeship. I have been an apprentice for about 4-5 months now, and I am finding the journey to be quite enjoyable.

So far in this journey I've had to adapt from being a student to staff, I've picked up various skills within carpentry, painting & etc both college and on-site, and finally I've truly begun to become part of the maintenance team.

Not everything has been sunshine and rainbows, although overall I've had far more positive experiences than negative and I love the banter between myself and the team (and also I get access to the staffroom now :]).

There's much more I would say, however I'm afraid if I went into detail you'd be reading for a good 20 minutes and I've been asked to keep it short.

If you prefer hands-on work such as I do then this could be an apprenticeship to consider. You do something different each day and it is a perfect pathway into opportunities within the trade industry.

Bryony, Head of Speech and Language Therapy



St Catherine's

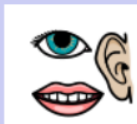
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Communication Needs
School - College - Post 19

Laura has been an active member of our team as an assistant for many years. The apprenticeship makes it possible to further build her professional skills and capacity. It is also a real benefit to the wider team, as she is able to share learnings and research from her close contacts with the university.

I'm proud that our organisation is able to support the workforce, and consequently our students, through the apprenticeship route. It enables us to build knowledge, confidence and continuity in a way that directly benefits our students and families.



Laura, Speech and Language Therapy Apprentice



St Catherine's

Specialists in Speech, Language and
Communication Needs
School - College - Post 19

Being on the speech and language therapy degree apprenticeship through Sheffield University has been a really positive experience so far. It allows me to learn on the job while also studying. Since September, I have been lucky enough to observe different sessions from therapists ranging from assessments to speech sound sessions. Having hands-on experience and observation opportunities has helped me to further develop and understand speech, language and communication needs in real, everyday situations.

Having the opportunity to access Clinical Mentoring sessions with a speech therapist has allowed me to cultivate my clinical skills and I'm constantly developing understanding of the theory behind therapy intervention. It's boosted my confidence and practical skills. Overall, it's been a really rewarding experience and has made me excited about progressing in this career.

**Susan,
Fundraising and
Marketing Manager**

Kieran has been a great addition to the team since he joined us as an admin apprentice last April. St Catherine's is always seeking opportunities to help people to develop their skills and the apprenticeship scheme is a great vehicle to do this. We benefit from the skills that Kieran is developing through his course at the Isle of Wight College, while Kieran has the opportunity to put those skills into practice during his day to day work.



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**Kieran,
Administrative
Apprentice**

I have really enjoyed my apprenticeship journey so far as an Administrative Assistant Apprentice at St Catherine's. From the beginning, I have felt welcomed and supported by the team, which has helped me settle into my role with confidence. The apprenticeship has allowed me to develop a wide range of administrative skills, including organisation, communication, and time management, while also giving me a better understanding of how a specialist school operates on a daily basis.

I am learning something new every day and appreciate the balance between practical work and developing my knowledge through the apprenticeship. It has been especially rewarding to work in an environment that has such a positive impact on pupils and their families. Overall, this experience has been both enjoyable and valuable, and it is helping me build a strong foundation for my future career.



St Catherine's

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School - College - Post 19

FEBRUARY HALF TERM-WHAT TO DO

The following pages are provided for information -
St Catherine's does not endorse any of these activities

THE WIGHT STROLLERS
panto

Robin Hood

and the Babes in the Wood

14th, 15th & 21st February

MEDINA THEATRE

ADULTS - £14.50 UNDER 14s - £10.50
Price includes £1.50 booking fee

BOX OFFICE: 01983 823884 WWW.MEDINATHEATRE.CO.UK



Isle of Wight Pottery

Starts Fri 27th Feb



Children's Pottery Club

Fridays
younger kids (5 plus) 4-5:30pm
older kids (10 plus) 6-7:30pm
during term time

£108 for 6 weeks

A fun 6-week pottery course where your child will explore;

- . wheel throwing
- . sculpting
- . slip casting
- . glazing
- . modelling making

All pottery is fired to keep forever



To book visit us at:
www.isleofwightpottery.com



VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

VENTNOR FAMILY PLAY SESSIONS

MONDAY & THURSDAY MORNINGS
(TERM TIME ONLY)

ARE YOU FREE FOR A FEW HOURS A WEEK?

VENTNOR FAMILY CENTRE

CONTACT ELOISE: eloise.preston@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk

Registered charity number 1198024

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

It's almost HALF TERM, so GO ALL IN to reading with the **IN STORY FESTIVAL**

Thurs 19 to Sat 21 February 2026

Tickets: iwstoryfestival.com or visit the Quay Arts Box Office in person.

Favourite authors, some coming to the Island for the first time, can't wait to meet you. Buy their books at the MEDINA BOOKS stall and read your way into a world of new adventures.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Key Stage One:
 Billy the Brave - Raw Theatre Arts (Thurs)
 How to Catch a Book Witch - Doppio Theatre (Fri)
 Pugs of the Frozen North - The Foundry Group (Sat)
 Don't Call Me Grumpycorn! - Sarah McIntyre (Sat)
 Hot Food: NICE! - Neal Layton (Sat)

Key Stages Two / Three
 The Moonhaven Chronicles - Rob Biddulph (Thurs)
 Astrosaurs - Mission to Infinity! - Steve Cole (Fri)
 Nora and the Map of Mayhem - Joseph Elliott (Fri)
 The Island at the Edge of Night - Lucy Strange (Sat)

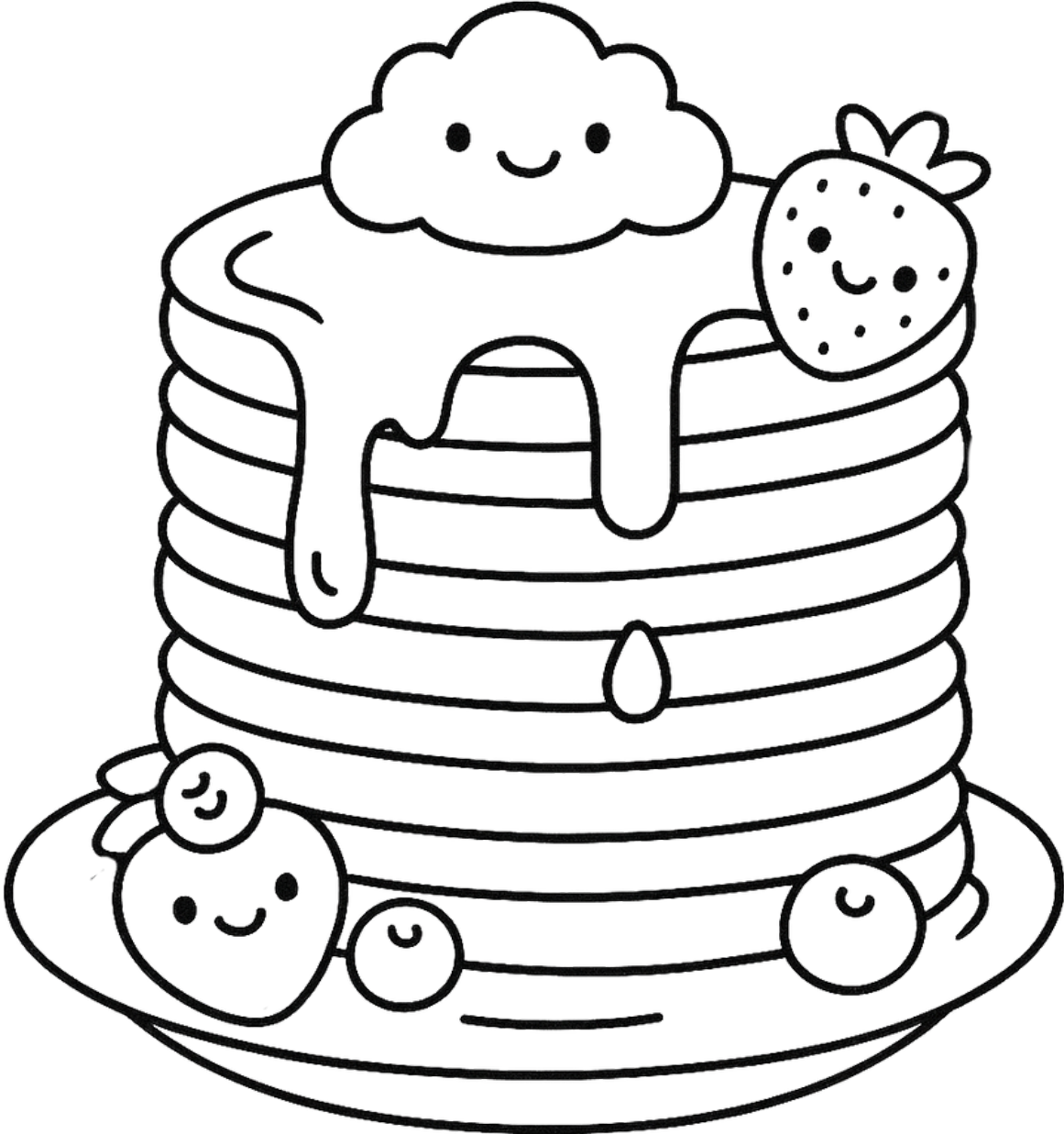
New for this year:
 Subsidised Day Rover bus fares for ticket holders (see website for details)

Plus,
 Accessible venue with lift to first floor.

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE SHARING A STORY
BUY TICKETS NOW!
iwstoryfestival.com

HALF-TERM COLOURING

**PANCAKE
DAY**



NATIONAL ONLINE SAFETY

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make decisions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples, like how recommendations on YouTube or Netflix work, to build understanding and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or alive.

2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfake videos, photos, and fake 'facts'. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and read. Teach them to double-check information using reliable sources, to look at images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.

3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY

Explain that AI systems learn by analysing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like reading app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.

4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI

Support children, when using AI tools, to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. This fosters confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When children use AI creatively, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.

5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some chatbot tools mimic conversation but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.

6 USE AI TOGETHER

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an AI art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modelling critical thinking.

7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI tools to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.

8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE

Some AI tools, like homework help apps, may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit real understanding.

9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY

Help children explore how AI works, where it might be biased, and why ethical thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes; some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools; talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.

10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.

Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College