

ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

"Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire." – St Catherine of Siena

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From the Headmistress

It has been a pleasure to see so many parents this half term, and a joy to have our school events running without the serious impact of Covid 19.

It has been a particular pleasure to see girls new to the Senior School settling in so well. I always enjoy my conversations with pupils, especially when I hear about their activities, including - for many now - rehearsals for the next school musical. At the top of the School it is also the time for assessments as the girls prepare for their public exams in the Summer; Year 13 can go into the holiday pleased with their efforts, and Year 11 and 12 have time now to prepare for assessments after the break. Well done - and good luck - to all these girls.

Recent highlights include the very enjoyable New Parents Drinks Reception, and the Sausage Sizzle on Friday 7 October, when it was a pleasure to welcome families to a fun evening and to see so many parents helping at this FOSC event.

Otherwise, the site has been busy, the new lunch menus have been popular, and planning for Christmas events is underway; I look forward to seeing you on site again soon.

With best wishes,
Mrs McPherson

New Teachers

This academic year, St Catherine's is delighted to welcome a number of new teachers. Our Mini Reporters Club were very keen to interview our new staff. Here are our first three interviews, with more to come in the next Newsletter.



Mrs Saunders - Senior Deputy Head

On Thursday 29 September, we were delighted that Mrs Saunders agreed for us to interview her about her experiences so far at St Catherine's. Mrs Saunders joined the school this year in September, and she is a great addition to the St Catherine's community. We are thrilled to have Mrs Saunders as our Senior Deputy Head.

Why did you choose to come to St Catherine's?

I was looking for a Deputy Head position, and St Catherine's school website gave a lovely impression! I also found the pupils of St Catherine's very welcoming.

What is your favourite element of the school so far?

I particularly like the School Council as I get to hear the pupils' opinions on the school. It feels like a good partnership to help improve things.

Which subjects do you enjoy teaching?

The subject that I enjoy teaching the most is RE A level (Philosophy and Ethics) and I especially enjoy debates over the existence of God.

How would you describe St Catherine's?

I would say warm, caring, vibrant and kind (*We agree!*). It was wonderful to see all the girls together on the first day of term.

Do you have any advice for St Catherine's pupils?

I would say be brave and do not be limited by other people's expectations of you.

We really enjoyed interviewing Mrs Saunders; it was lovely to talk to her!

Calista, Kinjal and Evie Year 8



Mr Zajaczkowski - Head of Maths

Why did you choose to become a Maths teacher?

Before entering the profession of teaching Maths, I was a swimming coach, which I thoroughly enjoyed. As I also really enjoy Maths, I decided to combine my passion for both Maths and teaching.

How long have you been teaching Maths, and did you teach at other schools before St Catherine's?

I taught for six years before coming to St Catherine's. I taught at Twyford C of E High School, a co-ed school; and The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, a boys' school.

What are you enjoying most about teaching at St. Catherine's so far?

I love how all of the students are always involved and engaged in lessons. Another bonus is that everyone is focused on the work; the pupils are really enthusiastic.

What part of Maths do you enjoy the most?

I particularly enjoy high level mathematical topics, including Applied Mathematics, Mechanics and Statistics. I also enjoy applying Maths to real-life problems.

What hobbies do you enjoy doing during your free time?

I used to be a very keen runner. I also enjoy swimming and general exercise. While I was at University, I was a London University athletics champion.

I support two football teams. I'm a big fan of Arsenal, but the local team is Brentford, so I support them as well.

We really enjoyed interviewing Mr Zajaczkowski, and are very grateful for his time. Hopefully all our readers have learnt something new about Mr Zajaczkowski.

Jasmine, Jocelyn and Amaya Year 8



New Teachers & Book Success



Miss Jones - Science Teacher

Miss Jones was working at St Catherine's last year as well, but this year she has started teaching Science. We were very pleased to have the chance to ask Miss Jones the following questions.

What is your favourite element in the periodic table?

That's a hard one, but, if I had to choose, I would choose helium because it reminds you of helium balloons from parties when you were little.

What do you like about Science?

I like everything in Science. For example, in Biology, I like seeing how humans work and, in Chemistry, I like seeing all the chemical reactions.

What is your favourite: Chemistry, Biology or Physics?

I think Chemistry because I love the practicals. I also really enjoy teaching Biology.

Which famous scientists have inspired you?

There are many female scientists who are very inspirational, including Nobel Prize winners. I particularly admire Marie Curie and Lise Meitner (the namesake of the lab I work in).

Do you have any advice for people who want to pursue science or teaching?

Well, for science I would say, if you have a passion, run with it! Do clubs outside of school and enjoy your lessons and enjoy your practicals. For teaching, you could try volunteering in schools or clubs; I volunteered at St Catherine's before working here.

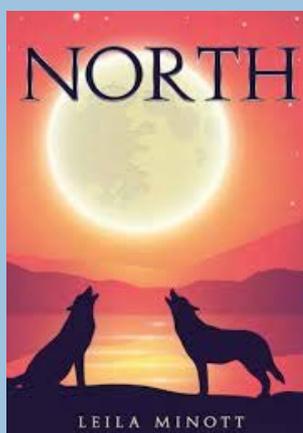
It was a really lovely experience getting to know Miss Jones better. Thank you, Miss Jones, for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Evangeline and Ayesha Year 7



Leila's book has been published!

St Catherine's was very proud to learn that Leila in Year 8 has had her first book published. This is a tremendous achievement! Leila has written *North*, a story about a young wolf's quest to find safety for his family amidst many dangers, and is set against a background of terrifying climate change. *North* is published by Olympia Publishers and we are sure that this is just the beginning of Leila's writing career.



Interview with Leila

Isabella and Siya in Year 8 interviewed Leila to find out about her writing process-

What inspired you?

I was inspired by the issue of climate change and by the work that David Attenborough is doing. I wanted to write a book that would help spread awareness of these important issues.

What was the hardest thing about writing this book?

The hardest thing about writing a book is trying to continue writing after getting writer's block and resisting the temptation to quit and start all over again.

When did you write your book?

I wrote it when I was bored during lockdown! It was between September 2020 and February 2021.

Do you have any advice for future authors?

Never give up on your dreams and try to do everything you can to achieve your goals.

"I was inspired by the issue of climate change and by the work that David Attenborough is doing."

TEAM BUILDING

Year 7

The Year 7 girls were in high spirits as they headed off on their team building day on Thursday 6 October. The coach slowly filled with the sounds of various chants and songs. We were treated to a sunny day to match our sunny disposition and the girls, working in mixed form groups, faced various team and individual challenges. Whether encouraging each other to face their fears on the climbing wall, or working as a team to problem solve on the low ropes course, the girls' warm and inclusive nature shone through. Their high spirits remained intact throughout the day including singing for the duration of the coach journey home, much to the delight of the driver, no doubt!



Year 9

One of the things I like most about St Catherine's is how we always support each other and work as a team to tackle challenges.

At the start of a new term, Year 9 were given the opportunity to do something different. We spent the day with other forms solving problems together and working with new people. My favourite activity of the day required two long pieces of wood with four strings attached to each plank. The aim of the activity was to have four people moving each leg at the same time as everyone else. This taught us that the more we worked with one another, the quicker we went. Not only that, it was hilarious too!

A big thank you to Liam, Russell and our teachers for organising such a memorable day. We can now take the lessons we learnt into the classroom.

Chloe Year 9



LANGUAGES WEEK

26 September was the European Day of Languages, and we spent the week celebrating different languages and cultures from around the world.

In Prep, the Year 6 pupils enjoyed a French storytelling session, Year 8 took part in an interactive German theatre session, and the Year 9 and 12 pupils were instructed in the fine art of Flamenco dancing. In addition, our Year 8 and Year 9 pupils have been completing foreign-language haikus and calligrams as part of the Poetry Competition. Food and Nutrition lessons focused on recipes from around the world, and pupils across the year groups took part in a World Cuisine competition and cake sale raising money for the School's nominated charity, Mary's Meals.



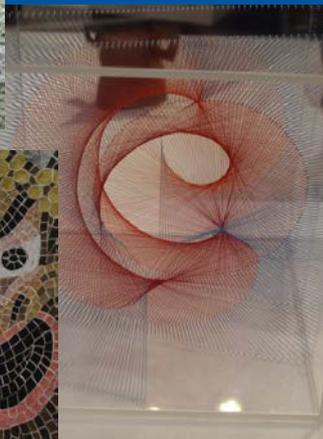
Textiles

The Knitting & Stitching Show - Year 10



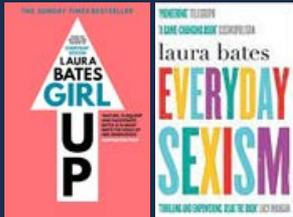
Year 10 Textiles pupils enjoyed a fabulous day at the Knitting & Stitching Show at Alexandra Palace. They took part in workshops, researched the textile artist exhibition, researched materials and media, and explored the exhibitions. The girls really enjoyed the Degree exhibition this year; it was such an inspiration to see what they can expect from different universities, such as Liverpool and the Royal School of Needlework.

They learned to knit in the Knitting Lounge and crochet for an inspiring mental health initiative run by British craft company "TOFT", where they crocheted dots to add to a magnificent crochet butterfly.



Talks & Visits

Laura Bates



On 22 September, St Catherine's was lucky enough to have a talk by Laura Bates, an advocate for equal rights for all, regardless of gender, and exposing sexism in day to day life. The talk covered how sexism is still present in the western world, how to stop sexism spreading and what caused Bates to start the Everyday Sexism Project. This is a website where women can anonymously submit their lived experiences of sexism, harassment and abuse, in order to share that sexism is still prevalent. One of the interesting points Laura made was that by

making sexism and misogyny a thing of the past, it benefits both women and men. Not only would it stop women from being undervalued, underappreciated and harassed, it would also take the pressure off men to show no emotion, and could help lower male suicide rates. The talk was incredibly eye opening, explaining how ingrained sexism is in our society and how to confront it.

Thank you to Laura Bates for taking the time to talk to our school and to the teachers for organising the talk.

Eleanor Year 11

"The talk was incredibly eye-opening, explaining how ingrained sexism is in our society and how to confront it."

The Royal Courts of Justice and The Old Bailey



On 23 September, St Catherine's Sociology and Politics A level students were lucky enough to venture to London to explore the Royal Courts of Justice and later watch a court case at the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court. We were taken on a tour around the RCJ, which is the second most important court in the country. We enjoyed learning about the rich history of the RCJ, together with more modern issues, including the strikes by thousands of criminal barristers in relation to the funding of the criminal justice system. In the afternoon we visited the Old Bailey, where we, and other members of the general public, were able to observe a court case of our choice. This was a brilliant opportunity and a very inspiring experience that I highly recommend.

Abi Year 12



Politics & Policing in Washington DC

The Politics and Sociology department had a talk from Salah Czapary. Salah is a former Ward 1 Democrat candidate for Washington DC Council and former Assistant to the Chief of Police of Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department. He talked about issues spanning George Floyd and the BLM inspired defund the police movement, as well as the implicit and explicit bias of some police forces in the USA, to right and left realist policies on sentencing and reoffending rates and offered advice to women who wanted to start a career in policing or politics. Mr Novak



CHAPLAINCY & ALUMNAE

Alpha Course



We are currently running two Alpha Courses, one for the Sixth Form and one for Middle School. Both are well attended and the pupils enjoy discussing topics to do with Christianity, where any viewpoint is welcomed. The students enjoy some tasty refreshments and are able to speak deeply about the topics, allowing them to further their friendships and hear each other's opinions. We look forward to starting our very first Staff Alpha Course and to the many Alpha Courses we plan to run for the students in the future.

Alumnae Visit

On Thursday 29 September, the school welcomed a group of our alumnae, who wanted to visit St Catherine's as part of their celebrations for their 70th birthdays. We were delighted to welcome them and to show them around the school. They were led on tours around the school by a group of Year 8 pupils and were fascinated to see how much it had changed. They told us that when they were at St Catherine's, the school included the buildings at Radnor House as well. They would travel through the tunnel to get to most of their lessons.



The alumnae also told me that the main St Catherine's building only had the ground floor, with the reception and the newly built swimming pool. They were shocked at how much the school had grown and had a conversation full of memories with Mr Blake about how the science block used to have mahogany desks and chairs with a stage at the front. After our talks and tour we had afternoon tea. The alumnae were so happy to see St Catherine's again and were very impressed at how much the school has grown and developed over the years. It was lovely to be part of this happy occasion.
Amaya Year 8

Pet Blessing



Each year in the Breakfast Club we encourage the girls to bring in their beloved pets to be blessed for the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. This year, Eliza in Year 7 and her grandmother brought in their dog Oreo, who was most well behaved whilst being blessed by Miss Ryan, our Chaplain.

Ms Czajkowski, Breakfast Club

Friday Club



The Friday Club meet every Friday morning from 8-8.30am in the Chaplaincy, where we share pastries and hot chocolate and chat about our highs and lows of the week. It is an initiative thought of by the Year 10 pupils and is a chance for the pupils in the Middle School to share a time of reflection, friendship and fun. We end our time together with prayer, where the pupils pray spontaneously about their own intentions. It's been a real success this term and we are looking forward to the many Fridays there are to come!

FOOD & NUTRITION



It has been a busy few weeks in Food and Nutrition; we particularly enjoyed supporting the MFL Department with Languages Week by celebrating the food traditions of different cultures. Year 10 made French apple tarts with enriched shortcrust pastry, Year 9 made decorative focaccia, and Year 8 made shaped bread rolls and Mediterranean pasta salad. Year 10 also took their cooking further afield with their teriyaki salmon and vegetable kebabs. Well done to the girls for all their hard work and enthusiasm!
Mrs Smyth and Mrs Proudfoot



CO-CURRICULAR

Mahjong Club

Mahjong Club takes place every Tuesday lunchtime at 1.30pm. Many pupils from the Senior School, as well as teachers, take part in this 19th century game from China. Mahjong is commonly played with 4 players, 134 tiles of different Chinese characters and a game board. It is a game of skill, risk-taking and memory.

Pupils find it is really interesting as you get to engage with another culture and you get to sit and play with pupils you do not know. It is also fun to compete against the teachers!



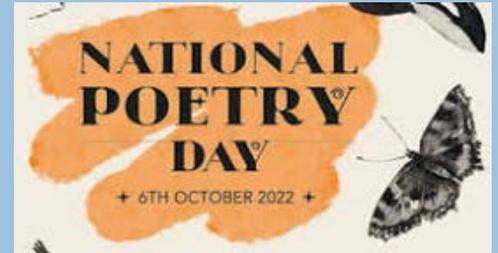
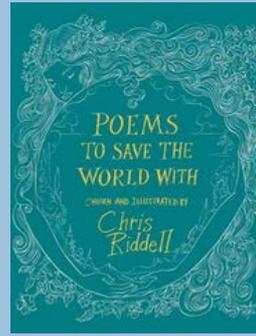
Scrapbooking Club



Mrs Smith's Scrapbooking Club is proving very popular in the Library.

LIBRARY NEWS

National Poetry Day



Thursday 6 October was National Poetry Day. The theme was the environment. The English Department and the Library celebrated with poetry readings, a poetry treasure hunt and making poems of our own. The pupils shown above are reading from the poetry collections shown next to their pictures.



Busy times in the Library



The girls have been enjoying board games, card games, craft and even some homework!



Black History Month



During Black History Month we encourage the girls to ensure that they are reading widely in order to continue to deepen their knowledge of Black History. This year we were inspired by Mrs Gava's Year 11 Form, whose assembly on Black History was particularly thought-provoking. We learnt about such diverse figures as British space scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, MP Diana Abbott, campaigner against racial prejudice Harold Moody, and actors Ncuti Gatwa and Yasmin Finney (both soon to appear in the BBC's Dr Who).

CAREERS

CAREERS INFORMATION THIS WAY

The Senior Library has university prospectuses, careers guides and biographies of inspirational people. Come and explore our careers resources.

Ask Mrs Smith for help.



All Senior pupils can use our Careers resources in the Library during break and lunch, and after school. Years 8 and 9 are exploring the Careers section during their Tuesday form time Library visits, and Year 10 are having Careers meetings with Mrs Smith on Thursdays.



Year 11 exploring our Careers resources in the Senior Library

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE!



**CAREERS DROP-IN SESSIONS WITH MRS SMITH
EVERY TUESDAY FIRST HALF OF LUNCH IN THE LIBRARY -
ASK ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT CAREERS, UNIVERSITY, WORK EXPERIENCE**

Mrs Smith is our Careers Advisor, as well as our Senior Librarian, and is available on Tuesday lunchtimes in the Library to discuss anything to do with Careers, including subject choices, University courses and apprenticeships. This is an informal opportunity for your daughter to get advice about her future. The Sixth Form are also very welcome to speak to Mrs Smith during any of their free periods.



At St Catherine's we use the careers platform Unifrog. This is an excellent resource for all of our Senior pupils. Year 7 will be receiving their log-in details shortly. We encourage the girls to explore Unifrog, including the Careers Library, Subject Library and Know-How guides. The quizzes that help match the girls' interests and personalities to careers that might suit them are useful and fun! Your daughter can log on to Unifrog at home as well, and we encourage you to explore the site with her.

Siena Society - Programme of Visiting Speakers

These talks, which take place after school at 4pm, are open to girls in Year 10 and above and we expect girls to attend at least one every half term.

- 8 November Councillor Richard Bennett (Green Party) for South Twickenham and Strawberry Hill
- 10 November Nicholas Armour, experienced career diplomat, with postings in the Middle East, and former Consul General in Toronto



The Chocolate Challenge

Year 9 will be taking part in the Chocolate Challenge on the afternoon of Monday 14 November. This is a business enterprise activity involving the creation and marketing of a product, and is always really engaging and enjoyable.

SPORTS NEWS

Ibstock Tournament

The start of a new school year also brings the start of a new netball season. Our U19 Team (mainly made up of Year 11 and 10 girls) kicked off the season with the much anticipated and fiercely competitive Ibstock Place Netball Tournament. This event is always a fast-paced, high energy competition with schools battling it out to show who has kept the most fitness over the summer break. Our team (Abi, Hermione, Bella P, Bea, Eleanor, Flo, Bella C, Kate and Gabi) came into the competition as underdogs due to their age but ready to fight with underdog spirit and energy. It was a fantastic day with some really beautiful netball being played by the St Catherine's girls. Early season tournaments are always a useful measure of where the team are and shine a light on to the targets to be set for upcoming training, and this was no different. The team held all competition to tight score lines and frustrated older, more experienced opponents with fantastic defensive strategies as well as punching through with fierce attack and some excellent movements in the circle. I look forward to seeing how much more this team can improve and achieve, especially when competing in their own age group.

Mrs Mercer



Year 11 - Latymer Upper

Congratulations to our Year 11 Netball Squad. Our A team won their match against Latymer Upper 31-13. The standard of play was most impressive and the squad's feisty spirit was encouraging. I look forward to watching this squad progress. It's a great pleasure to be able to support them all and I am delighted that so many of them now support and coach our younger pupils in the school, acting as excellent role models. Well done !

Mrs Healey

"The standard of play was most impressive and the squad's feisty spirit was encouraging." - Mrs Healey



Year 9

The following girls represented St Catherine's at a recent tournament playing extremely tough and tall opposition. The team's efforts were outstanding and each player left having improved their tenacity and tactical performance. Each player has been set a target and we look forward to watching this team progress across the season.

GS: Salam

GA: Kaitlyn

WA: Pippa / Rima

WD: Agi / Meghan

GD: Erin /Bella

GK: Tia

C: Chloe



St Catherine's Drama at the Edinburgh Fringe!

We are still riding high on the success of 'Our Eyes Met', the show that we took to the Edinburgh Fringe. Ten of our pupils participated in this wonderful trip and really did themselves proud. The originally written show, devised by staff and pupils, was based around the story of Medusa and explored the different outcomes of her story that could have been. It was a humorous and thought-provoking piece that the cast and crew were very proud of.



We were in Edinburgh for a total of twelve days and during this time we flyered for our show, performed an eight day run where we managed both the onstage and technical aspects of the performance, supported other artists that we met, and saw as many other shows as we could fit in. With well-deserved reviews describing the energy and skills demonstrated by the cast and crew, it was an absolutely unforgettable experience.

We performed one final time on Thursday 6 October, and it was lovely to see the group all together again. The audience were suitably impressed and we are already getting enquiries about our next visit in August 2024!



The Crucible

On Monday 3 October there was a GCSE and A level trip to the National Theatre to see the new adaptation of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'. Tickets flew off the shelves for this production and we were extremely lucky to be able to see it. The production was superb, and the rain machine at the front of the stage (so effective that front row patrons were wearing ponchos) created a wonderfully atmospheric mood as we watched the painful turn of events in Salem.

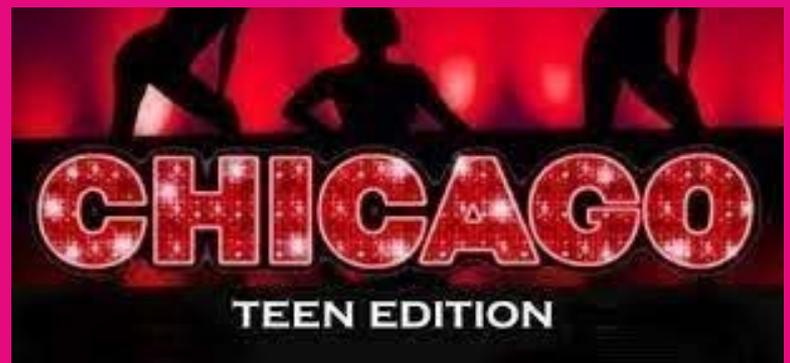
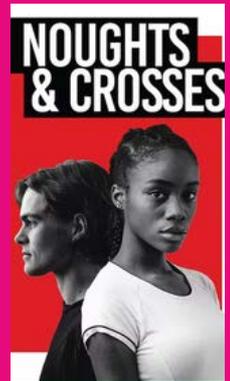


Chicago

Auditions and rehearsals have begun for the new production: Chicago (teen edition). Staff have been absolutely delighted with the amount of interest and enthusiasm shown and there has been a serious level of talent on show, even at the audition stage. It is also wonderful to see so many pupils signed up to help with costume, set and backstage; we are very much looking forward to this being a fantastic event!

Noughts and Crosses

On Thursday 29 September, we ran a joint Drama and pastoral trip for Year 9. Beginning with pizza in the Drama Studio, we then made our way to Richmond Theatre to watch a new adaptation of Malorie Blackman's hugely popular *Noughts and Crosses*. Some pupils had read the novel already and some had not, but all agreed that it was a beautifully emotional and brilliantly acted production which left us with lots to think about. Everybody really enjoyed having a fun evening out and it was a lovely way for Year 9 to begin the year.



KEY DATES

Monday 17 October - Friday 28 October - Half Term
Monday 31 October - Year 11 & 12 Autumn Assessment Week
Friday 11 November - Remembrance Day
Monday 14 November - Wellbeing Week
Tuesday 15 November - Year 11 Retreat - Kintbury
Thursday 17 November - St Cecilia Concert
Friday 18 November - Science Live Trip
Sunday 20 November - Monday 21 November - Year 11 Geography Trip to Swanage
Tuesday 22 November - Sixth Form Retreat
Wednesday 7 December - A Christmas Carol Theatre Trip
Thursday 8 December - Lower School Pantomime Trip
Friday 9 December - Christmas Jumper Day, School Christmas Lunch, House Quiz
Monday 12 December - Alumnae and Community Carol Service
Tuesday 13 December - Senior School Carol Service
Wednesday 14 December - Saturday 17 December Paris Trip Years 10-13
Wednesday 14 December - last day of term
Thursday 5 January - Spring Term begins

FOSC Events:

- Tuesday 15 November - ReDress Second Hand Uniform Sale 3pm
- Friday 25 November - Cheese & Wine Evening 7pm
- Thursday 1 December - Christmas Wreath Making 6.30pm
- Sunday 11 December - Christmas Fair 11am - 2.30pm

You can keep up to date with all of our St Catherine's news on social media:



@stcatherinessch