

14 FEBRUARY 2025

# ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

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



## Newsletter Highlights

CHRISTMAS MARKET TRIP

PREP NEWS

BLETCHLEY PARK

VOICES OF THE HOLOCAUST PLAY

SPORT - SENIOR & PREP

FOSC NEWS



# The Jubilee Year of Hope

Pope Francis has proclaimed 2025 a Jubilee Year.

"Pilgrims of Hope" is the overarching theme of the year, as reflected in the opening words of the Bull of Indiction, entitled "Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint."

The Jubilee Year began on Christmas Eve 2024 with the ceremonial opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, followed by the opening of several other Holy Doors in the other cathedrals of Rome. The Sixth Form girls will be able to see the Holy Door when they visit Rome in February.

This theme for 2025 provides an opportunity for all of us to be renewed in hope. The Pope says "Everyone knows what it is to hope," and "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring."



- Pope Francis expresses his desire for peace in a world increasingly marked by violence and conflict.
- He appeals especially for prisoners, recalling the tradition of offering amnesty or pardons during Jubilees, and said he hopes to personally open a Holy Door in a prison.
- Pope Francis urges that hope be offered to the sick, to the young and to the elderly, to migrants and to the poor.
- The Holy Father recalls that the fruits of the earth are intended for all, and encourages everyone to come to the assistance of the poor.
- Pope Francis also encourages renewed efforts to further Christian unity.

The Holy Father concludes the Bull with a final note of hope, praying that "the coming Jubilee will be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God", and that it might help us recover "the confident trust we require in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation."

There will be activities throughout the year at St Catherine's to explore this theme. We will be considering the things on which hope can be founded: faith and values, personal endeavour, relationships and community. These principles are at the heart of our School Mission.

Mrs McPherson has presented the Year of Hope to pupils and staff, and we are exploring this theme in our school life. Whatever our individual faith may be, we want to focus on hope, goodness, truth and beauty in St Catherine's and in the world.





## Valentine's Day at St Catherine's





## Christmas Markets in Germany



On the last day of term in December, we embarked on our German Christmas Markets Trip to Cologne, Koblenz and Bruges (for the Belgian leg of the trip).

On the second day, we travelled to Koblenz spending time finding lunch and buying souvenirs in the Christmas markets around the town. We then took part in a historic tour of the town, learning about its role in German history.

On the third day, we firstly visited the Christmas Market in Cologne, and then visited the magnificent Cologne Cathedral with its gothic architecture. This was followed by some free time and lunch, before taking a boat trip along the river Rhine. We had an evening meal in a Cologne restaurant and fun evening of bowling.

On our final day, we travelled back to St Catherine's, but with a stop-off in Bruges for a final bit of gift shopping and lunch.

The girls had a very good time, and several were commended for their excellent attitude in taking every opportunity to practise their German interactions in shops and at the markets.





## Prep News - 1st Sleepover

Year 3 had the first ever sleepover in Prep on Friday 7 February. The girls took part in craft activities after school, had takeaway pizza for dinner, watched some cartoons and then cuddled up in bed with a story. It was a quiet night for Miss Mac and Ms Sharps and the girls slept through until the morning. We enjoyed a continental breakfast altogether after which the girls were collected by their families. The idea of the sleepover in Year 3 is a great opportunity to spend a night away from home in a familiar place and this supports independence and resilience.

**"My best bit of the sleepover was having the pizza. I chose pepperoni because it's my favourite!"**

**Kareena**



**"I liked sleeping the best at the sleepover. It was really comfy and warm! I had fun with my friends." Hattie**





## Inside Maths

On Monday 10 February, four girls in Year 5 and Mrs Conway went to The Royal Institution in London for an 'Inside Maths' event for pupils who love challenges and thinking outside the box. We took the train all the way to London. The host, Zoe Griffiths, who is a mathematician and does lots of workshops around the UK, gave us a warm welcome, and Fran Watson taught us all about the power of paper folding and how it can be an important topic in maths.

During the day we had two activities: one was a Fractal Build and the other was a RI Puzzle Trail. Our first activity was the RI Puzzle Trail which was really fun and got us thinking hard. We had to go around the RI, read the clues in our booklets and complete puzzles. The puzzles were different and encouraged us to 'guesstimate,' count differently and do some difficult maths problems. We were also given references for how maths is useful in everyday life. We had to listen and look out for these references throughout the day and tick them off in our book.

After lunch, we went to our next activity - Fractal Builds. Fractal Builds was a more creative challenge than the Puzzle Trail. We cut out an unfolded pyramid on a sheet of paper then connected the sides to make a pyramid. We stuck them together using a special method and the shape that we created was called a Tetrahedron. This activity was all about teamwork. We had our own system and we all had lots of fun. When we finally made a two layer Tetrahedron, we joined with another school and worked together to attach them. There were many other schools that did this too, so afterwards, the staff combined all the models to make two four layer Tetrahedrons - it was huge!

Once we had finished all of our activities and gathered in the theatre again, Rob Eastway gave us a fascinating talk about the Magic of Maths. He did a few tricks on the audience and they had us puzzled about how they work. Fortunately he did tell us and it was all about how the numbers are organised and if they are odd or even or prime numbers. He also told us about Binary Code.

Overall I think that all the maths was mind-puzzling and brain-scratching. I think all the people that went definitely learned something new - I know I did. We are definitely going to take all the new knowledge that we've learned forward, including to Spark Club and STEAM Club. The trip was really enjoyable and I hope we have other trips like this.

Ria, Year 5



## Movie Night



In the Autumn Term, the Prep School Council proposed a Prep Movie Night. This suggestion came to fruition in January when Prep enjoyed their very first Movie Night. The Small Hall was transformed into a cosy cinema with comfy mats, warm fairy lights and (of course) a range of movie snacks.

The girls wore their favourite onesies and pyjamas and brought cushions, blankets and cuddly toys with them to enjoy the film. We watched 'Cheaper by the Dozen' and our rapt audience laughed and cringed in equal measure.

It was a huge success and we can't wait to hear what other great ideas Prep School Council raise in the future which we can bring to life!



## Young Voices at the O2 Arena

On 22 January, Years 5 and 6 journeyed to the O2 Arena in London to participate in the world's largest children's choir with Young Voices.

They spent several weeks preparing their music and made St Catherine's School proud during the very long day of rehearsing and performing with guest artists such as MC Grammar and Tommy Blaise.

Clara in Year 5 gives a wonderful description of her experience of the event:



When the lights burst into life, the whole arena lit up and it felt like I was standing in the middle of something truly magical. It was like nothing mattered in the world, it was breath taking.

My heart was full of joy. I looked around and everyone had their arms on each other. I felt like I was in my own world.

A wave of emotion rolled through the arena.

Before the concert it was full of gloom, now sweet melody and roars from the crowd filled the O2 up. It was like a galaxy of stars.

It was an unforgettable experience for all.

I am so glad our school had the chance to let us be in the biggest choir in the WORLD!

**'My favourite moment was raving and watching parents dance!' - Adeline, Year 6**

**'It felt like we were singing with family' - Sienna, Year 6**

**'It felt awesome and I can't get the songs out of my head.' - Aimee, Year 6**

**'It was a once in a lifetime experience' - Bella, Year 6**





## Victorian Day



This term, Year 6 have been learning about the Victorians and how Britain changed in the 19th Century. We have researched Queen Victoria, mapped the Empire and it's global impact and considered how the Industrial Revolution led to migration and social change.

We enjoyed 'Victorian Day', where we dressed up and experienced a school day the way it would have been for a child in the 1800s. Our day included the 3 'R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic), chanting our answers and learning how education was offered to all, regardless of class.

**“I had to stand in the corner with the 'dunce' hat for calling out the wrong answers...”**

**Alice**

**“I enjoyed the Victorian PE - we stretched and hopped on the spot instead of games like football.”**

**Lucy**

**“I liked that we got to write with ink fountain pens instead of our usual stationery.”**

**Adeline**

**“We learnt about the punishments that Victorian teachers gave and Miss Conway carried a cane for naughty children.”**

**Tara**



## Shakespeare Monologues

We have enjoyed a term developing oracy through Shakespeare in Drama. Several of our girls, Prep and Senior, made an effort to learn a Shakespeare monologue and prepared to compete in the ISA Shakespeare monologue competition this Spring.

We had a wonderful morning of storytelling from the Prep girls on Friday 30 January, and the Prep teachers have voted to submit Jessica, Clara and Tara as our finalists for the ISA competition.

The winners will have the chance to perform their monologues in the captivating Tudor setting of Mary Arden's farm in Stratford-upon-Avon on Thursday 1 May. Not only will they enjoy the honour of performing in this unique venue but they will also partake in a tour of the working, sustainably operated farm and enjoy immersive workshop sessions with the acclaimed learning team from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

It has been such a wonderful opportunity to see our girls thrive and develop their speaking and acting skills. We wish them all the best in the next stages of the competition.



## Year 9 Retreat



The Year 9 retreat at SPEC Pinner, held on 23-24 January 2025, was a memorable experience filled with spiritual growth and meaningful moments. The girls especially enjoyed the prayers and worship sessions, which helped deepen their reflections. The retreat also provided a wonderful opportunity for the students to bond, strengthening their friendships in a peaceful and supportive environment.

## Drama Trip

On Tuesday 21 January a group of Year 9 pupils made their way to the National Theatre to go and see the new adaptation of Noel Streatfeild's 1936 classic 'Ballet Shoes' in a new adaptation by Kendall Weaver.

The story follows an eccentric explorer, his niece, and his three adopted daughters as they all forge their way in life. From the moment we entered the theatre, we were spellbound by the elaborate set, and excitedly participated in a whole theatre dance routine, which got us even more in the mood!

The show itself was spectacular. The touching story was brought to life with incredible energy. There were video projections, wonderful costumes, and amazing lighting. Despite being written almost a hundred years ago, the story contains themes which are still relevant today where the girls were ambitious and trying to explore their own identities as they supported and cared for each other. We laughed, we cried, we marvelled at the beautiful dancing, and the set was used fantastically in order to create a variety of illusions. The cast played their roles perfectly.





## Year 9 Options Day

Year 9 pupils were given an opportunity to explore their options for the upcoming academic year during an Options Day organised and run by Year 12 pupils. The Year 12's created interactive booths and presentations showcasing the various subjects available. They shared their personal experiences, offered study tips, and answered questions about course content, workload, and potential career paths. The afternoon was a resounding success, fostering a sense of community and providing Year 9 students with the information and confidence they needed to make informed choices about their academic future.

**The Year 9 pupils appreciated the relatable perspectives of older pupils and gained valuable insights into subjects they were considering.**



**The Year 12's also benefited from the experience, developing their communication and leadership skills while reinforcing their own subject knowledge.**





## Bletchley Park



On Tuesday 4 February, Year 7 went to Bletchley Park. This is where intelligent women and men from places like Cambridge and Oxford came to decode Morse code sent by Germans using radio waves.

The women and men working at Bletchley mansion, and many other buildings in Bletchley Park, used the Enigma machine to decipher the Morse code being sent by Germans. The Germans assumed in the war that England did not have an Enigma machine. Little did they know that Bletchley park did in fact have an Enigma machine.



A man called Alan Turing and other agents worked shifts all throughout the day; even when it was midnight they would relentlessly work. Bletchley Park is located about one hour and thirty-three minutes away from Twickenham. Our tour guide explained that this was so if London were to get bombed, they would be safe as Bletchley Park is quite far away from central London.

The people working at Bletchley Park were extremely smart and used the enigma machines to decipher the messages the Germans were sending to each other. The workers here had to work with extreme secrecy, often going to work in cars so people would not get suspicious. The sad part was that these people were not recognised at the time for their actions as they were not allowed to talk to it about to anyone.

Ami, Year 7





## 'The Voices of the Holocaust'

On Tuesday 28 January, St Catherine's commemorated the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and were honoured to welcome cast members of the 'The Voices of the Holocaust'. This is a pioneering charity and theatre company dedicated to sharing real life stories of the Holocaust. The company performs a collection of verbatim plays, the most acclaimed being, 'Kindness: a legacy of the Holocaust,' which has been viewed by over 30,025 students since its launch in 2022.

Years 9-13 were privileged to watch this play and were fully engaged in the Q&A with the cast and the director, Cate Hollis, which followed the play. This particular play focuses on the life of Susan Pollack OBE, from her early life in a small village in Hungary, to the forced separation of her family and her experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. Susan Pollack was sent to Auschwitz aged 13 in May 1944 and stayed there for 10 weeks. She endured horrendous treatment and living conditions. She was later sent to work in an armaments factory in Guben, Germany, before being forced on a death march to the Bergen-Belsen camps as a result of the approaching allied forces. On the 15th April 1945, a severely malnourished Susan was liberated by the British and sent to Sweden for her recovery.

There are other narratives sewn into this play, for example, the inspiring and resilient acts and escape plot of Mala Zimetbaum and Edek Galinski. Their moving story highlights their unwavering strength and love for one another. The combination of these stories highlights the widespread impact these camps had, as well as reminding us of the sheer amount of suffering that was caused. These are remarkable people who suffered greatly as a result of prejudice, hatred and bigotry.

As the number of survivors dwindles, there is a widespread concern that our generation will forget these horrific events, therefore it is essential that these life experiences are recorded so that their voices are not lost, and their stories will live on way into the future.

This play further aims to teach us that we must challenge prejudice and speak up against Holocaust deniers, so that these atrocious events are never repeated or tolerated, and a better future is made.

Thank you to Mrs Gava and the rest of the History Department for organising this event for us - it was a thought-provoking, spectacular performance with a mix of uplifting and horrifying experiences to fully show the true reality, all brilliantly showcased with a strong narrative. Watching the play was an unforgettable experience.

Florence, Year 13

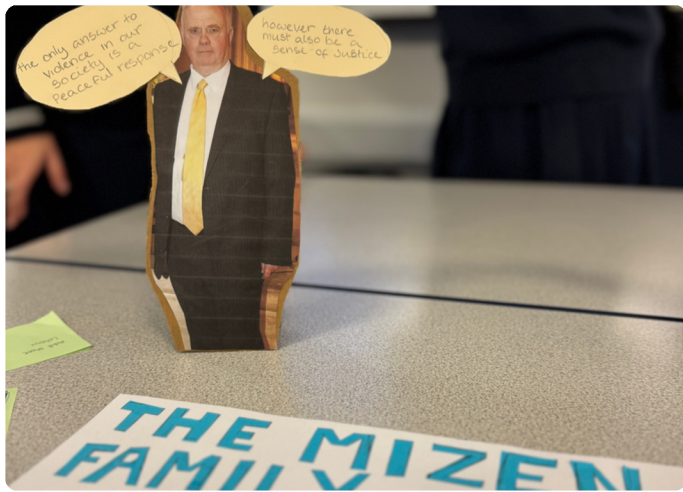




# Religious Education

## Peace and Forgiveness

In RE, Year 9 pupils have worked together on projects to research the legacy of peace brought about by an influential figure, including Gee Walker, Rosa Parks and Margaret Mizen. We opened our Museum of Peace to exhibit our findings in a creative way, demonstrating their work and explaining the link to Christian teaching on peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.



## Mosque Visit

As part of their study of Islam in RE, Year 8 visited Hounslow Mosque to have a tour of the prayer hall and hear from the Imam about life as a Muslim.

We learnt about the Five Pillars and the key features of the Mosque. We were reminded of Muhammad's (pbuh) final words against any form of racism, and learnt how important it is to the Muslim community in Hounslow that all religions and customs are respected.



## Sports News

### Prep Netball

#### U11 Netball vs LEH

The netball teams enjoyed a competitive and spirited fixture against LEH in their first match back after the Christmas break. Despite the time off, the girls quickly found their rhythm and demonstrated impressive improvement throughout the game.

Special congratulations are due to Daisy, who earned Girl of the Game for the red team, showcasing her skills and determination. Klara also deserves a special mention for her outstanding performance and well-deserved Girl of the Game award for the blue team.



#### Under 11 ISA Netball Tournament

A huge well done to all of the girls that played in the ISA Netball tournament. We started the tournament extremely strongly with four convincing wins meaning we finished second in our group and qualified for the semi finals.

We faced a great team in the semi final and played a hard fought close match and narrowly missed out on getting through to the final. The two players of the tournament were Lucy for her great interceptions and leadership on the court and Ria for her composure when shooting.

### Prep Cross Country



#### ISA Cross Country

The Year 3 and 4 girls' race at the ISA cross-country competition at Sherfield School faced challenging conditions due to recent heavy rain making the course muddy and uneven.

The race presented a physical challenge, demanding increased effort from the competitors due to the resistance of the mud. Despite these difficult conditions, all the girls ran exceptionally well.



## Prep Interhouse Gala

The Interhouse Swimming Gala, took place on 20 and 21 January and showcased remarkable teamwork and sportsmanship among the girls. Throughout the event, the girls supported one another, cheering each other on and stepping up to swim extra races when needed. Pankhurst House clinched first place, followed by Cavell in second, Bronte in third, and Nightingale in fourth.



## Richmond Borough Gala



The Richmond Borough Swim Gala went really well for St Catherine's. Isabelle (Year 4), Ria (Year 5), Lucy (Year 6), Klara (Year 6) and Adeline (Year 6) all swam brilliantly, putting into practice all that they have worked so hard on in lessons and at Swim Squad! The PE department are very proud of you. Final results are yet to be published.



## Netball



### U13 ISA Netball Tournament

Huge congratulations to our U13 netball team for their outstanding performance in the ISA Regional Netball Tournament.

The team played five games in the group stages, securing three impressive wins against Sherfield, Holme Grange, and Leighton Park. After the group rounds, the tournament was split into the Cup, Plate, and Bowl competitions. Our team advanced to the Plate final, where they faced Thomas' Battersea in a thrilling match. The lead shifted back and forth throughout the game, and despite trailing by two goals in the second half, the team showed remarkable resilience and determination to fight back and clinch a 10-9 victory.

Well done to Freya, Harshini, Georgia, Lily, Joanna, Paula, Scarlett, Matilde and Betsy.

## Football

### U15 Football v Thamesmead

Our U15s faced new opposition at Thamesmead, and it didn't take long to realise they were formidable opponents. Despite a standout performance from Chairó in goal, who was named Player of the Match by the opposition, the home side capitalised on their chances. Unfortunately, Chairó couldn't keep a clean sheet as Thamesmead proved clinical in front of goal. While the result didn't go our way, the team will look to build on this experience in future matches.



### Surrey Cup Game vs St Richard Reynolds

Well done to the U13 girls who played in the Surrey Cup against St Richard Reynolds. Although they lost, the girls put up a strong fight and played really well.

A special mention to those who stepped up to play a year above; Sasha for her amazing goalkeeping, and Betsy for being named Girl of the Match! Great effort all around!



## Cross Country



### Middlesex Cross Country

Sasha, Rose and Esme represented Richmond Borough in the Middlesex Cross Country Championships.

The day kicked off with the Minor Girls Race, where Sasha represented Richmond with an exceptional performance to secure 4th place. In a competitive field, Sasha's determination and grit pushed her through the tough course, narrowly missing out on the podium.

In the Inter Girls Race, Rose ran an impressive race, finishing in 9th place. Her consistent pacing and tactical running earned her a well-deserved spot in the top ten. Esme also delivered a solid performance, securing 13th place in a highly competitive race.

All three athletes demonstrated the true spirit of cross-country running, battling through challenging terrain to represent Richmond Borough with pride. The results were a testament to their hard work and commitment.

## Netball

### U13 vs Waldegrave

The U13A team secured a solid 18-5 victory over Waldegrave Girls in an impressive display of skill and discipline. Paula was the standout in attack, showcasing excellent movement and vision throughout the match. Freya was a rock in the defensive circle, making vital interceptions and ensuring Waldegrave Girls had limited chances to score. The team maintained their focus and composure throughout, working together to secure a comprehensive win.

The U13B team battled through an intense and closely contested match, securing a hard-fought 7-6 victory. Strong defensive work and sharp passing kept the game tight, with both teams fighting for every goal. In the final moments, our team held their nerve, showing great composure to score in the last seconds of the game. Player of the game was Alba.

The U13 C team ended in a 2-2 draw. The focus on this match was clear—to slow down and take the time to make thoughtful decisions, whether in passing, positioning, or shooting.





## FOSC NEWS

### Christmas Carols Wrap Up

It feels a while ago now, but we'd like to mention December's Christmas Carol Service, as it was a wonderful celebration for the whole school community. We hope you enjoyed the festive atmosphere, with our delicious BBQ feast, delectable mulled Pimms and fun Christmas stalls.

FOSC would like to send a thank you to all who made the evening a success. As well as having your company, we received many fabulous donations for Re-Gift, the book stall and of course jolly jars. A very special thank you to all the volunteers who kindly gave their time. All proceeds from the evening have contributed to funding the new STEAM room and purchasing cricket equipment.

### Oh Golly, How Jolly were your Jars!



Thank you to all Prep girls who participated in making jolly jars to be sold after the Carol Service. They were all wonderful. We particularly loved this jar of "Reindeer noses". If it's yours, please go to reception and collect your prize for best jar. Congratulations!

### Books, Books, Books

Thank you to all who donated books in such pristine condition. We hope you enjoyed browsing and found a few good New Year's reads.

There were plenty of books to spare and we have passed them on for many more families to enjoy. St Agatha's RC primary school were very grateful to receive a large donation to their school library and Fara Kids and Fara Books received the remainder.

### Have you collected your Prep Tea Towel?

These beautiful hand-drawn 2024/2025 prep tea-towels are available at the ReDress boutique. The perfect gift for a loved one.



### Revision Guides at ReDress

We have plenty of study guides and texts available at the ReDress Boutique. All year groups are catered for from 11 plus, through to GCSE and A Levels. The books are in excellent used condition and are perfect aids for forthcoming exams. We also welcome donations of any study guides and texts you may no longer need.

FOSC always welcomes the talent, knowledge and creativity our parents bring to St Catherine's. If you're interested in joining the fun-loving FOSC team, would like to help in a specific event or have new ideas to put forward, please speak with your class rep and they will be able to pass on our contact details.



## Upcoming Event



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL  
— TWICKENHAM —

Supporting  
International  
Women's  
Day

International  
Women's Day

#AccelerateAction  
#IWD2025

Do you have a daughter between the ages of 7-14 years?

Join us for an International Women's Day Event at  
St Catherine's School, Twickenham

All  
Women  
Welcome



Monday 10 March,  
6.30pm

Guest Speaker: Deana Puccio

Deana Puccio is an experienced speaker and consultant with a mission to educate, engage and empower the next generation. She is well known to St Catherine's through her engaging pupil talks. Deana is co-author of *Sex, Likes and Social Media: Talking to Teens in the Digital Age* and frequently appears as an expert commentator on Sky News and the BBC.

★ Fostering healthy self-image in girls

★ Building real relationships on and off-line

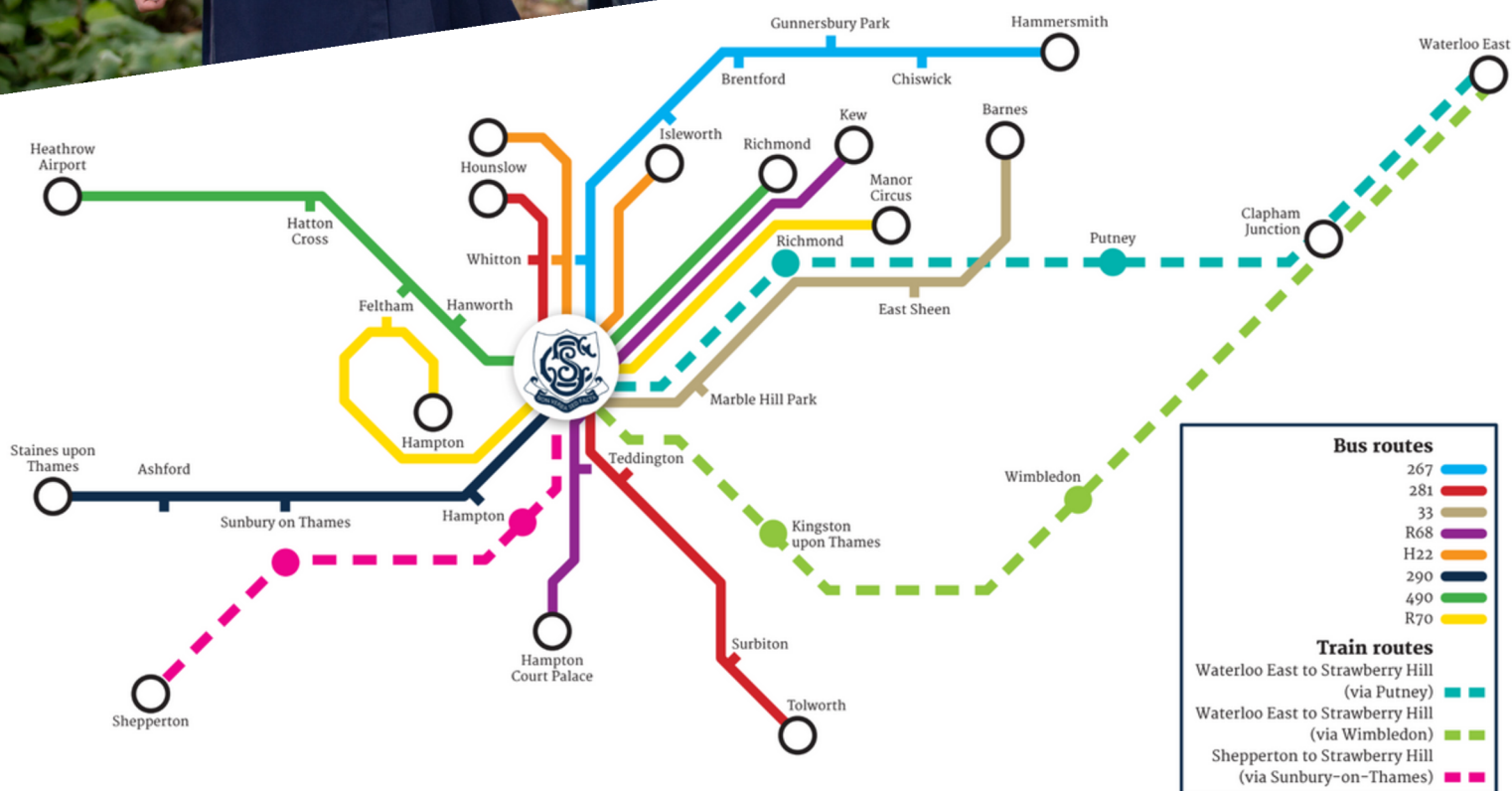
★ Raising confident girls in a changing world

Join us for discussion  
and refreshments



BOOK NOW





**Close to your home, close to her heart.**

Please see our website for more info on Public Transport Routes and Open Events.



## Housekeeping / Notices

### SOME KEY DATES TO DIARISE

27 February	FOSC Curry & Quiz Night
3 March	Prep World Book Day
4 March	Prep Spring Concert
10 March	International Women's Day Event
12, 13 March	Senior School Production (Shrek)
27 March	Senior Spring Concert

### SHARE THE LOVE

Please 'share the love' this February by remembering to follow, share and engage with our social media.



Click on the icons above



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL  
TWICKENHAM

## TERM DATES 2025-2026

*Whilst every effort is made to ensure that dates remain unchanged, we reserve the right to make adjustments if circumstances require.*

### AUTUMN TERM 2025

### SPRING TERM 2026

### SUMMER TERM 2026

#### Term Begins:

Wed 3 Sept 2025

(staggered start time for Senior pupils)

#### Half Term:

Mon 20 Oct - Fri 31 Oct 2025

#### Return from Half Term:

Mon 3 Nov 2025

#### Term Ends:

Fri 12 Dec 2025

(early finish at 12.30pm)

#### Term Begins:

Wed 7 Jan 2026



#### Half Term:

Mon 16 Feb - Fri 20 Feb 2026

#### Return from Half Term:

Mon 23 Feb 2026

#### Term Ends:

Wed 1 Apr 2026

(early finish at 12.30pm)

#### Term Begins:

Tue 21 Apr 2026

#### Half Term:

Mon 25 May - Fri 29 May 2026

#### Return from Half Term:

Mon 1 Jun 2026

#### St Catherine's Day:

Sat 27 Jun 2026

#### Term Ends:

Fri 3 Jul 2026

(early finish at 12.30pm)

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