ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

Autumn Term, Week 10-11

Message from the Head

"...singing belongs to those who love."
- Pope Leo XIV

Dear Parents,

It has been another wonderful and bustling fortnight at St Catherine's, filled with warmth, talent and a palpable sense of community across the school.

Over the past two weeks, we have enjoyed several Year 11 and Head Girl Team assemblies. Each was thoughtfully and diligently put together and delivered, offering valuable, practical advice for everyone in attendance. It is always inspiring to see our older pupils lead by example and share their wisdom with the rest of the school community.

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the St Cecilia's Concert. The standard of musical talent on display was truly outstanding, and the confidence with which our girls performed was something to behold. I was left genuinely speechless by the end of the evening. More than the exceptional performances, the overriding feeling among the pupils was one of unity, positivity and mutual support.

Building on that musical energy, yesterday saw our annual House Music competition, another wonderful showcase of the breadth of talent at St Catherine's. As my first of many, it was a real joy to experience. Once again, our pupils performed with remarkable confidence and joy, and every single act was met with rapturous applause and encouragement from the whole school. It was a true celebration of house spirit and togetherness.

On Tuesday evening, we also welcomed families for our Year 11 Parents' Evening. It was a very positive and productive evening, with plenty of constructive conversations and helpful advice shared as our pupils continue to prepare for the important months ahead.

With just two weeks remaining until the end of term, there is still much to look forward to, and I know our pupils will continue to approach the final stretch with their usual enthusiasm and determination. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

With best wishes,

Andrew McCleave
Head



PREP SCHOOL NEWS

Prep News

After a number of assessments this week, Year 3, 4 and 5 were rewarded with a festive afternoon putting up the school Christmas trees. The girls were excited as they transformed the Main Hall and the Dining Room with Christmas cheer. Working together with plenty of holiday cheer, they carefully hung sparkling baubles and stars - the perfect way to unwind after their tests and get into the Christmas spirit.





Retreat in the Chaplaincy

6S had a wonderful time in the Chaplaincy at their retreat last Friday. The girls were reminded that their value is not linked to test scores. They are cared for and valued, especially by God.

We had a delightful break, with cookies and hot chocolate, then we had a time of prayer where we listened to the Bible and imagined what it would be like to be a bird that does not worry. We ended the retreat drawing our own "birds", with one imaginatively named "Bartholomew".

Year 6 to Year 7 Transition Event

It was lovely to bring our Year 6 girls and their parents together recently to explore the exciting next chapter of their St Catherine's journey.

The event highlighted how the move into Senior School builds on the friendships, relationships and experiences established in the Prep, while opening up a wealth of new opportunities. Staff spoke about the academic challenges ahead, specialist teaching across the sciences, languages and creative arts, and how girls are encouraged to develop their independence, pursue their interests and discover new talents.

Families also heard about the transition programme over the coming months, including Year 6 taster sessions and induction days, as well as life in the Senior School, from House activities and more than 40 co-curricular clubs to our Year 8 and Sixth Form Big Sister mentoring programme.

A particular highlight was hearing from former Prep pupils now thriving in the Senior School, who spoke openly about their experiences of moving into Year 7, what they have enjoyed most and how much they have grown along the way. It was wonderful to see our Year 6 girls looking ahead with excitement and curiosity, and we look forward to seeing them embrace all that Senior School life has to offer.

The presentation from the event is available here for anyone interested in finding out more about the transition to Senior School.



SENIOR SCHOOL NEWS

St Catherine's Pupils Achieve Bronze and Silver Awards at National STEM Event



Members of our STEM Club recently represented St Catherine's at London's Digital Catapult offices to celebrate the Engineering Development Trust (EDT) reaching 500,000 Industrial Cadets experiences nationwide.

Following a keynote address from Minister of State for Skills, Jacqui Smith, our award-winning Bronze and Silver teams presented their engineering models and networked with industry experts; building communication skills and exploring future STEM careers.

Congratulations to the pupils who represented the school so brilliantly:
Year 10 (Bronze 2026): Joanna, Maya, and Harshini
Year 11 (Bronze 2025 & Silver 2026): Anneliese, Cecilia, Millie and Grayce

Year 11 pupils, Millie and Grayce, also dedicated part of their summer holidays to completing the EDT Silver Industrial Cadets Challenge through a work experience placement with Virgin Media O2.

The programme explored STEM career pathways and apprenticeships, culminating in an individual project on making telecommunications more environmentally sustainable.

Well done to all our Industrial Cadets for their dedication and initiative beyond the classroom.

"I learnt what different paths we could take in STEM, specifically about apprenticeships, and what daily life is like in those apprenticeships. In order to obtain a Silver certificate, I had to complete an individual final project about how to solve a common issue with telecommunications: how to make the industry more environmentally sustainable, which I greatly enjoyed."

~ Grayce

Year 11 Geography Fieldwork in Dorset



Year 11 recently visited sunny Dorset for their residential GCSE Geography fieldwork, putting their classroom theory into practice along the south coast.

Their first task was to investigate whether local sea defences remain effective, carrying out intensive coastal measurements on the beach before returning to the study centre to analyse their data. On Saturday, the focus shifted to human geography as the girls assessed the impact and effectiveness of urban regeneration projects in a deprived area of Bournemouth.

Between the crisp, sunny weather, the stunning coastal scenery and the girls' enthusiasm and focus throughout every activity, the trip was a true pleasure and a brilliant preparation for their upcoming GCSE exams.

WHOLE SCHOOL NEWS



St Cecilia Concert

On Thursday, 19 November, St Catherine's came together for a wonderful evening of music at our annual St Cecilia's Concert. The event was a fantastic celebration of the musical talent across the school, with every single year group, from Year 3 through to Year 13, represented on stage.

The programme showcased an impressive variety of musical styles and performances, from classical instrumental pieces and musical theatre favourites to contemporary pop, rock and beautiful vocal performances. Soloists, duets and ensembles all had their opportunity to shine, demonstrating the breadth of musical talent within our school community.

Our Prep Choir opened the evening with an enthusiastic performance of Do-Re-Mi, while the Rock Band brought plenty of energy and excitement to the stage. The Senior Choir provided a lovely conclusion to an evening with their haunting rendition of Both Sides Now.

Most importantly, the concert was a celebration of the confidence, enthusiasm and dedication of our pupils. It was wonderful to see performers of all ages sharing their love of music and supporting one another.

A huge congratulations to everyone involved in making the evening such a success.

House Music

This week's House Music competition showcased talent, energy and extraordinary house spirit across the school. Performances by the Prep, Lower School and Middle School soloists were fantastic and the four Ensemble pieces were a real credit to those involved. The final round was the House Song, which saw every pupil participate in songs representing female empowerment.

We were delighted to welcome, acclaimed collaborative pianist, Matthew Clemmet, a Royal College of Music postgraduate and Oxford graduate. Fresh from reaching the finals of the 2026 Ashburnham English Song Awards, Mr Clemmet judged the competition alongside Mr McCleave offering insightful, encouraging feedback that inspired our musicians.

Pankhurst emerged as our overall champions, edging out Nightingale, Bronte and Cavell in a closely fought contest.

Congratulations to all performers for making it an unforgettable event.



STAFF FEATURE



Staff Feature

Mr Norman Doyle, Deputy Head Academic

1. Can you tell us a little about your background and what brought you to St Catherine's?

I have worked in education since the late 1990s, primarily teaching social sciences such as Politics and Sociology alongside a broad range of other subjects. Over the years, I have taught in a variety of faith and non-faith schools. In September my family returned from seven years in Rome where I was a Senior Leader in a small international school.

My time in Rome taught me firsthand how special a close-knit school environment is; it allows for meaningful human connections and a genuine sense of community. That atmosphere was immediately palpable during my early conversations with Mr McCleave and the senior team, and even more so when I visited the school. Taking on the Deputy Head Academic role in such a community was a very exciting prospect. Now in role, I can see how it has not only led to outstanding academic outcomes but also encouraged the girls to be the very best versions of themselves.

2. What do you enjoy most about your role and working with our girls?

As Deputy Head Academic, the most rewarding aspect of my role is helping each individual girl achieve their very best and grow into a confident, capable young woman ready to make her mark on the world.

I am also incredibly fortunate to work alongside such talented, dedicated, and engaging colleagues. They are experts in their fields who are genuinely trusted by the girls. They bring a wonderful sense of fun, warmth, and academic challenge into the classroom and support each other in a true community.





3. What makes St Catherine's special to you?

It comes down to the extraordinary community spirit here, which is deeply rooted in the school's Catholic ethos and values. Those values permeate daily life at St Catherine's, providing a strong, supportive foundation upon which every aspect of a girl's education, and personal development, can be built.



4. What is something pupils and parents might be surprised to know about you?

For four summers in my twenties, I ran an outdoor pursuits programme at an American summer camp in Maine. I spent my time leading 10-day wilderness canoeing and hiking expeditions along the Appalachian Trail and down the St Croix and Allagash Rivers. It was this experience, working with young people, that led me into teaching.

CO-CURRICULAR NEWS

Year 8 House Netball

A huge well done to all the girls who took part in our House Netball competition. It was fantastic to see everyone getting involved, showing great enthusiasm and putting their skills into practice. It was particularly lovely to see so much learning taking place through the games, with pupils developing their understanding, building confidence, demonstrating teamwork and learning from one another as they played.

There was plenty of sharp passing and movement on display, paired with generous encouragement from the sidelines.

Well done to every player involved, and a special congratulations to Pankhurst for taking the win.











ESSA Regional Finals

Congratulations to all the girls who qualified for the ESSA Regional Finals and represented the school so proudly.

The crisp, frosty weather made for a challenging yet beautiful setting for cross country. Throughout the race, the girls showed fantastic determination, resilience, and sportsmanship, putting in a tremendous effort from start to finish.

It was wonderful to see them pushing themselves, supporting one another, and giving their very best. We are incredibly proud of their performances and conduct throughout the day.

U11A Netball Tournament at Harrodian

The girls enjoyed a brilliant day at the Harrodian Tournament, testing themselves against strong opposition from across the region - including Heath Mount, Putney High, Surbiton High, St Paul's, Broomwood, Thomas's Battersea and KGS. Across seven matches, the squad experienced a real mix of outcomes, from closely fought wins and narrow defeats to fiercely contested games played at an impressively high standard.

Ably captained by Ria and Lotta, the girls showed great determination, resilience and sportsmanship throughout. They worked tirelessly until the final whistle, supported one another brilliantly and kept their heads held high whatever the scoreline. It was wonderful to see such strong teamwork, commitment and positivity on display.

CO-CURRICULAR NEWS

U18A Netball Tournament at Harrodian

The U18 girls delivered an outstanding performance at the Harrodian Netball Tournament, demonstrating remarkable determination, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the day.

Facing the challenge of eight back-to-back matches with minimal rest, the team showed tremendous fitness, grit and game awareness.

Even more impressively, the squad brought together players from four different year groups who had never played together before - making their cohesion on court all the more remarkable.





From the very first whistle, the girls produced an impressive display of netball, demonstrating real skill, adaptability and commitment to one another.

Their efforts were recognised not only on court, but also by the umpires, who were full of praise for both the quality of their play and their exemplary manners.

The girls should be immensely proud of what they achieved. They were a credit to themselves and wonderful ambassadors for St Catherine's.

Year 11 Inter-House competition

There were so many enormous smiles, brilliant netball and exciting football played by all. Well done to all the girls playing in the two-part House Netball and Football competitions. The final day was a fantastic, but chilly afternoon.

The overall results:

Football:
1st - Cavell
2nd - Bronte
3rd - Nightingale
4th Pankhurst

Netball:
1st - Bronte
2nd - Cavell
3rd - Pankhurst
4th Nightingale



HOUSEKEEPING

Christmas Card winners

Each year, our Art Scholars embrace the creative challenge of designing St Catherine's official Christmas cards, showcasing their unique artistic gifts.

We are delighted to announce that this year's winning designs were created by India, Year 7 and Simran, Year 10. Their cards will be sent out with warm festive wishes to our neighbours and the wider school community.

Congratulations to every scholar who took part - the remarkable quality and individuality across all the submissions made selecting just two finalists a difficult decision for the Head.







Countdown to Christmas

To encourage every girl to explore new stories and be curious about different genres this festive season, our School Librarian, Mrs Knights, has created bespoke, interactive Book Advent Calendars for all pupils.

Running right up to Christmas Eve, each daily digital "door" reveals a specially chosen book recommendation tailored to inspire a love of reading. Some even feature a short video - such as a reading, an author interview, or a trailer if the book has been adapted for film or television.

We invite you to explore the calendars together at home- one door a day - as a wonderful way to discover new authors over the holidays.

The links are available here (Prep and Senior) and via the Library Google Classrooms.

Open Morning

Our next Open Morning is on Thursday, 28 January from 11.00am.

Please share the date with friends and family who might like to discover what makes our school so special.

Please encourage any prospective parents to book online to confirm their attendance via our website.

If you would like to be involved at Open Events as a Parent Ambassador, please contact Mrs Kassanis on jkassanis@stcatherineschool.co.uk.



HOUSEKEEPING

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL
TWICKENHAM

Mr Andrew McCleave and the staff at St Catherine's are pleased to invite you to our

Christmas Carol Service

Thursday, 10 December 2026

6.30pm - 8.00pm

Followed by mulled wine, mince pies and Christmas Stalls in the Drama Studio.

RSVP via My School Portal

TERM DATES 2026-2027

AUTUMN TERM 2026	SPRING TERM 2027	SUMMER TERM 2027
Term Ends: Fri 11 Dec 2026 at 12.30pm	**Term Begins:** Inset Days: Mon 4 Jan & Tues 5 Jan Wed 6 Jan 2027	**Term Begins:** Inset Days: Mon 12 Apr 2027 Tues 13 Apr 2027
	Half Term: Mon 15 Feb - Fri 19 Feb 2027	**Half Term:** Mon 31 May - Fri 4 Jun 2027
	Return from Half Term: Mon 22 Feb 2027	**Return from Half Term:** Mon 7 Jun 2027 St Catherine's Day: Fri 2 Jul 2027
	Term Ends: Wed 24 Mar 2027 at 12.30pm	**Term Ends:** Wed 7 Jul 2027 at 12.30pm

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

FOSC NOTICES

JOIN US STRAIGHT AFTER THE CAROL SERVICE FOR OUR FESTIVE SAUSAGE SIZZLE!

TO MAKE THE NIGHT RUN SMOOTHLY, WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO PRE-ORDER AND PRE-PAY. PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR TICKET EMAIL AS PROOF OF PURCHASE.

Christmas Sausage Sizzle

Pre-order now to enjoy your choice of:

Meat
Veg/Vegan
Gluten-Free Meat
Gluten-Free Veg/Vegan

Enjoy a warm bite, good company, and plenty of Christmas cheer!

CALL FOR DONATIONS

Christmas Fair

Our much-loved Carol service / Christmas Fair is just around the corner – 10th December – and we need your help to make it a festive success!

BOTTLES

All families to bring bottles for the school tombola.
(Wine, fizz, olive oil etc.)

SENIOR CHOCOLATE

Senior girls to bring chocolate bars for the tombola.

THE BIGGER THE BETTER!

PREP JOLLY JARS

Prep girls to bring filled and decorated jars with small chocolates or sweets. Get creative!

Pre-order via the link below:



Pre-pay now! – Christmas Sausage Sizzle Pre-pay – St Catherine's School

Christmas Sausage Sizzle Pre-pay – St Catherine's School, Thu 10 Dec 2026 - Join us straight after the carol service ...

tickettailor

EVERY CONTRIBUTION HELPS MAKE THE FAIR A MAGICAL ONE FOR EVERYONE!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT

♡

PLEASE DROP DONATIONS INTO RECEPTION BY **MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER**

THE FOSC TEAM

Not words, but deeds.

Remember to follow us on social media.