

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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Celebrating European Day of Languages

From the Headmistress

It has been a pleasure to see the Senior School girls busy with their lessons and activities this half term, and wonderful that the end of pupil bubbles means that rehearsals, clubs and meetings can take place. In particular, I have enjoyed speaking with Year 7 girls, as they settle into school, and hearing about the plans of Year 13 as they move forward with the exciting process of university applications.

I would like to draw your attention to St Catherine's new School Mission Statement, which governors, staff and pupils have been discussing, as part of a recent review. The girls have engaged very well with this document and started to explore the ideas and goals within tutor groups and assemblies. Their thoughtfulness has shown that the values of St Catherine's are alive and well, and this is also evident in their friendships, their personal goals, and the way they each help to create a happy school community. The new statement is shared with you within the magazine today, and I hope you also enjoy this ambitious, confident and creative description of all we do, and stand for, here at School.

I look forward to seeing you at events and celebrations during the second part of term.

With kind regards,
Mrs McPherson

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

School Mission

We are inspired by St Catherine of Siena, who said 'Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire', to form young women of confidence and compassion, ready for service and leadership in the world. We fulfil our mission through these values:

Community: a place of cheerfulness, dignity and tolerance, where all are welcome

Faith: a Christ-centred school with time for reflection; a culture of gratitude and friendship

Courage: with self-knowledge, resilience and integrity, and a readiness for challenge

Scholarship: where gifts are developed through curiosity, imagination and ambition

Service: commitment to others, to stewardship, and to justice and hope for all

The Sixth Form Perspective

Emma-Jane F, our Head Girl, has been busy discussing the new St Catherine's Mission Statement with our Sixth Form pupils. Here are a selection of their thoughts on what our values mean to them.

Community: a place of cheerfulness, dignity and tolerance, where all are welcome

'Community is a golden trait of St Catherine's. There is always a strong focus on relationships within the school and a real drive for all years to be accessible to one another, for support, leadership and advice.'

Faith: a Christ-centred school with time for reflection; a culture of gratitude and friendship

'As a Chaplaincy society member, I definitely see faith as something integral to school life. We have such a diversity of faiths and beliefs, and I think that is something really special - it makes the school so vibrant and welcoming to all who step through the gates.'

Courage: with self-knowledge, resilience and integrity, and a readiness for challenge

'St Catherine's offers a wide range of opportunities to prepare pupils for life beyond the academic world. Sport, music, drama, charity fund-raising, and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme are all examples of the activities that can push us beyond our every day achievements and help us face challenges with bravery and determination, building our confidence to tackle adulthood.'

Scholarship: where gifts are developed through curiosity, imagination and ambition

'As a small school, all girls are given the attention and support they need to reach their potential. The school supports pupils in all aspects to allow them the best opportunity to succeed. St Catherine's prioritises a girl's happiness and her academic achievement equally. The opportunities at St Catherine's allow girls to really come out of their shells and discover talents they never thought they had. Every girl gets involved, and you can see the genuine passion and drive behind all achievements.'

Service: commitment to others, to stewardship, and to justice and hope for all

'The school motto 'not words but deeds' encompasses St Catherine's focus on individuals being a positive light in life, whether it is giving back to the school or wider community. We are taught that a title does not define one's ability to be a leader and that who we are when no one is looking is just as important as who we are in a room full of people.'



BONDING ACTIVITIES



Year 9 Bonding Day

Team building day was lovely. We all learnt valuable skills like communication and teamwork, while also having a lot of fun. For me in particular, I really enjoyed being put into different teams each time, which meant I got to laugh with almost every person, at least once. I enjoyed the activities as well, and although some of them were quite difficult and required higher levels of thinking, we always got the feeling of accomplishment at the end. All in all, the team building day was a brilliant experience, and definitely something I would like to do again.

Rebecca B 9S



Year 10 Movie Night

The days are shortening, the temperature is dropping, and the end-of-half-term fatigue is kicking in. So what better than comfy clothes, bean bags, and a good old giggle to a chick-flick film?

Year 10 girls piled into the Senior Library after their day of lessons. With the accompaniment of snacks and squash, the students relaxed with their peers for an hour and 50 minutes of Rom-Com galore! The 2008 feel-good film, *Wild Child* was the clear winner in the pupils' poll. There were lots of laughs (and even the mumblings of some girls reciting the script's lines). But contentment, and utter rest and relaxation was had by all.

Miss Holgate-Smith



MINI REPORTER

Mrs Smith's Mini Reporter club have been interviewing some of the new teachers who have joined the school this term. They have enjoyed using their organisational, communication and writing skills to complete this project.

Interview with Miss Dolan by Anaya J and Dionna M 9C

What was your first impression of St Catherine's?

St Catherine's instantly had such a warm atmosphere. Everyone was extremely friendly and helpful. I felt very welcome.

What brought you into teaching?

I have been teaching for five years. I love working with young people. It's really rewarding seeing pupils start to enjoy Maths more and more with each lesson.

What was your first job?

My first job was working in recruitment. I wasn't particularly keen on this; I much prefer being a teacher. I love being able to bring out my own personality whilst teaching, which you can't do so easily in an office job.

What are your favorite things to do when you are not teaching or marking?

I play contact rugby, netball and I have just gotten into cycling. I also love baking and cooking vegan food. My favorite dish to make is quesadillas and burritos. My favourite TV show is Game of Thrones and my favourite movie is A Star is Born

What's an interesting fact about yourself?

I am vegan, I used to play rugby for my county and I am a twin!

What was your favorite subject at school and what did you study at university?

From a young age, my favourite subject has been Maths, although, I also really love Media Studies and analysing magazines and movies. At university, I studied film production, which I really enjoyed. I like Maths because I like the fact you either get something right or wrong. The logic behind Maths is very satisfying, so I love sitting and solving good questions.



Interview with Ms Claringbold by Mia B and Jasmine F

Ms Claringbold is a new teacher who recently started at St. Catherine's and teaches swimming and P.E.

How are you finding St. Catherine's School so far?

The teaching is great! I love teaching all of the girls here. There is a lovely atmosphere and we all support each other.

What do you like about this school and your job?

I love teaching swimming here and the school has got a great swimming pool! The girls are very enthusiastic about learning and they are very polite.

Why did you choose to teach P.E in particular?

I chose to teach P.E because it's important for girls to have a good relationship with movement and sport. It is not only healthy, but you learn all sorts of life skills, such as leadership and teamwork.

What did you do before you taught here?

Before I taught here I was a teaching assistant at a prep school, where I helped in Year 2. I also taught swimming at the weekends.

What hobbies do you have?

I love to run, do amateur drama, and walk my dog, Bessie. I also have a passionate love for the theatre!

Can you tell us an interesting fact about yourself?

I attended the Olympic trials for swimming in 2012.

It was lovely interviewing Ms Claringbold and we hope you enjoy this article.

MINI REPORTER

Interview with Mrs Hegarty by Sophie P, Evie S and Claudia M-S

We interviewed Mrs Hegarty, one of the school's Biology teachers.

Mrs Hegarty used to teach at St Catherine's and then, after a break, she decided to come back. She used to teach Biology, Chemistry and Physics at other schools before coming here and specialising in Biology. Mrs Hegarty has loved Biology from a young age and it was therefore a natural decision for her to become a science teacher. Mrs Hegarty explained to us that she doesn't like it when pupils forget homework or equipment!

During her break away from St Catherine's, Mrs Hegarty focused on family, friends and enjoying music. When she returned, she was pleased to discover the Chaplaincy and thinks this is a great addition to the school. She likes the sense of community at St Catherine's and really enjoys the pupil productions and concerts, such as the carol concert.

We also spoke to Mrs Hegarty about what life had been like during lockdown. During this time, she missed seeing friends and family, but was able to do lots of cooking, and put on outdoor concerts for her neighbours. She found it very sad to see so many people alone. This year, she is looking forward to school concerts and the upcoming drama production.

Thank you, Mrs Hegarty, for letting us interview you, we really enjoyed the experience.



Interview with Mrs Meydanci-Lofting by Calista V, Jocelyn F and Charlotte C

We interviewed Mrs Meydanci, who joined St Catherine's as a Maths teacher this term. Having interviewed Mrs Meydanci, we believe that she is an extremely kind teacher because she cares about her pupils and listens to them when they need help. Mrs Meydanci is open to all questions, she believes in the children and supports them in achieving higher in Maths.

Firstly, we were interested in asking why Mrs Meydanci decided to teach at St Catherine's, to which she responded: 'It's a tight-knit community where everyone is kind and strives to help one another. We all care about each other, pupil to pupil, teacher to children and staff to staff. St Catherine's is a welcoming community and that is why many people love it here.'

For our second question, we asked Mrs Meydanci what her first impressions were of St Catherine's. She replied with: 'When I came to visit the school, I really liked the atmosphere and felt that it would be a place where I would enjoy working'.

We were then curious to know what our Maths teacher did for her A Levels: she did Maths, Physics and Art, which we were surprised to hear.

Some of Mrs Meydanci's favourite hobbies are swimming and long distance running; she is trying to run the marathon this year! Mrs Meydanci also loves travelling to remote islands and once helped at a turtle conservation in Costa Rica.

Another interesting thing we learned about Mrs Meydanci is that her favourite topic in Maths is algebra, which we can relate to.

Although she is now a Maths teacher, she began working as a Physics teacher but always enjoyed the Maths side of it. She enjoys explaining difficult concepts and watching children progress mathematically.

Lastly, thank you Mrs Meydanci for letting us interview you, we really enjoyed our conversation.

ART & DESIGN

Art Exhibition



On 21 September, parents, pupils and staff were treated to the long-awaited GCSE and A-Level art private view. Once again, we were so impressed with our pupils' wonderful work. Many thanks to Mrs Hayward-Smith, Mrs Proudfoot, Miss Toner and Mrs Hammond-Tse for organising this event and for all the the support they have been able to give to the girls.

Textiles Trip



GCSE Textiles pupils visited Alexandra Palace for the Knitting & Stitching show. The range of textile work and the level of skill on display was amazing and very inspiring.

European Day of Languages

Over the course of the week beginning 27 September, pupils from all year groups took part in a range of activities and competitions designed to celebrate language and culture from around the world. Classroom activities ranged from playing lotto in Maths lessons, Eiffel Tower model building, a French storytelling workshop in Prep, a Spanish interactive theatre performance for Years 7 and 8, and making paella and quiche in Food Technology. Year 8 and 9 pupils took part in a foreign language poetry competition, girls from Years 4-13 took part in a world cuisine competition and charity sale (raising £400 for the Young Minds mental health charity), and Senior girls were able to take part in a world art competition and the 50 Language Challenge. As always, the girls approached the events with great enthusiasm; showing their appreciation of other peoples and cultures, and demonstrating how enriching it can be to look beyond the anglophone world.



European Day of Languages

World Cuisine Competition



DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Silver Expedition

By Diya M 11C

The Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition for Year 11, and some Year 12 girls, took place from 24 to 26 September, and started from Amberley Station. Thankfully, the weather was decent for the most part, with occasional rain showers, but the nights were cold.

The first day was the most challenging as we had a long and difficult route to the campsite. We walked through fields of cows and deer, and there were many steep hills. Quite a few of the teams only arrived at the campsite at 9:30pm. We were all exhausted from the strenuous day, but very glad to have persevered.

The second day was not as difficult as the first, with an easier route. We had to climb some steep hills, but the views were spectacular. Although there were a few difficult moments, everyone arrived at the campsite at around 7pm, with morale a lot higher than the previous night. The campsite was very comfortable, and we had a very enjoyable evening, with a campfire, toasted marshmallows, and chocolate biscuits.

On the third day, everyone was very tired and sore. Luckily, the route was short, with more downhill than uphill trekking. When we arrived back at Amberley station, we couldn't wait to go home to get a good night's sleep, ready for school the next day.

Throughout the 3 days, despite the hours of walking with a heavy backpack and working very hard not to get lost, everyone was in good spirits, singing songs and having fun. The experience made friendships stronger and brought everyone together, especially when things were difficult. Completing the Duke of Edinburgh award helps you to appreciate the things that we take for granted like shelter, warmth, our nice soft beds and running water.

We are very thankful to Activ Adventures for looking after us. We would also especially like to thank Mr Cox who spent his weekend ensuring that we completed our expedition successfully.



BLACK HISTORY & POETRY

Black History Month

The History Department have been leading the girls in investigating different aspects of Black history. Year 7 are looking at the Windrush generation and are using *Windrush Child* by Benjamin Zephaniah as inspiration. Year 8 are working on projects based on the work of Dr Miranda Kaufmann in her remarkable book *Black Tudors: the Untold Story*. Year 9 have been presenting their research findings on what happened in the Haiti Revolution and the role of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Additionally, Mrs Smith has added to our Library collection of material relating to Black History, which girls are encouraged to explore. A selection of these books is shown below.



National Poetry Day

On 7 October, we celebrated National Poetry Day at St Catherine's. In Tutor time, we were invited by the English department to read and perform poetry, with Mrs Gillies awarding merits for the performers.

The English department recommended *Rosa* by Rita Dove and *Harriet Tubman* by Eloise Greenfield, complete with discussion points and tips on performance.

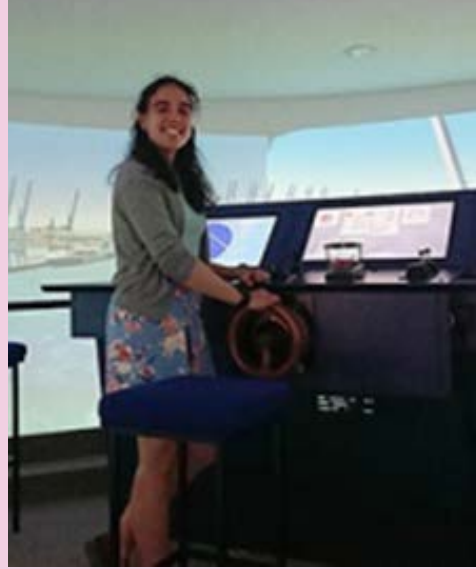


Pupils also competed to match various classic poems placed around the school with their titles. It was lovely to hear girls reading the poems out loud as they raced to collect their rewards from Mrs Gillies!

SUCCESSFUL FUTURES

Siena Society

Jessica Carter spoke to our Senior girls about her role as a graduate engineer at HR Wallingford and the career path she took to get there from studying STEM subjects at school. She works in the UK ship simulation centre on a variety of ship navigation based projects. Her group works together to model ships and new port designs virtually to assess their safety. Prior to joining HR Wallingford, she studied for a Masters Degree in Marine Engineering at the University of Southampton. Thank you, Jessica, for this inspiring talk about your fascinating career.



EPQ Mini

On Thursday, 7 October, pupils, staff and parents gathered for our fourth annual EPQ mini presentation evening. The EPQ mini programme is open to girls at the end of Year 9, to complete over their summer break and submit at the start of Year 10. The project is highly independent: girls select whether to participate, choose their own title, and have to motivate themselves to see it through to the final stage, their presentations. Once again we were treated to the most fascinating few hours, with topics as diverse as "Should museums return all their historical artefacts to their country of origin?", "Can environmental laws save our oceans?" and "Is the world becoming a better place?". While most girls choose to write an essay, others chose the option (equivalent to the formal EPQ taken in Sixth Form) to create an artefact, with Mei H-T creating a stunning piece incorporating her research on botany and women, and Hetti R showing off a digital animation showing her design for an environmentally friendly house, created on software used by professional architects. As well as celebrating with fizzy drinks, cheesy snacks and some of our Chef's delicious homemade cookies on the night, we'll also be recognising the girls' success with a presentation in this term's final assembly. For the time-being, they are to be congratulated for their determination, self-organisation, research skills and abundant intellectual curiosity.



"The girls are to be congratulated for their determination, self-organisation, research skills and abundant intellectual curiosity" - Miss Wallace

LIBRARY NEWS

Year 7 settling happily into the Senior Library



Library Clubs

With the end of pupil bubbles, we have been enjoying Scrapbooking, Board Games, Mini Reporter, Young Reporter, and Book Clubs in the Senior Library.



Middle School Book Club have been enjoying the Young Adult thriller *Ace of Spades* by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé, which is a gripping story of racism in an American high school. The girls have found it exciting and thought-provoking in equal measure.

CLUBS

Chess Club

It has been a real pleasure to see so many girls coming along to Chess Club this term. Since setting up the first boards back in September, thirty five girls from across the Senior School have dropped in on Friday Lunch for a game.



Some have been quick to establish themselves as hardcore regulars, whilst others have been content to drop by for the occasional match. If you have a board at home, why not dust it off and play a few rounds over Half Term? It is an excellent way to enjoy some screen free time that is both good for the mind and the soul. Mr Warner

Scrapbooking

We have been delighted to launch our Scrapbooking club this term, and it has proved to be a great success. Scrapbooking affords an excellent opportunity for creativity in a sociable and relaxed atmosphere.

Mrs Smith



SPORTS NEWS

Congratulations to our Year 9A and B Netball Teams who secured comfortable wins in their first match this season.

Girls of the game: Mia W, Phoebe S and Katherine C.



Our Year 9A Netball Squad is doing very well. After beating Kew House and Grey Court, they headed off to LEH for the Middlesex Prelims. They faced some exceptionally tough competition at this tournament and emerged with greater focus, determination and tactical ability, in spite of not winning all 7 matches. Well done to all who played and represented their school. It feels so good to be involved in competition once again.



The U18 Netball Team attended the Middlesex Netball Tournament on Wednesday after only a few short training sessions. They entered a world of girls as tall as Mrs Mercer but kept their spirits high. They played 7 matches throughout the afternoon and improved their tactical play as well as the score lines as the tournament progressed. It was fantastic to see their sense of fair play and team work in every game and other teams commented on how nice the St Catherine's girls were to play. Special mention goes to Clemmy and Tessa for fantastic third stage defence down the court, also to Hermione, Amelia and Thea who frustrated the opponents' shooters in every game with their positioning and tactics. Our captain, Beth, did a brilliant job of keeping the team calm and motivated.

It was lovely to take a group of girls ranging from Year 10 – Year 13 who were all friends and able to enjoy the day together. All girls played brilliantly and we are very much looking forward to the next U18 match. Well done to Beth R, Tessa J, Clemmy C, Olivia C, Hermione S, Thea R, Amelia S, Zoe C, Sophie B and Bella C.

KEY DATES

Monday 1 November - Y11 Autumn Assessment Week
Monday 1 November - Y12 Assessment Week
Monday 8 November - Wellbeing Week
Monday 8 November - Y10 RAP Project and Y10-11 Parents' RAP Project
Monday 8 November - Y11 pizza lunch
Tuesday 9 November - Singers Gala
Wednesday 10 November - Friday 12 November - Sixth Form Retreat
Thursday 11 November - Remembrance Day
Tuesday 16 November - Senior School Open Evening
Thursday 18 November - Y11 Sixth Form Preparation Day
Wednesday 24 November & Thursday 25 November - Senior Production, 'Peter Pan'
Wednesday 1 December - FOSC wreath making
Friday 3 December - Breakfast Club Christmas party
Friday 3 December - Middle School Christmas film night
Thursday 9 December - Y11 Retreat
Friday 10 December - Christmas Jumper/Lunch day & House Quiz
Sunday 12 December - FOSC Christmas Fair
Tuesday 14 December - Carol Service
Wednesday 15 December - End of Term

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



@stcatherinessch

Have a lovely Half Term holiday!