

St Margaret's Academy

ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Autumn Newsletter #18 6th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a fantastic week it has been at St Margaret's Academy! Our school has been buzzing with excitement, curiosity, and joyful learning from start to finish.

We began the week with the awe-inspiring space domes, which transported our pupils into the wonders of the cosmos. Their questions, wonder, and enthusiasm were wonderful to see. Later in the week, our Year 5 & Year 6 pupils represented us brilliantly during their meeting with local councillor Nick Bye, sharing thoughtful ideas and demonstrating real leadership.

Friday brought a burst of fun with Number Day, where maths came to life in creative and energetic ways across the school. It was brilliant to see pupils so engaged and confident in their learning and embracing the theme of Maths in their clothing choices.

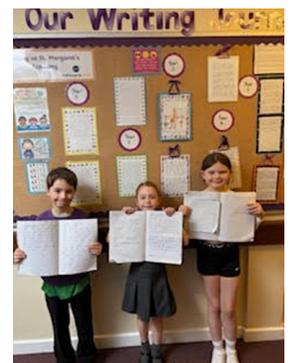
We were also delighted to welcome Gareth and Abby, who joined us for a Read Write Inc development day. Their participation in our phonics sessions provided valuable insight and celebration of the strong practice happening daily in classrooms.

A huge well done to all our pupils and staff for their enthusiasm, effort, and positivity throughout the week. You make St Margaret's a truly special place to learn and grow.

Wonderful Writers in Year 3

I was delighted to be joined by Ivy, Libby and Ethan from Year 3, who proudly shared their creative writing inspired by the book *Nen and the Lonely Fisherman*. The children independently planned their stories and worked hard to include rich descriptive language, as well as imaginative alternatives to the word *said* when using direct speech.

Their enthusiasm, creativity and confidence were wonderful to see, and I look forward to watching their writing continue to flourish over the coming weeks.



ACTIVE THINKING



RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



Visit from Nick Bye—Celebrating Inclusion and Pupil Voice

On Thursday, we were delighted to welcome Cabinet Member for Children's Services Nick Bye to St Margaret's Academy. He visited to learn more about how we support children with a hearing impairment, as well as our wider provision for pupils with SEND. His aim was to understand what is working well - and it was wonderful to hear his overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Nick was particularly impressed by the fantastic, talented musical performances taking place during his visit and the calm, respectful learning environment across the school. He commented on the warmth of relationships between staff and pupils, and the inclusive ethos that shines through in every classroom.

During the visit, Nick spent time with a group of our older pupils in Year 5 and Year 6: Esmee, Oscar, Raya, Rayyan, Harry and Teyla. Together, they explored what the children are most proud of at St Margaret's and what they hope to develop further - both within their school and in the wider context of living in Torbay.

Key highlights from the discussions and the visit included:

- The strong sense of how special and inclusive our school community is
- The supportive and trusted relationships pupils have with staff especially in respect of the amazing Hearing Support team.
- The children's aspirations for enhancing their school, including developing the school grounds further so more pupils can enjoy learning in the orchard and outdoor spaces
- The pride pupils feel in how they support one another and contribute to a positive, caring school culture

We are incredibly proud of our pupils, their thoughtful reflections, and the way they represented St Margaret's. It was a pleasure to share the wonderful work happening every day in our school.

Year 5 Space Dome

This week Year 5 enjoyed a visit from Simon and his Space Dome. This immersive experience using sound, images and film supported the work that they have been doing about space as part of their Science work this half term.

The children learnt about past, current and future space explorations, including the astronauts involved, the various missions and the range of spacecraft used. They also developed their knowledge about the individual characteristics of the planets whilst surrounded in our solar system inside the dome!



ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



Safer Internet Day—Tuesday 10th February

"Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI"

Next Monday in readiness for 10th February, we will be joining schools and organisations across the country in celebrating Safer Internet Day 2026. This year's theme, *"Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI"*, focuses on helping children understand how to use artificial intelligence safely, thoughtfully and responsibly in their online lives.

Throughout the week, pupils will take part in activities exploring:

- how AI tools and technologies are used
- what the benefits and risks might be
- how to make safe, informed choices when using smart technology
- who to talk to if something feels worrying or unclear

Our aim is to equip children with the confidence and knowledge they need to navigate the digital world in positive and empowered ways.

Support for Families at Home

We know how valuable it is for these conversations to continue beyond school. For guidance, tips and resources tailored to parents and carers, please explore:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

This website provides easy-to-use advice on privacy settings, managing screen time, how to respond to online worries, and much more.

Conversation Starters for Home

Talking regularly with your child about their online life is one of the most effective ways to support them. Not sure how to begin? These gentle conversation openers can help:

Ask about what they enjoy online:

- "What websites do you like to visit?"
- "What games do you and your friends enjoy playing?"
- "Can you show me your favourite online game? Shall we play it together?"



Ask how they stay safe:

- "What do you do to keep yourself safe online?"
- "What things are OK or not OK to share?"
- "Where did you learn those safety tips?"



Ask where they would go for help:

- "If something online worried you, who would you talk to?"
- "Do you know how to block or report something?"
- "Where can you find privacy or safety settings on the apps you use?"

Talk about your own internet use:

- "What online activities could we enjoy together?"
- "Is there something new you could show me online?"
- "How can we make sure we all stay safe when using the internet?"



Children's Mental Health Week

This important week runs from 9th to 15th February 2026. This year's theme, *"This Is My Place"*, focuses on helping children feel a strong sense of belonging in their school, families and wider communities.

Throughout the week, children will explore this theme through activities and discussions that promote connection and wellbeing. We would like to end the week on Friday 13th February with an optional non-uniform day to celebrate.

Please ensure your child/ren come to school in comfortable, warm clothes and ensure they have their coat. Our School Councillors felt that bright colours that encourage happiness would be nice and we would really appreciate any donation you can make to this important cause.

To make it easy please either make a donation on the dedicated [Just Giving Page](#) or drop off your donation into class on Friday morning. Thank you so much in anticipation of your support.



Playmaker Training and Y4 Multi-games Festival

Our Y5 Sports Leaders from last year who are currently Y6, have been on a training course to become a Playmaker. The Playmaker award aims to give them the skills and knowledge to be able to assist in leading their own games and activities at break times or lunchtimes.

They will give up some of their lunchtimes and help to organise games and activities for younger children in the playground. Be responsible for handing out and collecting in play equipment and help to make our playground a safe and happy place to play. Encourage everyone and be a fantastic role model. Record data like taking registers and monitoring different age groups.



Last week the children completed their training and I'm pleased to say that they all passed with flying colours. Their training finished with them using their skills to help run a Multi-skills Festival at St Cuthbert Mayne, which our Y4 children attended and some children from St Marychurch school. The Y4 children had a great time playing lots of different games with the emphasis on participation and having fun rather than competition. We hope to have our Playmakers on the playground organising games very soon for our younger children to engage with.



Playmaker Training and Y4 Multi-games Festival

This week and into next week we have been trialling some new playtime/lunchtime arrangements. Playtimes will remain the same length, but will take place in different time slots, meaning fewer children will be outside at any one time. We hope this will provide more space, reduce overwhelm, and ensure better access to equipment. Most importantly, we want the playground to feel calm, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

This trial comes directly from our autumn term survey feedback from pupils and staff, and we are keen to gather thoughts from pupils, families and staff. Please over the weekend and coming days you can share your thoughts, so that we can ensure that the new spring term runs smoothly and take on board your suggestions. Please click on [the link](#). Thank you

NSPCC Number Day

Thank you so much to all the children and families for supporting the NSPCC Number Day on

Friday 6th February 2026. We enjoyed seeing the children coming into school in their number and maths themed items of clothing and having a fun day of maths activities.

Thank you so much for your generosity and we will announce the total next week.

NSPCC



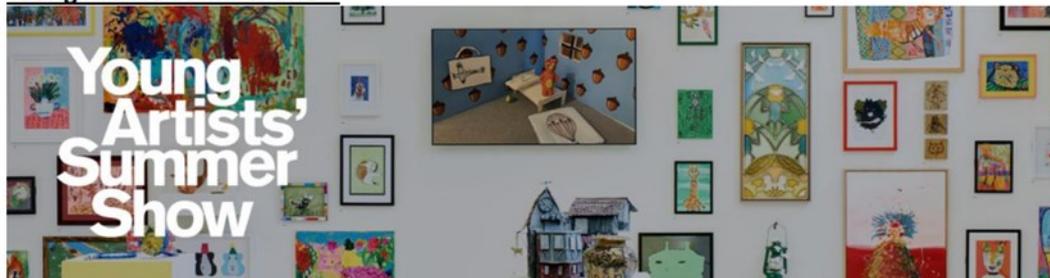
Number
Day

ART COMPETITION

Thank you to everyone who entered the 'Little Works, Big Difference' art competition in the Autumn term.

In the Spring term you may be interested in the following competition (but please be aware, the deadline is not too far away!)

Young Artist's Summer Show



About

Now in its eighth year, the Young Artists' Summer Show is a free, open submission exhibition for students aged 4–18 studying in the UK. Artworks are judged by a panel of artists and arts professionals, with selected artworks displayed online and on-site at the Royal Academy of Arts.

What artwork can you enter?

The artwork can be made using any material; it can be a painting, sculpture, photograph, installation, video, drawing, or a combination. There is no theme so artworks can be of any subject and we don't mind when you made the artwork.

Taking part

To take part, please give your art work to Miss Pritchard who will photocopy it and submit it into the Royal Academy. These artworks will then be judged by a panel of artists and arts professionals with selected artworks displayed online and on-site at the Royal Academy of Arts.

[Young Artists' Summer Show | Royal Academy](https://youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk/)

Please give your art work to Miss Pritchard by **Monday 23rd February**.

<https://youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk/>

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend! Rest, recharge, and enjoy the break. We look forward to welcoming you back on Monday for the final week before half term.

Mrs Nikki O'Dwyer
Headteacher

Free Online Introduction to Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language

lal.
Lancashire Adult Learning

Join us to learn more about BSL and effective communication with deaf people.

In this one-off session you will be introduced to deaf awareness and British Sign Language (BSL). You will identify the barriers the deaf community face on a daily basis communicating in a hearing world. This session will cover tips on how to communicate more effectively with all deaf people. It will also teach you how to introduce yourself using British Sign Language and show you how you can continue to learn BSL independently after the session.

Online
Tuesday 10th February
9:30-12:30



Online
Tuesday 17th March
9:30-12:30



Use the QR codes above to enrol today!

hsc.lal@eastlancslearning.ac.uk | www.lal.ac.uk | 01254 354423



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Diary Dates

9th - 13th February 2026	Children's Mental Health Week
9th February 2026	Birch Class Swimming Lesson Year 2 Dental Workshop
10th February 2026	PTA Disco Afterschool Safer Internet Day
12th February 2026	Spring Link Trustee Day
13th February 2026	Whole School Non-Uniform Day for Children's Mental Health 13.30—14.30 School Nurse Drop in Session for Families
16th February 2026— 22nd February 2026	Half Term
17th February 2026	Pancake Day—Shrove Tuesday
23rd February 2026	First Day Back for Children 5.30—15.40 Y1 Parent Phonics Meeting PSC Focus
27th February 2026	5.30—15.40 Y1 Parent Phonics Meeting PSC Focus
12th March 2026	13.00—14.00 Y3/4 Dodgeball Competition

ACTIVE THINKING

RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



Ash	Riley	For writing his name. Well done Riley ! What a superstar .
Elm	Freddie And Remi	Freddie- Has shown great interest and focus with his writing this week. Remi- For fantastic Maths and her representation of "5 and a bit"
Beech	Elsie. W	This award goes to someone who always does the right thing with every adult she works with. She is respectful, responsible, and kind. She is also one of the first people in class to offer help when someone needs it.
Pine	Neave	For her super calculation skills this week and for trying so hard in phonics with Mrs Price.
Apple	Amelia	In Apple Class, Amelia has really amazed us with her story writing this week. She has been so aspirational and put so much effort into her writing. You should be proud of yourself Amelia! Keep up the good work.
Oak	George W	George turned 7 this week and he has shone in all areas of his learning. He has worked hard on writing his own story (including finger spaces between his words), he has moved to blue group for phonics and he showed independence when getting ready for forest school. Well done George- you are a star!
Willow	Ayla	Willow's star of the week is Ayla. She consistently makes her best choices whether in class or out on the playground. She is always willing to help others out and does so with a smile and she has shown incredible kindness towards her classmates.
Holly	Luna	Luna is our star of the week this week. She has shown such aspiration in her writing by using her purple pen to add in any adverbs and adjectives. Well done Luna!
Cherry	Jonathan	We all need great friends when we are finding things tricky. Jonathan has been an amazing support this week to not only his best friend but also to adults. Thank you Jonathan, you've been a superstar
Hazel	Samuel	Samuel is our star in Hazel this week. Samuel is a true asset to Hazel class. He is always kind, always aspirational, always responsible and always respectful. Samuel has really challenged himself this week with his writing, choosing to write from a different perspective whilst still applying facts to make his work historically accurate. Well done, Samuel. Keep up the good work!
Rowan	Esmae	Esmae is the star of the week in Rowan class. She demonstrates all of our school values everyday. She is a wonderful learner and always tries her best in all tasks. She shows great perseverance and focus. Well done Esmae.
Birch	Zak	Zak has shown great determination and willingness in our writing lessons this week. While writing our Norse myth based on <i>Arthur and the Golden Rope</i> , he has shown that he has been listening carefully, taking in ideas he has learned over the past few weeks and applying them thoughtfully to his own writing. He should be very proud of the effort and progress he has made.
Hawthorn	Lola	Lola has been super responsible this week. We have seen super effort in her written work as well as aspiration to do well in our assessment tests. Lola has made some fantastic progress in maths and we are really proud of her! Well done Lola!
Maple	Rocco	Rocco is our star of the week. We are so very proud of him, particularly with his contributions to our freeze frame lessons in writing. Well done Rocco, you have shown such resilience!