



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DARTMOOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND SIXTH FORM • SPRING TERM 2026 • ISSUE 14



Spring Term Newsletter

Bringing you all the latest news from
South Dartmoor Community College

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from all the staff at SDCC



Welcome

In a world where you can be anything – be kind.

In the depths of January, I rescued a hedgehog. I found myself delivering it to a rescue centre in the back of beyond, somewhere long past Okehampton. On the way, I reversed for a car I'd met in a dark lane and, in the rain and the mud, I promptly got stuck in a ditch. Had it not been for the kindness of a stranger who happened upon me shortly afterwards, and the kindness of his farmer friend on the other end of his phone, who brought a tractor and a tow rope to my rescue, who knows where I would be now! It could have been the most costly hedgehog in history!!!

The point of my daft story is the same point we emphasised this week at our celebration events: in a world where you can be anything, be kind. We never know what difference we can make to others by simply choosing kindness.

Our students show their best selves in the way they look out for one another every day and it is a complete privilege to be part of this community and to work alongside such wonderful students and staff alike.

This newsletter highlights, once again, some of the best bits of our Spring term. But let us not forget all the things that happen behind the scenes, day in and day out: the kindnesses shown, the 'above and beyonds', the successes and the moments from which we learn. I am hugely proud of each and every one of the SDCC community.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and relaxing Easter.

Jen Veal
Executive Head Teacher



A Visit from Skye

South Dartmoor have been working in partnership with Ashburton and Newton Abbot's Neighbourhood Policing Team on a number of projects that have benefited our students in college and young people across our local community.

We had an unannounced visit from Skye, our local police dog. Skye is a highly skilled member of the police force, trained in the detection of illegal substances. Her handler spent the morning showcasing their work, and Skye visited several classes to demonstrate her abilities as a working police dog.

Other than a planted substance on a staff member for training purposes, Skye was unable to detect any substances on our students. We are delighted that our students continue to make safe and responsible choices.

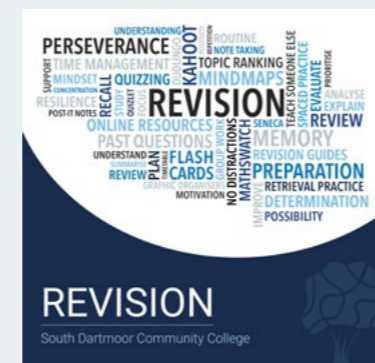


Year 10 and 11 Revision Evening

It was great to see so many Year 10 and 11 students, parents and carers at our revision evening.

The event included revision guidance, exam tips, coursework information and subject-specific talks aimed at maximising exam success.

For those who couldn't make it, there is a wealth of revision information on our [website](#).



Year 11 Masterclass Revision Programme

Year 11 students have been working incredibly hard as they prepare for their summer exams.

Their commitment has been outstanding, with many attending our after-college Masterclass revision sessions, making the most of every opportunity for focused support. We are immensely proud of their determination and effort.

Best of luck to all our Year 11 students!



Year 9 Options Evening

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Year 9 Options Information Evening, where we unveiled our exciting new curriculum.

The new offer places academic outcomes and opportunity alongside an enriched wider curriculum designed to inspire enquiry, curiosity and wellbeing.

Students have spent time investigating and experiencing the subjects and opportunities available and were supported in choosing options that ignite their passion for learning, challenge them to be the best they can be and prepare them for future careers and aspirations.

Our curriculum team will now craft an offer that best meets the needs of our brilliant Year 9 students.



World Book Day

To celebrate World Book Day, Year 7 students enjoyed a special Harry Potter-inspired Potions lesson in Science.

After reading the extract where Professor Snape introduces his first class, the room was set for a magical session.

Students got hands-on with bubbling cauldrons, disappearing ink and colour-changing "dragon's blood" potions.

It was a fantastic way to bring a little magic into science while supporting literacy, and students approached it with real enthusiasm and imagination. A truly enjoyable day!



Bus funding

We would like to say a huge thank you to Teign Housing Residents' Forum Community Chest for awarding us a grant of £500.

This funding has contributed towards an extra bus, enabling Year 11 students to attend additional revision sessions after college. We are extremely grateful for their support.



Scholarship Programmes

South Dartmoor Community College launched its 2026 Scholars' Programme this term for Year 7 students (High Performing Academy) and Year 8 students (the Masterclass Sessions).

The Creative Arts group began by exploring the work of local artists and drew inspiration from Dartmoor, developing expressive collages and learning about the theme of Place and Space. Students then headed out to Haytor to capture landscape images that will inspire their future paintings.

Performing Arts students explored local stories and created their own myths before developing original dance, drama and music pieces. They also began thinking about how to extend and combine their ideas across all three art forms.

Humanities students investigated what makes a civilisation successful, creating shared criteria before analysing an ancient Roman law trial. They are now researching a civilisation of their choice to evaluate how great they believe it to be using these criteria.

In Psychology, students explored neuroplasticity and how enriched environments support learning in humans and animals. They then designed habitats tailored to boosting the brain power of different species, sparking creative thinking and scientific curiosity.

STEM students took part in a "Floating Garden" challenge, designing a floodproof garden capable of growing plants and keeping chickens. Inspired by discussions about flood risks in Bangladesh, they created and built their models with support from A level mentors before presenting and testing their prototypes – with the strongest garden holding 3.6 kg!

Lastly, Sport students were introduced to Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) training, exploring techniques to enhance athletic performance. They also explored weight training, focusing on correct lifting technique, strength development and muscular endurance.



Adventures on the Moor

Trail Trotters have enjoyed a fantastic term of running during their REACH sessions, exploring a range of Dartmoor routes and building confidence, stamina and teamwork along the way.

One outing took students on a long circular route from near Cold East Cross up to Top Tor. Misty but dry weather created an atmospheric backdrop, and once warmed up, the group settled into a strong, steady pace. They kept a respectful distance from the sheep and even spotted Dartmoor ponies grazing in the mist. Despite the distance, every runner completed the route with time to spare, showing great teamwork, pacing and resilience. For many newcomers, it was their longest off-road run yet, and they rose to the challenge impressively.

Another outing took the group up and around Haytor on a bright, breezy and beautifully sunny day. Although the elusive quarry lake remained unfound, the stunning views and lively conditions made it a fun and energising adventure. Trail Trotters also enjoyed a wonderful run to Bonehill Rocks, tackling one of the steepest climbs of the term. The reward was magnificent views across the moor, enjoyed in wonderfully warm sunshine.

With growing confidence and fantastic team spirit, Trail Trotters have had an excellent term – and they can't wait for more adventures!



Formal Award Presentations

Students came together at the end of term to celebrate each other's wonderful achievements.

Students were nominated for a number of different awards, including subject, tutor and Head of Year nominations. The final presentation was the Headteacher's award. Each award winner also received communication home to celebrate their achievements.



Building Aspirations

Our careers programme offers students a broad range of meaningful opportunities to explore their future pathways.

Across the college, students have taken part in a variety of activities designed to broaden their understanding of education, employment and training. These have included career-focused assemblies, employer and provider talks, work-experience preparation and opportunities to learn more about post-16 and post-18 routes.

Students in Years 9–13 also visited the Careers Fair, engaging with a wide range of exhibitors. The event helped them explore future pathways, discover career opportunities and gain insight into A level subjects to support their next-step decisions.

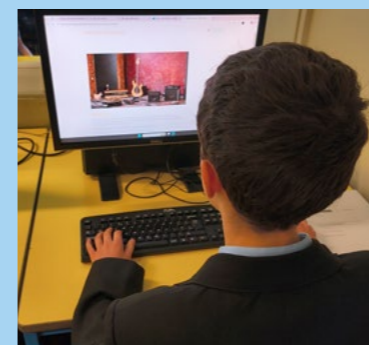


Think Careers

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be taking part in 'Think Careers' lessons.

These sessions use Unifrog – an online platform designed to support students as they navigate their educational and career pathways.

Through Unifrog, students can explore interests, research careers and find opportunities, all in one easy-to-use system.



Understanding Labour Market Information

Labour Market Information (LMI) is a combination of data, statistics, research and practical experience about the world of work.

LMI shows the job opportunities, labour trends and skills currently in demand for young people moving through education and into employment. Below is the latest employment data for Devon and Torbay.

You can find out more information about the current Labour Market on the Unifrog platform.

Labour Market Information Devon and Torbay

Most people work in:



Sunshine and Coastlines

Glorious sunshine welcomed our Year 12 geographers to the Dorset coast, creating perfect conditions for the start of their fieldwork.



Students immersed themselves in a range of fieldwork techniques during their stay and investigated the coastal processes shaping this incredible landscape.

Their first stop, Chesil Beach, provided the perfect natural classroom to build confidence, test ideas and deepen understanding – a brilliant start to their coastal fieldwork adventure.

The sunshine continued on their second day, as the group headed to the stunning beaches of Studland and Swanage to explore the processes shaping this low-energy coastline, including a stop to admire the iconic Old Harry Rocks. From investigating sand dune succession to analysing coastal management

techniques, they immersed themselves in hands-on fieldwork and discovered just how dynamic this landscape really is.

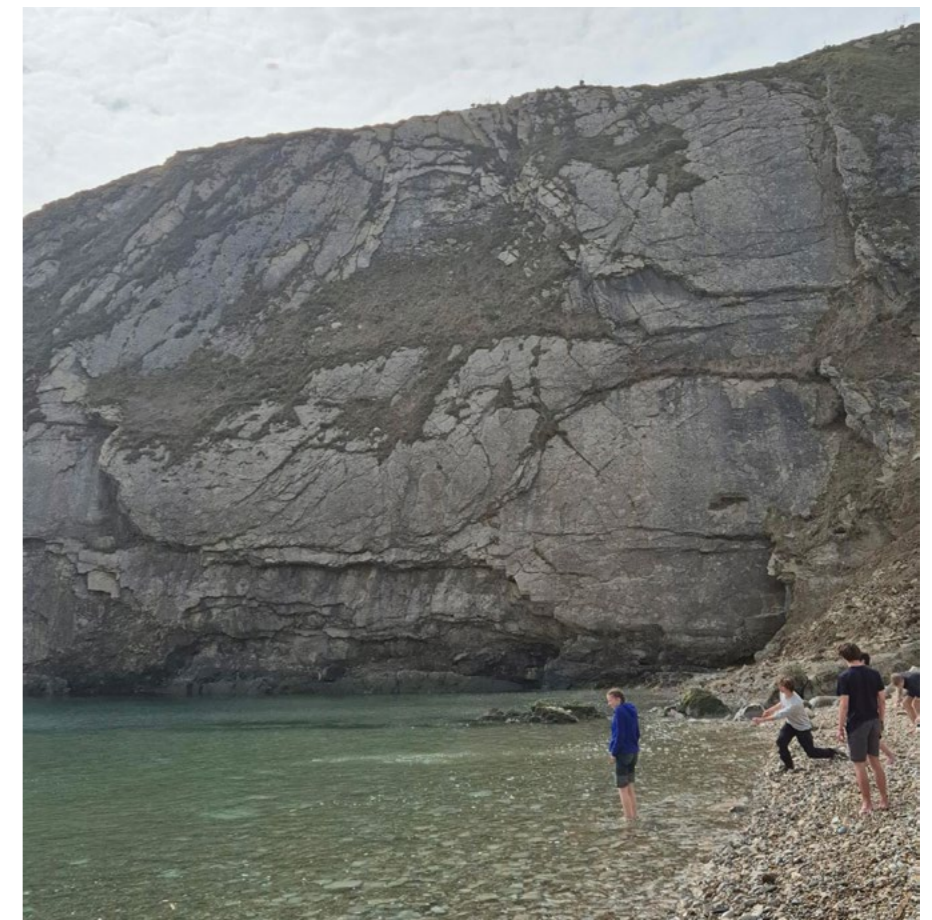
Their learning continued the next day in Boscombe, where

“From the iconic arch of Durdle Door to a sun-soaked Man O’War beach, it was a perfect blend of learning and landscape”

they shifted focus to human geography techniques and real-world enquiry skills. Exploring themes such as regeneration and globalisation, they made strong

links between the changing coastal townscape and the concepts studied in the classroom. It was a fantastic opportunity to turn theory into lived experience and deepen their understanding of human geography in action.

Their final day took them straight to some quintessential geography. From the iconic arch of Durdle Door to a sun-soaked wander down to Man O’ War beach – complete with some essential stone-skimming practice – it was a perfect blend of learning and landscape. A short hike up and over the cliffs led them to the sublime Lulworth Cove for their final stop, rounding off four days of hard work, big views and brilliant fieldwork.

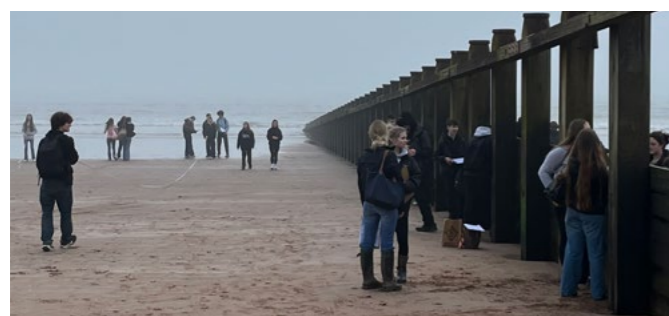


Foggy Fieldwork

It was a foggy start for our Year 11 geographers at Dawlish Warren, but despite the limited visibility, students showed brilliant resilience as they completed their compulsory GCSE fieldwork.

They revisited key coastal processes, especially longshore drift, and investigated whether the groynes at Dawlish Warren are the most effective coastal management strategy. Students explored a range of coastal defences that help protect vital areas such as the beach, railway line and local businesses, before collecting groyne measurements to analyse back at college.

A huge well done to the students for staying focused, working hard and embracing the challenge – even in the fog! A great day of geography in action.



Forest School

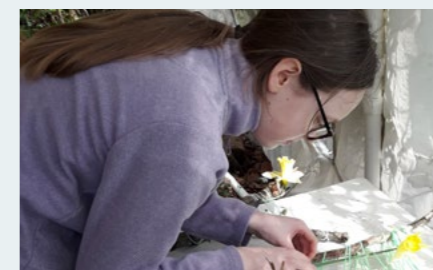
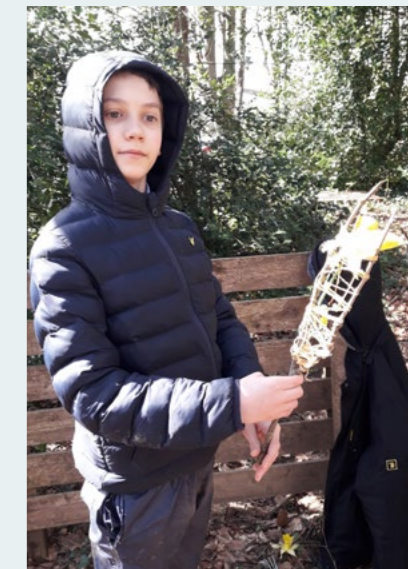
This term, students have shown impressive growth during their Forest School sessions.

With brighter days and new life emerging around them, they have made full use of the changing season—exploring woodland and pond habitats, identifying plants and insects and developing practical outdoor skills.

Students have become noticeably more confident, whether navigating challenging terrain, leading group tasks or applying new techniques such as climbing trees, shelter building, tool use and fire-lighting.

Their teamwork, resilience, and problem solving skills have strengthened week by week, and many have begun to take real ownership of their outdoor learning.

It has been inspiring to see students not only develop new abilities but also thrive personally—showing independence, supporting one another and engaging deeply with the natural environment. We are excited to build on this progress as spring unfolds and we move toward the energy and brightness of summer.



Ten Tors 2026: Mud, Maps and Mighty Team Spirit

There are few classrooms quite like Dartmoor; wind across the tors, mud underfoot, maps flapping in the breeze and the occasional bog lying in wait.



This is where the South Dartmoor Community College Ten Tors and Walking Group teams have been learning their craft since October. What began as a group of enthusiastic walkers has quickly grown into a determined, resilient and adventurous cohort preparing for one of Dartmoor's most iconic challenges.

Training started with day walks across both the North and South Moor, where students steadily built their navigation skills, confidence and teamwork. The teams have ventured into some wonderfully remote places, including the infamous

Great Kneeset on North Dartmoor. They have tackled river crossings in ever-changing conditions and, on occasion, become geographically misplaced.

All of this training led to a big

“Students steadily built their navigation skills, confidence and teamwork”

milestone: the teams' first independent walk and overnight camp at Mount Kelly with the brilliant [Simply Outdoors](#) team in

Tavistock. After a training day in college learning how to pitch tents, cook outdoors and, crucially, what to eat to stay fuelled, the students set off ready for adventure. The walk began in dry and sunny conditions, although the Dartmoor weather soon had other ideas. Thankfully, most were already snoring in their tents by the time the rain arrived!

Day two saw the 35-mile teams enjoy an action-packed adventure day with archery, high ropes and plenty of challenges that pushed some well outside their comfort zones — ending with a million



smiles and possibly a small sugar high.

Meanwhile, the 45 and 55 mile teams faced a tough day on the moor in truly gruelling conditions. Between surprise bogs, bonus chocolate Hobnobs from Heatherbelle and some questionable sing-alongs, they showed incredible resilience and teamwork.

A huge thank you must go to our amazing volunteer team — an incredibly generous, supportive and all-round wonderful group of people who give up their time (often in wild Dartmoor weather!) to make this possible. Quite simply, none of this would happen without them. We are also hugely grateful to the [Dartmoor Lodge](#) for sponsoring the adventure day and cheering our teams on this year!

We couldn't be more proud of the attitude and spirit shown so far. The boots are well and truly muddy, the skills are growing fast and the training continues. There are many more miles, maps and moorland adventures ahead before Ten Tors 2026 arrives.



A Coastal Challenge

Two members of the Ten Tors team recently tackled a challenging and varied section of the South West Coast Path.

Setting off from Woolacombe, Drew and volunteer Ros navigated flooded paths, steep diversions, dramatic cliffs and long stretches of sand, with views opening up towards Ilfracombe on the final ascent.

After a long day, they made it to the bus stop just in time for the last bus back to their starting point with only moments to spare, finishing their adventure with a well-earned sense of achievement.

Drew has written a detailed account of their adventure, which can be read on our [website](#).



Year 7 Landscape Paintings

This term, Year 7 students have been exploring colour theory and learning how to create the illusion of space in their artwork.

After studying the colour wheel, they applied their knowledge to landscape paintings, experimenting with complementary colours, monochromatic schemes and accent colours. Students planned their compositions carefully and produced some truly impressive outcomes!



Artistic Exploration

Art and Design students in Year 10 have been immersing themselves in hands-on creativity through inspiring sessions at MAKE Southwest.

During their first visit, students took part in a pottery workshop led by the immensely talented Joss Hibbs from [Powdermills Pottery](#). They learned how to throw a pot and had the chance to explore and document the KINETIC exhibition currently on display.

The students headed back into the pottery studio for a second session to complete their clay masterpieces, before exploring another fantastic exhibition at [Bovey Paradiso](#), led by Mrs Carr.

Throughout both visits, students were praised highly by the ceramic artist, the education facilitator and members of the public. Their enthusiasm, focus and willingness to get their hands (and aprons!) messy made them a shining example of the creativity and commitment within our Art and Design cohort.

Students' reflections on their visit can be viewed on our [website](#).



Body Language Week

Body Language Week was bursting with inspirational choreography, incredible commitment and genuine dedication.

We are so proud of the 600+ dancers who took to the stage across our three performance platforms; their energy and passion made the whole celebration unforgettable. At South Dartmoor, we continue to champion outstanding dance opportunities thanks to our wonderful learning community. You can read more about Body Language Week on our [website](#).



Live Sessions

Live Sessions was a great success, and we are incredibly proud of everyone involved.

The evening showcased performances from all year groups, including solos and small ensembles, and featured a wide variety of pieces chosen and introduced by the students.

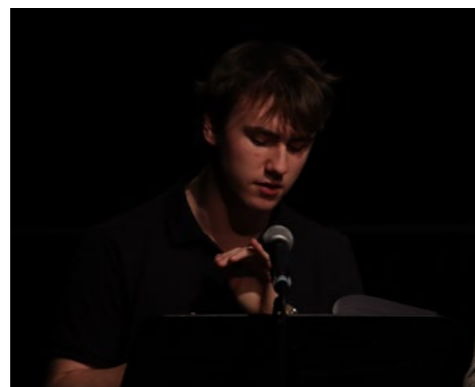
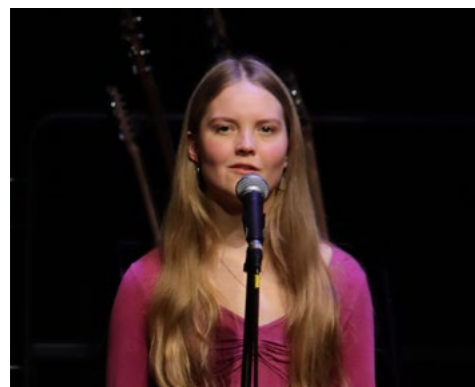
A huge thank you to our talented performers, who brought energy, dedication and confidence to the stage. We are also very grateful to our audience, families, teachers and FOSDA for their continued support – your encouragement means so much to our students and the wider community.



Easter Concert

Thank you to everyone for making our Easter Concert such a wonderful event!

Students from Years 4–13 performed with incredible excitement and pride, showcasing a fantastic range of musical styles. It was amazing to see so many students involved, such a great variety of genres and a full audience supporting them throughout. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a success — and especially to our students for their hard work and dedication. We are so proud of you all!



Dartmoor Lodge Visit

Hospitality and Catering students visited Dartmoor Lodge Hotel and worked with staff across both front and back of house.

They were able to see a business in action and learnt about key kitchen and service processes to support their course. Students gained experience in service, health and safety, stock control, table settings, taking orders and a range of professional hospitality skills. They were fantastic ambassadors for the college throughout the visit.

We were thoroughly impressed with the outstanding kitchens and welcoming staff at the [Lodge](#), and we are very grateful to the team for giving up their time to provide such a positive experience for our students.



A Seasonal Celebration

At the end of the Autumn term, our amazing Year 10 and 11 Hospitality and Catering students pulled off a Christmas miracle.

From gravy and crackers to perfectly presented tables, they served a festive lunch to Years 7, 8 and 9, working tirelessly to bring our college community together for a celebration of joy and belonging. Exhausting? Yes. Rewarding? Absolutely!



Science Week

This year we joined the national celebration of Science Week, embracing curiosity — the starting point of every great discovery!

Curiosity sits at the heart of scientific investigation—every discovery begins with a simple question that drives us to explore, test and push the boundaries of what we know.

The week began with an inspiring assembly for Years 7–10, introducing students to the exciting possibilities that curiosity can unlock. They explored ideas such as driverless cars, advances in genetic engineering, future space travel and other remarkable developments shaping our world. The assembly encouraged students to think about how these breakthroughs began with inquisitive minds willing to ask questions.

Throughout the week, Year 7 and 8 students took part in special Science Week lessons. They investigated mystery powders using chemical reactions, explored how acids and carbonates can inflate balloons and observed woodlice to discover the conditions they prefer. Each activity gave students the chance to think, test and question —just like real scientists.

Science Week once again showed that curiosity is a powerful force for learning. By asking questions, students discovered that science is not just something found in textbooks but a way of thinking that helps us understand the world around us. We hope it has inspired everyone to stay curious and keep exploring new ideas—both in and beyond the classroom.



Grant Boost for Science

We are incredibly grateful to the Norman Family Charitable Trust for awarding FOSDA a £1,500 grant to purchase 15 new power supplies for our classrooms.

These power supplies are already having a positive impact. They support the practical work our students do in lessons, helping them explore circuits, develop technical skills and gain hands-on experience that deepens their understanding.

A heartfelt thank you to the [Norman Family Trust](#) for supporting our students and helping us enhance the learning experience across our Science department.



County Cricket Finals

Congratulations to our U13 Girls' Cricket Team, who qualified for the Chance to Shine County Finals in March, then went on to achieve an impressive third place at the event!

The team showcased incredible skill, determination and team spirit throughout the competition — all the more impressive as several players are still relatively new to cricket. Their hard work and commitment were evident as they secured wins against Torquay Girls' Grammar School, St James School and Ivybridge Community College, narrowly missing out on a place in the final against eventual winners Blundell's School.

A special thank you goes to Olive in Year 12 for her fantastic support in coaching the team during the event.

Players voted for their awards, with Best Players going to Ella and Elise, and Team Players awarded to Lily and Maisie.

Cricket Club continues every Wednesday during Break 2 and is available as an option within the REACH programme—a great opportunity for anyone looking to develop their skills further.

A brilliant effort from everyone involved — we are so proud of you!



Year 9 Football

Our Year 9 footballers travelled to KEVICC for the annual Football CVL tournament.

Entering two teams, they worked through a busy round robin schedule, with each side playing four matches. Both SDCC A and B performed brilliantly: the A team finished with one win and three draws, while the B team secured three wins and one draw.

Most impressively, neither team conceded a single goal across the entire tournament—a fantastic reflection of their teamwork and determination.

Players of the Tournament were our exceptional goalkeepers, Toby and Jay, who kept multiple clean sheets and stood strong against numerous shots. A brilliant effort from every player involved!

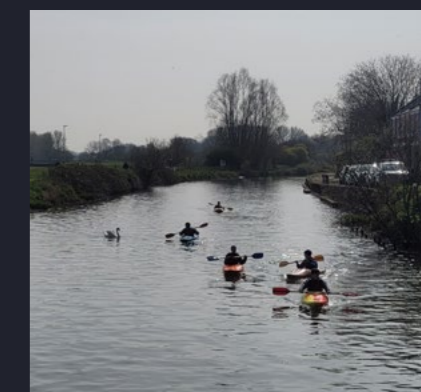
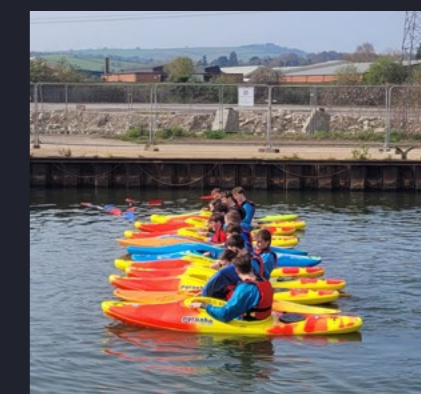
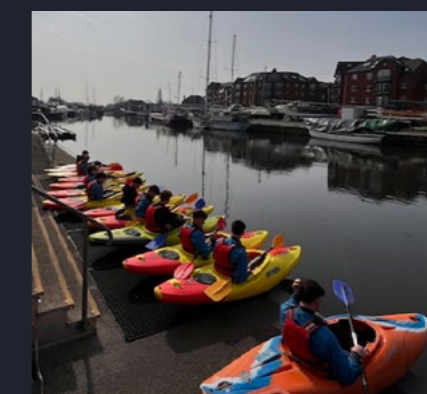


A Day on the Water

Year 13 Health, Fitness and Sports Science students took part in an Outdoor Adventurous Activities (OAA) kayaking trip at Haven Banks Outdoor Education Centre, enjoying a fantastic day on the water in Exeter.

From team activities such as kayaking games and water-based challenges to building individual confidence and resilience, the trip perfectly captured the aims of the OAA element of the course. Students stepped out of their comfort zones, embraced new challenges with enthusiasm, interacted positively with one another and supported each other every step of the way — with plenty of laughter throughout!

The group were an absolute pleasure and represented the college exceptionally well. Their attitude, behaviour and willingness to get involved were outstanding, reflecting our Sixth Form community superbly. A brilliant way to round off the year for our Year 13 Sports Science students!



Multi-Sport Festival

We were delighted to host a KS2 Multi-Sport Festival for targeted students, giving them a fun and supportive space to try new activities, challenge themselves and build confidence through sport.

Students took part in Archery, Boccia, Benchball, Traverse Climbing, Orienteering and Pickleball, with each activity designed to develop teamwork, problem-solving and resilience. The students were brilliantly supported by our Year 9 Sports Leaders, who showed excellent leadership and enthusiasm throughout.

It was inspiring to see the students grow in confidence, celebrate their achievements and encourage one another. A huge thank you to the schools involved for supporting this opportunity, and well done to the Year 9 Sports Leaders for helping create such a positive and memorable experience.



Gymnastics competition

Key Stage 2 students took part in an exciting gymnastics competition, and their focus, pride and determination shone throughout.

SDCC Sport Leaders judged and scored with great professionalism. While one age group competed, the other developed their skills on the vault, beam, box tops and mats. There was plenty of talent on display, with students challenging themselves, learning new skills and supporting one another.

Congratulations to our winners and runners-up, and well done to everyone who took part – performing in front of others takes real courage, and students represented their schools superbly. Thank you to the SDCC Sport Leaders and staff for their support throughout the morning. A truly inspiring event!



Let's Dance

As part of Body Language Week, this year's Let's Dance 2026 shows were a joyful celebration of creativity, confidence and community.

The evening brought together students from our local schools and community project groups, alongside our international school partner, Nayamba School in Zambia. Each piece was created using inspirational quotes and beautifully reflected themes of resilience, kindness, ambition and hope, with the young dancers bringing their chosen words to life through movement, music and imagination. The standard of performance was fantastic, and the dancers' energy, confidence and joy made the evening incredibly special.

We are absolutely thrilled that ticket and raffle sales from both *Let's Dance* and *Primary Body Language* shows raised an incredible £2,508.46 for Nayamba School's food programme. Every penny will go directly to support the food programme – enough to provide over five months of meals for every student.

A huge thank you to all the teachers, organisers, volunteers and the technical team who made the event possible, and congratulations to all the amazing young performers who made *Let's Dance 2026* such a memorable and inspiring evening.

A full article with more details is available on the SDCC [website](#).



Happy Easter!

The staff at South Dartmoor would like to wish you all a Happy Easter.

The new term starts on Monday 20th April 2026, and we look forward to welcoming students back.



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