



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DARTMOOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND SIXTH FORM • AUTUMN TERM 2025 • ISSUE 13



Autumn Term Newsletter

Bringing you all the latest news from
South Dartmoor Community College

CONTENTS

AUTUMN 2025



3 WELCOME
Executive Head Teacher's message

4 STUDENT NEWS
First Week Back
First Aid Workshop
Languages for All
Moors Week
Scholarship Programmes
Award Presentations
Christmas Dinner

8 REACH PROGRAMME
Magic on the Moor

9 DUKE OF EDINBURGH
Cornish Coast Challenge

10 TEN TORS
The Journey Starts

11 CREATIVE SUBJECTS
Linden Dance Company
Autumn Concert
Oliver!
Carols on Tour
Carol Service

18 SPORT
BMX Success
Cricket Tour to South Africa
Year 7 Football
Year 8 Football
Polocrosse
Year 7 Rugby
Cross Country at Stover
Devon Hockey
Netball
Devon Cricket
SDCC in Top 25 for Cricket

24 DSSP
Trampoline and Flight Festival
Dance Festival
KS1 Aesthetics Festival

26 SIXTH FORM
Student Finance Talk
Open Evening and Futures Event
A Level Chemistry
Graphics
A Festive Celebration

28 STAFF NEWS
A Journey through the Alps
New Staff
And finally...



Welcome

Every year, I am fortunate to be invited as 'guest headteacher' to speak to over 100 teacher trainees at Marjons.



Two weeks ago, I arrived on campus and was signed in by a very nice student volunteer who looked ever so familiar. I duly delivered my session and signed out two hours later with the same young man who had met me. And then it dawned on me.... I hung back and asked 'Are you Jack?' His face lit up and he grinned. 'I didn't think you had remembered me,' he said.

Jack was a student with whom I had spent a lot of time in a previous Headship. School had been a challenge for him; he was bright but he did not enjoy his learning and he struggled to make good decisions. He regularly received sanctions for disruption, missed homework or poor behaviour. His mum was in school most weeks and we struck up a good relationship, working together to ensure Jack got closer to realising his potential.

I left that Headship before Jack had finished school so I did not know what had become of him. Until last week. After asking if I remembered him, he said, 'I bet you never thought little Jack could get to university and train to become a teacher?' The answer to that question is 'yes, I did'.

We believe that all students can succeed, achieve and thrive, and we want nothing less for them. We are mindful of the pressures on students and we always try to keep a balance between high expectations and well-being. However, the power of learning can never be underestimated.

Your children continue to be amazing! We are very proud of them, what they achieve and who they aspire to be. The following pages will give you a small insight into what we have been doing this year so far, alongside the excellent learning every day.

Thank you for all your support. On behalf of the staff, we wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jen Veal
Executive Head Teacher



First Week Back

What a fantastic first week back at South Dartmoor!

From reconnecting with friends to embracing new learning adventures, the energy across the college was inspiring. A huge thank you to our students, staff and families for making the start of the year so positive.



First Aid Workshop

Year 7 students took part in an engaging and empowering first aid workshop led by Mrs Dixon.

The session introduced pupils to the fundamentals of first aid, equipping them with the confidence to respond in emergency situations. Students explored the key qualities of a good first aider, learned how to assess a casualty's condition, practised the recovery position for breathing casualties and discovered how and when to perform CPR.

This hands-on experience gave them a vital introduction to life-saving techniques and helped build their awareness of how to act calmly and effectively in a crisis—a brilliant step toward becoming responsible and caring members of the community!



Languages for All

Year 11 Languages students enjoyed an inspiring trip to Exeter University.

The visit was part of the *Languages for All* programme, which promotes language learning beyond GCSE.

They met alumni, enjoyed a taster Turkish lesson and spoke with professionals who shared how their language degrees have shaped their careers. It was a day full of inspiration, new experiences and motivation for their language-learning journey!



Moors Week

Year 7 students had a great time on Dartmoor, exploring its rich history, diverse biology and incredible geography.

Our expert staff linked this outdoor learning experience to a range of curriculum subjects, bringing these connections back into the classroom to further enrich students' studies.

Moors Week was thoughtfully planned to help students develop a deeper understanding of their sense of place in the world—an important part of discovering who they are and who they aspire to become.

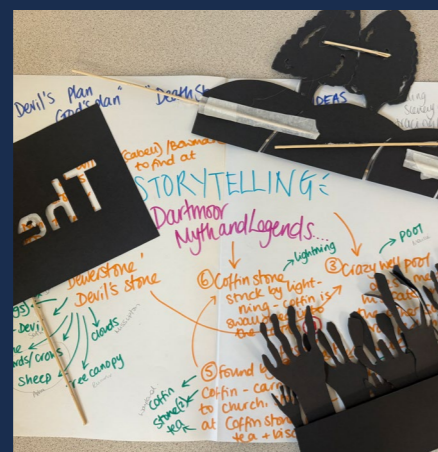


Scholarship Programmes

Our HPA and Masterclass students enjoyed a term of inspiring experiences.

Different groups took part in a range of activities: touring Plymouth Argyle FC with alumni Charlie, exploring economics through hands-on challenges, creating stories using performing arts, visiting the Sharpham Trust rewilding site and producing a shadow-puppet film based on Dartmoor myths.

Parents and carers joined us for the graduation evenings where students proudly presented their work to a large audience in the Sixth Form Centre.



Award Presentations

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

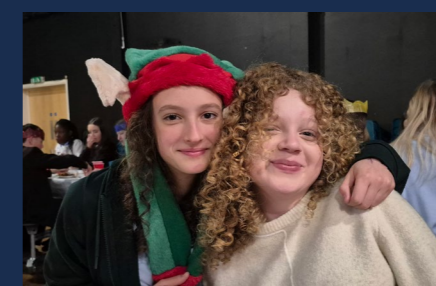
Awards included faculty, Head of Year and the prestigious Headteacher's award. A huge well done to all our notable mentions and award winners—what a wonderful way to round off the term's festivities!



Christmas Dinner

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 enjoyed a festive Christmas dinner served by our wonderful catering students.

The occasion brought everyone together to share a meal, socialise with friends and celebrate each other's achievements.



Magic on the Moor

Our Trail Trotters have been making the most of Dartmoor with fantastic outings full of energy, teamwork and stunning scenery.

On one adventure, they looped past Top Tor and Hollow Tor and tiptoed across the stepping stones at Blackslade Ford. Some of them mixed it up with a run or hike, while others just ran and ran—clocking a solid 4km. Big shoutout to the crew who sprint-finished to beat Mr Stokes to the end!

More recently, the team tackled the climb to Rippon Tor, where crisp air and sweeping views set the scene for another adventurous afternoon. Wildlife was out in force—Dartmoor never disappoints! While grazing cows were given a respectful wide berth, curious ponies wandered closer, adding an enchanting touch to the day.

Both outings were packed with great vibes and determination, and the groups soaked up plenty of moorland magic. A fantastic effort from everyone—more adventures to remember!



Cornish Coast Challenge

Our Silver DofE students embarked on a three-day trek from Bude to Port Isaac.

Despite a blustery start, their spirits remained high as they embraced the adventure ahead. The first night brought thunder, lightning and heavy rain, but the group persevered. Thankfully, the forecast promised better weather for the second day, and the team pressed on towards Boscastle and Tintagel, camping near Tintagel that evening.

On the final day, the students continued their journey, making their way to Port Isaac. A fantastic achievement and a memorable experience for all involved!



Ten Tors: The Journey Starts

Our new Ten Tors participants for the 2026 training season have been nothing short of spectacular.

The 35-mile teams kicked things off with an introductory day covering what lies ahead in their training, including essential navigation skills. They then put those skills to the test on a full-day walk from Bovey Parke to Haytor. Clocking up solid miles, they discovered just how soggy a Dartmoor bog can be and enjoyed the moor at its best—a glorious burst of sunshine paired with a crisp, frosty chill. This was also their first outing with all three distances—35, 45 and 55 miles—and every participant rose brilliantly to the challenge.

A huge thank you to our wonderful volunteers who walked every step alongside the teams. We were delighted to welcome new faces and see several Sixth Form students return to join the 55-mile team after taking last year off for exams.

Training is well underway, spirits are high and the adventure has only just begun. Watch this space—and give them a wave if you see them out on the moor!



Linden Dance Company

We were thrilled to welcome Linden Dance Company back recently for their third tour with us.

We are incredibly lucky to have formed a strong partnership with this inspiring company in recent years. They strive to empower, nurture and engage through dance—and they absolutely delivered.

As part of their Devon schools tour, the team held a residency at SDCC, finishing with a full day packed with inspiring workshops for examination dancers. The day concluded with a performance of their Arts Council-funded production, *Caged*, to over 370 students across KS3 and KS4.

The entire programme was exceptional—both inspiring and sparking curiosity among all students who worked with the company throughout the week. Our students were particularly fortunate to gain behind-the-scenes access, learning about the dancers' backgrounds and training experiences, and even interacting with the iconic bird cage at the heart of the professional work.

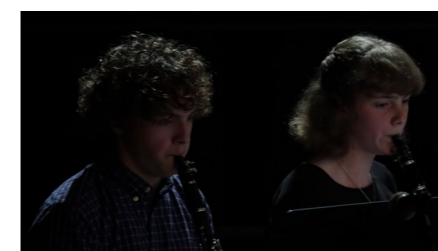
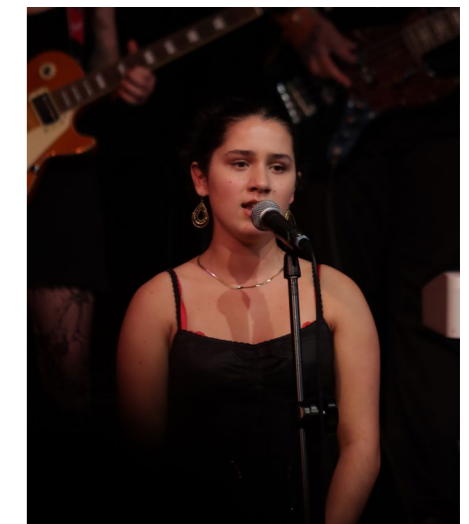
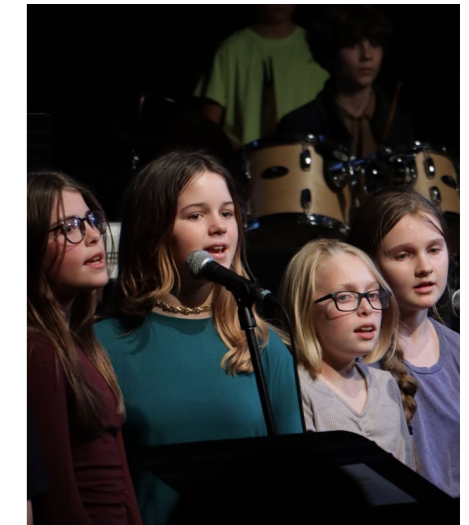
We cannot wait to welcome them back in 2026!



Autumn Concert

Our Autumn Concert marked the first performance showcase of the academic year, and what an incredible start it was!

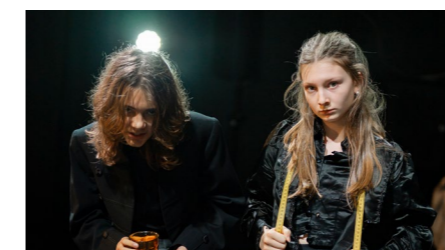
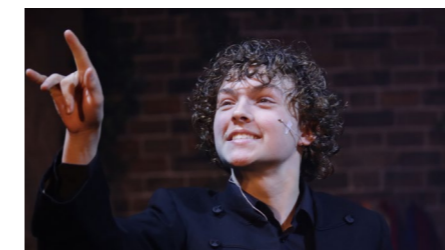
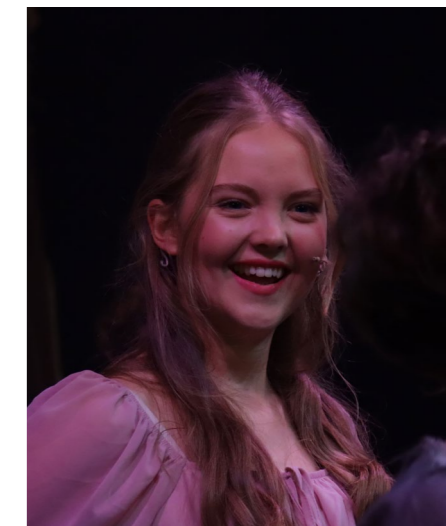
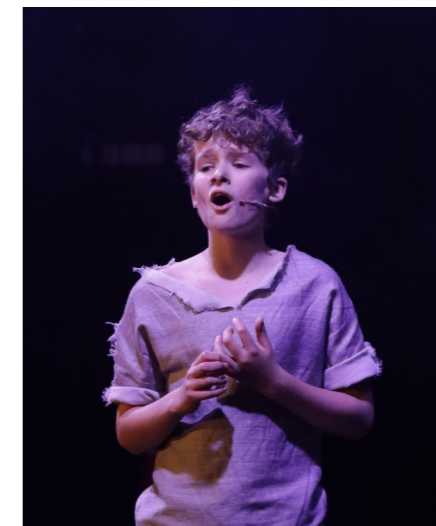
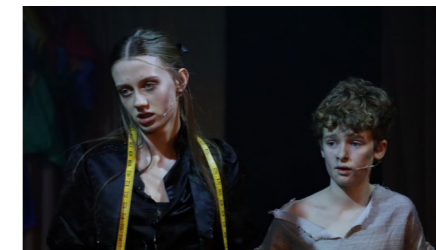
The hall was alive with warmth and excitement as students from every year group took to the stage, sharing their passion and creativity with the audience. This term, our students have demonstrated exceptional energy and commitment, and their performances were a true reflection of that hard work. From the confidence on stage to the artistry in each piece, the evening highlighted the depth of talent within our school community.



Oliver!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our recent performances of Oliver! Your enthusiasm and heartfelt support meant the world to us.

Bringing this classic musical to life takes dedication and love, and seeing audiences respond with such warmth made every moment worthwhile. The incredible cast and creative team were the heart and soul of this production. The dedication, passion and sheer determination they brought made this run not only a success but an unforgettable adventure.



Carols on Tour

We enjoyed a truly wonderful day as our musicians prepared for the festive season and our Christmas celebrations.

Our choir and orchestras travelled to Exeter, Newton Abbot, Ashburton Primary School and Buckfast Abbey, delighting audiences with performances of carols in readiness for our Annual Carol Service.

Throughout the day, students embraced the Christmas spirit, performing with enthusiasm as they shared the joy of the season with members of the local community. It was a heart-warming experience that showcased not only their musical talents but also their sense of togetherness and festive goodwill.

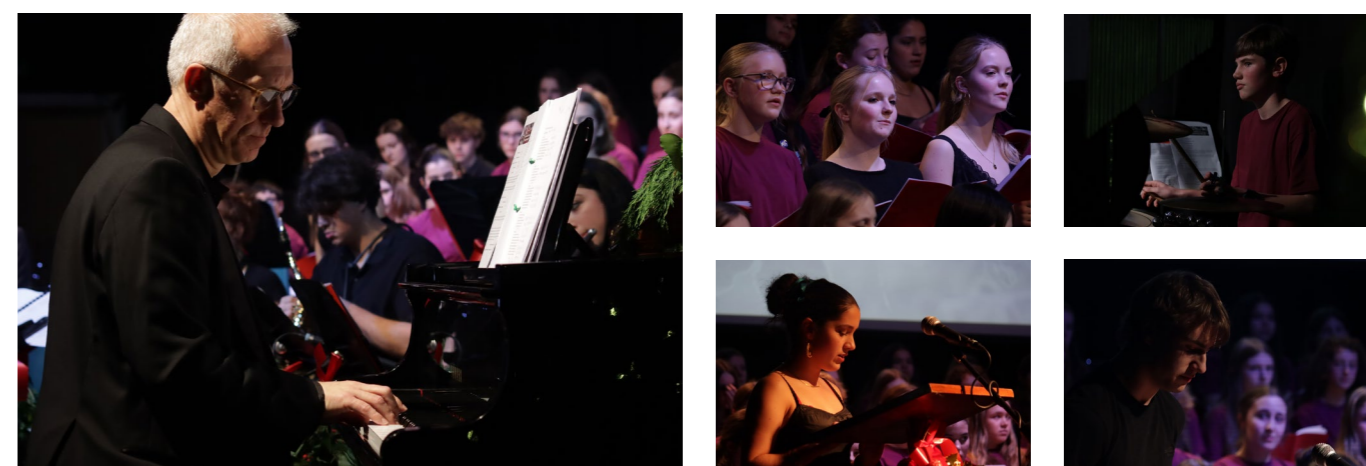
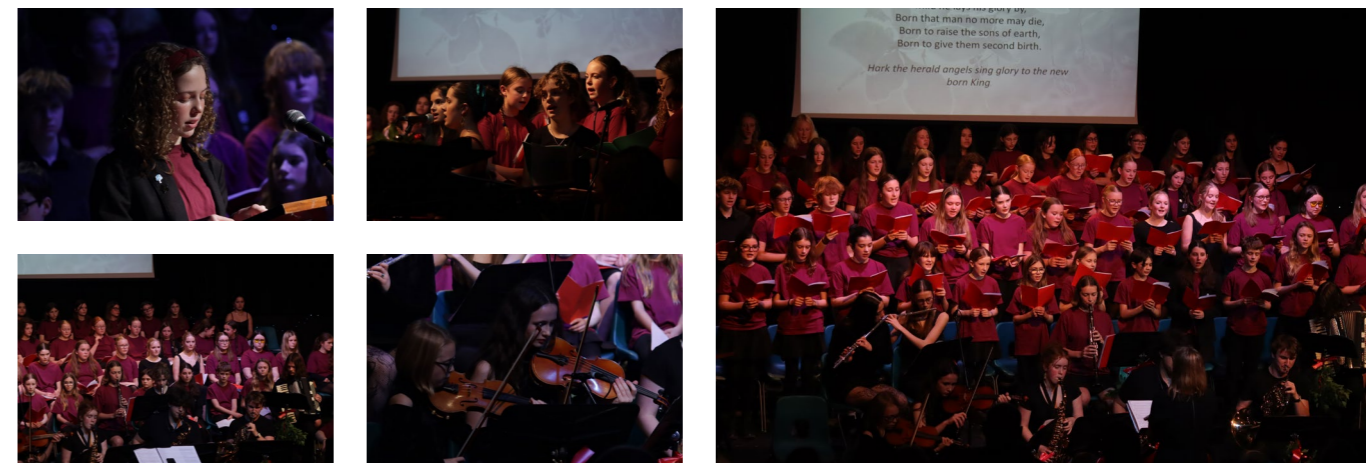


Carol Service

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in making the Carol Service such a memorable occasion.

We are especially grateful to Kevin Hooke for leading the evening. The audience greatly enjoyed joining in with traditional carols and listening to performances from the college orchestra, choirs and folk ensembles. Students also delivered thoughtful and engaging readings throughout the service.

The evening concluded with music from our Folk and Jazz ensembles, followed by refreshments kindly provided by FOSDA. This was a welcome opportunity for families and students to come together, celebrate the season and look ahead with anticipation to the new term and year ahead.



BMX Success

Year 9 students Coby and Ned successfully completed the National BMX Racing Series, which spans ten competitive rounds across the country.



Both Coby and Ned secured places on the top two steps of the podium—an outstanding achievement reflecting their dedication and hard work.

Following this success, Coby proudly represented Team GB at the UCI BMX Racing World Championships in Copenhagen. After intense training and competition, he powered through the rounds to reach the World Final.

In a thrilling final race, Coby made a phenomenal start, moved into third after the first turn, and executed a daring inside move to claim second place—crossing the line as World Number 2!

Huge congratulations to Coby and Ned. You are excellent ambassadors for our school, and we are immensely proud of you.



Devon U16 Cricket Tour to South Africa

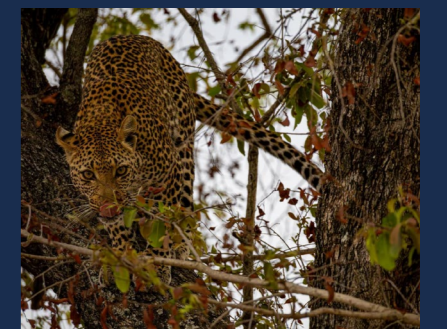
Year 11 student Albie was selected for the Devon Under-16 Cricket Tour to South Africa—an unforgettable experience combining challenging cricket, incredible wildlife and new friendships.

The tour began in Kruger National Park, where the team enjoyed early morning and evening game drives, spotting four of the Big Five (no rhino!) and learning about conservation from park rangers. The team played matches against local representative teams, and one of Albie's proudest moments of the tour was scoring 110 not out.

The second leg in Cape Town brought tougher opposition and stunning venues, with highlights such as a day/night game against a township academy. Across the whole Cape Town leg, they played four matches and only lost one game, the final match against Western Province. The level of cricket really challenged them and helped Albie develop both his game and confidence.

Off the pitch, the group explored Table Mountain, visited penguins, and immersed themselves in South African life and culture.

This remarkable experience strengthened skills, confidence and teamwork—an opportunity to remember for years to come. Read more of Albie's story on our [website](#).



Year 7 Football

Year 7 Football got off to a strong start this term with three fixtures in quick succession.

The team has faced tough local opponents and is making great progress ahead of upcoming cup games.



Year 8 Football

Our Year 8 team travelled to Plymouth for their first football fixture of the year, facing familiar opponents Sir John Hunt CSC.

Despite having limited numbers, no recognised goalkeeper and three Year 7 students stepping up to play a year above, the team showed great determination.

The match began with the hosts taking an early lead through some sharp counter-attacking football. Alex managed to pull one back, but we went into the break trailing 3-1. After some tactical changes, the team delivered a much more structured second-half performance with two excellent goals from Noah in Year 7 bringing us back into contention before SJH sealed a 5-3 win.

Noah was voted Player of the Match for his impressive debut brace, while Mr Malone's pick was Max for his versatility and brilliance in defence.



Polocrosse

Year 8 student Kara achieved an incredible milestone by competing in the Pony Club National Championships for Polocrosse.

Facing tough competition, she delivered an outstanding performance, securing 3rd place and a well-deserved spot on the podium.

We are very proud of Kara for representing her club and demonstrating such resilience and talent. Congratulations, Kara!



Year 7 Rugby

The Year 7 Rugby team ended their recent tournament at Churston Ferrers Grammar School on a high.

Despite being placed in a tough group, the team progressed all the way to the final against Spires Academy where they delivered an outstanding display—securing the win and preventing Spires from scoring a single point!

Isaac was voted Players' Player of the Day for his dominance and try-saving tackles, while Mr. Mallone's Player of the Day was Freddie—remarkably playing his first-ever rugby match and finishing as top try-scorer!

Congratulations to all for your hard work and commitment.



Cross Country at Stover

Students enjoyed an incredible day at the Stover Cross Country event.

They represented the college exceptionally well, competed with determination against strong opposition and demonstrated superb effort, resilience and team spirit throughout.

There were several standout performances, with Eldon, Seth, Noah and Alex all delivering outstanding runs to qualify for the next round—a brilliant achievement they can be very proud of.

It was a fantastic day for South Dartmoor, highlighting both individual talent and collective success. Well done to all involved!



Devon Hockey

Year 10 student Evie made her Devon Hockey debut this term with a trip to Yeovil.

She played two competitive matches against Dorset and Cornwall, showcasing her skill and determination on the pitch. It was the first time the squad had played together, and their confidence grew as the day went on.

Well done, Evie—it is fantastic to see you representing Devon, and we are so proud of you!



Netball

Congratulations to our Year 7 and 8 netball team, who played their first fixture this term.

They showed great dedication in the lead-up to the match and came away with an impressive 11–6 win against Teign.

Their excellent teamwork was evident on court as they supported and motivated one another throughout.

We look forward to seeing their confidence grow as the season continues!



Devon Cricket

Huge congratulations to Ella, Owen, Albie, Olive and Gethin for being selected to represent Devon Cricket for the 2026 season!

This is an incredible achievement that reflects their hard work, commitment and passion for the sport.

We are immensely proud of each of them and excited to see how they continue to develop and shine throughout the season.



SDCC in UK Top 25 for Cricket

South Dartmoor has once again been recognised as one of the top 25 state schools for cricket in the UK by *The Cricketer* magazine.

This prestigious accolade highlights the exceptional quality and enjoyment of cricket across our college community.

The Cricketer's annual Schools Guide names the 195 best schools for cricket nationwide. This year's edition features more state schools than ever before, with 25 earning a place on the list.

Rob Pryke, Head of Cricket at South Dartmoor, commented: *It is a tremendous honour to be recognised once again as one of the leading state schools for cricket in the UK. This achievement reflects the enthusiasm and commitment of our students and staff. Cricket continues to thrive here, with regular attendance students at our college cricket club and opportunities provided through the REACH programme. We field four competitive teams and proudly maintain a 1st XI fixture against the Marylebone Cricket Club. I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the success of cricket at South Dartmoor, particularly Mr Malone and our Sixth Form students for their invaluable support.*



Trampoline and Flight Festival

Students from Years 5, 6 and 7 enjoyed a fantastic afternoon at the Trampoline and Flight Festival.

They took part in a variety of stations – from mastering the big trampolines to perfecting controlled landings off springboards, trampettes and box tops, as well as building strength and coordination on benches and apparatus.

Our Year 9 Sports Leaders were outstanding, coaching and supporting all abilities throughout the day with brilliant leadership, encouragement and energy. Everyone had a fantastic time developing new skills, confidence and a love for movement and flight.



Dance Festival

Students from seven primary and secondary schools came together at SDCC for a Dance Festival filled with creativity, teamwork and performance joy.

Throughout the festival, participants explored the theme of magnets – learning how to translate scientific ideas into movement. They worked on concepts of magnets attracting and repelling, using their body parts and each other to express this energy force.

Special thanks go to the SDCC Year 9 and 10 Dance Leaders who supported with confidence and care, guiding warm-ups, teaching choreography and helping to create new sections inspired by the dancers' ideas. Their leadership and positivity shone throughout.

The atmosphere was electric, and the final performance was bursting with energy. Students left feeling proud and excited after showcasing what they had learned. Well done to all involved and thank you to the schools who joined us!



KS1 Aesthetics Festival

The college was buzzing as students from Ashburton and Buckfastleigh took part in a KS1 Aesthetics Festival.

The event gave young learners the chance to explore and develop their skills across six engaging stations in gymnastics, dance and yoga. The children embraced every activity with enthusiasm, celebrating what their bodies can do.

The confidence, patience and positivity of the SDCC Year 9 Sports Leaders was outstanding. Their encouragement and creativity ensured every child felt supported and inspired, making the festival both enjoyable and memorable.

Thank you to the schools for bringing students to this fantastic opportunity!



Student Finance Talk

Year 13 students were introduced to the world of student finance as part of the Sixth Form Period 0 programme.

Our outreach link from Exeter University spoke to students about how student finance works, why it matters and how they can begin preparing their applications for the spring.

Students have access to the presentation slides, and both students and parents/carers are welcome to contact the Sixth Form team for further guidance and support at sixthform@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk



Open Evening and Futures Event

It was wonderful to share our vibrant and welcoming Sixth Form.

Sixth Form applications for September 2026 are live and can be made [here](#). Priority applications close on 30 January. For more information about our Sixth Form please find the 2026 Prospectus on our [website](#).



Graphics

Our Year 12 and 13 Graphics students recently had an inspiring session with Matt Thame from Arts University Plymouth.

Matt, a lecturer in Graphic Communication and an experienced professional designer within the music industry, delivered an inspiring session that broadened students' understanding of progression routes in the creative sector.

He introduced the breadth of courses and opportunities available at AUP, outlining pathways into higher education and the expectations of degree-level study. He showcased an exciting range of graduate work alongside examples from his own professional portfolio, giving students valuable insight into contemporary industry practice.

Throughout the session, students engaged directly with the work presented, asking questions that deepened their understanding of graphic communication processes. Matt also reviewed individual student portfolios, offering personalised feedback on their Personal Investigations, particularly in relation to the AQA Art and Design assessment objectives.

His professional guidance supported students in identifying next steps to strengthen their portfolios, refine technical skills and extend the conceptual depth of their projects in line with AQA standards.



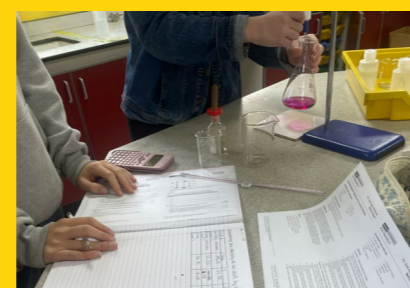
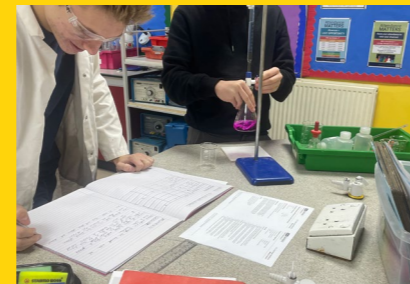
A Level Chemistry

Our A level Chemistry students dived into the fascinating world of titration!

They honed their practical skills and investigated the mystery acids hidden in unlabelled bottles. It was a challenge that demanded accuracy, patience and a sharp scientific mind.

Why is titration so useful? It was far more than a classroom experiment. This technique is widely used in real life, from checking the acidity of foods and drinks to monitoring water quality and ensuring medicines contain the correct concentration of active ingredients. In industry and research, titration underpins quality control and safety standards.

It is all about precision, problem-solving and applying chemistry to everyday life.



A Festive Celebration of Achievement

Our Sixth Form community gathered for a joyful Christmas lunch and celebration.

Students shared a festive feast before taking part in the Quiz of the Year and applauding outstanding achievements across the curriculum.

From lead learners and notable mentions to DofE Silver awards and outstanding volunteering successes that enrich the wider SDCC community, the event was filled with warmth, pride and festive energy—a perfect way to celebrate all that Year 12 and 13 have accomplished this term.



A Journey through the Alps

Nestled in the heart of the Austrian Alps, Gastein was the kind of place that made visitors question whether they had accidentally wandered into a postcard.



Towering peaks, lush green valleys and crystal-clear streams created a landscape so pristine it felt curated by nature itself.

From the moment the team arrived, there was a palpable sense of wellbeing. Maybe it was the alpine glow, the spa culture or simply the fact that everything was immaculately clean. Even the cows looked like they had just come back from a wellness retreat. Gastein wasn't just beautiful—it was restorative. For a trail runner, it was paradise with altitude.

The Adidas Infinite Trails was a symphony of sweat, scenery and shared suffering. Mr. Stokes was part of a trio representing Black Trail Runners (BTR) and together they tackled the full relay: 21km, 35km and his leg—the mighty 44km L loop. His teammates embraced their sections with joy and determination. All three set out at the same time, each tackling their loops with excitement and grit. Both Ash and

Jess had a fantastic experience and were waiting at the finish line with open arms when Mr. Stokes crossed.

The L loop delivered everything a trail race could offer: alpine meadows, forest switchbacks, panoramic ridgelines and climbs that made runners reconsider their life choices.

“They ran not just for themselves but for each other and for the community they proudly represented.”

Every step was worth it. The terrain was challenging but fair, the views were distracting in the best way and the support from volunteers and fellow runners was nothing short of heartwarming.

Crossing the finish line was a team triumph. They ran not just

for themselves but for each other and for the community they proudly represented.

Mr. Stokes had only just met Ash and Jess, but from the moment they connected it felt like they had been teammates for years. Ash had a generous spirit that made people feel instantly at ease; his smile and gentle laugh were like sunshine on a cloudy climb. Jess was the queen of the mountains—fierce, funny and full of heart. She had him laughing through the pain and cheering through the sweat.

Mr. Stokes was genuinely proud to stand beside these two incredible people, representing Black Trail Runners. They clicked instantly through their shared love of trail running, their appreciation for being part of this event and their commitment to the BTR mission. It was more than a race—it was a bond forged in snow, altitude and mutual respect.

If trail running was a solo sport,

this event proved it could also feel like a family reunion. The BTR crew showed up in full force, bringing energy, encouragement and enough good vibes to power a small village. Their presence was a reminder that representation mattered and community was everything.

Adidas Terrex was more than a sponsor—it was a genuine supporter of what BTR stood for. Their backing made it possible for the team to race, connect and feel seen. It wasn't just about gear; it was about opportunity, access and inclusion.

The atmosphere was electric—like someone had plugged the Alps into a generator powered by joy and everyone felt part of something bigger.

Some of the most memorable moments happened away from the trails. Their roommate, BTR legend Deo Kato, brought calm wisdom and warmth that made every conversation feel like a masterclass in resilience. Meeting Phil, the founder of BTR, was another highlight. Their chats about how BTR began were enlightening and inspiring.

Conversations with the BTR crew covered kit, races and training—but the most meaningful for Mr. Stokes were about Black heritage. At 53, he had never before been in a space where he could talk openly about heritage with other Black people. They shared stories, experiences and perspectives—and it felt freeing. Liberating, even. Like finding a part of himself he didn't know was missing.

This race was more than kilometres and climbs. It was connection, community and a celebration of who they were and what they could achieve when supported, seen and uplifted.



New Staff

Meet the new members of staff who joined us in the Autumn Term:



Sophie Goldstone
Teacher of
Modern Languages

I am excited to have joined the Modern Foreign Languages department at South Dartmoor Community College as a teacher of Spanish and French. I recently completed my PGCE at the University of Exeter, after an undergraduate degree in Spanish and French from Swansea University. After graduating, I spent several years travelling, with extended time in the USA, Mexico, Central America, Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. These experiences strengthened my interest in languages and culture and continue to influence my teaching. Outside of college, I enjoy travelling and spending time outdoors.



Alice Lovell
Teacher of
Physical Education

After completing my teacher training here last year, I am delighted to be back and part of the SDCC community. As a member of the PE department, I'm excited to share my passion for physical activity and begin my journey as a newly qualified teacher. Outside the classroom, you will often find me on the netball court or in the kitchen baking something sweet.



Ewan Murray
Teacher of
Social Sciences

I am excited to have joined South Dartmoor Community College as part of the Social Sciences department. I studied Human, Social and Political Science at the University of Cambridge and, after graduating, co-founded an electric vehicle charging startup. I later undertook my teacher training at the University of Oxford, and now I can't wait to share my passion for social sciences with my students. Outside of work, I enjoy sports—especially football, rugby and boxing—and I'm a lifelong Celtic FC supporter. I also love to travel; this summer I spent seven weeks motorbiking through Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines—an unforgettable experience I would love to repeat someday!



Becky Wright
Teacher of
Maths

I am delighted to be joining the Maths team at SDCC. I'll be teaching Mathematics across the school and delivering Computing lessons to Years 8 and 9. I trained at the University of Exeter, completing a degree in Mathematics Education followed by a Master's in Education. I've taught in two fantastic schools in Torbay and Plymouth and particularly enjoy working with A level students, especially in Further Mathematics. Outside the classroom, you will find me at the yard with my horses or training and competing my two dogs in agility.

And finally...

It's that time again! Mrs. Veal's traditional *Christmas Bad Joke du Jour* is back to brighten December - and new families are in for a treat!

Sharing is caring, especially when it comes to festive humour, so here are some of the finest examples for you to enjoy—or endure!



Merry Christmas

The staff at South Dartmoor would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The new term starts on Tuesday 6th January 2026, and we look forward to seeing you all then.



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