



CAREERS

@ Paignton Academy

Newsletter

2026 / Edition 22

INSPIRING STUDENTS

As we move through a busy start to the year, it has been fantastic to see students across the school engaging in a wide range of careers activities designed to motivate, challenge and inspire them. These opportunities help students to develop the key employability skills that employers tell us are essential for their future workforce, from communication and teamwork to confidence and resilience.

A particular highlight has been the Assembly launch for the Year 10 Work Experience programme, supported by Managing Director Greg Clark of QMS (Line Marking Specialists), which gave students the chance to begin exploring the world of work and preparing for this valuable opportunity later in the year. We have also seen our Year 7 students developing important life skills through their First Aid sessions delivered by Jay's Aim, equipping them with knowledge and confidence that could make a real difference in an emergency.

These activities are just a snapshot of the many ways we are helping students connect their learning to the wider world and start thinking about their future pathways.

We are committed to helping our learners develop a strong understanding of the world of work and are always keen to work with local businesses and members of our wider community to strengthen our careers provision. If you have ideas about how you could support our students, please do get in touch with a member of Paignton Academy's Careers Team.

Mrs Hay
Careers Lead

Have a question
or feedback?
Email careers@paigntonacademy.tsat.uk
or drop in the library and
have a chat with us!



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Maths Taster Day @ Plymouth University

A group of our year 10 students recently had the exciting opportunity to visit Plymouth University for a series of Maths taster sessions. The day offered a glimpse into university life and showcased how mathematics is applied in real-world scenarios.

Students began by touring parts of the campus, giving them a feel for the facilities and atmosphere of higher education. They then took part in engaging workshops designed to stretch their problem-solving skills. Activities included using equations to tackle intriguing questions such as:

- How many ponies are there on Dartmoor?
- If everyone in the world stood in a line, how long would that line be?

These challenges encouraged students to think creatively and apply mathematical reasoning to everyday and global contexts.

There was also a carousel of problem-solving tasks, where students worked collaboratively to crack puzzles and explore different branches of mathematics. This hands-on experience not only deepened their understanding but also demonstrated the versatility and importance of maths in diverse fields.

The visit was a fantastic opportunity for students to see how the subject they study in school connects to real-world applications and future careers. Many left feeling inspired and motivated to continue their mathematical journey.



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World Book Day 2026

WORLD
BOOK
DAY
5 MARCH 2026

This year's World Book Day brought a fantastic sense of excitement across the school as students set out to solve a most unusual mystery 'The Disappearance of Dave the Troll'. From the moment tutor groups watched the introductory video, theories began to spread. Had Dave been taken by Grizzlewick the Witch? Was Princess Summers involved? Or was the culprit Filbert the Frog?

To crack the case, students explored a series of clues hidden around both school libraries. Each activity helped them piece together information, test their detective skills, and move one step closer to uncovering who had taken Dave, and why. The libraries were busier than ever, full of teamwork, discussion, and lots of laughter as students worked to solve the mystery.

Adding to the fun, staff from across the school joined in the celebration by dressing up as their favourite literary characters. From wizards and witches to classic heroes and villains, the costumes brought a brilliant buzz to the corridors and helped create a truly magical World Book Day atmosphere. It was a wonderful event that showcased creativity, curiosity, and a shared love of reading. Dave the Troll may have gone missing for a while, but he certainly helped make this World Book Day one to remember.



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Year 10 Work Experience Launch 2026

Our Year 10 Work Experience launch assembly was hosted by Greg Clark, Managing Director of QMS Ltd, who delivered an outstanding presentation inspiring our young people.

QMS is a family-run company that started in 2001. It was set up by Greg and his father, Ralph, and together they have over 70 years of experience in their industry. They are a company that works with highways engineers to help make roads safer and better for the environment. They use data and technology to look after road assets (like signs, markings, and safety features) and find clever ways to improve them.

Greg offered practical advice on work experience and provided 4 extremely valuable tips....

- 1) How do we see ourselves?
- 2) How do others see us?
- 3) How do we wish to be seen?
- 4) What can we do so others see us like that?



Work Experience 2026: July 6th - 10th



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Year 10 Bank of England Workshop



Year 10 Business Studies students enjoyed a visit from Clair Mills, Executive Director for Banking & Payment Operations for the Bank of England, learning about the Bank's role, career opportunities and its work in AI and cyber security.

The students learnt that there are still real cannonballs from historic riots built into the Bank's walls and saw £3,000 of shredded £50 notes up close!

This is a fantastic opportunity for students to gain real-world knowledge and inspiration from professionals working in the financial sector.

Banking careers are wide-ranging, including economists, analysts, customer advisers, IT and cyber specialists, and policy or communications roles.

Routes into banking include apprenticeships, A levels followed by graduate schemes, or university degrees such as economics, finance, maths, business or computer science.

Key skills that you need to be successful in this sector include numeracy, problem-solving, communication and teamwork. Ongoing training and professional qualifications also help staff to develop and progress throughout their careers.



For more information, please visit:
www.bankofengland.co.uk/careers

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JAY'S AIM

HELPING YOUNG HEARTS

Last term, we were delighted to welcome Jay's Aim into school to deliver an important and inspiring set of workshops to all our Year 7 students. The sessions focused on teaching vital lifesaving skills that could one day help students save a life.

Throughout the workshop, students had the chance to practise CPR on mannequins, giving them hands-on experience and helping them build confidence in responding to real-life emergencies. They also learned how to recognise the difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest, what a defibrillator is and how it works, and where to find one in their local community.

The sessions also brought some fun along the way, with students choosing from classic CPR-timed songs such as Pink Pony Club, Stayin' Alive, and Nellie the Elephant to help them keep the correct rhythm while practising chest compressions. Students developed awareness of Careers linked to health and medicine. Students also discussed when these skills may be required in the world of work.

A huge thank you goes to Kirsty and the entire Jay's Aim team for delivering such engaging, memorable and essential training. Their passion and commitment to equipping young people with lifesaving skills made a real impact, and we are incredibly grateful for their time and expertise.

We're proud of our Year 7 students for their enthusiasm, focus and willingness to learn.



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Year 9 Careers Day



We recently held two brilliant Careers Days for our Year 9 students, first at Borough Road, followed a week later at Waterleat Road, each featuring a different range of guest speakers and activities. These annual events support students as they prepare for their GCSE option choices, helping them broaden their horizons and connect learning to real-world career pathways.

Highlights from Borough Road

We were joined by an excellent group of visitors who made the day exciting and engaging:

- Georgina Cleasby – Learning styles and apprenticeships
- South Devon College Adventure Sports Team and 11 current students delivering communication and team-building activities
- Ewa Fojt & Pete Reeves (Next Steps South West) with higher-education students discussing post-16 pathways
- Richard Henderson (Henderson Safety Ltd) – Careers in Construction
- Hannah Whyte (Access Creative College) – Communication and creative careers
- Mr Scott even joined in with a specialist session linked to AI Careers.

A week later, Waterleat Road hosted its own Careers Day, welcoming a new set of speakers and offering fresh activities, giving even more students the chance to explore future career routes.

Across both events, students showed fantastic engagement, enthusiasm and curiosity. It was wonderful to see them learning, collaborating and thinking positively about their next steps.



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NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

9TH – 13TH FEBRUARY 2026

South Devon College



We were delighted to welcome Alfie and Scarlett from South Devon College, who spoke to students about the exciting opportunities available through apprenticeships and early career pathways.

What Is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job where you learn the skills and knowledge needed for a career. You work alongside experienced staff, gain practical experience, and complete training that leads to a recognised qualification.

Options for 14–16-Year-Olds

Although full apprenticeships start at 16+, younger students can begin exploring through:

- Pre-apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Work experience placements linked to school

These pathways help students build confidence and develop early workplace skills.

Getting Started

Students interested in apprenticeships can:

- Explore their career interests
- Research local employers and training providers
- Attend careers events
- Create a simple CV
- Apply via the Government's Find an Apprenticeship website when eligible

Find Out More

<https://www.southdevon.ac.uk/apprenticeships/live-vacancies/>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

IMPORTANT

Vacancies change regularly, so students should check these links often

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Year 10 Work Experience Student Checklist



1

CHOOSE A PLACEMENT

Pick something you're interested in
It does NOT have to be your future job
It can be local or further away

ASK AN EMPLOYER

Contact them via email, phone or in person
Be polite and confident
Tell them:
Your name and school
Dates 6th-10th July
Why you want to work there

2



3

CHECK INSURANCE - THIS IS ESSENTIAL!

The Employer Needs:
Employers Liability Insurance
Public Liability Insurance
No Insurance = No Placement!



COMPLETE THE FORM

Fill in the placement form
Parent/Carer checks it
Hand it in to the library by:
THURSDAY 2nd APRIL 2026
Late forms will NOT be accepted!

4

GET READY

Check start & finish times
Find out what to wear
Plan how you will get there
Be on time & polite
Have fun - this is your time to shine!

5

NEED HELP?

Come to the library and speak to your Careers Team for advice - don't wait until the deadline!

LEAP ACTIVITIES



As part of the ongoing LEAP programme at Paignton Academy, we were delighted to welcome Next Steps South West (NSSW) to deliver a dynamic and engaging Maths-focused workshop for our Year 9 LEAP students.

The session was designed to highlight the importance of mathematical thinking in real-world situations, while also helping students develop key skills such as teamwork, communication, and resilience. Throughout the workshop, students worked in groups to tackle a series of challenging and intriguing mathematical problems. These ranged from attempting a logic puzzle once used in Google job interviews, to cracking the patterns behind an ancient Chinese magic number square.

Far from being a traditional Maths lesson, the workshop encouraged students to engage in discussion, share strategies, and take creative approaches to problem-solving.

Students responded brilliantly to the challenges, demonstrating perseverance and enthusiasm even when the solutions weren't immediately obvious. It was fantastic to see them build confidence as they progressed through each task, discovering how mathematical thinking can be applied far beyond the classroom.

Workshops like this not only support the aims of the LEAP programme, broadening aspirations and developing essential learning skills, but also showcase the many ways Maths underpins future education and career pathways.



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GIRLS INTO STEM



Last summer, some of our then Year 9 students took on the "Girls into STEM" Challenge at South Devon College, despite it being an event normally aimed at Year 10! Hand picked by their science teachers, the girls competed against five other local schools. They rose to the challenge and emerged victorious with their innovative idea, "Disco Walkz", an energy generating walkway designed for Paignton Seafront (perfect timing with the current seafront upgrades!).

The girls worked closely with their amazing mentors Lee Tatton, @alison webber and Giorgia Cornish from Torbay Pharma, who provided outstanding guidance and support throughout the project. After impressing the judging panel at South Devon College, the team were invited by Lucy Lewis (Build Torbay) to present at Torquay Town Hall where they confidently presented in front of senior leaders including Jackie Warren, Phil Black and Chris Wheeler. They absolutely nailed it!

A huge thank you to everyone involved over the past 9 months, especially Torbay Pharma for mentoring support and treating the team to a celebratory tasty treat delivered to school, and South Devon College for recognising the girls' hard work with Amazon vouchers. We are incredibly proud of the "Disco Walkz" team. What an invaluable experience, inspiring teamwork, confidence, and future career ambitions in STEM.



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A TRIP TO PAIGNTON ZOO



Year 7 and 8 students recently enjoyed a hands-on, careers-focused day at Paignton Zoo, exploring life behind the scenes at one of the region's leading conservation centres. Running from 9.30am to 3.30pm, with a hot meal included, the visit offered a memorable mix of animal care, creativity, and environmental learning.

Animal Care in Action

Students began their day in the giraffe enclosure, helping to clean the habitat and learning why this plays a vital role in maintaining animal health. They also discovered more about giraffe diets and even had the chance to feed them, quickly realising just how strong a giraffe's grip can be!

A-Z Scavenger Hunt

The students then took part in a lively A-Z scavenger hunt around the zoo, encouraging teamwork, observation, and exploration of areas they hadn't yet discovered.

Enrichment for Monkeys and Tortoises

Next, pupils created enrichment items for several species, including the Diana monkeys, the Sulawesi crested black macaques, and the red-footed tortoise. These tasks encouraged the animals to problem-solve and stay mentally stimulated. The group also made colourful vegetable kebabs for the tortoises, learning about nutrition and enrichment along the way.

Forest School & Conservation Careers

After lunch, the students took part in activities in the forest school area, working directly with the zoo's Conservation and Research Officer. They learnt about ecology, how wildlife is monitored in the field, and the types of skills needed in conservation and environmental careers. They also made survival bracelets and explored basic outdoor skills.



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Science and Engineering Showcase @ Plymouth University

A group of our Year 9 students visited Plymouth University to explore the exciting world of STEM at the annual Science and Engineering Showcase. The event aims to raise students' aspirations in science and technology and show how engaging STEM can be at A level and in higher education.

Aspirational and Interactive STEM Experiences

The day began with a tour of the university campus, giving students a taste of life at a modern university. They then had the chance to meet undergraduate and PhD students, as well as academics, to learn what it's really like to study and work in STEM fields.

The main exhibition took place in the university's on-campus marquee, filled with interactive exhibits from across the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Students could explore freely and spend time at the stands that interested them most.

Highlights included:

- A robotic dog demonstration
- VR headsets offering immersive engineering experiences
- A large African snail and a giant cockroach, which some students bravely held
- A fun questionnaire challenge, with a few students winning prizes!

It was lovely to see our students fully involved, asking questions, trying new activities, and enjoying the hands-on displays. The trip offered a fantastic glimpse into future STEM pathways and left many feeling inspired about where their interests could take them.



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Paramedic **Mathematical Psychologist**
Zoologist **Wind Turbine Engineer** **Solar Panel Engineer** **Geohazard Specialist**
Water Testing Analyst **Forensic Scientist** **Sound Effects Engineer** **Vaccine Development Scientist**
Fragrance Chemist **Radiation Protector** **Laser Physicist** **Product Designer** **Animator**
Science Journalist **Geneticist** **Software Engineer** **Nutritionist** **Genetic Engineer** **Artificial Intelligence Researcher**
Dental Therapist **Meteorologist** **Medical Imaging Engineer** **Medical Physicist** **Stadium Designer**
Astronomer **Marine Ecologist** **CGI Effects Engineer**

JOBS IN SCIENCE, TECH, ENGINEERING AND MATHS

Toxicologist **Noise Consultant** **Cosmologist** **Sports Scientist** **Cancer Research** **Robotics Engineer**
Acoustics Engineer **Nuclear Design Engineer** **Prosthetics Technician** **Energy Conservation Engineer** **Games Designer** **Space Structures Engineer** **Emergency Shelter Designer**
Food Physicist **Teacher** **Digital Musician** **Special Effects Director** **Interior Designer** **Micro Biologist** **Data Analyst** **Flavourist**
Vaccine Development Scientist **Patent Attorney** **Flood Modeller** **Chemical Engineer** **Stadium Designer** **Clinical Genome Analyst**
Drug Designer **Astronaut** **Electric Vehicle Engineer**

On the Right Track: A Look at Train Driver Careers



If you love precision, focus and the thrill of being in control, a career as a train driver could be right up your track.

What Does a Train Driver Do?

Check controls and safety equipment

Drive trains between stations or depots

Follow signals, speed limits and strict safety rules

Skills That Make a Great Driver

Strong concentration and attention to detail

Staying calm under pressure

Reliability, patience and willingness to learn

Sharp observation skills

Entry Requirements

You must:

Be 20+ (or 21 for mainline routes)

Live within 45–60 minutes of your depot

How to Get There

1. Apprenticeship (1–2 years)

Train Driver Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship, combining classroom learning with supervised driving. Most employers ask for GCSE English & Maths (grade 9–4).

2. Work Your Way Up

Start as a rail passenger assistant, conductor or revenue officer, then apply for trainee driver roles.

3. Apply Directly

Train operating companies run assessments, medical checks and interviews.

Training takes 1–2 years.

What It's Like

Shift work (early, late and weekend shifts)

Noisy at times; mostly working alone

Occasional nights away from home

Uniform provided

Pay

Trainee: £24,000–£35,000

Qualified: £50,000–£70,000+

Where This Career Can Take You

Drive passenger, freight or engineering trains, or even specialist routes like Eurostar.

With experience, progress to: Driver Instructor, Driver Manager, Operations Manager

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Welcome to the Library!



**8.00am - 8.20am
Free toast and squash!**

**Chromebooks are available
during Breakfast Club, Break &
Lunch and Homework Club**



**Comedy, Horror, Mystery,
Sci-Fi, Adventure, Romance and
History... we have them all!**

**Homework Club
3-4pm Mon-Thurs
3-3.30pm Fri**



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