



CAREERS

@ Paignton Academy

Newsletter

2026 / Edition 23

Achievements & Next Steps

As Year 11 students prepare to leave Paignton Academy, they stand at the beginning of an exciting new chapter, with the long summer holidays ahead offering both a well-deserved rest and valuable opportunities for growth. This time is a chance to celebrate achievements, recharge and take small but meaningful steps towards their futures.

For our year 10 students, the focus turns towards preparing for and fully embracing their work experience placements, where they will gain a real insight into the world of work, develop employability skills and begin to shape their aspirations for their futures.

Meanwhile we encourage our students in Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) to fully engage in their summer term learning by exploring and discovering more within their subjects and taking on an active role in Academy life by participating in enrichment opportunities. Academy students will grow and thrive when they become part of a supportive community that embodies our CARE values: Community, Ambition, Relationships, and Excellence

Mrs Hay & The Careers Team

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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Environmental Law



We were delighted to welcome Christopher Kerr, Head of ESG at David Jones Bould, who spoke to our students about careers in environmental law.

This was a fantastic opportunity for students to gain insight into how law can play a vital role in tackling some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges. Christopher shared his career journey, the skills needed to succeed in this field, and the growing importance of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) within the legal sector.

Our students asked thoughtful questions and showed real enthusiasm for how they can make a difference through future career pathways. Experiences like this are invaluable in helping young people connect their learning to real-world opportunities.

A huge thank you to Christopher for giving up his time to inspire the next generation.

For more information on a career in law, have a look at:
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>



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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A CAREER GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



What is Artificial Intelligence or AI? AI is described as “a transformative technology capable of tasks that typically require human-like intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising patterns and making decisions”

Britain is the third largest AI market in the world and is home to an array of global talent and pioneering AI firms like Google, DeepMind and Wayve. But it's not just big tech companies where AI skills are in demand. Smaller employers also have an increasing need for staff who can implement, manage or work alongside AI.

JOB ROLES IN AI

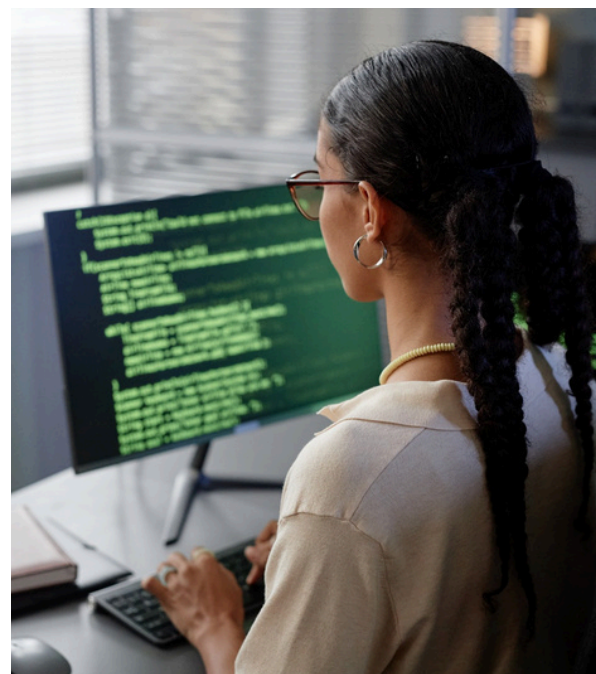
AI experts and specialists are needed to work in:

- AI research and validation
- AI product and integration
- AI development and engineering
- AI governance and ethics
- AI sector specific roles
- Log onto our website

<https://www.paigntonacademy.org/learn-with-us/student-careers/>

Click to explore 10 examples of jobs in AI:

- **ROBOTICS ENGINEER**
- **SOFTWARE DEVELOPER**
- **SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT**
- **SYSTEMS ANALYST**
- **TECHNICAL ARCHITECT ARTIFICIAL**
- **INTELLIGENCE (AI) ENGINEER**
- **CYBER INTELLIGENCE OFFICER**
- **DATA ANALYST-STATISTICIAN**
- **DATA SCIENTIST**
- **RESEARCH SCIENTIST**



SKILLS NEEDED FOR AI CAREERS

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Digital and technical skills that may be needed for certain AI roles include:

- The ability to use a computer confidently
- Knowledge of computer operating systems, hardware and software
- Coding and programming
- Data handling
- Cybersecurity awareness
- Digital problem solving
- Technical creativity



ESSENTIAL SKILLS

In addition to technical skills specific to certain jobs, there are some essential skills that are needed in ANY job. With the emerging use of automation and AI these human skills will be even more important:

- Communication
- Creative Problem-Solving
- Self-management
- Collaboration

POST 16 & 18 PATHWAYS INTO AI

ACADEMIC ROUTE

A Level subjects that relate to careers in AI include:

- Maths & Further Maths
- Computer Science
- Psychology
- Statistics or Economics
- Physics

VOCATIONAL/ TECHNICAL ROUTE

Students may study a Level 2/3 Computing course or a T-level at a local college in:

- Digital - Production, Data Analytics or Support & Security
- Engineering & Manufacturing

APPRENTICESHIPS

Intermediate/Advanced apprenticeships include:

- Digital & AI support
- Cyber security technician Data technician
- IT support technician Software developer



Many universities offer degree courses related to AI including in:

- Data Science
- Computer Science
- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics Engineering

Students may go on to study a Level 4/5 Higher Technical Qualification in:

- Applied Computing
- Computing (Cyber Security)
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Digital Technologies

Level 6/7 degree apprenticeships include:

- Cyber security
- AI Engineer
- Data Analyst
- Data Scientist

Writing Competition



Future Authors...

Last term, students were invited to unleash their imaginations by taking part in the Stranger Sagas Creative Writing Competition, a challenge that proved just how powerful 100 words can be.

With only a small word limit, pupils explored big ideas: creating suspense, unravelling mysteries and delivering surprising twists that kept readers hooked until the very last line. The competition encouraged students to think carefully about word choice, structure and impact, while reminding them that great storytelling doesn't need length – just creativity.

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the success of our future authors who took part in the Stranger Sagas short story project. An impressive 40 students got involved, demonstrating imagination, commitment and real enthusiasm for their writing. Seeing their work published is a fantastic achievement and a true reflection of their hard work and talent.

For many students, this was their first opportunity to write for an audience beyond the classroom and to see themselves as published writers, an exciting milestone in their creative journey.

Well done to every student who took part, outstanding work on your first published pieces!

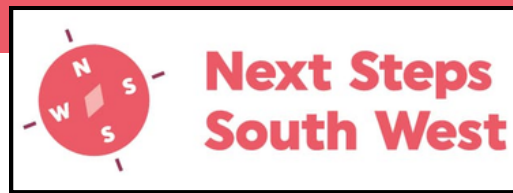
Competitions like Stranger Sagas play an important role in developing essential writing skills while building confidence and a love of storytelling. For those interested in future opportunities, Young Writers run a range of creative competitions and free resources, available at www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions.



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WORK EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP



We had an exciting week during May at Paignton Academy, trialling a brand-new Work Experience Workshop in partnership with Next Steps South West.

Some of our lucky Year 10 students took part in this fantastic opportunity, gaining valuable skills and practical tools to help them understand how to apply for and secure work experience placements in what is currently a very challenging climate.

The workshop ran over two days and, as a split site school, that meant delivering four sessions in total. A busy but incredibly worthwhile experience!

We are extremely grateful to Ewa, Pete and Fran at Next Steps South West and the University of Exeter's Student Ambassadors for their time, support and expertise in delivering such engaging and impactful workshops.

We are also delighted to share that several of our students has already secured a work experience placement following the sessions.

Thank you again to everyone involved for supporting our students to take these important next steps in preparing them for the world of work.



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South Devon College

MARINE ACADEMY

Some of our lucky Year 10 students recently had the fantastic opportunity to visit Noss Marina, where they took part in an engaging and hands-on “Girls into Maritime” experience.

Throughout the day, students explored a wide range of activities designed to introduce them to the exciting and varied careers available in the maritime industry. Highlights included an on-the-water exploration, navigating a rescue mission using a professional bridge simulator, wiring navigation lights, and completing chartwork and navigation tasks.

The experience gave students a real insight into both the practical and technical sides of maritime work. For many, it was a true eye opener, showcasing just how diverse and rewarding careers in this sector can be, both locally here in Devon and across the world.

Our students had an amazing time, embracing each challenge with enthusiasm and curiosity. Opportunities like this play a vital role in encouraging more young women to consider pathways into industries where they are traditionally underrepresented.

A huge thank you to the staff at South Devon College Marine Academy for hosting such an inspiring day, and to Charlotte Bounsall, Rebecca Sanders, Paul Singer CMgr MCMI, and Holly Manvell for sharing their expertise and passion.

Thank you for helping to inspire the next generation of young women to explore the many exciting possibilities within the maritime sector.

To find out more about courses available in the Marine Industry at South Devon College, log onto: <https://www.southdevon.ac.uk/courses/marine/>



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RAF VISIT INSPIRES STUDENTS



We were delighted to welcome Sergeant Liam Quinn from the Royal Air Force (RAF), who delivered an excellent and inspiring insight into life in the RAF for our students.

Across the two days, students took part in engaging and hands-on team-building workshops, designed to reflect the skills needed in RAF roles, such as communication, leadership, problem-solving and resilience. Activities included memory challenges—where students had to collect and recall items in the correct order—skipping rope and practical teamwork exercises, all of which encouraged focus, cooperation and determination.

Alongside the practical elements, Sergeant Quinn spoke openly about career pathways in the RAF, giving students valuable information about the wide range of roles available, from engineering and logistics to healthcare and aviation. Students were particularly interested to learn about salaries and apprenticeships, including the RAF's starting salary of £26,500, as well as the opportunity to earn while gaining nationally recognised qualifications.

There was also a strong focus on healthcare careers within the RAF, with students learning that those who pursue nursing can benefit from a £7,000 bursary, making this an especially attractive route for anyone interested in combining clinical skills with travel, teamwork and service.

The sessions were informative, energetic and highly motivating, leaving students feeling well informed, enthusiastic and inspired about the possibilities available to them after education. A huge thank you to Sergeant Liam Quinn and the Royal Air Force for giving our students such a memorable and impactful experience.



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IMPORTANT NEW POST 16 QUALIFICATION V LEVELS



If you're in Years 7–10, it might feel early to think about life after GCSEs. But some exciting changes are coming that could affect your future choices.

What's changing after GCSEs?

The government is updating education for students aged 16+ to make it simpler and clearer to choose what to do next.

The aim is to help everyone gain the skills they need to:

- * Get a good job
- * Go to university
- * Follow their ambitions

What are V Levels?

From September 2027, there will be a brand-new option called V Levels. After GCSEs, students will have three main choices:

- A Levels – more academic (classroom learning and exams)
- T Levels – more technical (includes work experience placements)
- V Levels – a new option where you explore different career areas before specialising

Key facts about V Levels:

- The same size as one A Level
- You can combine them with A Levels
- Help you try out different career paths
- First subjects will include:
Digital (technology), Education & Early Years & Finance & Accounting

Why are these changes happening?

Right now, lots of students (and parents!) find post-GCSE options confusing.

These changes will:

- Make choices easier to understand
- Allow students to mix different types of subjects
- Help employers and universities recognise qualifications more clearly

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What if you're not ready for Level 3 courses?

Not everyone is ready to jump straight into A Levels, T Levels, or V Levels—and that's okay.

There will be two new Level 2 pathways (GCSE level) appropriate for those that gain below Grade 4s at the end of Year 11:

Occupational Pathway

- For students who want to go into work or apprenticeships
- Focuses on real-life job skills

Examples include:

- Catering
- Childcare

Further Study Pathway

For students who want to continue studying, but need more time. Helps build confidence and skills before moving on.

What if you struggle with English or Maths?

If you don't pass GCSE English or Maths:

- You won't just keep repeating the same exam
- You'll get new courses and extra support
- You can improve step by step and build confidence

When do these changes start?

First courses begin in September 2027, schools and colleges will introduce changes gradually.

For more information, please visit

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2026/03/new-v-levels-and-post-16-qualifications-explained/>

GOV•UK

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Experience the difference - explore your potential.

The sixth form Open Morning. 30th June 2026.

Accepting boys and girls.

Please book your place today!

Torquay Grammar School Sixth Form



For full information and to book, go to:
<https://www.tggsacademy.org/>

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Sports Experience Day @ Marjons

Some of our lucky Year 9 students were invited to visit Plymouth Marjon University for an exciting Sports Experience Day.

Students took part in a range of interactive activities, including measuring their reaction times, jumping height, and grip strength. They also explored the science behind exercise by analysing what happens to the body while running on a treadmill.

A highlight for the students was the opportunity to try the anti-gravity treadmill, which simulated what it would feel like to run on Mars.

The day finished in the sports hall, where students tested their speed and even experienced the university's cool room at a chilly -11°C .

The students thoroughly enjoyed the day and gained a fascinating insight into the world of sport science and university life. Thank you to everyone involved for such a wonderful opportunity!

To find out more about sporting opportunities at Marjons, log onto:

<https://www.marjon.ac.uk/sport/>



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Year 8 Set Sail in Pirate Enterprise Challenge



Year 8 students at Waterleat Road recently embarked on an exciting and imaginative Pirate Enterprise event, putting their teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills to the test. The challenge was to design and build a boat that wouldn't sink and could carry weight, using only a limited range of everyday materials. Working within a strict budget, students were divided into teams and tasked with constructing their vessels from items such as empty plastic bottles, egg cartons, straws, tape, and string.



The activity encouraged innovation and careful planning as teams balanced design ideas with practical engineering solutions. After a series of tests, team Go Fast Girty emerged victorious with a sturdy and buoyant design, earning themselves some delicious pirate treasure.



The event also provided valuable careers insight, with special guest judge Tom Warburton, a Chief Mate and maritime safety officer, sharing his expertise on leadership, teamwork, and operations within the maritime industry. His real-world experiences helped bring the challenge to life and inspired students to think about future pathways. Adding to the fun, Girty the Parrot made a surprise appearance, boosting team spirit and creating a lively pirate atmosphere.

The Academy's Pirate Enterprise challenge was a fantastic example of hands-on learning beyond the classroom, combining creativity, collaboration, problem solving and career learning in an unforgettable experience.



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**Girty
the
Parrot**





We would like to take this opportunity to say ‘Goodbye!’ to our fantastic, resilient Year 11 leavers. We know they are going on to do some brilliant courses at local schools and colleges and wish them all the very best for the future. And remember although your studies at Paignton Academy are coming to an end, your learning has not.

You will continue to explore and discover, overcome many challenges and grow and whilst you construct your futures and exciting memories we give these words of advice: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

We would love to hear from past students to find out how they are doing. In the meantime, if any students require help or support please do get in touch with us via the Careers e-mail address:

careers@paigntonacademy.tsat.uk



Mrs Hay



Mrs Vere



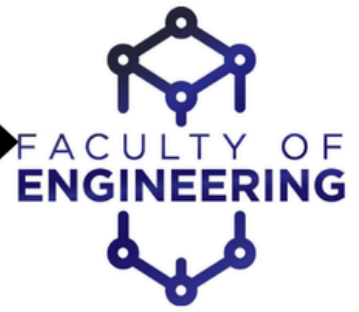
Mrs Deane



Mrs Barter

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**SUMMMER
2026**

**TO BOOK PLEASE SCAN QR CODE
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE**



JUNE

17

WEDS

OPEN EVENT

2.15PM - 3PM

TASTER SESSIONS

3PM - 4.15PM

JULY

13

MONDAY

OPEN EVENT

2.15PM - 3PM

TASTER SESSIONS

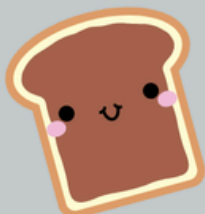
3PM - 4.15PM

TEL: 01626 248982

EMAIL: STUDENTRECRUITMENT@SOUTHDEVONUTC.ORG.UK

KINGSTEIGNTON ROAD, NEWTON ABBOT TQ12 2QA

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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