



Thornden School Newsletter

30th January 2026



Welcome - Ms Lowing (Headteacher)



Dear Families,
I hope that you have had a good couple of weeks.

As I explained before, I am now an Ofsted Inspector. I had completed a few inspections last academic year under the old framework. Since January OIs (as they are known!) have been doing inspections under the **renewed framework**.

You may have read about this in the news. Here are some of the main differences:

- There is **no overall judgement** for a school - schools are no longer judged as Outstanding, Good, Requires Attention or Inadequate.
- Instead, there are **6 - 8 areas** that the school is judged on - these are judged largely as Needs Attention, Expected Standard or Strong Standard. There are judgements of Urgent improvement and Exceptional standard but these are not the norm.
- Reports have changed to be more of a report card

Inspection report: 16 December 2025



An example Ofsted report card

After doing an inspection last week there are a number of things that I want to share with you:

- Expected Standard sounds a little underwhelming, but **this is a high bar**. In my opinion, a better phrase would be "Effective Standard" because a school that is meeting all of these is doing a great job!
- The Ofsted standards used to be a 'best fit' so schools were slotted into the area that seemed the most appropriate. However, **they are now a "secure fit"** so if a school falls down in one sentence of the criteria (or part of a sentence) it is likely to be given a "Needs Attention"
- **Many schools will have at least one area judged as "Needs Attention"**. Just like an advisory notice on your MOT - this is an area that needs to be looked at rather than a "fail"
- Exceptional is an incredibly high bar! It was described to me as "something that the school does that other schools would not think is possible"

As I explained previously, the motivation behind becoming an OI was to ensure that Thornden would be in the best position possible when we have our visit in either the Summer term this year or the Autumn term next year. **However, we do not run the school for Ofsted - we run it for our young people.** It just so happens that the areas in the renewed framework are the key areas that also deliver a fantastic education for our students. A win-win situation!

Thank you to those of you who responded to our Parent Survey. If you have not done so and would like to then please [click here](#).

Please see below for the letter that we received from the Secretary of State and the Department for Education last week. We are really proud of our results and appreciate the recognition.

Best wishes,

Caroline

A message from Bridget Phillipson



Dear Caroline,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at Thornden School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

Dates for you Diary

Event	Date	Information
Winter Production Rehearsals	02/02/2026-04/02/2026	
Winter Production	05/02/2025-06/02/2026	
Year 10 Reports	06/02/2026	Available to parents
New York Trip	Departs 13/02/2026	
Non-uniform day	13/02/2026	Payable for the year via Arbor
Austria Ski Trip	Departs 14/02/2026	
Half term	16/02/2026-20/02/2026	
Year 9 Reports	25/02/2026	Available to parents
Chinese New Year Event	25/02/2026	In the canteen
Year 9 Parent and Carer evening	26/02/2026	
Year 7 Synagogue visit	02/03/2026	
Student Parliament Unloc training	02/03/2026 and 04/03/2026	
Spanish Play	03/03/2026	
Year 8 Hindu Mandair visit	13/03/2026	

Inset Days 2025-2026

30/06/2026

08/07/2026

Non-uniform days 2025-2026

Friday 13th February

Friday 27th March

Friday 17th July



Extracurricular Timetables and Updates

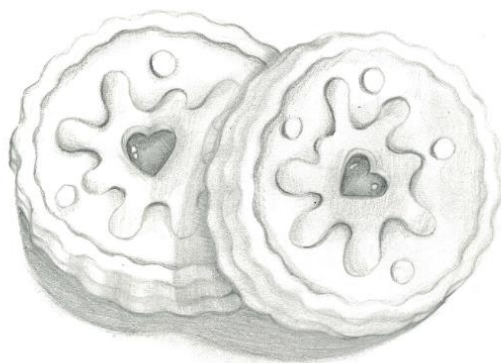
Please follow this [link](#) to our Extracurricular timetables.

Extracurricular Music Department Timetable



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breaktime					
MU3	Recorder Ensemble Mrs Williams				
Lunchtime					
MU2	Flute Cocktail Mrs Dodd	Advanced String Group Mrs Gale	Brass Ensemble Mr Needham		
MU3	Sax Mad Mr Jones		Percussion Ensemble Mr Streater	Jazz Band Mr Jones	
Hall		Show Singers Mrs Rowcliffe			
Drama 2			String Orchestra Mrs Gale		
Vocal Room			Vocal Ensemble Mrs Bekker	Vocal Ensemble Mrs Bekker	
After School (3:00pm – 4:00pm)					
Hall			Thornden Singers Mrs Bekker	Wind Band Mr Jones	

Artist of the week



The Artist of the Week is Emilia W from Year 8, with this amazing pencil sketch of Jammy Dodgers. The shadows and details show excellent pencil control - Well done Emilia!



The Artist of the Week is Eliana M from Year 8. Eliana's clay gargoyle has many interesting features which are well modelled using the clay, in particular the stitching effect on the scars is very well handled - Well done Eliana!

Chinese New Year Celebration

On Wednesday 25th February we will be holding our Chinese New Year Celebration. The event will start at 6pm and finish by 8pm. We welcome back the spectacular lion dance and we will have food to share.

Please complete this [form](#) by 30th January, if you wish to attend.

We look forward to celebrating with you!





Poetry Live- Miss Herridge (Teacher in English)



On Tuesday 20th January, forty-six Year 11 students and four very excited English teachers went to Bournemouth for Poetry Live! We spent the day at the Pavilion Theatre, listening to poets read and discuss their work. Some of the poems discussed are actually part of the English Literature Paper 2 exam, so getting an insight into deeper meanings from the poets themselves was incredibly useful for our GCSE students. Students listened well and made useful notes. Miss Herridge, Miss Harman, Miss Swinson, and Mrs Georgiou would like to say a huge thank you and well done to all who attended.

Miss Swinson had this to say:

On Tuesday this week I had the pleasure of accompanying the English Department's trip to this year's Poetry Live! event held in Bournemouth Pavilion. It was an excellent chance for them to get some trade secrets from the poets they study and AQA's chief examiner: about method, about meaning and about intent. Students were particularly enthusiastic about the passionate, if somewhat improvised, final session with John Agard, writer of 'Checking Out Me History' (already a student favourite). He encouraged the pupils to continue reading and writing poetry, long after their exams are over, and to make 'language their ally' - the dream of any English teacher! I even got the chance to ask Simon Armitage, our current poet laureate, a question about a favourite poem of mine. All in all, it was a day of helpful tips, a chance to question the poets they study, and, of course, a chance to hear the rhythm of poetry - live!



Houses

The Great House launch has taken place, and everyone is off the mark! Our first house competitions are already underway, with The Quest for Olympus around school, Logo designs and Mottos being devised, and the first of the inter-house sports competitions happening.

The students all had a chance to nominate their ideas for Houses, and vote for the winners. The student body decided it should be GREEK GODS.

So, look out for more events and support your house, be it Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Athena or Poseidon.

Shield Competition

Can you design a shield for your new house?

- **It must be related to the theme of your God and be colourful and decorative.**
- **We have included some blank shield options if you wanted to use them or design your own!**
- **These shields will be displayed in tutor rooms and will represent your house for the rest of the year.**

All entries must be submitted to your Head of house by Friday 6th February.



LOKT update

Thank you to all the families supporting the LOKT app trial. The image below shows you the initial impact it has had.

- Over **3,000 hours of phone-free focus time** delivered in just two weeks.
- Consistent daily engagement from active pupils, averaging nearly **60 hours per pupil**.
- Year 7 showing the strongest overall impact, which really reinforces the importance of early habit-building.
- Early signs that the impact is **beginning to extend beyond school into the home**, which is exactly the longer-term behaviour change we hoped to support.

If you would like to sign up to the trial, you can join anytime. You will need a unique code for your child's year group, which can be found on the initial letter. Alternatively email info@thornden.hants.sch.uk and we will provide this for you.

For parents/carers already using this, if you ever need to remove the lock temporarily, please follow these steps:

Settings → Apps → LOKT app → Remove Screen Time Manager.



Join Thornden's Digital Wellbeing Trial

1 What is LOKT.app?
Pauses distracting apps during school hours (8:35am-2:50pm). Essential functions like calls, texts and medical apps still work.

2 Why Join?

- Better concentration in lessons
- Healthier digital habits
- Optional family controls at home

3 What Parents Say

- "Easy to install and just locks automatically"
- "Even knew when it was INSET day"
- "Nice to know distractions are removed during learning time"

4 Getting Started

- Download LOKT.app on your child's phone
- Use the unique invite code provided by the school
- Parent confirms setup & digital wellbeing begins!

Join the trial today for a focused learning experience!
www.lokt.app



Safeguarding-Mr Thomas (Deputy Headteacher and DSL)

Upcoming support sessions available to parents and carers, run by Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:

- Embracing Autism-4th February 9.30am-4pm-[Book here](#)
- Information and Advice session 4th February 10am-2pm. [Book here](#)
- Understanding ADHD-5th March 9.30am-4pm-[Book here](#)



Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service



Wellbeing Den-Mrs Kingsley-Smith (Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager)

Low Mood Workshop for Parents Thursday 5th February 2026 9.30am to 10.30 am

Our next parent coffee morning event is a low mood workshop. We are grateful to our Mental Health Support Team (MHST) who will be delivering this session to help parents recognise the signs of low mood in their children and explore practical ways to support them. They will introduce simple strategies like activity scheduling and value-based living to help break the cycle of low mood and encourage positive daily habits. Wellbeing Den team will also be around to support, so we look forward to seeing you then.

Spaces will be limited and on a first come first serve basis. Please click [here](#) if you would like to book.

Children's mental health week 9th February to 13th February 2026

We are excited to be supporting CMHW again this year. We are starting a week early with huge thanks to Solent Mind who will be hosting assemblies all week for each year group.



Thornden's Parent
Teacher Association



Supporting Thornden's children ... beyond the curriculum *with Waitrose green tokens!*

Please make sure that you put your green tokens in our box!

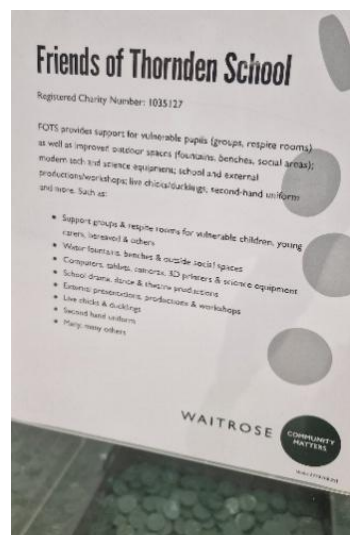
Don't forget how we help:

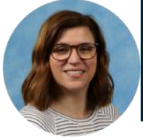
- Support groups & respite rooms for vulnerable children, young carers, bereaved & others
- Water fountains, benches & outside social spaces
- Computers, tablets, cameras, 3D printers & science equipment
- School drama, dance & theatre productions
- External presentations, productions & workshops
- Live chicks & ducklings
- Second hand uniform
- Many, many others

Your school, your PTA!

FOTS- your PTA supports the school in a huge range of ways! They help keep after-school clubs free while providing water fountains and books, benches, sports kits, trampolines & 3D printers... plus many pastoral and support groups for young carers, bereaved students and others.

Don't forget, **without our donation scheme, none of this would be possible!** As one year group moves on, we lose their donations, so **now is the time to take action** and **SIGN UP TO DONATE** - it only takes a few minutes. Even the mere price of a coffee, once a month, makes a real difference!





i-Construct Winners – Miss Stickland (BTEC Enterprise and Careers Lead)

In October we took a group of 12 students to CEMAST in Leigh on Solent for an event run by the construction industry. In teams, students were asked to interview a construction company about the work they do, their aims and their environmental practices. Teams were then asked to create a presentation on the information they had discovered and present to a panel of industry experts.

In January we heard that one of our teams, the Thornden Throttles 3, had won the award for best presentation. The judges were very impressed with the way our students presented their findings and answered their questions. The event ran over 3 days, and 550 students attended, so to win an award is very impressive. On Wednesday we were invited to the awards ceremony at Southampton Solent University where the students were awarded their trophy. Well done to Oliver, Fiyin, Ben and Clara.



2025 Chess Club Winner

Last year Arran T won the 2025 Thornden Chess Club Tournament. This week he was presented his trophy by Dr Duffy. Congratulations to Arran!





Careers – Miss Stickland (BTEC Enterprise and Careers Lead) & Miss Quinn (Careers Coordinator)

Click [here](#) for all the latest careers news, events and opportunities.

Barton Peveril College Deadline

The deadline for Barton Peveril College applications is Friday 13th February. Any students still wishing to apply must ensure applications are submitted on time as the colleges do not offer flexibility on deadline dates. We strongly recommend applying to multiple colleges and all applications are done via the college website. Students must complete the predicated grades section of the application now that results have been released.



Barton Peveril
Sixth Form College

InvestIN free workshops

Life after school may feel uncertain for you and your child with AI reshaping the graduate job market and changing careers today. That's why [InvestIN](#) is launching a new series of free workshops in February, with two sessions to help students prepare for the future.

[Will AI Take My Dream Job?](#) - 3rd February | 6pm

- How is AI affecting jobs today?
- How AI will impact jobs in the future
- The opportunities and challenges of AI
- How AI affects subject choices, university decisions and career planning

[How to Futureproof Your Career](#) - 10th February | 6pm

- How to prepare for changing career paths
- Why personal values matter more than ever
- How to develop key transferable skills
- The importance of work experience

You can register for the sessions [here](#).

Babcock 2026 Apprenticeships

Applications for Babcock's 2026 Apprenticeship Programmes are open!

[Apprenticeships · Babcock Early Careers](#)

Whether you're a school leaver, seeking a career change or ready to take your skills to the next level, Babcock apprenticeships are engineered with your future in mind. Spanning engineering, science, business and project management, each programme is designed to help you develop in-demand skills, gain industry-recognised qualifications and receive the support you need to thrive – during your apprenticeship and beyond.



INVESTIN

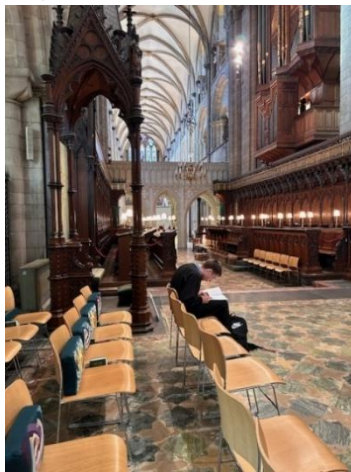


Department Spotlight- Each newsletter we will shine a spotlight on the work of one of our fantastic departments.

Miss Willis - Head of Art

This last term has been a busy and inspiring time for the Art Department! Our Year 10 students enjoyed a highly successful trip to Kew Gardens, where they photographed and sketched an incredible range of unusual plants to support their Natural Forms coursework. The visit provided fantastic primary source material and plenty of creative inspiration.

The Year 11 Fine Art group also ventured out on a cultural trip, visiting Chichester Cathedral and Pallant House Gallery as part of their second project. Students sketched on site at the cathedral, finding the space and architecture hugely inspiring, before taking part in a mixed media workshop at Pallant House that encouraged experimentation and new approaches.



At the end of the summer term Southampton Arts Society again generously supported our wonderful Year 11 Art students with their annual competition. The winners were awarded an Amazon voucher, and we are very proud to now be able to share their work with you.



Josh W 3D Art & Design



Alina S – Fine Art

Oscar S – Graphic Communication



Photography is a new GCSE that will be offered by the Art department from September. To spark interest and develop new skills Mrs Wilmore ran some after school Photography sessions for Year 9. They were really enthusiastic and produced some exciting pieces!

On Options evening recently the department set up displays to allow Year 9 students to look through GCSE sketchbooks and also talk to current Art students, to give them a real insight into the 3 GCSE Art courses offered in the department.



Meanwhile, Year 7 Awesome Art Club continues to run every Monday lunchtime, led by our two brilliant Student Leaders, Olivia C and Amelia S. So far, students have explored working with charcoal, clay, pen and ink, and oil pastels. New members are always welcome. Come along on a Monday if you'd like to get involved and get creative!



Some Year 7 Art club charcoal pieces.



Thornden Sport- Miss Hall (2nd in PE)

Sports Results

Date	Team	Gender	Sport		Opposition	Fixture Type	Result	Player(s) of the match
19/01/2026	U14	Boys	Football	vs	Toynbee	League	lost 1-2	
19/01/2026	U16	Girls	Rugby (7 a side)	vs	Kings	Friendly	Lost 15-22	
19/01/2026	U16	Girls	Rugby (7 a side)	vs	Perins	Friendly	Lost 5-25	
20/01/2026	U14a	Girls	Netball	vs	Kings	League	Won	Mia & Frankie
20/01/2026	U16a	Girls	Netball	vs	Kings	League	Lost 13-24	Ava B
20/01/2026	U13	Boys	Football	vs	Kings	District Cup	Won 5-2	
20/01/2026	U16	Girls	Football	vs	Calthorpe Park	County Cup	Lost 1-2	Freya S, GS – Laila
22/01/2026	U14a	Girls	Netball	vs	Mountbatten	League	Won 11-9	Mia & Laycie
22/01/2026	U16a	Girls	Netball	vs	Mountbatten	League	Lost 13-23	Madi & Ava
22/01/2026	KS4	Boys	Badminton	vs	Westgate	County Championships	Won 5-0	
22/01/2026	KS4	Boys	Badminton	vs	Costello	County Championships	Won 5-0	
22/01/2026	KS4	Boys	Badminton	vs	The Petersfield School	County Championships	Won 5-0 (County Champions - onto Regionals)	
26/01/2026	U12b	Girls	Netball	vs	Wyvern	League	Won	Ella, Charlie & Petra
26/01/2026	U13b	Girls	Netball	vs	Wyvern	League	Won	Amelia & Phoebe
27/01/2026	U15	Boys	Football	vs	Crookhorn	County Cup	Won 1-1 (5-4 on Penalties)	Oscar
28/01/2026	U14	Girls	Football	Vs	Thornden	HOUSE EVENT	Artemis!	

SAVE THE DATE – Sports Awards Evening

Wednesday 29th April 2026

Parents and students from current Years 9, 10 and 11 who have represented Thornden Sport are invited to our Annual Sports Awards Evening. Please save the date for now, with full details to follow in the next few weeks. The evening will include BBQ style food, followed by the awards presentation.

Careers Week

2nd to 7th March 2026

We want our students to feel inspired, motivated and excited about the huge range of opportunities that exist within the world of sport. As part of Careers Week 2026, we are looking for parents or friends of Thornden who work in a sport related field and would be willing to come into school to speak to our students.

This could include careers in physiotherapy, sports science, sports technology, sports nutrition, coaching, performance analysis or any other area connected to sport. Hearing real experiences and career journeys makes a huge difference and helps bring these pathways to life.

If you are able to visit the school at any point between 2nd and 7th March and are able to share your experience, we would love to hear from you. Please email Mr Hall at b.hall@thornden.hants.sch.uk for more information.

Sporting Success

We are always keen to hear about success stories from our students outside of school, so please do get in touch if there is news we can share. For any sporting successes, please email Mr Hall, Head of PE:

b.hall@thornden.hants.sch.uk

Social Media

We warmly invite parents to follow us: [Thornden Sport Instagram](#)

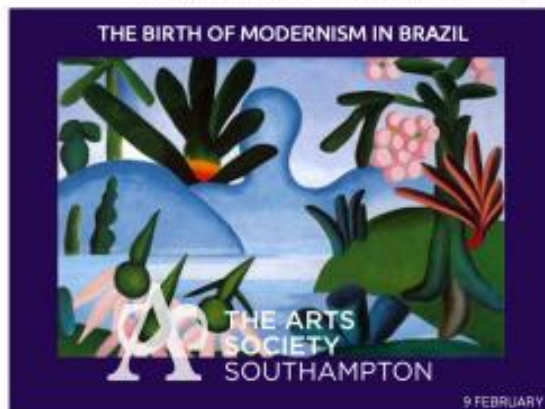


@THORNDEN_SPORT

Thornden Hall



Step into the magic, follow the gleam - welcome to our midsummer dream.
An immersive re-imagining brought to life by the talented students of Thornden School



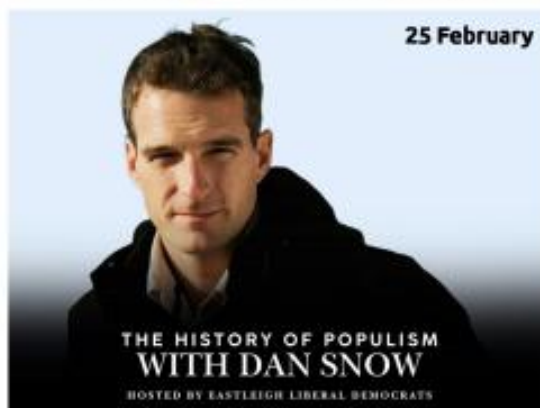
The Arts Society, Southampton monthly lecture



Olivier-award winning ballet triptych captures the heart of Woolf's uniquely artistic spirit.



The Twisted Case of a Tango Killer -
Argentinian Tango Show



Join acclaimed historian, broadcaster, podcaster
and author of an evening of insights and storytelling



Thornden Hall is a high quality performing arts centre, located at the back of Thornden Hall
Serving both the school and the wider community hosting a variety of events including:

Live theatre performances

Concerts

Cinema screenings

Community and professional productions

The venue is well-equipped and designed to support a wide range of artistic and cultural activities.

More information can be found at www.thorndenhall.co.uk

Vacancies

As we prepare for the new academic year 2026/2027, please see the following links to teaching vacancies starting in September 2026.

- **Teacher of Business/ICT** - closing date Thursday 12th February, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)
- **Teacher of Design & Technology** - closing date Thursday 5th February, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)
- **Teacher of English** - closing date Friday 6th February, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#).
- **Teacher of Maths** - closing date Friday 30th January, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)

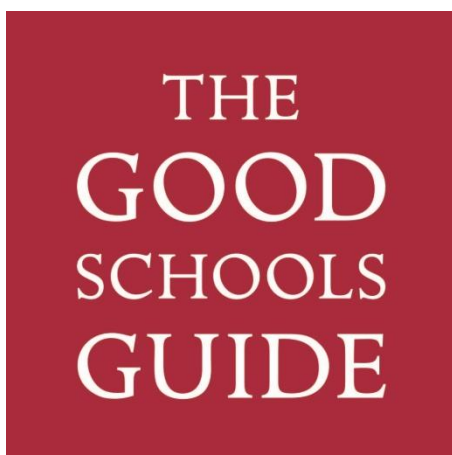
We also have a few support staff vacancies currently available.

- **Thornden Hall Manager** - closing date Friday 6th February, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)
- **Learning Support Assistant x 2** - closing date Friday 6th February, deadline midday.
[HISP Multi Academy Trust - Vacancies](#)

General Contact

If you need to contact the school, please use either of the email addresses below.
In an emergency, please contact the school during office hours on 023 8026 9722.

info@thornden.hants.sch.uk/reception@thornden.hants.sch.uk



"A big school with a big heart, exceptional leadership and a culture where it's cool to want to do well. Delivers academic excellence without compromising on wellbeing or personal development. Families feel very lucky to have this school on their doorstep." [Good Schools Guide 2025](#)

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE DAYS

Join an in-person school experience day to observe real classroom learning, meet pupils and staff, and explore what modern teaching looks like. It's a great way to discover if teaching is right for you - and boost your application.

To attend a school experience day at one of our partnership schools, scan the QR code below and visit our website.



>> inspiringfutureteachers.org/hisp <<

