



Thornden School Newsletter

13th February 2026



Welcome - Ms Lowing (Headteacher)



Dear Families,

As we move into Spring term 2 I just want to say thank you for all of the positive comments and messages that we get. We are so fortunate to have such supportive parents and families.

We had a visit from our local MP, Liz Jarvis, on Friday. Liz was really interested to hear about how the school has been highlighting and supporting young people with EHCPs to get into college and the difficulties that some of them have faced when their applications have been rejected. She was also keen to hear about the lack of funding for the schools, the pressure that schools and families face in the SEND system - both locally and nationally - and about the challenges of smart phones for our young people. Liz spoke to a number of our students and we hope to visit parliament with her soon.



I know that education has been in the press a lot recently - internal suspensions, inclusion and SEND and smart phone use. As a school we think carefully about everything and make decisions that are right for our school and our context. We will be holding a series of listening exercises around mobile phones in schools, details for follow after the half term break. We are aware that some schools in the surrounding area are banning smart phones from September (but allowing brick phones). Whilst I have talked to you many times about the detrimental effect that smartphones have on young people we want to ensure that we do not just bow to pressure on this but listen to your views, the views of students, staff and the wider community before we make any final decision.

I hope that the students have a restful half term break and we hope to see you soon.

Caroline

Dates for you Diary

| Event | Date | Information |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 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 | Evening event |
| Year 9 Parent and Carer evening | 26/02/2026 | |
| Student Parliament Unloc training | 02/03/2026 and 04/03/2026 | |
| Year 7 Synagogue visit | 03/03/2026 | |
| 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 27th March

Friday 17th July



Extracurricular Timetables and Updates

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

Extracurricular Other Activities Timetable



| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----|------------------|---|--|--|--------|
| | Breaktime | | | | |
| R3 | | Operation Clean Up Thornden All years welcome <i>Miss Beard</i> | | Operation Clean Up Thornden All years welcome <i>Miss Beard</i> | |
| H1 | | History Club Year 7 Different theme per term Run by student leaders | | | |
| E6 | | | Well-being Wednesday All years Calm environment- colouring, crochet, arts and crafts Mrs Oliver | | |

Artist of the week



Artist of the Week is Dimitra P, Year 9, for her excellent Jomon pot. Dimitra built a well-formed pot using coils and decorated with an octopus tentacle - well done Dimitra!

Artist of the Week is Matilda T, Year 8 for her beautiful mixed media piece of a Jammy Dodger. She has used watercolours and pen outline to capture the design and colours of some of our favourite biscuits - excellent work Matilda!



Iftar Event

On Wednesday 11th March we will be holding our annual Iftar event. The evening will start at 6pm and end at 8pm. It will be held in the canteen and places to pray will be available.

Please complete this [form](#) to indicate if you will be attending and any dietary requirements. Please only complete one form per family. Deadline to complete is Sunday 22nd February.





Science Week- Mrs Drabble (Head of Science)

Ducklings and other activities

We will be having the duck eggs delivered on Monday 2nd March. There will be a live feed so you can watch them hatch which normally takes 2-3 days. The ducklings will then make an appearance in lessons as well as at lunch time for students to hold. We thank FOTS for making this event possible every year.

Science fair

We will also be holding our Science fair for all years on Tuesday 10th March. Students have been encouraged to submit entries in by Friday 13th February by filling out a Form on Satchel. Last year we heard all about Schrodinger's experiment, sharks, capybaras, guinea pig-powered devices and flying potatoes to name a few. Parents/carers will be welcome to view the displays from 3.30-4.15pm. Entrants and winners will all gain points for their Houses too.

Save the date!

As part of Science Week, **Southampton Science and engineering day will be on Saturday 14th March**. This is an amazing **free event** and fun for all the family. I can't recommend it enough. You need to book tickets and some of the workshops, events and lectures need to be booked in advance. Tickets normally go online mid-February so do keep an eye out for the event going live. Whilst it is free, if you want to go to the 'fun' workshops/lectures you will need to book early. There are a number of buildings open across the Highfield and Boldrewood Campuses looking at a variety of areas of science from stem cell research to X-ray machines to electric cars to electron microscopes. There are things for younger children to make as well as lots of other hands-on activities for all age groups.

[Southampton Science and Engineering Festival 2026 - Home](#)



SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING DAY

SATURDAY
14th March 2026

Highfield Campus and
Boldrewood Innovation
Campus, Southampton

**Free activities, workshops, talks, lab tours
and live shows suitable for all ages.**

SAVE THE DATE



Young Chefs Shine at Eastleigh College-Mrs Coles (Head of Design and Technology)

We are delighted to celebrate the success of Aariana (Year 10) and Kieyan (Year 9), who have recently completed the Junior Chef Programme at Eastleigh College.

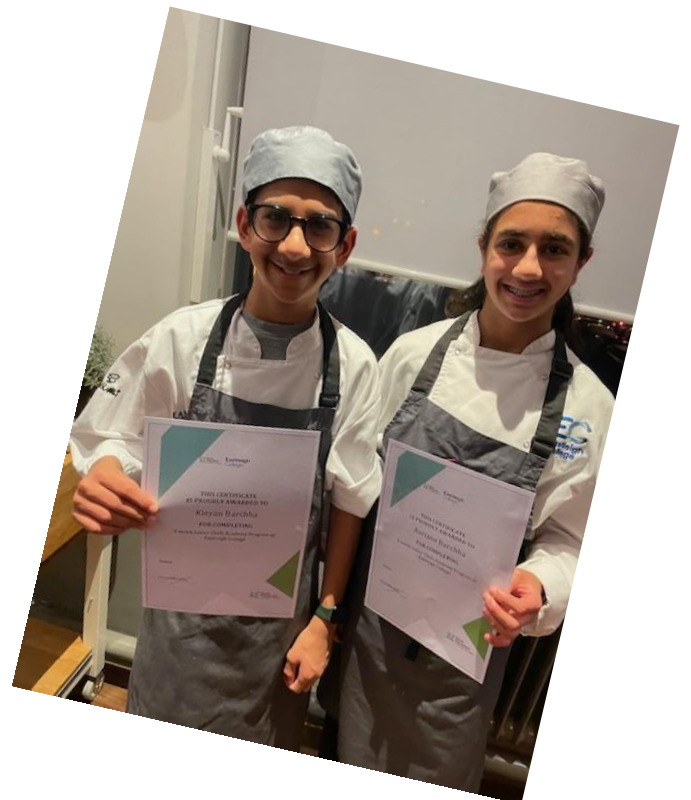
Over six weeks, the students attended after-school sessions at the college one evening a week, where they worked incredibly hard to develop their culinary skills. Their dedication and enthusiasm culminated in a fantastic final challenge: assisting in the preparation of a three-course dinner for their families and teachers.

The evening was a huge success. The food was wonderful, professionally presented, and tasted great, showcasing just how much Aariana and Kieyan had learned during the programme.

Well done to both students for their commitment and excellent achievement!

If any Year 9–11 students are interested in taking part in the Junior Chef Programme in the future, please visit Eastleigh College's website or speak to a member of staff for more information.

[Junior Chefs Programme \(for Year 9 to 11 students\) - SHCG | South Hampshire College Group](#)



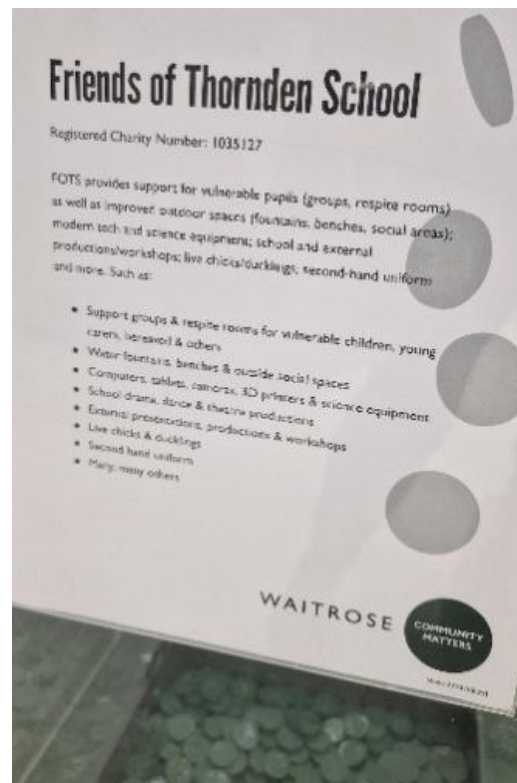
FOTS

Thornden's Parent
Teacher Association



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

Thornden School is currently in third place for the Waitrose green token scheme. If you are popping to Waitrose, please do pop a token into the school box to help us get as much funding as possible. All funds raised by FOTS go towards events, resources, trips and much more to support the school!



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



Barton Workshops- Mrs Drabble (Head of Science)

Barton Peveril Aspirin making workshop

20 dedicated Year 11 students went to Barton Peveril for a 3 hour Aspirin making workshop on Saturday 24th January. This linked perfectly with what we have been learning in Organic Chemistry so it was great for them to see how this is taught at A-level and gave them an insight into the practical's they might do if they choose to do A-level Chemistry. The students said they had a great time, made a decent amount of aspirin in the practical and were able to test its purity.

“We got to refine our practical skills and we now know how to make aspirin although it would normally take multiple lessons to do this in reality as they made it slightly easier for us to complete in a morning.”

Biology masterclass

Rebecca Gibbs from Barton Peveril delivered an engaging workshop on Protein synthesis to about 30 Year 11 students after school on Wednesday 25th January. They found out about DNA, transcription, translation and what happens to the polypeptide chains that are made to give us the proteins we know and study at GCSE such as enzymes, hormones and haemoglobin.

The students who are being entered for Combined Science were grateful of the chance to look at this topic in more detail and will help prepare them for studying Biology A-levels.

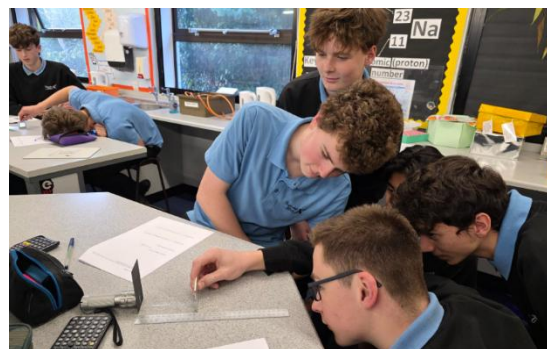


Physics masterclass

Steve Preston from Barton Peveril came to talk to our Year 11s after school on Wednesday 4th February about the wonderful world of Physics A-Level, and guided them through a masterclass on all things Light. The Year 11s demonstrated their sharp mathematical skills in rearranging and applying Snell's law to work out how far light will refract or diffract, and then how that can be used to work out what is going on billions of light years away from us - looking at the Red-Shift from Supernova!

“If a supernova goes off right next to you, you'll go from Biology to Physics” said one Year 11 studentbut equally we are all made of stardust so that's Physics to Biology!

We are very grateful to the staff at Barton Peveril for putting on these workshops and giving up part of their weekend and after school time to make them happen.





Additional Languages-Mrs Vickrage (Assistant Headteacher)

Did you know that at Thornden our students and families speak over 20 additional languages! We are proud to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures of the families in our community.

Thanks to the efforts of Mrs Bridgeman, Additional Languages meet ups have been happening for some time in our school. On the 26th January we had over 40 students attend our meet up. They were full of ideas about how we can continue to provide opportunities for our Additional Language speakers. On the 9th February we had a Chinese speakers meet up with our wonderful student leaders Boaz Au and Luhan Wang presenting on Chinese New Year and sharing Chinese snacks.

We would like to wish our Chinese families Happy New Year for the 17th February.



We are also lucky enough to be able to offer some additional support for students who may require help with their English. After half term, Mr Tully will be hosting Languagenut club in L1 – starting on Wednesday 25th February. This online learning platform has an EAL zone where students are able to practice their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Mr Tully would also like you to get in touch if you feel your child would benefit from practicing their English language skills online at home. Please contact d.tully@thornden.hants.sch.uk to find out more.

You can contact Mrs Vickrage a.vickrage@thornden.hants.sch.uk for any other queries relating to EAL.



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

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

The careers website has been updated with all the upcoming open events and links to book a space. Please use this [link](#) to access this information.

Barton Peveril College application deadline

The deadline for applications to Barton Peveril College is Friday 13th February 2026.

Sparsholt Open Event - Saturday 7th March 2026 - Year 10 & 11

Registrations are now open for Sparsholt College's next open event on Saturday 7 March 2026. These are on campus, in person events. To attend, students will need to register for the event, and book tours of the subject areas that they wish to see as soon as possible by visiting [Experience Sparsholt - Sparsholt College Hampshire](#). Timings for the event depend on the tour/tours that the student has booked.

Year 11 students, it is not too late to apply to Sparsholt College.

British Army Careers

In celebration of National Careers Week and International Women's Day, join us for an insightful webinar exploring the wide range of career opportunities available in the British Army.

With seven distinct career streams including STEM, logistics, healthcare, engineering, intelligence, combat, and business-focused roles the British Army offers far more than many people expect. This session will showcase how young people can build rewarding, long-term careers, gain recognised qualifications, and develop skills for life, whatever their interests or strengths, [book here](#).

PETA Apprenticeship Open Evening

We're excited to invite everyone to our Open Evening on Wednesday 23rd April, running from 4:30pm to 7:00pm. Please complete this [registration form](#) to book.

This is a great opportunity to:

- Meet the companies we work with and learn about the career pathways they offer.
- Speak with current apprentices and hear first-hand about their experiences on programme
- Chat to our trainers and Learning & Development Coaches about training, support, and next steps
- Get advice on applications and CV tips, including what to expect and how to best prepare

EBP South Get Inspired Event O2 Southampton Guildhall - 6th May 4:00 - 6:00pm

We're thrilled to announce that Get Inspired Southampton and New Forest, in partnership with Southampton City Council, New Forest District Council and Barratt David Wilson Homes is returning in 2026, bigger and better than ever! This year, we've teamed up with Southampton City Council's Your Future event, creating one incredible experience for young people, parents, and carers.

We're on a mission to open the eyes of 11 to 16-year-olds to the incredible variety of careers available right here in their local area. Through hands-on, interactive activities, students will get a real taste of the exciting opportunities that businesses in Southampton and the New Forest have to offer.

From engineering to entertainment, construction to coding, this event brings it all to life in one action-packed day, [book here](#).

InvestIN weekend work experience programmes - Age 15-18 years

Please use the link to find details of InvestIN weekend work experience programmes [Weekend Programmes – InvestIN Education](#), charges do apply. Please note, this would be in addition to the official year 10 work experience.

Apprenticeship opportunity at Shell UK

Our Shell UK Apprenticeship Programme is built for people who are ready to kick-start their careers, gain real hands-on experience, and earn nationally recognised qualifications, all while working alongside experienced colleagues in an inclusive, supportive environment. [Shell UK Apprenticeship Programme | About Shell UK](#)

Diploma Open Day in Sport and Physical Activity - Year 10 & 11

NCFE Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) on Sunday 19th April 10am - 3pm at Andrew Simpson Centre, Eastern Road, PO3 5LY. To find out more and book, please email jpowell@kgabayhouse.uk



**PETA
Apprenticeship
Open Evening**

23rd April 2026 | 4.30pm - 7.00pm

PETA, 1 Access Point,
Portsmouth PO6 3TE

At PETA, we specialise in delivering high quality apprenticeships in:

- Business • ICT • Finance
- Engineering • Management

Register your interest

Curious about apprenticeships? Drop into our Open Evening to explore career pathways, get practical advice, and chat with our friendly team about where your skills could take you.

PETA ASPIRE TO LEARN → APPLY TO ADVANCE



**Diploma
Open Day**

NCFE Level 3 Extended
Diploma in Sport and Physical
Activity (Outdoors)

**Sunday 19th April
10am-3pm**

Andrew Simpson Centre,
Eastern Road, PO3 5LY

**Find out more
Meet the team
Try the activities**

Find out more & book
jpowell@kgabayhouse.uk

Andrew Simpson Centres **MARINE** EDUCATION HUB **KABH6**



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

Mr Vickerage – Teacher in Maths

According to studies, the reading age required to understand many GCSE papers is around **15 years 7 months**. As a result, weaker readers face a hurdle in achieving successful GCSE results.

In the Maths department we spend our time teaching students how to solve the kind of complex mathematical problems that they will encounter in their GCSE examinations. Many of these are longer ‘wordy’ questions, containing **academic vocabulary**, that students need to be able to *decode* before they can apply their mathematical skills.

Academic vocabulary is often a **command word** or phrase that requires the students to answer in a specific way. For example:

- Evaluate
- Calculate
- Show that
- Find
- Demonstrate
- Compare

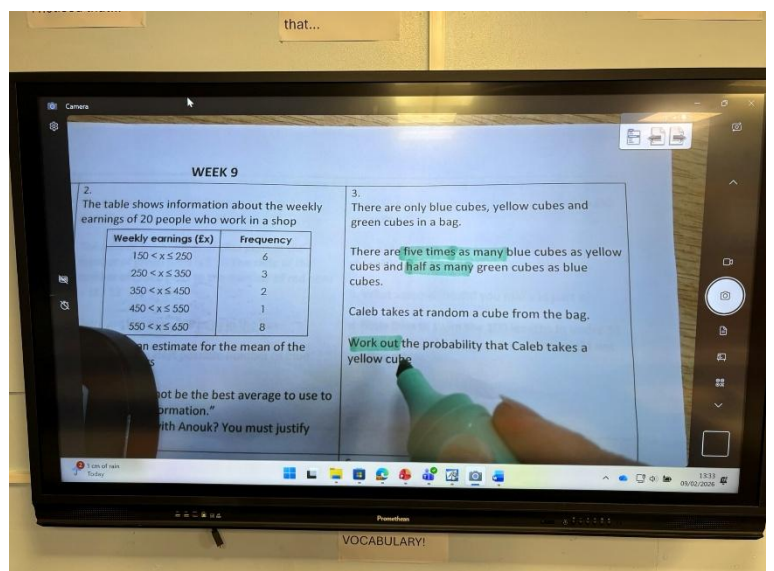
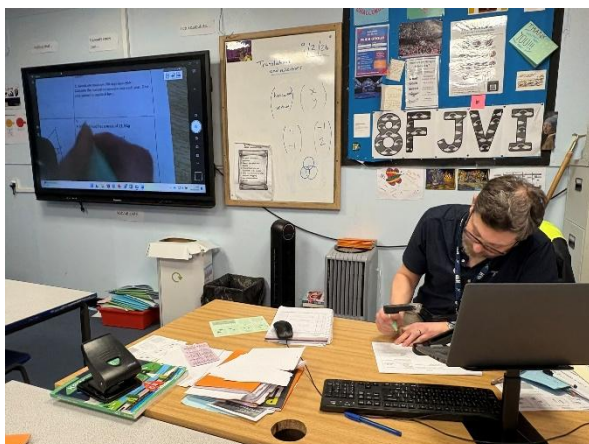
Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 have weekly **Problem-Solving** lessons where this is the focus.

Teaching reading and vocabulary skills involves demonstrating to students how to successfully approach a question, identify and understand academic vocabulary. Teachers do this by displaying the questions on the classroom screen, using a desktop camera (visualiser) and modelling the process of reading and ‘decoding’ a question. The teacher demonstrates:

1. Reading the question carefully
2. **Re-reading** the question and **highlighting** academic (Tier 2) vocabulary that defines the context of the question and what is required to answer the question correctly.

In Problem-Solving lessons, a student can follow along in their own booklets and highlight the words or phrase with the teacher. Students then get time to answer the questions, discuss their approach with a partner and report back to the class.

The students have been working hard on this and making amazing progress with their problem-solving skills! This approach is part of a whole School focus on reading and vocabulary.





Thornden Sport- Miss Hall (2nd in PE)

Sports Results

| Date | Team | Gender | Sport | | Opposition | Fixture Type | Result | Player(s) of the match |
|------------|------|--------|------------------------|----|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 28/01/2026 | U14 | Girls | Football | vs | Thornden | House Event | 1 st - Artemis | |
| 29/01/2026 | U13 | Boys | Football | vs | Mountbatten | District Cup | Loss | |
| 29/01/2026 | U16 | Boys | Hockey | vs | Romsey | Friendly | Lost 2-3 | |
| 29/01/2026 | U12b | Girls | Netball | vs | Mountbatten | League | Won | OPOM: Maya, Petra. PPOM: Charlie |
| 29/01/2026 | U13b | Girls | Mountbatten | vs | Mountbatten | League | Won | OPOM: Phoebe, Danielle. PPOM: Jess |
| 03/02/2026 | U13 | Girls | Perins | vs | Perins | Friendly | Won | Cara |
| 03/02/2026 | KS3 | Girls | Various | vs | Various | County Championships | 1st place (County Champions - onto Regionals) | |
| 03/02/2026 | U13 | Boys | The Petersfield School | vs | The Petersfield School | Hampshire Plate Quarter Final | Won 25-20 | |
| 05/02/2026 | U12a | Girls | Mountbatten | vs | Mountbatten | League | Won | Bella & Emily |
| 05/02/2026 | U13b | Girls | Mountbatten | vs | Mountbatten | League | Won 25-12 | Kitty & Bethany |
| 02/05/2026 | KS4 | Boys | Various | vs | Various | SGO district tournament | Finished 4th | |

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



Osborne & Shepherds Down School Outreach Services Parent Workshop:



Tuesday 10th March 2026

10.00am – 2.00pm

**Venue: Shepherds Down School, Compton,
Winchester SO21 2AJ**

This workshop will provide you with an insight into autism and how it affects your child. Our aim is to provide you with a range of practical strategies to support your child in the home environment.

The course will cover:

- ❖ An introduction to autism and the areas of difference
- ❖ Positive behaviour management
- ❖ Communication

Led By:

Carson Elday

(Osborne School Outreach Service)

Laura Watts (Shepherds Down Outreach Service)



Free of charge

To book a place please contact **Osborne School Office**

Please **do not** contact Shepherds Down to book.

N.B. Places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Refreshments will be provided, please bring a packed lunch.

Email admin@osborne.hants.sch.uk

Phone 01962 854537

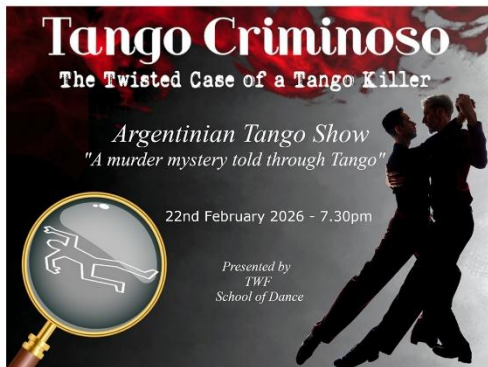
Parking – On site. Overflow parking if required at Compton Tennis Club SO21 2AB

Safer Internet Day

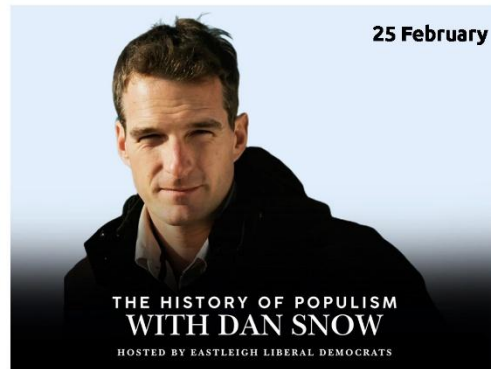
Please use this [link](#) to access information and tips about internet safety.



Thornden Hall



**The Twisted Case of a Tango Killer -
Argentinian Tango Show**



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



**One of the most-watched NT Live productions
of all time**



**A tinderbox of competition and resentments
underneath the facade of a picture-perfect couple**



**Giselle conjures up the earthly and otherworldly
realms in a tale of love, betrayal and redemption**



**Filmed live at the Theatre Royal Haymarket
with David Harewood and Toby Jones**



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

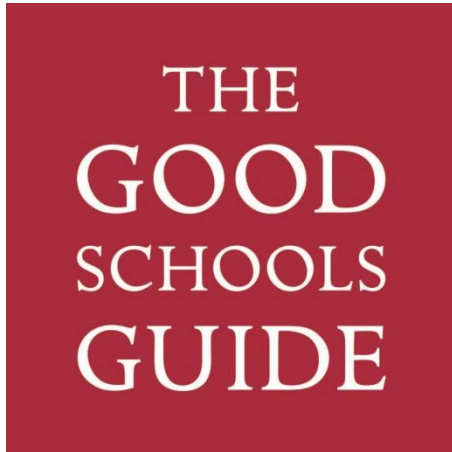
The venue is well-equipped and designed to support a wide range of artistic and cultural activities.

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

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](#)

Supported by:
DRAPER
SELF STORAGE

JIGSAW FESTIVAL

1 - 4pm, Saturday 14th February
St Matthew's Church, Otterbourne

Join us for the return of our Jigsaw and, **NEW TO 2026**, boardgame festival! Entry: adults £1, children free.

SAVE THE DATE...
SATURDAY 11TH APRIL 2026
EASTER FUN-DAY

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 <<

