

Christmas Cheer

Our students love being creative and hands-on throughout the year, but Christmas is a particularly special time where it becomes even more magical to share in festive crafts and cheer. This year, our Christmas activities once more brought us all together as a community. Fantastic craft activities designed by staff and a range of festive and natural materials, coupled with love, care and attention from students, staff and their families made for some magical moments at our Christmas craft afternoon.

We were delighted to share in some moments with families working on their activities and joyful faces throughout the event. Seeing so many fantastic Christmas jumpers and outfits made for a special afternoon to launch the festive period at The Sheiling Ringwood.

Our talented students also delighted our Trustees with handmade Christmas gifts. Each Trustee received a gift bag brimming with Christmas treats, all handmade by students who paid a special visit to deliver the bags in person and to pass on their warmest Christmas wishes.



Milestone Celebrations

Students and staff gathered to celebrate Teacher Carmen and her incredible 35 years at the Sheiling! The event was filled with heartfelt speeches, thoughtful gifts and a spectacular cake. Best of all, the celebration remained a surprise for Carmen. It was a lovely gathering and a well-deserved tribute to her dedication and impact over the years. Carmen's husband, David, also joined, adding to the occasion.



The Power of Specialist Further Education

Sheiling College was proud to take part in The Power of Specialist FE awareness week, highlighting the essential role that specialist further education (FE) plays in supporting young people with the most complex needs.

Led by Natspec, the membership body for specialist FE colleges, The Power of Specialist FE awareness week ran from 1st to 5th December. It brought together specialist colleges and other providers offering specialist FE from across the country to celebrate the important work they do with young people with SEND.

Across England, more than 1.7 million children and young people are identified as having SEND - the highest figure ever recorded. While the growth in numbers and the costs of meeting increasing levels of need is gaining national attention, the focus is primarily on children and schools. The crucial role of colleges and, in particular, the specialist provision they offer 16 - 25-year-olds with SEND, often goes unrecognised in discussions about long-term solutions.

Along with other specialist FE providers across the country, throughout the first week of December we celebrated learners' achievements and highlighted the vital role of specialist provision.

Clare Howard, Chief Executive at Natspec, said:
"Specialist FE is about unlocking potential and creating positive futures. Our colleges give young people, many with very complex needs, the skills, confidence and independence they need to succeed in their adult lives. They are critical to the government's mission to create an inclusive education system, where no learner is left behind. Yet despite this, the sector is too often overlooked by policy makers.

"Through The Power of Specialist FE awareness week, we are shining a light on this vital provision to ensure that it is recognised, valued and fully included in future policy making."



Trustee Spotlight

Hi, I'm David and have been a Trustee at the Sheiling for around 2 ¹/₂ years. To answer the question 'why am I a Trustee' I probably need to provide a little background to me and how I found myself here, as my career and background is quite different to most of the other Trustees.

I have spent my career in leadership roles, over 20 years at Waitrose running stores and central project teams followed by a regional role managing large geographically spread regions for Midcounties Cooperative Food. I then became Operations Director for a timber merchant business followed by over 4 years as Managing Director of a positive psychology-based psychometric assessment business. I am now Operations Director for a builders merchant business and manage the operational teams dealing with all goods, orders, trade stores and delivery solutions.

So my experience is commercially based, more corporate and focused on leadership, culture and managing large teams of people to achieve amazing results.

Around 4 years ago, my wife and I moved to Andover to help care for elderly parents who had been diagnosed with dementia, and this coincided with the launch of a volunteering platform at work. We had decided early in our married life that we were not going to have children and, as a result, I have had no involvement or connection to education or children with additional needs. Having moved a number of times for work, and been focused on my career, it felt like the right time to give back and I wanted to do something that would give back to the wider community, whilst helping me establish additional interests outside of work. Enter stage left the opportunity to become a Trustee.

Having registered my interest, I was approached by a number of organisations and I took up both a governor role in a local authority secondary school of 1000 pupils, where I am now Chair of the Board, along with the Trustee role at the Sheiling. From the first moment I visited and met Corine for a walk round of the Sheiling, I was smitten. I met a number of the students and saw first hand the amazing environment that the team create, the happy smiling faces of the students and a number of the staff team.

I walked the site, felt the amazing calmness and peace that this special place holds and knew that I wanted to be a part of this - and felt I might be able to bring some of my experience and skills to help make a difference.



I am skilled in financial management and enjoy analysing data and statistics to reach sound and reasoned decisions, grounded in fact and data. I am used to managing large teams in complex settings so I bring a different perspective on leadership from a more corporate setting to the Sheiling. This helps with challenging and supporting the Senior Management Team to be the best employer, to be a provocative voice when needed and to help look forward with additional focus on the future strategy for the organisation. I am also a practical, problem-solving force for change and take a strong interest in the physical estate, the buildings, maintenance and provision of modern and 'fit for the future' facilities to help achieve the very best outcomes for our amazing young people.

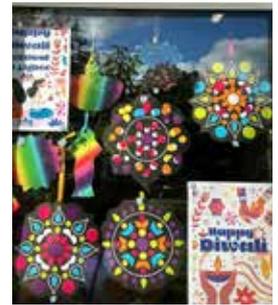
I am very proud to be a Trustee here, I continue to learn and am in awe of the incredible life-changing impact that our teams help to bring to our students. The amazing young people inspire me every time I visit and I am committed to helping support the Sheiling to deliver the very best we can to the students of both today and tomorrow. I am hugely excited to see the new Parsifal building opened and in use, and will continue to support and challenge the creation and provision of more incredible spaces and facilities, with the new college classrooms coming next and a future plan for the rest of the estate. Most of all we must continue to attract and retain incredible team members at all, levels across the Trust, ensuring that we keep the anthroposophical history and approach alive, whilst staying fit for the future and adapting to the challenges of today.

David

Delightful Diwali

Across the college, students explored the traditions of Diwali and created a wonderful range of crafts and window displays to mark the occasion.

It was a vibrant celebration of culture and creativity, bringing the spirit of Diwali to life throughout the campus.



Seasonal Festivals

Our vibrant festival calendar has continued with huge enthusiasm this year!

Students decorated jars for a magical lantern walk around our site, where lantern-lit walkways and glowing canopies created an enchanting atmosphere. The evening was filled with songs from students and staff in full voice, making it a memorable celebration.

Groups and classes also explored poetry and art for Remembrance Day, gathered for a community meal for Michaelmas and experienced the wonder of walking the Advent spiral, one of our most cherished traditions.

Now, excitement for Christmas is everywhere - reflected in beautiful class work, spirited carol singing and the joy we've shared together. We've even spotted some fantastic Christmas jumpers and accessories as students make their way around the site!



Super Star

We are thrilled to announce that a Silver Group student has been awarded a BCP Star Award for Education! These awards, made by BCP Council, celebrate the achievements of young people across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole in education, personal development and community contribution - and one of our star students stood out among many deserving nominees.

This award is made extra special as the nomination came from outside of the Sheiling and recognises the progression they have made during the last academic year. These awards are a wonderful way for the community to uplift and recognise young people.



October's Parent Forum Event

For the first time, we held a welcome lunch, which was a great opportunity to socialise with other parents and enjoy a lovely lunch.

During the meeting, we were given the headlines from the Principal, Trustees and Heads of School, College, Residential, Health and Therapies, Finance and Facilities.

We then opened the discussion on the question "What is living and breathing with families?" A good discussion on various topics covering parents' thoughts, feelings and experiences, with many shared experiences. There is no pressure to join the discussions; you are more than welcome to participate or simply listen.

One shared experience was working with Local Authorities - who is best to deal with, which phone number gets answered and whose email address is the best to get a response. From this discussion, email groups have been set up for some local

authorities, allowing parents to communicate with other parents in their local area.

We finished by discussing future 'spotlight' topics for 2026 events.

If parents did not wish to attend the Transition event being held, tours of the school, college or Residential areas had been arranged for parents to join if they wished.

All parents are welcome to attend the Parent Forum. Our next event is Friday 13th February 2026, with Total Communication as the 'spotlight' feature.

We look forward to seeing you in February.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Helen

Sheiling Parent and Parent Forum Lead

Parsifal our Perfect Place

On Friday 19th September, we celebrated the opening of our new purpose-built double classroom, Parsifal.

Students, parents and staff were joined by special guests, including the Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset and the Mayor of Ringwood, for a wonderful afternoon of celebration.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, guests explored the new building, which features spacious classrooms, quiet rooms and outdoor areas designed to support learning and wellbeing.

Everyone enjoyed chatting with students and staff, touring the eco-friendly facility, and relaxing in the sunshine with refreshments - with excellent serving and greeting from our college student helper.

This new space means more opportunities for our students to learn and thrive in an environment tailored to their needs. It was a fantastic day of community spirit, and we love the learning that is already taking place in Parsifal!



Positive Reflections

We recently welcomed a Student Nurse Associate for an engaging and highly beneficial placement that supported their professional development.

Our provision is built on strong ethical principles and inclusive, professional values which closely align with the core values of nursing. The Nurse Associate shared that 'staff were compassionate, caring and extremely supportive throughout the learning experience. Interacting with students provided invaluable opportunities to link theory to practice, particularly through the advanced medications program.'

She also described the placement as a wonderful experience that broadened her knowledge and skills in care - especially for children, young people and those with special needs - and highly recommends the Sheiling as a placement setting.

Spirit of Giving

Students in school have been busy collecting and donating items to support the Mustard Seed Shoebox Appeal for children this Christmas.

Thanks to their generosity and hard work, 14 beautifully packed shoeboxes have been created and will be sent this week to bring joy and comfort to children and families in Eastern Europe during the festive season.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this wonderful act of kindness - it truly reflects the spirit of giving at this special time of year!



Pumpkin Fun

This term, Maddy's class has been busy! They enjoyed a shopping trip choosing their items carefully. Getting creative with pumpkin carving - a hands-on experience that combined learning with seasonal fun was a class favourite and they all loved seeing their pumpkins come to life!

Tinsel and Tradition

Our college students recently enjoyed a fantastic visit to The National Trust - Kingston Lacy Estate as part of their Leisure and Community session. They explored the stunning grounds and admired the beautifully decorated rooms, which created a truly magical festive atmosphere. It was a wonderful opportunity to experience local heritage and get into the Christmas spirit together!



A Dream Journey!

We previously shared a special story about one student's passion for the railways - and now that dream has come true! Their first shift with South Western Railway was a success and this inspiring journey is just getting started.

On the day of the shift, the student arrived at the train station ready for an exciting experience. They met the team, joined the handover and carefully noted all the important details for the day ahead. After checking the cabin to ensure everything was in order, they introduced themselves to passengers and shared information about the journey.

As the train began to move with its familiar "bub bub" sound along the tracks, the student confidently checked tickets and assisted passengers. It was a busy day and, after a short break spent chatting with colleagues about school, life and future goals, they returned to their duties with renewed energy.

Hard work and dedication paid off - they completed the shift with confidence and pride. Later, this incredible story was featured in the South Western Railway magazine and now they are preparing to assist SWR management on a school assessment day, inspiring peers and showing that dreams really can come true.



Technology that Transforms Lives

At the Sheiling, technology isn't just a tool - it's a lifeline for independence, communication and confidence. Our recent NAACE assessment highlighted how digital innovation is making a real difference for our students.

Every student now has a personal iPad, opening doors to personalised apps, assistive communication tools and creative learning experiences. For some, this means finding their voice for the first time. One college student, using a Neo keyboard and iPad, shared the powerful message: "I can't speak but I'm not stupid." Technology gave him the ability to advocate for himself.

Interactive screens, AAC devices and software such as Clicker and Proloquo2Go help students overcome barriers to literacy and language. Virtual reality brings cultural experiences to life, while tools like Minecraft Education and Kahoot make learning interactive and fun.

We are delighted to have retained the NAACE Mark, which reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering every student through technology.



This is to certify that:

The Sheiling Ringwood

has been awarded the NaaceMark Accreditation for demonstrating commitment to continual improvement through the use of education technology.

16 December, 2025

Award valid for three years

Phil Blackburn
Chair, Board of Management, NAACE



Love to Learn

This term, school students have been exploring different celebrations each week! They've enjoyed learning about Guy Fawkes Night and creating fun, themed activities.

They also marked Remembrance Day, helping children understand its importance in a simple way. In PSHE, the class has been focusing on personal care, building confidence and independence through practical activities.

It's been a busy and exciting term full of learning and new experiences!



Together We Care

A huge thank you to The Sheiling Ringwood students, our wonderful families and Sheiling staff for the generous contributions to our Martinmas coat and warm clothing donation. Several sacks of warm clothes, winter coats and sleeping bags have been donated to Hope for Food.

Heidi, our Head of Residential Services, delivered the Sheiling donations to the Hope for Food community van for distribution alongside weekly meals.



Changes to the Sheiling's Complaints Process

Dear Parents,

It is rare that we find ourselves in a situation where a parent/carer makes a complaint regarding an aspect of the Sheiling's provision. However, sharing your dissatisfaction, concerns and/or complaints is important as this offers us an opportunity to reflect on various aspects of our practice and consider if we can further improve areas of our work.

We are therefore refining the way in which we record any issues raised by yourselves with colleagues. Initially, you are still likely to share any areas of dissatisfaction with the teacher or house manager of your child, or the deputy/head of department. As has always happened, these colleagues will look into the area of concern and hopefully be able to ensure that the matter you have raised is addressed and resolved in a satisfactory manner. The Department for Education considers it to be best practice to log these conversations, the investigations addressing your concerns and the outcome itself under the informal Stage 1 of our complaints procedure. Therefore, please don't be surprised if something you raised - which may actually feel minor to you - is now recorded informally under our parental complaints process and the outcome will also be shared with you in writing.

This is simply part of our ongoing efforts to provide additional clarity and transparency to all our families, so please do continue to raise any matters with staff in exactly the same way as you would have done before.

Thank you
Corine

Policy Reminder

A reminder that our regulatory policies and our Statement of Purpose are reviewed regularly and are uploaded to our website for easy access. To view, please visit our website, www.thesheilingringwood.co.uk.

However, if you would like a hard copy, this can be accommodated, please just get in touch.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve accessibility, we have updated the format of these documents.

Dates for your Diary



Christmas Break

20th December - 4th January 2026

(inclusive)

Half Term

14th February - 22nd February 2026

(inclusive)

Easter Break

26th March - 12th April 2026

(inclusive)

Our Environment

This term, Parsifal has been a huge hit with staff, students and our Finance team! Its energy-efficient design keeps running costs impressively low. During August, September and October, Parsifal's solar panels generated more electricity than it used, with the surplus helping offset energy costs for other buildings.

Looking ahead, our next new build is underway. Taurus, a college double-classroom building, will follow the same design principles to replicate Parsifal's success.

We're also introducing a can-crushing station in the recycling and waste shed. Students can crush aluminium cans, which will then be sold, with profits going back to benefit our students - a fun and educational way to promote recycling!

Our bee hives had another productive year, providing a lovely harvest of honey enjoyed by students and staff. With plants flowering through a mild autumn, our three colonies foraged later than usual, stocking up on pollen and honey for winter. We always leave enough honey in the hives and supplement with vitamin-packed fondant to keep them healthy.

Winners of the Bee Experience, auctioned at our Summer Festival, had a wonderful time learning about the hives and getting hands-on alongside our beekeeping team.

We're proud to be creating an environment where students learn the importance of caring for our planet.



Social media

We are keeping our X (@sheilingringwd), Facebook (@sheilingringwood), Instagram (thesheilingringwood) and LinkedIn (The Sheiling Ringwood) pages up-to-date. So check them out to see what is happening across the campus, events, see great new pictures and even keep in touch. Our YouTube channel (The Sheiling Ringwood) is another fantastic source of information and activities.



Enjoy the Festive Break