St Christopher School

AI & Digital Learning Newsletter

Issue 02 | Autumn Term 2026

What does it mean to be AI literate?

Artificial Intelligence is already integrated heavily into everyday life, not only through tools such as ChatGPT, but increasingly through search engines like Google, creative software, online platforms and the systems people use at work. For today's students, knowing how to use these technologies will undoubtedly be useful. However, knowing how to use AI is only one part of being prepared for a world in which it will become increasingly common.

At St Chris, we believe students also need to understand what AI can do, where its limitations lie and how to make informed decisions about the information it produces. This broader set of knowledge and skills is often described as AI literacy.

Young people may appear very confident using AI while still having a limited understanding of how the technology works or how much trust should be placed in its responses. AI systems can produce highly convincing explanations, images and written content, but a confident response isn't necessarily an accurate one. Students therefore need to develop the judgement to recognise when information should be questioned, checked or challenged.

Being AI literate also means understanding that different tasks require different approaches. There will be occasions when AI can help a student explore an idea, consider another perspective or work more efficiently. There will also be occasions when the most valuable part of learning is the struggle to reach an answer independently and knowing the difference is becoming an important skill in itself.

AI literacy isn't about becoming an expert in computer science or understanding every technical detail behind an AI system. Instead, it involves developing a set of habits that help us use these technologies thoughtfully.



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AI is already here.. but what actually is it?

Ask someone to name an example of AI and there's a good chance they'll say ChatGPT, Claude or CoPilot. But what most don't realise is that AI has been around us for decades. It helps filter spam from our inboxes, recommends films and music, translates languages and powers many of the digital tools we use every day. Chatbots are just one part of a much bigger picture.

Artificial Intelligence as a field can be traced back to 1956, when a group of researchers met at Dartmouth College to explore whether computers could carry out tasks linked to human intelligence. That meeting is often seen as one of the starting points of AI research.

Since then, AI has developed in lots of different ways. Some early systems followed rules written by people, while more modern systems are able to learn patterns from large amounts of data. As computers have become more powerful, AI has become capable of doing far more complex things.

Generative AI sits within this wider field. It's the type of AI that creates new content, such as text, images, music, video or code. A simple way to think about the difference is Netflix. If Netflix recommends a film or series based on what you've watched before, that is AI. If a tool creates a brand-new film scene from your instructions, that is generative AI. Both use AI, but only one is creating something new.

At St Chris, we want students to understand these distinctions rather than simply use the tools. That is why AI is becoming a more visible part of our Computing curriculum. Across II Group and III Group students will explore how AI works and where they already come across it, before moving on to some of the bigger questions around its use.



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What will students actually learn?

This term II Group students will begin with AI Literacy. The focus will be on understanding what AI actually is, how it differs from other types of technology and where they are already likely to encounter it. They will explore how AI systems use data, recognise patterns and make predictions, as well as looking more closely at generative AI and how tools such as chatbots and image generators produce their responses. A key part of the unit will also be learning how to use these tools critically. Students will look at why AI can produce inaccurate or misleading information, why a confident answer isn't always a correct one, and how to check and question what they are given.

In III Group, students will build on this through AI Ethics.
Here, the focus shifts from how AI works to what happens when we use it. Students will explore topics such as algorithmic bias, privacy, misinformation, ownership and responsibility, using real-world examples to think about how AI can affect individuals and society.

They will consider questions such as:

Can an AI system ever be truly unbiased?
Who owns something created with AI?
Should AI be allowed to make decisions about people?
What happens when an AI system gets something wrong?
Are there situations where AI simply should not be used?



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Why learn about Artificial Intelligence?

Not everyone feels positive about AI, and that's an important part of the conversation. There are understandable concerns around cheating, privacy, creativity, employment, misinformation, environmental impact and the wider question of what happens when we become too reliant on technology.

For us at St Chris, those concerns aren't a reason to avoid AI education. They are part of the reason it matters. Our role isn't to tell students that AI is good or bad, neither is it to encourage them to use it simply because it's available. Our role is to help them understand the technology well enough to question it, challenge it and make informed decisions about when its use is appropriate.

Students are likely to encounter AI in further education, the workplace and wider society, whether they actively choose to use it or not. Giving them the language and understanding to engage with it critically is therefore just as important as teaching them how the technology works.

There's no expectation that students will all reach the same conclusion about AI. What matters to us at St Chris is that they can look at an issue carefully, consider evidence, listen to different perspectives and arrive at a view they can justify.

As our approach to AI education continues to develop, we would also welcome the views of our wider school community. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions about how AI is being taught and discussed at St Chris, please feel free to get in touch with me at Curtis-broni@stchris.co.uk.



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