



ON THE ROAD WITH ST GEORGES SCHOOL



At Vectis Radio, we attend all the big events The Isle of Wight Festival, The County Show, and the Chale Show – but nothing compares to the joy and meaning we find during our school broadcasts. These aren't just events on our calendar; they're the heart of what we do.

One of the most powerful experiences we have is broadcasting from St George's School. St George's is a school for young people with special educational needs, and their students are part of our 4Ps Radio Training School, which is based at the Riverside Centre. The 4Ps Presenting, Production, Promotion, and Podcasting is all about helping young people build confidence, improve communication, and have fun while learning the art of radio.

Most of the time, students come to our studio. But occasionally, we pack up our outside broadcast unit and take the training school to them. These live broadcasts from school grounds give students the chance to participate without leaving their familiar environment, and the excitement is electric. There's a buzz in the air as they realise they're live on the radio sharing their voices, their stories, and their personalities with the Island. Normally they do live Radio and record podcasts at the station but when in outside Broadcast mode The Podcasts are done Live on Air.

It's not just fun it's deeply rewarding. These young people light up when they sit behind the mic. They speak, laugh, introduce songs, and tell their stories with pride. And when we play the recordings back, it's clear: they're not just participating, they're shining. It makes every bit of preparation worthwhile.





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Whenever we return to St George's School, we bring a former student with us to mentor the new recruits a powerful way to inspire, support and lead by example. Many of these young people are now a vital part of the Vectis Radio daytime schedule, something we are incredibly proud of. Two shining examples are Leisha Lang, now 23, who left school during Covid and co-hosts our Tuesday afternoon show, and Hannah "Banana" Barker, who lights up Monday mid-mornings. Without Vectis Radio, both would likely face isolation but instead, they've found purpose, community and confidence. In truth, we're the lucky ones. They don't just enrich our output they bring heart, energy and inspiration to everything we do.

Of course, these events take planning. Security checks, photo permissions, school coordination it's not just plug in and go. But we wouldn't have it any other way. Two of us go in, set everything up, and for the next two hours, over 20 students run the show. The format is similar to our studio shows familiar music, structured segments but the voices are fresh and real. The energy is different. It's the sound of empowerment.



And the impact goes far beyond the broadcast itself. More students hear about it, get excited, and sign up to join us in September. Some have never spoken on a mic before. Others are shy, unsure. But once they're on air, they transform. They feel heard, seen, valued. They're not just "special needs students" they're radio presenters, storytellers, entertainers. And they make their school proud.

There are around 300 young people at St George's, each with their own challenges and strengths. Giving them a platform like this is not just about radio it's about inclusion, opportunity, and visibility. It's about saying, "You matter. Your voice matters."

As Ian Mac, one of our presenters, says: "This is the most fun and rewarding broadcast on our calendar. You forget the challenges these young people face because they forget – they're too busy being themselves. It's humbling, and it's a privilege."





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We live in a world that isn't perfect, and young people with additional needs often get overlooked. Funding, support, understanding all of these are vital. But through radio, we can shine a light on their brilliance. We can share their voices with the wider world. And we can keep doing our part to make the Island a more inclusive place.

At Vectis Radio, it's not just about playing songs. It's about giving people, all people, a voice. And when we do that from schools like St George's, we're reminded why we do what we do. It's not just radio. It's transformation. It's joy. It's belonging. And it's unforgettable. This outside broadcast was more than just a radio show it was a heartfelt farewell to the amazing group of students who've been with us this term, and an open invitation to a brand-new wave of young voices ready to join us in September. But more than that, it was a powerful moment of connection, confidence, and courage.

By bringing the Vectis Radio experience directly into the school, we break down barriers. We replace anxiety with familiarity. So when September comes, these young people won't be stepping into the unknown they'll be stepping into something they've already felt, heard, and been part of. It's a subtle shift, but a huge one. Because feeling comfortable can make all the difference when you're about to do something new.

And they're already jumping in. Callum, who uses a wheelchair and dreams of becoming a darts player, is ready to take on the airwaves. Jack, who once struggled to engage with school, is now staying on just so he can keep doing radio. And Noah? He loves Gary Numan and extractor fans. That's the magic of working with young people they're wonderfully unpredictable, endlessly interesting, and full of surprises.

You never quite know what's going to happen in a live school broadcast, but that's what makes it so special. It's real. It's raw. And it's full of heart. These young voices are funny, passionate, thoughtful, and brave. They're the future of community radio and giving them this chance to be heard is one of the most powerful things we do.

