



Southend High School for Girls

AN ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 4UZ
Headteacher: Mr J Carey MEd (Cantab), BA (Hons), LLE, NPQEL

Friday 21st April 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Please find below information and updates from this week.

Congratulations! 2023 Rotary Young Citizen Award Winner

Congratulations to Matthew in Year 12 on his success on being chosen as a Rotary Young Citizen Winner 2023! Matthew will attend the Young Citizen Awards presentation and has chosen to donate the winnings to One Love, a local soup kitchen. Matthew is pictured below with SHSG Governor, Dr Ladner and his Rotary Young Citizen Winner trophy.



Director of Sixth Form announcement

From September 2023, Ms Boyson will be the new Director of Sixth Form at SHSG.

Miss Riebold has led the Sixth Form successfully for the past seven years, building a very strong team and growing a popular, over-subscribed Sixth Form where students achieved the highest A Level results last year, further strengthening SHSG's reputation as a top-performing grammar school. As part of the hand-over process, Miss Riebold will be seeing through the current Year 12 to the end of Year 13 to give them continuity for their examination year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Miss Riebold for her outstanding work with the Sixth Form.

Please see a message below from Miss Riebold:

"It has been an absolute pleasure leading the Sixth Form at Southend High School for Girls for the past seven years. I have had the opportunity to work with over 1000 incredibly gifted young people, ensuring that they have an enjoyable and fulfilling two-year Sixth Form journey, leaving them equipped to progress onto their desired educational and career pathways.

I am also very grateful to have worked with a phenomenal team of colleagues in the Sixth Form. What has been achieved over the last seven years would not have been possible without the support of Miss Marcel, Mr Barnett, Mrs Neill, Mr O'Brien and Mrs Hopkins, as well as a dedicated team of Form Tutors and A Level teachers.

I know that the Sixth Form will continue to develop and flourish under Miss Boyson's leadership, ensuring the very best academic success and personal development opportunities as well as successful progression onto post 18 pathways for all our students."



Please see a message below from Ms Boyson:

"I am delighted to take up the post of Director of Sixth Form next academic year. I joined the school as Assistant Headteacher in September, having spent 12 years working in schools across East London. In my current role, I have been working closely with both the SHSG House Captains and students applying to Oxbridge. In both these areas, I have been so inspired by our sixth form students' leadership, drive and ambition. I am looking forward to working with Mrs Neil, Mr O'Brien and Mrs Hopkins to make sure every student has the support to fulfil their academic talents, as well as a memorable and exciting journey through Sixth Form. I would like to thank Miss Riebold for all she has done to support SHSG Sixth Form students over the last seven years and look forward to working with her closely in the coming months as we prepare for our new Year 12 intake in September."

Feedback from assessment and reporting systems surveys

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the recent survey related to our current assessment and reporting systems in school. Along with the feedback from the student and staff surveys we now have a very rich and useful set of data and feedback to help inform and shape our policy and practice moving forward. For example, one area highlighted was the length of parents' evening appointments and that parents would like longer appointments. We will keep you informed of any related future developments.

Year 10 Careers Experience Days

Since January, all Year 10 students have been following a careers programme in their registration time and Life Skills lessons. They have learned how to research different career paths using our online platform Unifrog, how to write CVs and apply for specific jobs with a covering letter. Over two days this week we welcomed over 30 friends of the school, alumni, governors, careers advisors and local business owners. They very kindly gave up their time to conduct 15-minute interviews with all 180 of our Year 10s.

Students received verbal feedback at the time and we will celebrate those who particularly impressed with an achievement assembly later in the term. Interviewers were most complimentary at the high standard of our students' responses. They gave excellent answers to the questions and are to be congratulated for rising to the occasion, demonstrating ambition, and conducting themselves with confidence and maturity.



Student success!

Media Studies A level students went to a conference at the BFI in January. At the end of the event the editor of the Media Magazine, Claire Pollard asked for budding student journalists to write up an account of the day. Several of our students took up this challenge. Hannah P was successful, and her entire article has been printed in this quarters edition (see the end of this letter). Hannah was paid for her work and has also secured a week of work experience at the English and Media Centre in London. Victoria A was also quoted in the article and several of our students are featured in a photograph with actor and director Simon Bird.

Proctor and Gamble work experience write up by Victoria

On Thursday 30th March, I visited Proctor and Gamble's company in Surrey for a work experience insight day. What started off as a morning with a vague idea of what P&G do, ended with an evening of gratitude at how integral media GCSE and A level were in enhancing my understanding of the company. From sales and marketing to technology, the workers guided us through the process of branding, and how they cater to their audience to achieve maximum profit in the industry. This coincides well with the content we learn at school, particularly old spice, and

how their “transformative mass market campaign” revived their brand. Speaking of which, I was fortunate enough to capture the old spice section of the headquarters on the office tour, and (apart from reminding me to revisit the topic before my mock exams), it made me respect media studies more than I already do, because the work experience gave me a vivid visualisation of everything I have gained from the subject. Overall, I don’t regret travelling 2 hours from home for this fulfilling day, and recommend it to anyone who loves media, technology, or is unsure of what they’d like to do!

Blue Stockings Performances – message from Mrs Wimsett

This week, forty students from years 7 to 12 in our SHSG Young Actors’ Company performed a production of *Blue Stockings*, by Jessica Swale. The play is about the struggles female students at Cambridge encountered in the early 1900s, whilst seeking the opportunity to graduate alongside their male peers.

Leading up to the performances, the actors attended weeks of rehearsals and learnt two hours’ worth of lines, whilst our backstage team got on with painting set, creating props and making costumes. Thank you to Ms Wimsett and Mrs Page for leading and supporting the group. It would be impossible to single out performances, as everyone from the Year 7s (playing Cambridge Professors) to our leading roles, were outstanding.



Summer Reading Challenge – Years 9-13

Southend Local Authority have asked us to share the information below with you. A poster is attached to the end of this letter and application forms are available to download on our website [‘here’](#):

*A Fantastic Summer Holiday Volunteering Opportunity for Young People aged 14 and over in Southend-on-Sea City Libraries. Southend-on-Sea Libraries are inviting students aged 14 and over to volunteer in their local library during the summer holidays. Their role will be to encourage children to participate in the annual **Summer Reading Challenge** and talk to them about the books they are reading. Students can use this opportunity to gain work experience within their community. They can put the volunteering hours towards Youth Award Schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This greatly benefits young people helping them gain new skills and self-confidence. We ask our volunteers to volunteer for approximately **48 hours** (12 days 9.30am – 2.30pm including a one-hour lunch break) although they are welcome to offer to do more hours if needed.*

Any Library in Southend marked FAO Community Development Officers Team, Summer Reading Challenge volunteers or complete the form and scan and return to librarydevelopment@southend.gov.uk

World Earth Day

As World Earth Day is 22nd April 2023, students in Year 7 to 11 debated the ethical implications of Fast Fashion in registration time this week. They discussed the importance of reusing clothes and reducing new buys. They will put their ideas into action at the end of term, with a special *swapathon*. This term our non-uniform day will be focused on supporting the planet. Planet Action have requested instead of paying money, students will bring an item that needs a new home. Then we will have all of these items for sale for an affordable price to raise money for environmental charities. More details to follow nearer the time.

Support one of our budding musicians

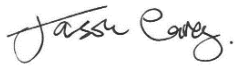
During the Easter Holidays, Isobel in Year 11 entered an international drumming competition called 'Hit Like A Girl'! There is currently a public vote underway, which will be ending on the 25th April.

If you would like to support Isobel, you can vote by clicking the link ['here'](#).

Key Dates

The calendar on our website is regularly updated and contains key dates of activities and events that are taking place in school. A full list can be found [here](#).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Jason Carey
Headteacher

THE MEDIAMAGAZINE STUDENT CONFERENCE

MediaMagazine kicked off the year in style with the return of our annual student conference. Hannah Pettit from Southend High School for Girls attended. Here's what she thought...

On Friday 13th January, Film and Media Studies students from London and surrounding areas attended the MediaMagazine Student Conference held at the BFI in London. A range of speakers including up-and-coming producers as well as academics gave informative and engaging talks on different aspects of the media industry, such as film, TV, and music, and ideologies, power and politics.



A packed NFTI full of eager Media Studies students



Margaret Holborn and Jane Prinsley from The Guardian

The first speakers were from The Guardian Foundation. We learnt about how The Guardian newspaper started out as a weekly local newspaper in Manchester in 1821, and how it achieved its current status as a respected go-to news source in countries all over the world with offices in London, New York and Sydney. Next, we heard about the ownership of the newspaper. The Guardian is owned by the Scott Trust, which is the sole shareholder. It has a policy of not interfering in the decisions made by the editors of The Guardian and The Observer to ensure that journalistic freedom is protected. We also learned that any profits made by the trust are reinvested back into quality journalism which is a unique model for a British newspaper. The speakers then explained some infographics provided by The Guardian's data analysis department. These were particularly interesting, as they provided us with an insight into what people read when visiting The Guardian's website, social media and app at different times of the day and week. In addition to this, we heard about the daily schedule of an employee at The Guardian's offices, as well as some statistics regarding the newspaper's readership globally. Overall, this talk was very informative and useful for students learning about newspapers as part of their Media Studies courses.

"We were encouraged to participate in a game of The Guardian's 'fake or for real?' social media quiz, an eye-opening and amusing task in which many were surprised to see how much false information gets reported in the media. Emily Monk, Waldegrave Sixth Form



Jane Prinsley

Simon Bird

The next speaker was BAFTA-nominated actor and director Simon Bird, who is best known for his roles in *The Inbetweeners* and *Friday Night Dinner*. Firstly, he talked about *The Inbetweeners*, describing it as 'unpretentious and funny', 'inter-generational and very much of its time, while also describing how he landed the role. Next, he went on to talk about his work later in life as a director, and described the common themes running through his work: teenage experiences and parent-child relationships, often expressed with a significant amount of emotional depth. Finally, he spoke about the reality of working in the comedy and television industry and suffering from impostor syndrome, before taking questions from the audience. Again, this talk was very informative, particularly for members of the audience interested in going into the world of comedy. Mr Bird painted a realistic picture of the hardships of the industry and offered some advice on how to break into it.

"The relentless nature with which you pursue a career in the media industry, was something he mentioned as part of his personal experience. Bird's growth from being on *The Inbetweeners* to shows he now directs is evident; it was highly motivating to be in the same room as him and listen to his story. Victoria Azodo, Southend High School for Girls



Claire Pollard and Simon Bird



Simon Bird with students from Southend High School for Girls

Dr Maitrayee Basu on Janelle Monae's 'Turntables'

After a short break, Dr Maitrayee Basu delivered an extremely engaging and interesting talk on Oppositional Media in Janelle Monae's 'Turntables'. Dr Basu first spoke about Monae - a famous actor, musician, and author, who most recently starred in *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery*, the sequel to 2019's *Knives Out*, and described some general features of Monae's work: robots, Afrofuturism, and her repeated message of 'Liberation, Elevation, Education'. Dr Basu then further broke down Monae's music video for 'Turntables' into four themes:

- The American Dream
- Renegade
- 'Table bout to Turn'
- Spectatorship and Witnessing.

For each of these themes, she pointed out scenes and quotes in the video which evidence them. She finished the talk by further explaining the genre of Afrofuturism and concluded that Monae's main message is centred around the politics of hope; change is inevitable. This was one of my personal favourites of all the talks, as I loved how Dr Basu went into the details of the video while also linking it to theorists such as bell hooks and explaining the wider genre and message Monae intends to express.

"Not only did this lecture give me an incredible sense of identity as a woman of colour, but it showed me the diversity within the range of talks delivered at this conference. Victoria Azodo, Southend High School for Girls



Maitrayee Basu



Alex Kayode-Kay

Next, we watched the first half of a screening of *The Ballad of Olive Morris*, a BAFTA nominated short film directed by Alex Kayode-Kay. I was immediately intrigued as the film began, as I found the setting of the record shop and the cinematography very captivating and almost documentary-like, while the message of Olive's defiance against police brutality was clear throughout. There were audible gasps heard in the audience at several of the scenes, even within the first half of the film, proving that such shocking storytelling is necessary to convey Olive Morris's story in a memorable manner. As someone who would one day like to work in the film industry myself, I found this talk very interesting and informative. Mr Kayode-Kay provided background information on Olive Morris and her impact as an activist for black rights, women's rights, and housing rights in 1960s Brixton. He then went on to talk about the themes of race and gender covered in the short film, and described the synergetic cinematography, make-up, costumes, and production team he assembled to perfectly capture the atmosphere of the time period, before taking questions from the audience and giving some advice for aspiring directors.

"The Ballad of Olive Morris was extremely insightful on key, sensitive issues that black ethnic groups and women of colour experienced throughout history and are still prominent today. Aaliyah Williams-Smith, Cardinal Pole Catholic School

"I really enjoyed watching *The Ballad of Olive Morris*. I found it a great portrayal of the issue of institutional racism within British society. It portrayed the culture of the time accurately and was a tough watch but a great production. Kelvin Biney, Cardinal Pole Catholic School

David Hesmondhalgh

Next, we listened to an equally engaging and charismatic speaker, and one of our set theorists: David Hesmondhalgh. It felt somewhat unusual to be able to speak directly to the person whose theories we use in our essays and to ask him questions. Hesmondhalgh began by talking about the Marvel Cinematic Universe, commenting on the success of the genre. They are the most popular example of a serialised franchise, and despite occasional flops, people still want to know what happens next. This appetite guarantees ticket sales.

He then went on to talk about the 'techlash' (a backlash against big technology companies) and the opaque nature of computer-automated recommendation systems which have direct control over how we spend our time. Finally, he spoke about music streaming (the focus of his current research) and asked whether we think it makes people less inclined to listen to music with which they are not familiar. I found this talk to be quite eye-opening, as I'd never really stopped to think about the everyday actions of listening to music or scrolling through the content my social media suggest to me and how these actions dictate the way in which I spend my free time. It was clear from what Mr Hesmondhalgh said that the impact of this current age of technology that we are living in has yet to be fully felt.

"Hesmondhalgh talked about how large media conglomerates control the way we listen to music, and how this could affect us as listeners: 'Music helps us bond, communicate', he explained from the heart. Now, it is controlled by Spotify, YouTube and more. Does this limit the way we find and understand our music tastes? Emily Monk, Waldegrave Sixth Form



David Hesmondhalgh

Dr Anamik Saha on Stuart Hall

The final talk was delivered by Dr Anamik Saha, who discussed another one of our set theorists, Stuart Hall. Dr Saha began by providing some background information on Stuart Hall, one of the most important British intellectuals of the 20th/21st century and a key founder of cultural studies. He was also an important member of 'The New Left'; he coined the term 'Thatcherism', and was known as 'The Godfather of Multiculturalism'. Dr Saha then discussed two of Stuart Hall's central ideas:

- That popular culture matters; and
- That media is central to our understanding of 'racial others', in both good and bad ways.

He explored these ideas and explained that popular culture is where we create our sense of selves and belonging and is a place where the powerless can challenge authority. Furthermore, representation in popular culture and the media is significant and is shaped by power, while Black, Brown, and Asian cultural producers can challenge stereotypes through the media they create. Finally, he posed the questions: 'Is this moment of diversity as radical as it seems?' and 'What does it reveal about the current conjuncture?' Again, this talk was very useful as it applies directly to our course, and in a wider sense, further validated our reasons for studying media, because, as he put it, it 'helps us understand the nature of power in contemporary society'.

"Anamik Saha talked about Hall's belief that the media is a space where powerless people can challenge authority, and that it is central to understanding our race: a truly inspirational message. Emily Monk, Waldegrave Sixth Form

Overall, it was a rewarding and thought-provoking experience that I would recommend to any students of Film or Media Studies. It was both useful and relevant for our courses, as well as eye-opening and informative in terms of our future careers.

Hannah Pettit is a year 12 Media Studies student at Southend School for Girls.

Special thanks to Emily Monk, Victoria Azodo, Kelvin Biney and Aaliyah Williams Smith.



April McCarthy and David Hesmondhalgh

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We are looking for volunteers to help children take part in the **SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2023** in libraries in Southend during the summer holidays.

INTERESTED? Aged 14 or over?

Ask for an application form at your local library or by request from:
librarydevelopment@southend.gov.uk

Closing date: Saturday 1st July.

Please apply early to secure your first library choice.