

LITERACY FESTIVAL 2023

The Literacy Festival returns
with fantastic events line-up!

MEDIA STUDIES STUDENT SUCCESS

Highly Commended work and
tribute to children's book

SCHOOL SHOW 2024 ANNOUNCED

After slow, cryptic hints,
we can finally announce
the musical for 2024...

SPORTS DAY BACK FOR 2023

Students beat the weather for
day of sporting competition





A message from the

Headteacher

Dr. Barbara Minards

Welcome to the final edition of our newsletter for the 2022-23 academic year! The end of term is a time to reflect on how much we have achieved as a school community since September. Congratulations to Year 7 and our new Year 12 students who have successfully completed their first year at Sutton Girls.

This seven-week half term has seen the successful completion of the GCSE and A-level examinations. We are so proud of the way our Year 11 and 13 students dealt with their first external examination series. Year 11 enjoyed their trip to Blackpool and both year groups celebrated at their proms, we hope they continue to enjoy their extended summer holiday.

On 28th June we had very well attended open evening for Year 5 students and their families. It was great to see how many of our current students volunteered to help out and to share their experiences of Sutton Girls with prospective students and their

families. We welcomed next cohort of Year 7 students on New Intake Day, they were given a very warm welcome by staff and students and we look forward to them joining us in September.

The literacy festival was once again very successful with three author visits and the standard of both the book bake off and open doors competition was higher than ever. I was inspired by the creativity and effort on display and am already looking forward to what will be created next year and the number and variety of books we will have read by then.

Alongside our regular lessons, tutor times and assemblies we continue to provide a wide variety of extra-curricular events and educational visits. Many students participated in the soloists and instrumental evening, gaining performance experience and sharing their musical talents with friends and family. Year 10 students successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh qualifying expedition at Cannock

Chase during the weekend of 1st July, with their celebration evening this week. Year 12 Computing and Mathematics students had an engaging trip to Bletchley Park and Geographers in Year 10 and 12 have completed fieldwork in a variety of locations. Over 150 Year 9 students went on a four-day trip to Paris and Year 7s enjoyed their residential stay at Whitemoor Lakes. Currently two groups of Year 12 students and staff are participating in World Challenge expeditions to Tanzania, we can't wait to hear about their adventures on their return.

Please enjoy reading more about what has been happening at Sutton Girls during the final half of the summer term. As we reflect on another busy and productive academic year it is now time to wish staff, students and their families a happy and safe summer holiday!

Dr Minards

Staffing News

We say goodbye to eight colleagues at the end of this year. Miss Perry (Geography), Mr Garnier (Head of MFL), Mrs Spurrier (Humanities), Mrs Little (Design & Textiles),

Miss Backhouse (Computing), Mrs Aston (Chemistry), Mr Broadbent (Physics) and Mrs Cole (Textiles).

We recognised our colleagues in the final staff meeting of the year and on behalf of the staff and students of Sutton Girls, I would like to thank all our

leavers for their contributions during their time at the School and wish them all the very best for the future.

We look forward to welcoming our new colleagues in September.

Summer Open Evening at SCGSG

by Rebecca in Year 8

Open evening is an amazing way to get to know the school. Prospective students can look around and visit their favourite departments. As I chose my schools during lockdown, I never actually visited the school before coming here. However, the school made an amazing effort to make us feel welcome when we did arrive. As I already had a great experience joining the school, I can't imagine the added excitement of open evening.

At each department, there is something different. For example, in maths (where I was) we taught the Year 5 students to make tri-tetra-flexagons. Although the name sounds



complicated, it is simply a three-sided shape that looks two-sided until you open it up. This was also a good way to showcase our cross-curricular skills, with the students able to draw pictures on their shapes.

Students have the opportunity to either tour guide or help in

a subject-specific department. I want to share a little story about a Year 5 student I met. She was being toured by a friend of mine. The minute she walked in the room my friend came over and told me that she wasn't interested in anything and that she didn't want to talk. However, something changed the second she got to the decorating part of her flexagon making. She started drawing the most beautiful pictures on her flexagon.

This school has something for everyone and not just the sportiest or the cleverest or the most arty. This school has no stereotypes. It is so diverse and here, there will be something you like.

The Debating Denouement...

Mrs L. Woodhall
Humanities Department

The Year 13 Debating Team students Hannah and Varsha were invited to join Andrew Mitchell MP in the Houses of Parliament on Thursday 6th July.

They spent an amazing day touring the building, experiencing the debates of the House of Commons and House of Lords before having lunch and the opportunity to question Mr Mitchell on the hot topics of today including, migration and refugees; the current housing crisis as well as diversity in the House of Lords. Some very interesting and eloquent points were raised – we were incredibly proud of the students!

Andrew Mitchell was very encouraging and took the time



to thank our students, along with the other debating teams from the Sutton Coldfield cohort of schools of Bishop Vesey, Plantsbrook, Arthur Terry, Bishop Walsh, Fairfax and John

Wilmott for the efforts they put into competing in a debating tournament that was held at Arthur Terry in the summer term.

This is an annual event and we will be looking forward to setting up our Debating Club in September in order to find the SCGSG Debating Team finalists for 2023-24. Who will be touring parliament next year?

If debating interesting and varied topics is something that appeals to you, maybe you are a History, RS or Sociology student who wants to develop your skills of evaluation, or maybe you would like to consider political views in light of the impending general election of 2024, then look out for the extra-curricular clubs for September or see Mrs Woodhall for further information.

Announcement of the 2024 school show...



Choosing a school show is never an easy decision, and the production team must consider lots of factors. This year, we asked ourselves 'Which show offers us the opportunity to have a really big cast?'

This is one of the reasons that this particular show has been chosen. The atmosphere around school has been one of anticipation, with posters

appearing to hint at possible productions. So, for next year's school musical, the sun will come out for...ANNIE!

Auditions will take place in September and the show will be **7th - 9th March 2024**. Rehearsals will be on Mondays and Thursdays after school.

We look forward to seeing lots of you there!

Students take part in Youth Proms at Birmingham's Symphony Hall

by Tara in Year 7

The SFE Youth Proms is a four night celebration of not only the young musicians who attend the weekly ensembles throughout the academic year but also the many children drawn from Birmingham-wide schools.

As the leader of the Strings Sinfonia under our new conductor William Cheung, it was

really exciting to take part on the third night where I was also a soloist in the orchestra. It was so thrilling to perform and be with the rest of the strings on stage and I instantly felt transported into another world as I played the solo in St Paul's Suite by Gustav Holst.

It's an experience I will cherish forever!



by Charlotte in Year 8

Youth Proms is an amazing experience as you are able to perform in front of an extremely supportive audience along with others who are also interested in music. In rehearsals, you can meet people from other schools and make new friends, while getting taught by kind and talented teachers who can help you make music to the best of your ability. I really enjoyed it, as it was not only fun, but it was a great experience to be able to perform at symphony hall, which is recognized as one of the world's best auditoriums.



Students delight audience with another stunning Soloists Concert

Mr C. Collet
Head of Music

On the evening of Monday 12th June, we celebrated our talented music students with the Soloists Concert, a combination of our Evening of Song and Instrumentalists Concert.

While these two events have been separate in the past, this year the department decided to merge them together to create a larger evening that showcased even more of our student talents.

We also presented the **Stephanie Cave Extra Mile Award** to Year 13

student Abigail for her incredible efforts and contributions to the Music Department and wider school community.

During the course of the night, we held a collection in aid of the YoungMinds charity, raising a total of £130.87!





Literacy Festival 2023

Mrs L. Jowett
Head Librarian

During the last week of June (Monday 26th to Friday 30th) our Literacy Festival took place and was a roaring success!

We kickstarted the festivities with the fabulous Book Bake Off. A grand total of 41 cakes were entered, and we had so many incredible entries that it was difficult to select a winner. Throughout the week students also enjoyed a quote finder

quest, our scholastic book fair with a range of the latest titles, bookmark crafts in the ILC, and our hugely competitive inter-house challenge- The Open Doors competition!

The Open Doors challenge saw every form participating to transform their door into a celebration of an author or book, all under this year's theme of "Diverse Voices", and the results were incredible. We also held a manga drawing contest, which has seen some spectacularly

talented entries.

While all of these things have been amazing, one of our biggest highlights were the visits from bestselling authors A.M Dassu, Jaspreet Kaur and Simon James Green, who spoke with the students about their lives, their careers, and their writing inspiration.

We hope that our students enjoyed the Literacy Festival as much as we did, and we cannot wait for next year already!





Author Visit: Jaspreet Kaur

by Eva in Year 9

I was on the front row of students in the Sports Hall, sitting with my friends, excited for the imminent talk. At the time, I didn't know much about Jaspreet Kaur – I had seen posters of her most famous book, *Brown Girl Like Me*, around school in preparation for the Literacy Festival, but I hadn't had chance to borrow it – yet I was glad to be there all the same. I find that I always enjoy and learn so much from the author events – but I did not expect to be so moved and inspired by this one.

I remember Jaspreet Kaur walking in, smiling, standing before us as she began to deliver her presentation. She started by talking about herself today. A writer, teacher and award-winning spoken word poet who recently performed at the Royal Albert Hall. A mother to a baby daughter – a 'brown girl like me', she said. A brown woman with an incredible career. She touched on her experiences growing up as a young brown feminist in Britain; she talked about her book, giving a brief overview of the different sections it covers and the many different issues it tackles. She then moved on to giving us all some advice as potential writers: how to start with an idea, how to get that idea published, how to get your voice heard and on the scene. All the way through, she engaged with us; reminded us that we didn't have to fit into one category, that we could be what we wanted and who we wanted.

My friends and I left the room inspired beyond belief – we all shared a sweet, beautiful feeling of belonging. Things are definitely improving, I believe, but I do feel that British South Asian women

are so under-represented when it comes to the media, the arts and literature in this country, and so seeing a British Indian woman stand up and become a part of all of that moved me to my core. It made me feel represented.

So, it was a stroke of luck, really, when I saw a copy of *Brown Girl Like Me* sitting on a shelf in the school library afterwards. Pretty much instantaneously, I made the decision to borrow it, and I am so glad I did.

Her book is so bold and brave, beautiful and honest; talking about so many issues in society which I think we all need to be discussing. She also wrote about them in a way that gives us hope: when she wrote about racist microaggressions, she also spoke about how we can change society for the better; she

acknowledged some of the more negative aspects of social media, and then went on to discuss how we can use it as a platform for progress. And although the target audience for the book is probably more for a 'brown girl like me' (pun intended), I truly believe that everyone who can get a copy should read this book. The more diverse the voices out there are, the better. The more we discuss difficult issues, the better. That means change, in the right direction.

I would just like to say a huge thank you to Mrs Jowett and Mrs Lorton for making these author events happen. I feel the whole school really does take so much from them – I know I do – and without you, they wouldn't be possible.





Author Visit: Simon James Green

by Olivia in Year 8

With our Literacy Festival only recently finished, I thought it would be interesting to interview one of the authors who came in to find out more about their lives, writing and, of course, their books.

Simon James Green grew up in a small town in Lincolnshire, and found his passion for writing with scripts before setting his sights on novels. Green has written over ten books since his book, *Noah Can't Even*, debuted in 2017, which was listed as one of the most important LGBT books of the last 50 years by WHSmith and longlisted for the Branford Boase Award. Those in Years 7-10 had the opportunity to hear Green speak in person and attend a book signing, but prior to the festival, I had the chance to speak to Green about his books, inspirations and experiences. But why did Green,

a future lawyer, choose to start writing?

Section 28, a law introduced in 1988 and ended in 2003, banned schools from keeping books or content containing LGBT material, and this meant that Green felt like he 'never got to see people like me in books growing up'. As a result, Green decided to write the books that he would have loved to see in libraries growing up, and that would have helped him throughout his teens.

As any budding authors would understand, personal experience is a huge contributor when writing, and this is something Green believes is important too. He states that 'there is a little bit of me in every character I write,' and when asked what he uses for inspiration, he said it could be anything from situations he had been in to people he had met. He also believes in including topics

that are important to him, such as LGBT themes and issues and, quoting from his talk, he wants his books to be like a 'mirror of the real world.'

If you yourself are an aspiring author, journalist, screenwriter or if you just enjoy writing and are looking for advice on how to improve, Green thinks the key is just to read and write a lot! He said that 'it doesn't matter if it's just for you and no one else reads it,' because any form of writing, from scripts to short stories, is the way to 'figure out what your voice is and what works on the page.' He is also quick to remind us that disappointment and rejection is a normal hurdle to face along the way, but despite that, although it's difficult to pursue writing after hitting a barrier, don't give up. 'Keep going, keep knocking on those doors and keep believing in yourself!'

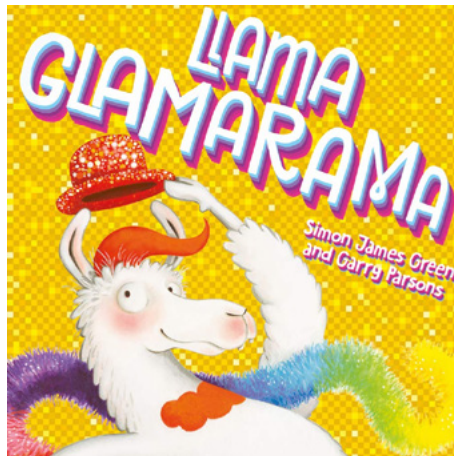
Students collaborate on film project as tribute to children's book

Mr S. Hall
Marketing Assistant

Inspired by the Whole School Read project we began in 2020 with the excellent Penny Joelson book "I Have No Secrets", our Head Librarian, Mrs Jowett, decided that we needed something fun to celebrate one of the authors that would be joining us in school during the Literacy Festival.

It was fitting that, during Pride Month, we chose children's book "Llama Glamarama" by Simon James Green which celebrates the freedom of being different.

Initially, Mrs Jowett had planned to read the book herself in a "Story time with Mrs Jowett" but we invited Year 12 students



<https://vimeo.com/839995901/cc2c7440ad>

During his visit to the school on Thursday 29th June, Simon got to view the film after it had gone out to the whole school during form time. As a thank you gift to the students that took part in the making of the video, they were each gifted a signed copy of the book.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Drama students Holly, Isobel, Charlotte, Stella, Saran, Poppy and Aysha, as well as Media Studies students Joanna, Kiran and Neha for their hard work and dedication to making something so special.

from Drama and Media Studies to work together instead to create a video that was directed and produced by the students themselves, allowing them to have complete creative control. The result is something that we and the students are very proud of. You can watch it here:

Year 12 Geography Trip to Formby

Our Year 12 Geographers enjoyed a trip to Formby sand dunes for their fieldwork assessment this half term.

Formby is a coastal nature haven with some of Europe's best sand dune habitats, where many rare species, including natterjack

toads, thrive. Here you can also catch glimpses of the past, from prehistoric footprints to old shipwrecks.



Media Studies students commended for work on “So This is Love..” film

by Neha in Year 12

A few months ago in our media studies lesson, Mrs Hobson told the class about the annual video production competition for the English and Media Centre. As someone who has always loved films and always thought about making my own one day, I was super interested along with my friend Kiran.

The theme was ‘tell us a story’ and we immediately started thinking about a story we wanted to tell. We decided on a twisted Cinderella story that doesn’t end in the ‘happily ever after’. We had our friend Saran to star as Cinderella and bought her a blue dress synonymous with Cinderella. We filmed in the park in the evening to add to the horror and darkness in our film. It was super fun shooting different scenes with different props.

One of my favourite moments was throwing the glass slipper in the lake and then having to fish it out after. After living out our director dreams, I edited the video adding in music created by my friend Jovita. We decided to make the film black and white to communicate the drama and sense of danger. We wanted to engage our audience with different perspective on fairytales.

Our film achieved a special commendation in the competition and the judges describes it as *“a gorgeously strange and atmospheric retelling of the Cinderella story with a dark twist, new perspectives and a tense escalating score. Thought-provoking”*. We are super proud of ourselves and our film and can’t wait for future projects!





Students beat rain for Sports Day

by Keira in Year 8

Sports day this year was very exciting. Although we were unable to finish some events due to the rain, houses competed with determination and the house spirit was amazing to watch, with

minions and unicorns and bears! The ice cream truck was a huge hit as usual, and the field and track events were brilliant and exciting. Though at the time of writing we are yet to find out who the overall winners are (including the House Spirit competition),

everyone did an amazing job, including the people cheering on their classmates the whole morning.

We can only hope next year is the same, though maybe without the rain!





Year 7 Rounders team success after exciting tournament

Mrs K. Tunstall
P.E. Department

Well done to the Year 7 Rounders team (Amelia, Evie, Hafsa, Hollie-Mai, Holly, Jessica, Kiera, Poppy, Shaan, Maria & Skye) who came joint second in the Sutton School Rounders Tournament.

There were some individual highlights with some excellent batting and fielding. The matches were all close but the team enjoyed the tournament and are looking forward to playing again next season.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award 2023

Congratulations to all 130 Year 10 students who successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award this month.



You can look forward to our next newsletter at the start of the Autumn 1 half term in October. In the meantime, keep up to date by following us on:

[facebook.com/suttcold](https://www.facebook.com/suttcold) or twitter.com/suttcold



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