



SCGSG

Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

FEBRUARY 2026



U13s FOOTBALL SUCCESS

Students make it through
to regional cup final!

ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

KS3 Computing Competitions
Year 9 Mock Climate Conference
Aquila Charity Fundraiser



A message from the

Headteacher

Dr. Barbara Minards

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026. The end of Spring 1 marks the half-way point in the academic year; it is a good time to reflect on all that has been achieved since September, have a refreshing break over the half term holiday and then re-focus on the goals to be accomplished by the end of the school year.

In the six weeks since returning from the Christmas holidays we have had disruption from the weather which led to the Year 9 Options evening being cancelled on Thursday 8th January and the school being closed for a snow day on Friday 9th. Fortunately, we were able to arrange an options afternoon for parents and carers of Year 9 students on 3rd February and were pleased to have high levels of attendance as family members joined their daughters to learn more about the GCSE option subjects, see engaging displays of current students' work and hear from our dedicated Heads of Departments. It was great to see our Year 10 students advocating for their subjects, sharing their love of learning with our Year 9s and their families.

Year 11 students also had an opportunity to learn more about their next steps with the Sixth Form taster day on Friday 16th January. They experienced taster lessons, met current sixth form students and staff to discover some of the extra-curricular, super-curricular and leadership opportunities available alongside the careers guidance and pastoral support we provide. There was a positive atmosphere throughout the day, our current sixth formers were a credit to themselves and the school and we hope our Year



11s choose to stay at Sutton Girls next year.

The six week half term has been a busy and positive one, with students representing the school successfully in a wide variety of events including football, computing and FIRST Lego competitions! We have also enjoyed whole school events including Aquila's Charity day raising funds for YoungMinds, Mental Health week and a Lunar New Year celebration all of which contribute to our inspiring, engaging and supportive community here at Sutton Girls.

The rehearsals for the annual school show are continuing,

already the cast are sounding amazing and we are looking forward to the four performances of Grease next half term.

This morning the school ski trip departed, with 57 Year 10 students and 6 staff members on their way to Toronto before heading on to Mont Sainte Anne, Canada. We hope they have a fantastic time and look forward to hearing all about their adventures on their return.

Please enjoy reading about what has been happening recently at Sutton Girls. Have a happy half term holiday!

Dr Minards

Mental Health Week: 09–13th February

by Mrs M. Lucas
Assistant Headteacher

The week has included a viewing on *Inside Out 2*; a great way to understand how the brain works and what happens when different emotions develop, such as anxiety. We have also had a "Can't Do Yet" wall which was open to everyone in school to post what they can't do yet to continue promoting and modelling a growth mindset.

From the half termly tutor time drop-ins that took place, a short video was made full of positive affirmations with students from Years 7 to 13 all sharing encouraging



messages to each other. The week culminated in every form group taking part in a live Wellbeing Kahoot quiz which quizzed our community on the assemblies that have been delivered by the

team this year, as well as some wider mental health facts. It has been a great week to have an extra focus on wellbeing with so many students being actively involved.

Students enjoy surprise January snowfall at lunchtime!





Aquila raise incredible sum for YoungMinds charity

by **Safa and Ruqqaya**
Aquila Prefects

Starting on Monday 19th January, we have had an overarching theme of mental health and wellbeing, with Mental Health Week coming up in February. This half-term, it was the turn of Aquila House to organise and run

an afternoon of fundraising for their charity, **YoungMinds**.

The main event for Aquila's lunchtime event was a Students vs Staff version of "The Weakest Link", as well as the homemade cakes, mocktails, samosas, a photobooth, guess the sweets mini challenge, milkshakes and more.

We are delighted to announce that through a whole-school effort today, we have raised an amazing **£1954.67!**

Thank you to Mr Gilbert, our Senior Student Ambassadors, and all the Aquila students involved in making the day such a success!



Year 9 Geography: Mock Climate Conference

by Mrs H. Chiverton
Head of Geography

In their lessons, Year 9 students have been learning about the COP30 Climate Conference. They had to research, present and debate their country pledges and climate challenges, then collaborate to raise global ambition for action. Each class was split into 10 delegations: Bangladesh,

the Marshall Islands, China, India, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Nigeria, Australia, the European Union, and the USA.

Students had a sheet to fill in while listening to each delegation's opening speech, listing key points for feedback and questioning their actions on the current climate crisis, with the USA being the country with the most arguments

directed at them!

There were some passionate and insightful remarks from the students that represented the more vulnerable nations (Bangladesh and the Marshall Islands) and those that represented the USA and UAE had to work hard to respond to arguments targeting their decisions and collaborative efforts.



Year 8 students success in CyberFirst Girls Competition

by Mrs C. Rudd

Head of Computer Science

We are extremely proud of a group of our Year 8 students who recently represented the school in **GCHQ's CyberFirst Girls Competition**, a national initiative designed to encourage girls to explore cybersecurity and computing. Working against the clock, the students applied logical

thinking, technical knowledge, and collaboration to a series of challenging online tasks.

Their efforts were rewarded with an outstanding **second-place finish in the West Midlands**, placing them among the highest-performing schools in the region. This achievement reflects not only their aptitude for computing, but also their resilience, teamwork, and enthusiasm for the subject.



Year 8 student's experience of CyberFirst Girls Competition

by Julia in Year 8



I'm really proud to say that my team of four, **Da Rizzlers**, came second in the West Midlands in the CyberFirst Girls Competition, representing Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls.

The competition, run by the National Cyber Security Centre, involved a range of cybersecurity challenges such as cryptography, networking, logic puzzles, and problem-solving under time pressure. We competed against lots of schools across the region and had to work together closely to solve problems and earn points.

Thanks to strong teamwork, good communication, and determination, we performed really well and secured second place in the West Midlands region. The experience helped us develop our technical and problem-solving skills and gave us a better insight into cybersecurity and technology-related careers.

Overall, even though we didn't win, it was a really rewarding experience and something we're all very proud of as a team.

KS3 students Bebras Challenge



by Mrs C. Rudd

Head of Computer Science

Students in Years 7–9 recently took part in the **Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge**, an international competition that tests problem-solving and logical thinking rather than prior programming knowledge.

The challenge consists of a series of carefully designed puzzles that encourage students to think

precisely, spot patterns, and apply computational reasoning under timed conditions. We are delighted to celebrate the exceptional achievement of **Ava (8SBA)**, **Allannah (7SPO)**, and **Elsie (9PDU)**, who all achieved full marks, earning the Best in School Award.

This is a fantastic accomplishment and highlights their outstanding analytical skills and enthusiasm for computing.



Latest edition of **Art Book** celebrates students' creativity

by Mrs S. Parkes
Head of Art

Throughout my first year as Head of the Art and Textiles Department, I have greatly enjoyed the thought-provoking conversations, material exploration, and, most importantly, witnessing our students' progress as they study GCSE and A level qualifications within our Art and Textiles Department.

Our intent as a curriculum area is to develop a strong understanding of the formal elements of art, foster a culture of sustained practice that leads to mastery, and nurture creativity as a 'superpower'; a transferable, future-proof skill relevant to any pathway. What a wonderful way to celebrate these intentions, visually through the lens of the artistic outcomes created by our students.

It has been so pleasing to see many students further their creative education post their time within



our school community, but also to note a shift in understanding about the value creativity brings beyond the confines of our subject areas.

Our young artists have been privileged to create work driven by their own interests and concerns; the things they love, the things they challenge, and the ideas they wish to communicate to the world around them. We



are incredibly proud to share this showcase as a platform for their voices and creative expression.

We hope you enjoy viewing it as much as myself and the Art and Textiles team have enjoyed the process!





A Day in the Life

Hi there, my name is Elissa and I'm currently in Year 9 at Sutton Girls. I was excited and nervous to come here in Year 7 but I settled in really quickly with everyone being so kind and encouraging!

Here is a day in my life:

8:50am

After a quick drive to school, I go to my form room where I get involved in a range of activities including personal development, learning about things like money, hearing announcements from our student leaders in the weekly slides and having time to catch up with friends.

9:10am

Firstly, in the morning, I go to first period which is Physics on a Friday. In Year 9 we start the GCSE sciences, and I've got a lesson on gravitational potential energy and how to find how much energy is used. This is a nice lesson as I enjoy the maths side of Physics and the physics department make it easier to learn by using lots of practice questions and experiments to help with understanding.

10:10am

A twenty-minute break gives me time to hang out with friends as well as having a snack.

10:30am

After break I have an hour of Chemistry where I am currently learning about ions and how they're formed. At the moment the lessons are based on ionic structure as well as positive and negative ions. All of the work in class is backed up by practice questions and experiments like in Physics. In Chemistry we also have videos to help further our understanding.



The main chorus for Grease, our school musical for 2026!

11:30am

Before lunch I have a Maths lesson. In this hour I am briefly learning about transitions. The class focuses on how to use the information with examples and practice questions. The lessons have quite a fast pace, but the teachers are very supportive, and we have frequent assessments to check for gaps in knowledge.

12:30pm

We get an hour of lunch where we can talk to friends and eat, however I do this for 15 minutes at the beginning of lunch as I have rock band on a Friday where I improve my guitar skills and prepare for upcoming school concerts.

1:30pm

Art is quite a relaxing lesson, most of the work is independent though the teachers are constantly walking round to provide support if necessary. It is quite social due to the class's independent nature. The art catch up club at lunch is very useful - at the moment I am doing an animal head project encouraging our sculpting skills as

well as our painting.

2:30pm

I end the day with Religious Studies. During this hour we have been focusing on philosophical topic and are currently learning about spirituality. This is different compared to the religious topics in Year 7. In Religious Studies the lessons are mostly focused on learning information on the topic, but we have practice essay questions almost every other lesson. The teachers try their best to support us with the essay questions as they can be quite difficult.

3.30pm

I am in the school musical, so on Mondays and Thursdays which is extremely fun as the cast builds a great sense of community. Once I return home, I often take a short break from schoolwork to do a few chores and hobbies like textiles before spending some time completing any homework or independent study I have planned for the day.



Experiencing Symphony Hall with the CBSO

by Amelia in Year 7

I have been very excited by our trip to Symphony Hall and really enjoyed it (especially as I've never been there before), the atmosphere was amazing, and the orchestra provided an enthusiastic and captivating performance.

This year's concert had a cosmos/space theme, with a couple of pieces that I know but many that I hadn't heard before. The concert opened with the Star Wars: Main Title by John Williams, with an iconic and heroic opening. What a way to start!

Lucy asked members of the



orchestra to tell us about their own instruments and their families on stage: woodwind, brass, percussion, strings (my favourite) and the piano. Each musician told

us a fact about their instrument, like Carol from the strings section who told us about the different kinds of wood from around the world used to make just one violin!

One of the pieces of music I did recognise was Jai Ho by A. R. Rahman, which Lucy got the whole audience involved with by creating percussive beats with our hands, chests and thighs, as well as shouting out "JAI HO" at the end.

I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to Symphony Hall; it has really inspired me. I would love to come back for another show in the future!

Year 7 students get stuck in to "Ninja Warrior" during gymnastics



What happens when you give six Year 9 students and three dedicated Year 13 mentors a box of LEGO bricks, a robot kit, and a mission to solve real-world problems in archaeology?

An unforgettable learning experience – that’s what happens...



When students go beyond the classroom: Our FIRST LEGO League journey

This term, our FIRST LEGO League team – the brilliantly named Binary Builders – embarked on an extraordinary journey through the Unearthed challenge, and I’m thrilled to share their remarkable achievements with you.

by Ms S. Kauser
Computer Science

The Dream Team

The Binary Builders consisted of six enthusiastic Year 9 students, brilliantly supported by three incredible Year 13 mentors – Ria, Francesca and Christy – who showed extraordinary commitment throughout the entire process. These sixth-formers didn’t just supervise; they coached, encouraged, troubleshooted technical problems at 4pm on a Friday, and shared their own computing and engineering expertise with genuine passion. Watching our Year 13s mentor younger students was a masterclass in leadership, and proof that learning happens beautifully when students teach students.

The team name itself – Binary Builders – perfectly captured what they were doing: constructing solutions using the fundamental language of computing while literally building with LEGO. It was clever, geeky, and absolutely perfect.

More Than Just Building Robots

FIRST LEGO League isn’t your typical after-school club. It’s

an intensive, hands-on STEM experience that transforms students into engineers, programmers, researchers, and entrepreneurs. The Unearthed challenge tasked our girls with exploring how we discover, preserve, and share historical treasures – from archaeological excavation techniques to protecting cultural heritage sites and making discoveries accessible to everyone.

The Binary Builders quickly discovered that success required mastering genuine engineering principles. They needed to understand the fundamental difference between a ball bearing and a proximity sensor, grasp the intricacies of gyroscopic movement, and write thousands of lines of code to make their robot perform precision tasks on the competition mat. These aren’t just buzzwords – these are real engineering skills that many university students struggle with.

The NSCG Newcastle College Showdown

The atmosphere at NSCG on competition day was absolutely electric. Teams from across the region gathered for what can only be described as “robot

wars” – though with considerably more science and slightly less pyrotechnics! Our Binary Builders watched their robot autonomously navigate the challenge mat, completing missions designed around archaeological themes. Every millimetre mattered. Every sensor reading counted. Every line of code was scrutinised under pressure.

What impressed me most was their resilience. When their robot malfunctioned during a crucial run, they didn’t panic or give up. They debugged. They recalibrated. They problem-solved like seasoned engineers, demonstrating the kind of critical thinking and perseverance that defines true STEM excellence.

The Dragons’ Den Experience

Perhaps the most nerve-wracking element was the innovation project presentation. The Binary Builders stood before a panel of judges – including renowned LEGO education leaders and industry professionals – to pitch their innovative solution for a real-world archaeological challenge. Think Dragons’ Den, but with robotics and heritage preservation instead of tech startups.

They presented with confidence, fielded challenging questions about their methodology, and defended their design choices with evidence-based reasoning. They discussed mathematical models, computational algorithms, and engineering constraints with remarkable poise. Watching Year 9 students hold their own against judges who work at the cutting edge of educational technology was genuinely inspiring.

The Career-Shaping Experience

Throughout this journey, I watched students naturally step into professional roles that mirror real careers. One became the lead programmer, wrestling with sensor calibration and debugging complex loops. Another took charge of mechanical design, calculating gear ratios and optimising robot weight distribution. The team's researchers dove deep into archaeological technologies and preservation methods, while others crafted compelling narratives to communicate complex ideas to non-technical audiences.

These aren't just roles in a school competition - they're genuine career experiences. Whether our students ultimately pursue software development,

mechanical engineering, project management, museum curation, or any STEM pathway, they've experienced what those careers genuinely demand: collaboration, innovation, technical mastery, and creative problem-solving.

Maths, Computing, and Engineering in Action

Abstract classroom concepts became tangible realities. Pythagoras' theorem determined robot navigation paths. Algorithms controlled decision-making sequences. Physics principles governed momentum and friction. The Binary Builders calculated angles for precise turns, optimised code efficiency to shave milliseconds off run times, and engineered attachments that could reliably manipulate mission models.

This is applied STEM at its finest - not worksheets, but actual engineering challenges with measurable outcomes and real consequences.

The Real Victory

Did we win the trophy? No. Did we secure the trip to Florida for the international championships? Not this year. But did our students gain invaluable experience that will shape their futures? Absolutely.

And here's the thing - the girls loved it. Every challenging moment, every debugging session, every presentation rehearsal. They threw themselves into this competition with enthusiasm and determination that made me incredibly proud to be their teacher. Their passion was infectious, their teamwork was exemplary, and their growth was remarkable.

Looking Forward

The Binary Builders started as students learning about robots, but they finished as engineers, innovators, and confident young women ready to tackle any challenge. They've proved that Sutton Coldfield Grammar School girls don't just participate in STEM - they excel at it, and they absolutely love doing it.

If your daughter is curious about joining next year's team, please get in touch. The experience alone - the teamwork, the problem-solving, the late-night debugging sessions, the sheer joy of watching your code work perfectly - is worth more than any trophy.

Because sometimes, the journey really is the destination. And what a journey the Binary Builders had.

The Binary Builders: Building the Future, One Brick at a Time.



U13s Football Team claim exceptional victory in run up to District Final!

by Mrs K. Tunstall
PE Department

On the evening of Tuesday 3rd February, our U13s Football Team played a double-header against Erdington Academy, which counts towards the league and cup, with a cracking **4-0 win**.

Well done to team mates Etta, Darcey, April, Amber, Emily, Annabel, Tash, Abigail, Talia, Deniz, and Vicky, who the opposition voted as the most valuable player!

We are now through to the final of the District Cup!



Success in Trevor Francis cup match for Year 8 & 9

by Mrs K. Tunstall
PE Department

Congratulations to our Year 8 & 9 football team, who beat Fortis Academy on Wednesday 11th February a massive **13-1!**

This means they now progress to the next round of the Trevor Francis Cup.

Well done team members: Deniz, Erin, April, Etta, Bethany, Abigail, Amelia (who scored 8 goals during the game), Vicky & Annabel, who was voted most valuable player!

You can look forward to our next newsletter at the end of the Spring 2 half-term in March!

In the meantime, keep up to date by following us on:
facebook.com/suttcold



Phone Number: 0121 354 1479
Email: enquiry@suttcold.bham.sch.uk
Web: www.suttcold.bham.sch.uk

Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5PT