

# NEWSLETTER

16 OCTOBER 2026

## WHAT A FABULOUS START TO THE YEAR!

We are delighted to celebrate this first half-term of 2026-7 with you! It has been a busy, happy and successful few weeks for SuMS staff and students alike, whether they have moved up into Y13 or joined us as our new Y12 cohort. Not only have we enjoyed teaching and learning in our unique style, we have also built our community, strengthened bonds of collaboration, and even had time to compete and demonstrate some enviable talents!

Please enjoy this first edition of our 2026-7 newsletter, and do let us know if there's anything that you'd like to see included in our next edition, just before the winter break - we are always happy to hear from you.

## TRIPS AND VISITS

### Cuffley trip

On the 9-11 September we took our Year 12s to Cuffley Active Learning Centre; an annual trip that is designed to help our new students build their own confidence and community, and get to know some of our staff outside of the classroom. It was a fantastic three days, packed with new activities, good food and down time spent together. We were very fortunate with the weather and our Year 12s told us that they loved the experience!

### Year 12 Orienteering

For those Year 12s who elected not to join the Cuffley trip, we scheduled an alternative series of activities, including some fun orienteering, designed to help them get to know the local area. Again, we were lucky with the weather and thoroughly enjoyed getting out and about!

### Henley Fort overnight

Our Year 13 students were keen to schedule in an overnight trip - we think they were missing not being at Cuffley this year! From 16-17 September we took some of them to Henley Fort, a local Surrey Outdoor Learning and development centre. We hiked up there and back, and the students thoroughly enjoyed both the organised activities, the yurt accommodation and the campfire with marshmallows in the evening.

### Thorpe Park trip

On 29 September we made our annual trip to Thorpe Park, as a way of celebrating a hugely successful start to the new school year. It was a super-fun day, where we saw yet more friendships cemented, some of our students challenge themselves to get out of their comfort zones, and everyone having a great day out before returning to SuMS the next day refreshed and re-energised.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

### Maths

Alongside a busy half term of progress checks, university entrance exams and continued excellence seen across maths lessons, our students (in particular the girls!) have also been getting involved in maths competitions. 33 girls took part in the Maths Competition for Girls, achieving a total of 19 distinctions. In particular, Katy Shepherd had a stand out performance, scoring 47/50, which was the highest score in the South East! In the Maths Olympiad for Girls, we had four students participate, who between them achieved one distinction and two merits. All students recently entered the Senior Maths Challenge which we are eagerly awaiting the results for.

### Physics

Eleven of our Year 13 Physicists took part in the BPhO Round 0 competition on Thursday 1st October. Don't be fooled by the multiple-choice format, it was a challenging non-calculator paper and all the students should be proud of their hard work. Fingers crossed that they do well and earn entry to the next level of competition, the BPhO Round 1.

Whilst most of Year 12 were exploring outdoor challenges at Cuffley, Dr Brierley ran a k'nex building challenge for those students who remained at SuMS. She was very impressed with the structure and strength of the bridge they designed, and even more impressed with the speed at which they were able to disassemble and pack away all the components. Definitely some future engineers in the making, well done!

### Computer Science

Year 13 have been working hard on their NEAs (non-examination assessments) this half-term and it is fantastic to see them taking shape. Students are free to choose a project from an area that interests them, and as ever, we have an interesting range of themes covering music, literary analysis, financial planning and genetic evolution. Year 12 have been recapping the fundamentals of logic and programming and have come up with some interesting solutions to the challenge of managing gangs of snakes on a plane! After half-term they will apply their creative problem solving skills to a range of logic puzzles when both classes will take part in the Bebras Problem Solving challenge.

## STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

This week we remember Margaret Hamilton, the mathematician and computer scientist who passed away on 30 September at the age of 90. Hamilton led the team responsible for developing the flight software for NASA's Apollo missions, including the first Moon landing in 1969. Her work made an important contribution to the development of software engineering and helped open doors for women in science and technology.

In 2016, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama, the highest civilian honour in the United States, for establishing the foundations of modern computing.

At SuMS we are very proud that one of our four Houses is named after her. Her achievements remain an inspiration to our students and a reminder of the important role mathematics plays in scientific and technological progress.







