

MERRY CHRISTMAS SSSO!

Dear Parents and Carers

The autumn term is concluding, and what a busy time it has been! There have been many work related learning activities for students, mock exams for students in years 11 and 13 (with more to come in the Spring term), and lots of learning happening every day.

We had a wonderful awards evening to celebrate the achievements and the university destinations of former students, and a wonderful Carol Service at Southwark Cathedral. As always, I was immensely proud of our students as we walked to Southwark Cathedral looking smart and behaving impeccably.

Sadly, I must also pass on the sad news of the death of Mrs Angela Haines, formerly Miss Davies, the fourth headmistress of our school, a role she held from 1977 to 1994. She is remembered fondly by many 'Old Girls' of our school, not least for her dog Chad who accompanied her to school and was quite possibly the original therapy dog! We continue to keep her family in our thoughts and prayers.

Wherever and however you spend this Christmas break, I wish you a peaceful, happy holiday, and a happy successful 2025. I look forward to seeing all of our students safely return on January 7th 2025.

Best wishes
Catherine May



Important Dates for Parents, Carers & Students

Inset Day:
6th January

Spring Term Start:
7th January

Sixth Form Parents' Evening:
16th January

PSHCE Day:
28th January

Year 10 Parents evening
6th February

Year 11 mocks:
10th - 14th February

Half term break
17th - 21st February

Southwark Sustainable Challenge

30 students from Year 10 were given the opportunity to take part in the Sustainable Southwark programme. This is the second time we have taken part in this challenge with last year's winning team coming third against other schools in Southwark. This year we hope to win the competition with our current Year 10s. The Sustainable Southwark Challenge is a programme to prepare our students for employment in STEM. The programme is to equip young people to be problem solvers and green leaders to tackle climate change.



Students worked in groups to come up with an idea to address the challenges of climate change at a local level and an empowered green leader who champions sustainability. The Challenge was started by George Imafidon who is the CEO of the organisation. His story really grabbed our students, and they wanted to be part of the programme. Our students worked in groups for 2 days with a mentor with a STEM background to support them. Students heard from guest speakers regarding public speaking and running a business in recycling clothes.



On the final day we had to choose a winning group, the judges were Ms Davidson, Ms Urwin and Mrs Tubb. All the groups were very professional, and it was very hard to pick a clear winner, but the winning group was Zara 10G, Esther 10G, Ruth 10G, Cindy 10G, and Osayantin 10G. This group will now go into the next stage competing with other schools from Southwark.

Esther says 'I really enjoyed this experience; we had a great mentor that helped us a lot with presentation that was about using eco-friendly materials in fashion combined, with promoting cleaner transport methods. I really recommend it to the Year 9 students who will be doing this programme next year.'

Old Girl is Pearly Queen

Wendy Loftus is The Pearly Queen of The Borough, and is an Old Girl at our school. She regularly attends the Old Girls' Association Lunch and Annual General Meeting (AGM). Pearly Kings and Queens, known as pearlyies, are an organised charitable tradition of working-class culture in London. Wendy is pictured wearing her "buttons".



Livery Academy Awards



At the start of December, six Y12 students took part in the Livery Academy Awards Heat at the Merchant Taylor's. The students were given a brief to come up with a business idea that helped solve an issue in their local community and had to pitch their business proposal to investors in a presentation lasting 15 minutes.

We had 3 excellent mentors on hand to support us throughout the process. The students have grown so much in the 3 months spent preparing for this competition. They have been able to develop their team work, public speaking and knowledge and understanding of Business throughout the process. They were an absolute credit to themselves and to the school!

The students had this to say about their experience:

“My experience at the Merchant Taylor's hall was a dream come true. I've always seen people present at fancy halls and it was finally my turn. Although our team didn't win, the experience meant a lot and I am grateful for having this opportunity to be selected for the Livery Awards.”

“It was an experience that I urge people to try, get out of your zone but stay committed and work hard as it will pay off in the end. Even though we didn't win, everyone was proud of each other which I felt was a personal win considering the changes in our team. I loved every minute, especially the food and the Merchant Taylor's hall - it's very beautiful and historic. Because of Merchant Taylor's it's made me want to take many opportunities in Y12 as you never know what it could lead you too.”

Miss Urwin

Northrup Grumman Computer Science Workshop

On Monday 25th November, Year 10 Computer Science students were given an opportunity to participate in a workshop organised by Northrup Grumman, a global leader in solving complex problems in space, aeronautics, defence and cyber space. Students used interactive kits that were provided by Northrup Grumman. Students were able to have a Q&A with members of Northrup Grumman team to get an insight in working for a global leader.



Mr Young

Carol Service

On Tuesday, 10th December, our school community came together for a truly magical Carol Service at the magnificent Southwark Cathedral. The day was filled with warmth, music, and festive cheer, as we celebrated the theme "Joy to the World."

The cathedral was decorated with stunning art pieces, lovingly created by students from across the school. This collaborative effort brought a vibrant and festive atmosphere to the event, showcasing the extraordinary creativity and dedication of our pupils.

The day was further elevated by the outstanding performances of our school choir and gospel choir, whose harmonies filled the cathedral with the spirit of the season. Their performances of traditional carols and contemporary festive songs left everyone in attendance uplifted and inspired.

The Religious Studies, Music, and Art departments, would like to extend a big thank you to every student who contributed to making this event so special. Your hard work and enthusiasm transformed the Carol Service into a truly joyful occasion that will be remembered by all who attended.

As we continue through this festive season, we are reminded of the joy, unity, and creativity that events like this bring to our school community. Thank you to all who joined us to celebrate the season at Southwark Cathedral!



AI Ambassador Training

I am honoured to represent our school as a Southwark Schools Learning Partnership (SSLP) ambassador alongside Ya-Sapor, Ngozi, Michelle, Aleena and Akua. SSLP is a unique collaboration between local maintained and independent senior schools supporting students from the London Borough of Southwark. This academic year, the theme for SSLP ambassadors is AI. However, each participating school receives a specific topic to work on. Our school's topic is the impact of AI on student wellbeing. We are also collaborating with two other schools, Kingsdale and King's College, to improve student wellbeing using AI and are developing an app to help with this in the future.



Shae 10 Red

Business in Focus Workshop

On Friday 6th December, 25 students from Year 10 that are part of the Into University Programme were given the opportunity to attend a Business in Focus Workshop. The workshop consisted of our students working together with representatives from the Business Management Consultants from McKinsey (London) to participate in a Music Charity business simulation aimed to develop the students' understanding of business and entrepreneurship. The day was designed to build competencies in team building, leadership, mentoring, planning, managing under pressure, and cooperation. Everyone was very impressed by the work and professional work ethic shown by our students during the workshop.

One student said:

“I really enjoyed my time at McKinsey & Company. It was amazing to work with such talented people and learn how to solve problems in creative ways. The experience taught me so much about teamwork and striving for excellence, and I'm very grateful for everything I've learned.”



EPQ Southampton Trip

On 5 November the Year 12 EPQ group travelled to Southampton University for the day to attend a training session on how to use academic skills. The session was led by Victoria Yuskaitis who is Academic Skills Officer at the university and whose role involves preparing younger students for university life. This year's EPQ cohort learned how to target their search by using Boolean search terms, and also how to locate books in Southampton's University collection which totals over 3 million books, journals and reports. Students understood what it meant to be on a campus university and explored central Southampton commenting that it was 'significantly cheaper than London'. Julia from Year 12 comments 'If the trip to Southampton University could be described in one word, it would be "Inspiring" because we had the opportunity to explore the immense University campus and its library, where we were instructed by Victoria about these invaluable and useful skills that allowed us to access and download exclusive materials, reinforcing our knowledge and helping us to develop our EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). This trip was even better with the company of my classmates that make this a memorable experience.'



Construction Youth Trust

My experience at the Construction Youth Trust Programme was incredibly rewarding. I made new friends and gained valuable insights into my future career aspirations. Additionally, I learned about various job roles I can pursue, thanks to the guidance provided by the volunteers at the construction site. I also connected with several apprentices who were eager to assist me in finding work experience opportunities and enhancing my UCAS application. Overall, this experience was both enjoyable and inspiring.

~Sara~



Drama at SSSO

Waiting for Godot

On 6th November our sixth form Drama and Performing Arts students went to see Ben Wishaw and Lucian Msamati in a bleakly hilarious revival of Samuel Beckett's masterpiece *Waiting for Godot*. As Didi and Gogo, Wishaw and Msamati wait by a tree for a man named Godot. They don't know who he is, why they are meeting or what time he is coming – only that something incredible could happen when he does. Having the opportunity to watch such an important play was one we couldn't miss. We were fascinated by the ways in which Didi and Gogo managed to entertain themselves whilst in a state of existential crisis.



Treasure Island: Year 12 Pantomime

On Wednesday 18th December Year 7 were treated to an original pantomime, devised by our Year 12 Performing Arts class. Inspired by the traditional tale of *Treasure Island*, the performers adapted the plot to revolve around two sisters who become trapped on an enchanted desert island and then battle over the fate of four unsuspecting strangers who are transported there after playing a magic computer game at their Christmas party. The Year 7s were a joyful and noisy audience – booing the witch, cheering for the heroes and the fairy godmother and singing their hearts out with the actors in the finale. Congratulations to the Year 12s, Georgina, Havilah, Julia, Lottie, Queenet and Tia, for creating such a memorable show.



Oliver! Whole school production

Rehearsals are now well under way for this year's whole school production of *Oliver!* So far we've been relishing asking for more 'Food, Glorious Food!' and practising picking 'a Pocket or Two!'



KCL Law Taster Day

On 17th December we were given the opportunity for 10 students from Year 10 to attend KCL Law Taster day. The event was held at King's College London at the Strand Campus. We attended with other schools in the London area. Our students rotated through three 45-minute sessions : a law taster session, a talk and Q&A by KCL's students ambassadors about university life. We were given a tour of the campus which was a very good opportunity to see and feel what it would be to be a student at Kings. During the law taster sessions our students got to look into a crime that went to court and looked at the evidence around the case. I hope this can be a start of a working relationship with Kings College as our students enjoyed the experience and would like to visit again.



“From exploring the different types of degrees in law, acting as jury's and touring a university campus, my idea of how to become a lawyer has significantly developed”

Ngozi 10B

“I now have a developed understanding of how university life is like as a student”

Hermella 10B

Duke of Edinburgh



We are delighted to be establishing a Bronze DofE programme at SSSO. Accepted students will have the opportunity to build their own programmes (picking their own activities and voluntary roles) to achieve a highly regarded qualification. It will also involve a residential expedition.

Watch out for further details in the new year.

Outward Bound Alumni Celebration

On Monday 16th December, five members of staff and thirty students from the school choir attended and sang at the Outward Bound Alumni Christmas lunch, at Trinity House on Tower Hill.

St Saviour's and St Olave's enjoys close ties with the Outward Bound Trust (OBT), dating back almost twenty years. Many of you have been on residential trips to Aberdovey (Wales) or Ullswater (Lake District) as part of your Y7 transition programme and will have lasting memories of that trip. What you may not realise, however, is that the Trust provides students who participate in that trip with a very generous subsidy of about £200 per person. They are able to offer this thanks to the donors who support the OBT charity. The event on Monday was held in honour of special alumni (former participants in OBT courses) who have given regularly to the Trust, so that they can support the important work accomplished with young people in the Great Outdoors.



Our wonderful choir sang melodiously and joyfully for over an hour, to welcome the guests as they arrived. There were many traditional carols sung and plenty of festive favourites.



As you can see from the photo, Trinity House is quite a grand building. It is a charity dedicated to safeguarding shipping and seafarers, providing education, support and welfare to the seafaring community with a statutory duty as a General Lighthouse Authority to deliver reliable, efficient and cost-effective aid to navigation service for the benefit and safety of all mariners.

The guests were enchanted by our students and could not sing their praises highly enough. At the start of the lunch, Zoe in Y13 and Louise and Sophie in Y7 shared their personal experiences and memories of their residential at Outward Bound. It was such a lovely event – all praise to our sixth formers Tyra, Zoe, Hannah and Lico, who between them led the choir with such skill and aplomb.



Christmas Boxes

On Monday the 16th of December, some of our lucky student's got to deliver the Christmas Boxes to the Tower Bridge Care Home with our School Dog Winnie. The students and Care Home Residents alike, thoroughly enjoyed the visit, with Winnie being the star of the show. The Students ranging from years 8 to 12 were able to personally deliver the boxes to the residents and sing some Christmas Carols. This year we also met their resident cat.



Winnie's World

Winnie continues to be a compassionate presence around school. She has taken part in an annual review for a student with Special Educational Needs and their parent, has spent time with students who are feeling a bit sad or overwhelmed, and she has received cuddles on a daily basis. Again this year we had a doggy advent calendar which went around with Winnie to most tutor groups, and she was a real hit at Tower Bridge Care Home where she helped to deliver our Christmas Boxes.



Where to meet Winnie:

Every break time: Winnie is out and about on break duty either in Mayflower Gardens or the playground. She will be with a teacher or sixth former and you can ask if you can help to walk her around.

Every morning: Winnie is in the library every day between 8.00 and 8.30. She loves her library time and would love to see you there.



PHSCE Day

PSHCE is a crucial part of equipping young people with the tools they need for life beyond school. Our dedicated day focused on finance and careers helped to empower students to make informed choices about their future, develop practical skills, and build confidence in navigating the world of work and money management.

The day involved a variety of interactive workshops, one per year group, designed to help students explore their career aspirations, understand financial literacy, and learn how to make informed decisions.

Year 7 focused on collaborative working skills and problem solving with The Happy Puzzle company and Miss Lancaster. They worked together to strategically plan and find a solution to lots of exciting puzzles!

Year 8 had the chance to Learn2Earn with Young Enterprise, who hosted an interactive workshop which encouraged students to consider financial plans for the future, set goals and consider future study options.

Year 9 was one of the first year groups to trial our new online careers platform, Unifrog which helps students consider their interests through quizzes and explore future study options.

Year 10 were able to explore the world of engineering with Construction Youth, a social mobility charity that helps enable young people to reach their career potential.

Year 11 participated in a session with a former student, Elsie Cullen who runs a social enterprise called 'Our Ppls' that focuses on promoting well-being through creativity. Students were encouraged to confront their negative beliefs and challenge them, recognising how they can overcome these obstacles to achieve their aspirations. Grace in 11Y said 'it was very inspiring because it made me feel able to overcome my problems'.

Year 12 & 13 were preparing for the world of work by hearing from Unite the Union on how to be empowered in the workplace by understanding; workers' rights, zero-hour contracts and being safe in the workplace. There was also an opportunity for students to hear from one of our Alumni; Elsie Cullen who has worked within the media and creative industry for several years. Julia in Year 13 said 'Elsie gave us insight into finding opportunities everywhere, even when we least expect it. It showed me that I have wide variety of options in front of me, I really enjoyed the session'.

On Thursday 5th November, we launched Unifrog at SSSO. Unifrog is the universal destination platform which helps students to make informed decisions about their next steps. Our students will be able to broaden their horizons to discover the right next steps with personalised quizzes, psychometric testing, engaging video content about careers and subjects, interactive courses and webinars. Each student will have their own log-in details and teachers will have oversight of every step of the application process to improve their own students' chances of success. We launched this with our Year 11s, Year 9s and Year 12s. Students in Ks4 and Ks5 will be invited to use Unifrog during Careers Club which is held every Wednesday organised by Mr Young.



PSHCE speaker: former student

Raising Aspirations

"Throughout our lives, two of the most persistent questions we face are, "Who are we?" and "Who do we want to be?" The quest for identity and purpose is one of our most powerful driving forces. Yet, unfortunately, many of us lack the tools to build a strong foundation for this journey.

From a young age, many of us endure trials and tribulations that shake our confidence and sense of self. As we grow into our teenage years, the standards, expectations, and possibilities around us are constantly shifting which can feel extremely overwhelming. Doubts creep in, we begin questioning ourselves, and soon we are burdened with self-limiting beliefs that make us wonder if we should give up hope altogether.

In my workshop, Raising Aspirations, it would have been easy to talk about reaching for the stars and achieving dreams without acknowledging the reality that many of us have already faced significant challenges. These experiences leave us uncertain—unsure if we deserve greatness or even have the capacity to achieve it.

To truly raise our aspirations, we must first believe that we are worthy of greatness. We must realise that the tests we've faced do not define us but instead have the potential to become inspiring testimonies. In the sacredness of sisterhood, we created a space for our fears to be heard and discussed the importance of seeking support from those in positions of responsibility.

Most importantly, we reminded ourselves that challenges are stepping stones, not stop signs. With adequate support, good company, and a resilient growth mindset, we are capable of achieving everything we dream of becoming, no matter we may have been told or believe.

Creative Careers

In our workshop on Creative Careers, we explored the endless possibilities within this dynamic field. From design, music, and film to digital art, gaming, and content creation, there is a career path for virtually every form of creativity. What's more, pursuing a creative career isn't just about achieving professional success—it's also a deeply personal journey that can bring immense satisfaction and meaning to your life.

At 17 and 18, the most important mission you can undertake is to discover three key things:

- **What you love**—the activities, interests, and ideas that light you up.
- **What you're good at**—the skills and talents you naturally excel at or want to develop.
- **What you're passionate about**—the causes, stories, or creative expressions that truly inspire you.

And how do you uncover these things? By exploring! This is the time to dive headfirst into the unknown, try things out, and embrace new experiences. Attend classes, book workshops, and take online courses to learn from professionals and gain insights into various creative fields. Experiment with your own ideas, collaborate with friends, and take creative risks—it's in these moments of play and curiosity that you'll uncover your true potential.

At this stage in your life, your greatest assets are experience and self-determination. That's why volunteering or launching your own projects is one of the world's best-kept secrets for getting ahead. Volunteering allows you to gain hands-on experience, build connections, and develop a work ethic, while creating your own projects—no matter how small—demonstrates initiative and showcases your creativity to the world.

Remember, every creative journey starts with a single step. It's not about having it all figured out right now—it's about taking action, exploring possibilities, and building confidence in your abilities.

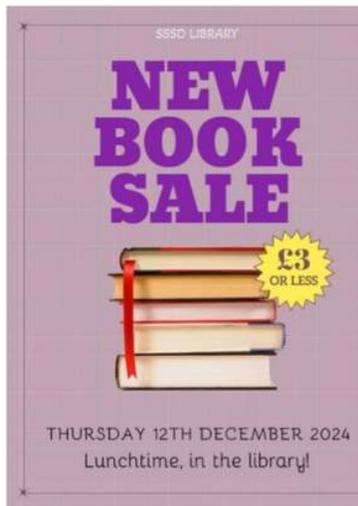
Elsie Ayotunde Cullen, Founder of ourppls and former student of SSSO



New Book Sale

On Thursday, 12th December 2024, the library held the library's annual new book sale which proved to be a huge success! The event offered a fantastic selection of new books, all priced at £3 or less, making it affordable for students to start or add to their own personal library collections.

The book sale aimed to encourage a love of reading while also supporting a great cause. Thanks to the incredible enthusiasm and generosity of our students, over 80 books were sold raising a total of £257.5 for Operation Smile, a charity dedicated to transforming lives by providing life-changing surgeries for children with cleft conditions. For more info on the charity, please visit www.operationsmile.org.uk. A huge thank you to everyone who helped promote the event and made purchases. A special thank you to our library assistants, who helped set up the tables and organise the books. Let's keep the spirit alive and continue to support all good causes. Stay tuned for more opportunities to make a difference!



Life Saving Skills

On Friday 13th December, 12 students from our 6th form and 10 students in Year 9 were given an opportunity to take in a Life Saving Skills Workshop. The training was organised by Mark Philips' company Safetraining 2U and he is also a parent of a student in Year 9. This is the second time Mark has given our school this training to promote our school's links with the wider community. Students were given the basic first aid information and also the chance to practice CPR on a first aid mannequin. We decided to give our Year 9s the opportunity this time around as it is very important students understand the basic information of first aid. Mark was very impressed with the knowledge and effort the students made during the workshop. We hope to offer more students the chance to take part in this training later on in the future.



Cinema Trip: Lego

Following on from a very successful trip to the Unicorn Theatre last October, when we saw their production of “Toto Kerblammo”, some students went to PeckhamPlex on 12th December to watch the newly released LEGO® film. It is called “Piece by Piece”.



The film takes the audience on a vibrant journey through the life of cultural icon Pharrell Williams, told through the lens of LEGO® animation. The soundtrack is great, and the visuals are very clever too. Here are some students sound bites after we left the cinema:



- Marilyn 7R – The film was good, I liked the songs and the animation;
- Sarah 8G – I loved the sound effects and the story of his life;
- Aisha 7Y – I enjoyed the film but there was a part I found a bit racist;
- Summer 7G – It was fun, I had a good time;
- Scarlett 8G – It was fun.



Oxbridge Programme

This term, SSSO launched its Oxbridge Programme, which is designed to support students aspiring to go on to study at Russell Group universities including Oxford and Cambridge. The initiative aims to cultivate critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and independent learning, which are key to unlocking the students’ potential. From January, the programme will feature fortnightly elective sessions where students will be able to engage in Oxbridge-style lessons. These sessions will encourage participants to discuss challenging topics, develop analytical skills, and explore subjects beyond the curriculum through wider reading and debate. Students interested in joining the Oxbridge Programme should contact Mr Seely and Mrs Walsh, Head of Sixth Form to take advantage of this unique opportunity to prepare for competitive higher education pathways.



Debating at SSSO

SSSO's inaugural Inter-House Debate of the year took place on Friday, 13th December, during lunchtime in the Activity Studio, with over 50 attendees. Blue & Yellow faced off against Red & Green on the motion, "This House Would Ban Social Media for All Under-16s."

Keiko 10B opened for the proposition with a focus on social media's negative effects on mental health, including increased body dysmorphia, depression, and reduced attention spans. Adebimpe 10Y expanded on privacy risks, exposure to harmful content, and the spread of misinformation, arguing that banning social media for under-16s was essential to protect their well-being.

The opposition passionately argued against the motion. Shae 10R emphasized the educational benefits and community-building potential of social media, whilst Sofia 9G highlighted social media as a vital outlet for self-expression and proposed regulation over outright bans as a fairer and more effective solution. The proposition narrowly won, impressing the adjudicator with strong rebuttals and effective use of Points of Information. Audience participation added to the lively atmosphere, with students posing insightful questions and cheering for their houses.

The success of the event sets the stage for an exciting series of debates next term. SSSO students will compete in inter-school contests for Key Stages 3, 4, and 5, including participation in The Great Debate hosted by St. Michael's Catholic College. Within the school, more inter-house debating will provide opportunities for students to refine their skills and encourage friendly rivalry.

Students interested in joining the Debating Club can attend sessions after school on Tuesdays (Key Stages 3 and 4) or during Sixth Form lunchtime on Wednesdays. Whether you're a seasoned debater or a curious beginner, the club offers a platform to develop confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills.



Sheriff 's Challenge

SSSO has officially launched its team for the 2025 Sheriffs' Challenge, a prestigious annual competition hosted by the City of London. Over 10 Year 12 students, guided by school staff and Livery coaches from the Merchant Taylors', are preparing to present their proposition to a distinguished panel of judges from the City of London.

This year's theme, "Which doors would you like the City of London to help open to improve your educational and career opportunities?" challenges students to craft a compelling argument grounded in research and collaboration. The team's journey will begin with a workshop at Merchant Taylors' Hall in late January, followed by heats in February. In the event of qualification for the last round of the challenge, the final will take place at the illustrious Old Bailey in March.

Year 7 Baking Club

At the request of some keen bakers, we have started up a baking club for Y7. Students come before school, at lunchtime and after pm registration to complete the different stages of their recipes. So far, we have made and decorated some Christmas-themed biscuits, as you can see from the pictures below. Next term we will be trying our hand at muffins and brownies. Here we come, GBBO!



Christmas Jumper Day

