

An inspirational visit from a Paralympian has helped Southend pupils build confidence and ambition beyond the classroom.

Former Paralympic swimmer and world record holder, Rachael Latham, visited Southchurch High School to work with Year 9 students as part of a programme focused on personal development.

The visit formed part of the school's commitment to offering opportunities that extend beyond traditional learning.

During a special assembly, pupils heard about Rachael's journey to elite sport and the challenges she has overcome along the way.

Students were encouraged to set goals, believe in themselves and remain resilient when faced with obstacles.

Mrs Airoll, headteacher at Southchurch High School, said: "Rachael's visit was truly inspirational.

"She demonstrated to our students that success comes through determination, hard work, and a willingness to overcome challenges.

"Experiences like this help our young people realise that they can achieve their ambitions, whatever path they choose."

Following the assembly, pupils took part in interactive sessions on the school's multi-use games area. Working directly with Rachael, students were given the chance to take part in activities designed to build teamwork, communication and confidence.

The hands-on sessions also offered insight into the dedication and discipline needed to succeed at the highest level of sport.

Staff said pupils were highly engaged throughout the visit, asking thoughtful questions and fully embracing the challenges set.

Teachers added the programme supports the school's wider ethos of developing well-rounded individuals alongside academic success.

Mrs Airoll added: "Southchurch High School prides itself on providing students with a rich and varied educational experience.

"Rachael's visit perfectly reflected the school's commitment to developing confident, resilient young people who are prepared to embrace challenges and make the most of every opportunity.

"By bringing inspirational role models into school, Southchurch High School continues to create experiences that motivate students to aim high, work hard, and believe in their potential.

"The school would like to thank Rachael Latham for taking the time to visit and inspire its students.

"Her message of determination, courage, and perseverance will undoubtedly remain with them for many years to come."



Inspiring - Rachael Latham speaking to pupils at Southchurch High School