
USH
Summer 2
Newsletter

A Message from.. Mr Sykes



As we reach the end of another academic year, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has contributed to making 2025-26 such a successful and memorable year at Upper Shirley High School.

Schools are built on people, and I feel incredibly fortunate to lead a community of students, staff, families, governors and partners who consistently go above and beyond. Throughout the year our students have embraced an incredible range of opportunities, from educational visits, residentials and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to City Athletics, College Taster Days, Sports Festivals and transition events for our future Year 7 students. These experiences enrich learning, build confidence and create memories that last a lifetime. Children remember moments when they are happy and smile.

The final few weeks of term have perfectly captured the spirit of USH. Sports Day at Southampton Sports Centre was a fantastic celebration of participation, teamwork and house pride. The opening ceremony, with students proudly displaying the banners they had created, set the tone for a day filled with enthusiasm, determination and healthy competition. Whether competing in athletics, volleyball, handball, ultimate frisbee or tug of war, students demonstrated tremendous resilience and community spirit despite the summer heat. The atmosphere throughout the day was exceptional and a powerful reminder of the pride our students take in representing their houses.

USHFest 2026 provided another wonderful opportunity for our school community to come together and celebrate another successful year. From indoor football, pickleball, volleyball and frisbee to board games, inflatables, house races and a silent disco, there was something for everyone to enjoy. A special thank you to our fantastic PTFA whose support, including the ever-popular BBQ and bubble tea, helped make the event such a success.

Last week's Awards Evenings were a fitting culmination to the year. It was a privilege to celebrate the achievements of so many young people and recognise not only academic excellence but also leadership, resilience, kindness and determination. What struck me most was how many of the students recognised are those who consistently do the right thing, day after day, often without seeking recognition. They are the students who quietly set the tone in classrooms, support their peers, embrace school life and embody our values. Awards Evening is an important reminder that character matters, effort matters and contribution matters. Every achievement recognised reflects countless small decisions to work hard, be kind and do the right thing, even when nobody is watching.

Indeed, one of the things that makes me most proud of USH is the quality of our students. The overwhelming majority demonstrate excellent behaviour, respect and maturity every day. They are positive role models for one another and outstanding ambassadors for our school. Visitors regularly comment on the warmth, confidence and courtesy of our young people, and rightly so.

This positive culture is also reflected in our attendance, which remains significantly above national averages. Every day in school matters and strong attendance makes a huge difference to students' achievement, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Thank you to our parents and carers for the support you provide in ensuring students attend regularly and arrive ready to learn. The high standards we enjoy at USH are only possible because school and home work together so effectively.

A final thank you to our exceptional staff, whose energy, commitment and enthusiasm make all of these opportunities possible. Whether organising trips, coaching teams, leading enrichment activities, supporting students or working tirelessly behind the scenes, they help create the vibrant school community we are fortunate to have. Together, staff, students and families have created a school where young people are challenged, supported and inspired to achieve their very best.

I wish everyone a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break and look forward to welcoming students back in September for another year of Learning Without Limits.

A Message from.. Our Governors

Firstly, the school governors would like to wish our current/departing Year 11 students all the very best for their next steps. We hope your time at Upper Shirley High has left you with a head full of great memories, obviously alongside the knowledge and skills to help you fulfil your potential.

At the most recent meeting, governors discussed and reviewed the School Improvement Plan for 2026/27. The school continues to excel in many areas and has a clear understanding of where further improvements can be made. Governors look forward to supporting the school in delivering these priorities over the coming year.

The governors would also like to say a collective thank you to Dr Michael Roe for continuing in the role of Chair. Governors meet up to three times each term and receive reports on all aspects of the school's policies, activities and performance from the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. Governors also work closely with Hamwic Education Trust to ensure the governance of Upper Shirley High School is as effective as possible.

Finally, the governors would like to take this opportunity to wish all parents, pupils, staff and colleagues at Upper Shirley High a wonderful summer break. Wherever you're spending the next six weeks, we hope you have the opportunity to relax and recharge. May the sun keep shining, though perhaps not quite with the same recent intensity!

Upcoming Events

Want to stay up to date? You will find all our school dates, term times and INSET days right here: USH Calendar

01 SEPT
Staff Inset Day - Closed to studuents

02 SEPT
Students return to school

17 SEPT
GCSE Art Trip - Exbury Gardens

26 SEPT
USH Open Morning

02 OCT
Staff Inset Day - Closed to studuents

05 OCT
Staff Inset Day - Closed to studuents

13 OCT
Flu Vaccinations

23 OCT
Y7 & Y8 Maths World Trip

26 OCT
Autumn Half Term Holiday

21 DEC
Christmas Holiday

03 FEB
Staff Inset Day - closed to students

15 FEB
Spring Half Term Holiday

25 MAR
Staff Inset Day - Closed to studuents

26 MAR
Easter Holiday

31 MAY
Summer Half Term Holiday

01&02 JULY
Staff Inset Days - Closed to studuents

22 JULY
Summer Holiday

13 SEPT 27
Y10 & Y11 St Ives Art Residential Trip

End of Year *Trips*



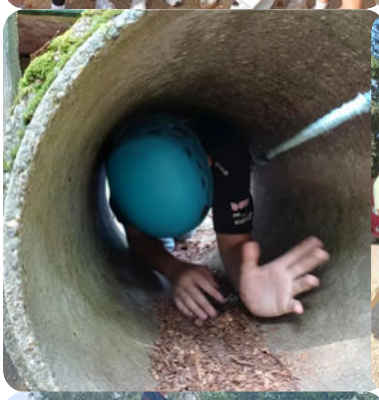



















AWARDS EVENING 26



















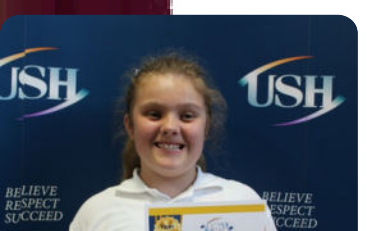















What's been happening in.. MFL

Welcoming Our Chinese Exchange Students



This week, we have been delighted to welcome a group of students from China to our school. During their visit, they have fully immersed themselves in school life, attending lessons alongside their student mentors, taking part in a range of after-school clubs, and joining in with the excitement of Sports Day.

The visit has been a fantastic opportunity for both our visitors and our own students to learn from one another, share cultures and build new friendships. It has been wonderful to see our students confidently guiding their guests around the school and helping them feel part of our community.

We would like to thank all of our students for demonstrating outstanding leadership and for living our school values of Believe, Respect, Succeed. Their kindness, respect and willingness to help have made a real difference to our visitors' experience.

A special thank you goes to our student mentors, who have dedicated their time throughout the week and generously given up time after school to support our visitors. They have been excellent ambassadors for our school, and we are incredibly proud of the care, enthusiasm and maturity they have shown.

Students Recognised in Spanish Art Competition



Our students recently took part in a Spanish Art Competition celebrating the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which is being co-hosted by Mexico, Canada and the USA, by creating football-themed artwork inspired by Spanish proverbs. The competition, organised in partnership with the Mexican Embassy and the University of Southampton, encouraged students to combine creativity with their language learning.

We are delighted that every student who entered received a certificate from the Mexican Embassy in recognition of their fantastic efforts and creativity.

A special congratulations goes to Salem M, who was awarded an Honourable Mention by the judges for his outstanding artwork. Salem had already been selected as the winner of our school's competition, making this regional recognition an even more remarkable achievement.

Year 8 Students Shine at French Spelling Bee

Four of our talented Year 8 French students recently went to the University of Southampton with Mrs Coffey to take part in the French Spelling Bee competition.

Competing against students from schools across Southampton, they demonstrated excellent French language skills, confidence and determination. After a fantastic performance, the team secured an impressive 4th place – a wonderful achievement!

The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, embracing the challenge of the competition and the opportunity to visit the university campus. It was a fun and inspiring day that has motivated them to continue developing their French skills.

Congratulations to all four students on representing the school so brilliantly, and thank you to Mrs Coffey for organising the day and Mr Howard for supporting.

SPORTS DAY 2026

MARINERS
Navigating together

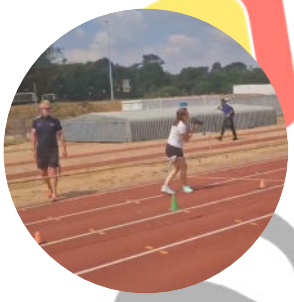
VENTURERS
Embracing the unknown

ENGINEERS
Building our future

AVIATORS
Flying high






























Year 9 Team





What a year it has been! It is hard to believe that we have already reached the end of Year 9. This has been a significant year for our students, filled with growth, maturity and important decision-making as they selected their GCSE option subjects and began preparing for the next stage of their educational journey.

This year, we were delighted to welcome Mr Hunt, our new Pastoral Support Worker. He has worked closely with students across the year group, offering guidance, encouragement and support as they navigated both the challenges and successes of the year.
Our students have also embraced a range of exciting careers-focused opportunities, including the highly successful 'Go to Work with an Adult Day'. This valuable experience gave many students a first-hand insight into the world of work and helped them begin to think about their future aspirations and career pathways.

Year 9 students have continued to demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities. Many have supported our transition programme as peer mentors, helping new students feel welcomed and confident as they prepare to join our school community. Others have given their time to run clubs, support within the library and contribute to school life in numerous ways. Their willingness to lead, serve and support others is a real credit to the year group and reflects the maturity and positive attitude they bring to school each day.

As we look ahead, an exciting new chapter awaits. In September, students will begin their GCSE courses and take the first steps towards their future qualifications. I am incredibly proud of all they have achieved so far and have every confidence that they will rise to the challenge, work hard and achieve great success.

Have a wonderful summer break. We look forward to welcoming our Year 10 students back in September, ready to take on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead!

What's been happening in.. Business Studies

The Business Studies department has enjoyed an incredibly busy and successful term. Year 9 and 10 students took part in an exciting educational trip to London, where they visited the Bank of England and the Museum of Brands, gaining valuable insight into the worlds of finance, marketing and consumer behaviour.

Year 10 students also spent a day at Solent University, working collaboratively to develop socially ethical enterprise ideas and exploring the skills needed for future business success. Back at school, the Year 9 Business Fayre was a fantastic achievement, with students designing, producing and selling sustainable products they had created themselves, generating total revenues of more than £450.

The term concluded with the Year 10 Dragon's Den Final, where students reinvented the humble chair and pitched their innovative ideas to a panel of five Dragons, four of whom were meeting our students for the first time. We are extremely proud of all they have achieved this term.



















What's been happening in.. Maths



The annual Year 7 Probability Faire recently took place, showcasing the fantastic probability games students have designed as part of their maths learning. Throughout the Probability unit, students worked in teams to create games that were both mathematically accurate and fun to play.

Each class selected its two best games to compete at the Faire, where Year 7 students had the opportunity to play the games and vote for their favourites.

This year's winners were:

🥇 1st Place: Lucky Bounce – Janne and Zac
🥈 2nd Place: Jar Jar's Gambling for Kids – Samuel, Rafael and Alexander
🥉 3rd Place: Balloon Pop – Poppy, Rani and Evie
⭐ Teacher's Choice: Fruit Mix – Victoria, Sofia and Vienna





After 13 years of students trying their hands at solving the 3D cube puzzle, we finally have a winner.
Randomly selected students are given a chance to try rebuilding the cube in 10 minutes.
Harriet T managed to it with 7 seconds to spare! For this amazing feit she won £250 as first part of a £500 prize going to the winner.
Congratulations Harriet and a big 'thank you' to Mrs Adamou for officially congratulating the winner.



Science

The Science Department has been thrilled to see the fantastic effort and dedication shown by students taking part in our Tassomai Competition over the past four weeks.

After an impressive start to the competition, students have continued to work hard, completing their daily tasks and demonstrating real commitment to their learning. As the leaderboard has developed, competition for the top spots has remained fierce, with students consistently pushing themselves to achieve their best.

To recognise these outstanding efforts, Mr Grainey treated our Tassomai winners to ice creams on Friday. It was a well-deserved reward for students who have put in the hours, shown resilience, and embraced the challenge with enthusiasm.

Congratulations to all of our winners and everyone who has taken part so far. Your hard work and determination have been fantastic to see, and we look forward to watching the competition continue to grow. Well done, everyone – keep up the great work!







What's been happening in.. D&T

Year 7
We have been learning about biomimicry and how to design bug hotels using isometric drawing. The students loved learning more tools in 2D Design to create the lids of their boxes. They then learnt how to use hand tools, the band facers and scroll saws safely to cut out and build their bug hotels from pine and plywood.

Year 8
The students have been learning about levers and linkages. They have applied this learning to creating their own African masks from card, which include with moving sections using linkages.

Year 9
They have been learning about Art Deco design and using it as inspiration to design and make their own lamps. The students learnt more in-depth application of 2D Design, 3D designing to make sections for 3D printing, how to laminate flexi plywood and how to solder more complex circuits. There are some stunning outcomes from this project.

Year 10
The students have been making portable and packable games or toys this term, following a previous exam theme, in practice for their final non-exam assessment project in Year 11. They have made a wide range of games and practiced various design and construction techniques along the way.



What's been happening in.. *Art and Photography*

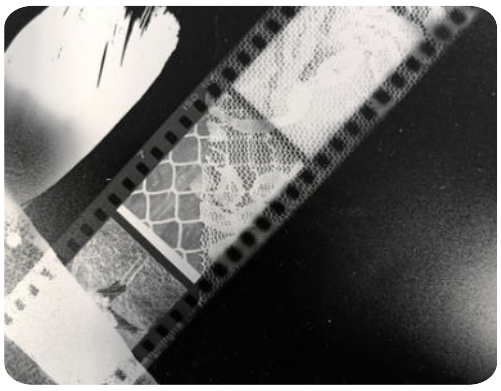
Art and Photography students from Year 9 and 10 enjoyed a sunny trip to London. We admired the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at the Natural History Museum, before visiting the V&A museum. Art students were inspired by the National Gallery, whilst Photography students took photos of London landmarks.

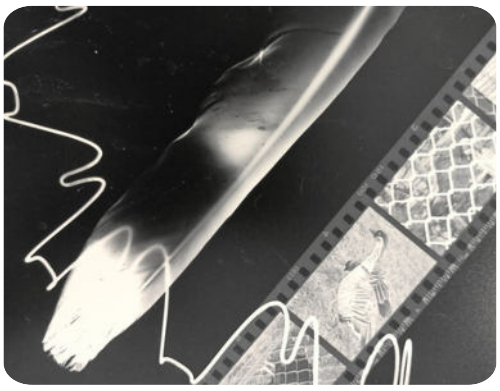
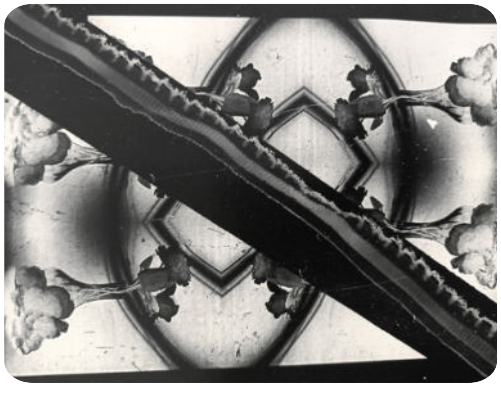






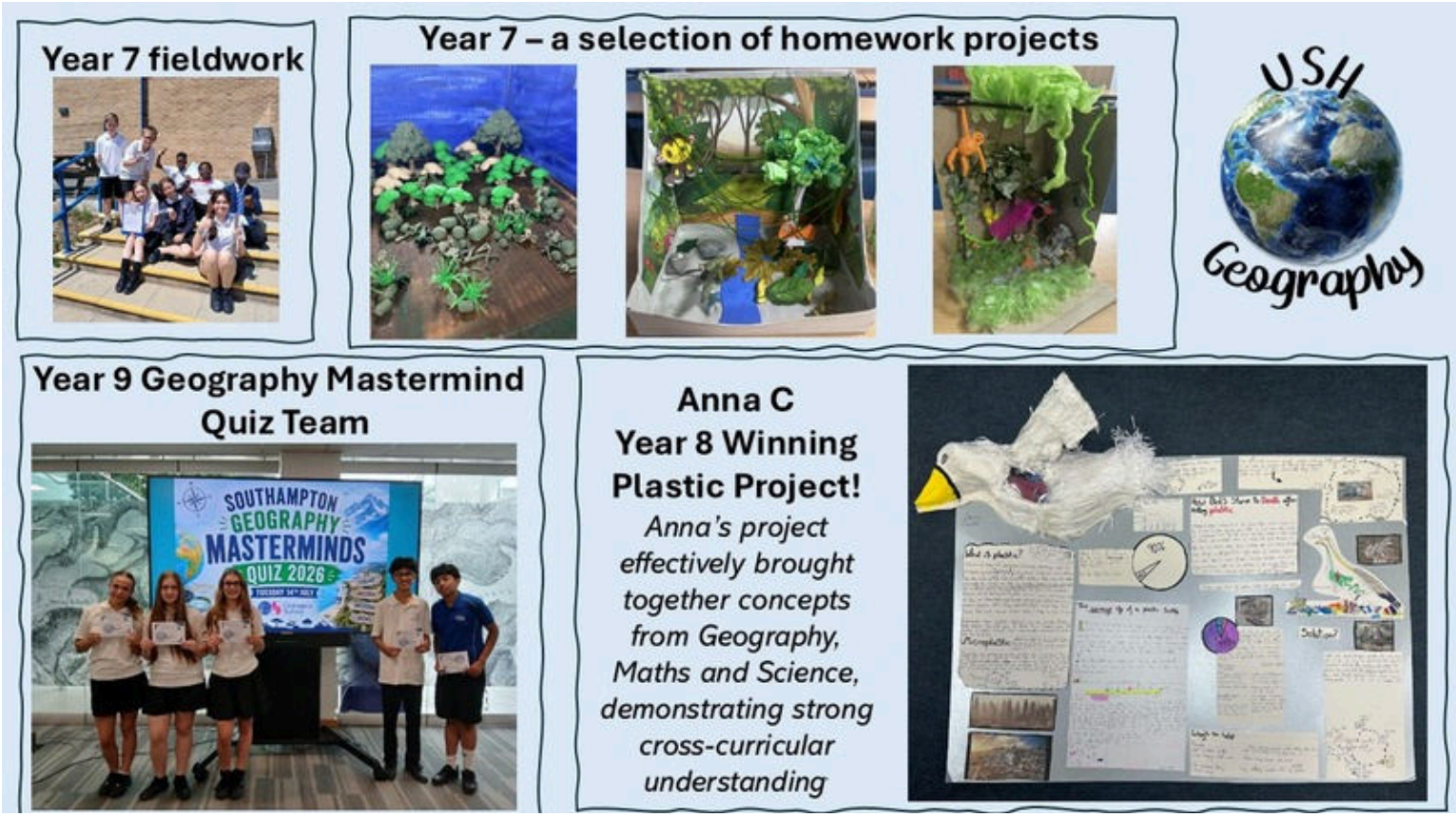
Year 9 Photography students visited Southampton College for a Photography Darkroom workshop. These photograms are the results of their experiments in the dark. It was great seeing the images appear like magic





What's been happening in.. Geography



It has been another busy and successful term in the Geography Department, with students across all year groups demonstrating enthusiasm, curiosity and commitment to their learning.
Our Year 7 geographers have been exploring one of the world's most important environments, the Amazon Rainforest, debating whether it should be developed and considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of such decisions. They have also produced and presented some fantastic homework projects, showcasing both their creativity and growing geographical knowledge.

Year 8 students have been working hard on an exciting cross-curricular project involving Geography, Maths and Science, investigating the issue of plastic pollution. The project culminated in students producing a final piece of work to showcase their learning and solutions. We are delighted to share that Anna C was selected by Mr Sykes and the Senior Leadership Team as the winner of the best project. Congratulations also go to our runners-up: Scarlett S, Kieran P, Aleks N and Lacie H, whose projects were equally impressive.

In Year 9, students have been studying the world's resources and tackling a very topical decision-making exercise on whether a new reservoir should be built in the South East. They also enjoyed carrying out fieldwork around the school site, assessing how sustainable USH is as a school and exploring ways in which we can continue to improve. In addition, our Year 9 Geography quiz team represented the school brilliantly at the annual Southampton Geography Masterminds Quiz, finishing a very respectable 4th place out of 11 schools.

Meanwhile, Year 10 students have been busy preparing for their first GCSE Geography mock examination. It was fantastic to see so many students attending the voluntary after-school revision sessions, demonstrating the commitment, resilience and determination of the year group as they continue their GCSE studies. A huge well done to all of our geographers for their hard work and achievements this term!

What's been happening in.. Duke of Edinburgh



At the end of June, 49 Year 9 students completed their expedition as par to the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the beautiful South Downs. Despite the exceptionally warm weather, the students were fantastic throughout, showing great resilience, determination and perseverance.

As part of the expedition, students are required to journey for a minimum of six hours on each of the two days, covering approximately 14–16km per day. Working in groups, they impressed assessors with their teamwork, navigation, problem-solving and communication skills.

Well done to all of our Year 9 participants! Please check Google Classroom or the recent letter sent home for information on how to get all sections of the award signed off.

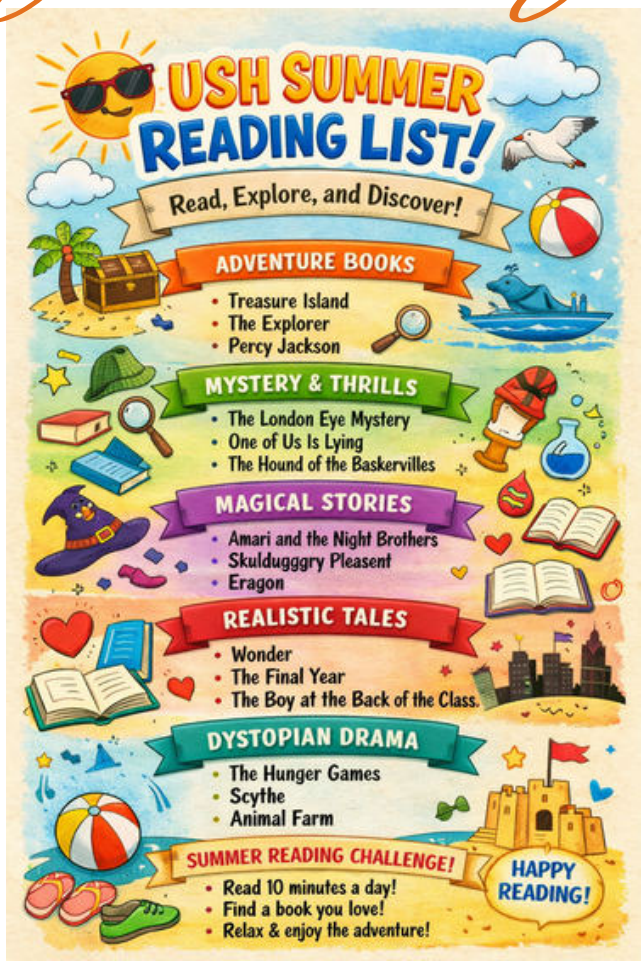
Summer Reading Challange

This week, Year 7 and 8 students took part in a Summer Reading Assembly, which encouraged everyone to keep reading over the summer holidays.

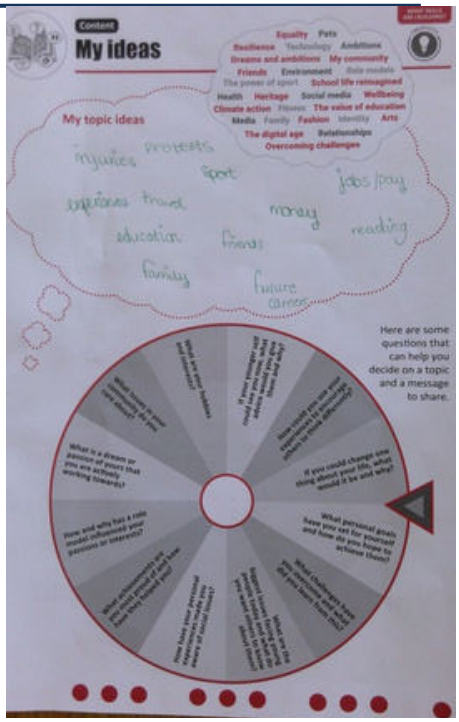
Students explored how reading can take them on adventures, help them discover new perspectives, and build curiosity and confidence. The assembly also introduced different types of readers, from adventurers and detectives to dreamers and strategists – showing that there is a book for everyone.

To help students develop positive reading habits over the summer, three simple strategies were shared:
The 10-Minute Rule – read for just 10 minutes a day.
The Sun Swap – swap screen time for reading when the sun is shining.
The Book + Place Combo – find a favourite reading spot and make it part of a daily routine.

We encourage all students to pick up a book this summer and discover where reading can take them. Happy reading!



What's been happening in.. English



Year 9 and Year 10 English students took part in workshops this half term to build their oracy skills. Year 10 students spent a day working with an instructor from The Speaker's Trust to practise their public speaking skills; writing and delivering a speech in a day.

Year 9 completed the second session of Southampton University's Speech Delivery training, attending a Speech competition in the lecture hall of the Education Building at Southampton University.

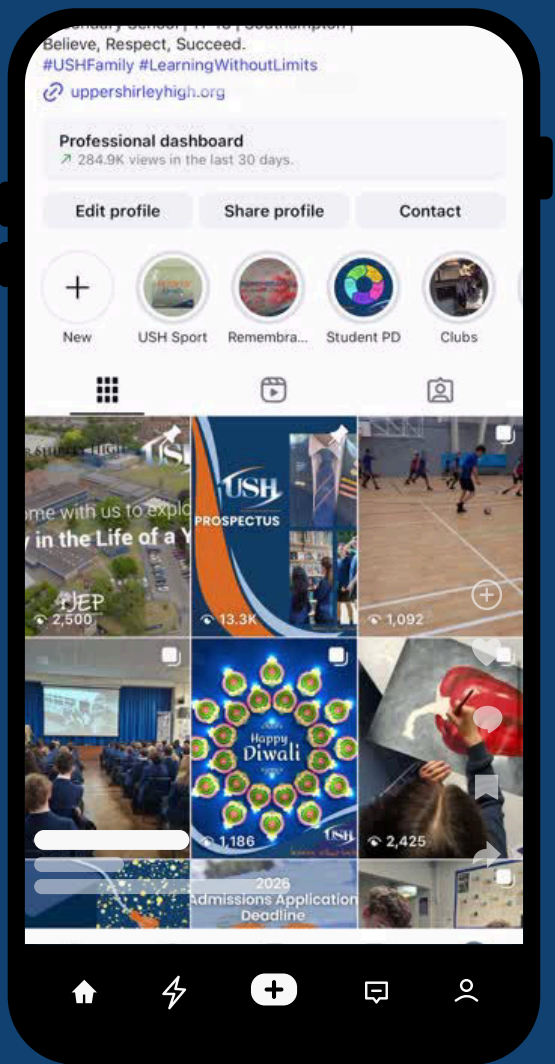
Congratulations to Anusha F in Year 9, who came second in the competition with a brilliant speech about ultra processed food.

Important Notices

Our free Breakfast Club is open to all students every day from 8:00am

Many of our departments appear on Instagram, we are sharing their posts through our social media feeds but do go and take a look at the great work happening across the school.

@USHschool
@USHPhotographyDepartment
@USHArtDept
@USHPhysEd
@USHGeography
@USHEnglishDepartment



The PTFA manage private Facebook groups for each year group, where you can keep up to date on what's going on. Please join by searching for the following groups:

USH Stuff! (for all year groups)
Year 7 @ USH 2025/2026
Year 8 @ USH 2025/2026
Year 9 @ USH 2025/2026
Year 10 @ USH 2025/2026
Year 11 @ USH 2025/2026



Community Notices

'Kids go free by bus this August'

As part of a government initiative, children aged 5 to 15 will travel for free on any participating local bus in August. This offer runs in addition to the £3 single fare cap and the £1 after 6pm single fare.

Now there's even more reasons to get out by bus to local attractions this August. For example, a family of 2 adults and 2 children, can travel from Southampton to Paulton's Park on the X7/X7R for only £6 each way!

Southampton also has wealth of great things to see and do this August. Whether it's a spot of retail therapy at West Quay, a bite to eat at the many restaurants, to catch the latest films at Showcase Cinema or walk the historic city walls, in addition to kids go free, adults can travel by bus for only £2.60 single within the Southampton zone or £1 after 6pm.

Leave the car at home this August and catch the bus instead, it's much less fuss by bus!

For further information, see bluestarbus.co.uk, firstsolent.co.uk or southampton.gov.uk'

NHS Dental Places Available for Families

Damira Anglesea Road Dental Practice is currently accepting new NHS patients, with appointments available within one week. Children are entitled to free NHS dental treatment, and regular check-ups help support good oral health from an early age.

🦷 NHS places available for children and families
📅 Appointments available within one week
🕘 Open Monday to Saturday

Damira Anglesea Road Dental Practice
📍 20 Anglesea Road, Shirley, Southampton, SO15 5QJ
📞 023 8077 1544
📧 anglesea@damiradental.co.uk

Parents can register and book appointments directly with the practice using the contact details provided.