



SOUTHBOROUGH
HIGH SCHOOL

*Year 6 into Year 7 Summer School
at Southborough:*

Ensuring a Smooth and Happy Transition





Nobody could have predicted a year like this. A world-wide pandemic that has touched most people's lives. Work, school and lifestyle all disrupted. People shielding and having to work from home. Children having to stay apart from their friends and elderly relatives.

For those young boys who were looking forward to enjoying their last few months at primary school before starting 'big school' in September, it must have felt particularly distressing and dis-orientating. Months of staying at home, completing school work via computer and having to make do with siblings as sometimes 'not-so-much-fun' substitute school friends have certainly taken its toll. The thought of starting a new school, a new environment with new teachers and school friends was something that many young boys were understandably beginning to get a little worried about.

It was these very real concerns about our future students that inspired Southborough High School to run a special 'Year 6 into Year 7' two week Summer School in August for students due to start in September.

Heavily subsidised to widen access, many students signed up to the two-week summer camp and it was wonderful to see so many faces on the first day.





The primary focus was to introduce the boys to their new school friends, meet staff and re-acquaint themselves with the school buildings, playgrounds and surroundings. From the off-set, boys were given special tours around the school and took part in 'finding your feet' sessions designed to help them prepare for the transition from primary to secondary school. Within a few days, it was wonderful to see newly-confident boys, self-assured in their own abilities, 'owning' their new surroundings and clearly benefiting from the new relationships they were forging amongst other students and staff.

One of the major concerns shared by Year 6 parents was that they feared that their sons had, during lockdown, fallen behind with vital skills and that as a result they would struggle academically once they joined their new secondary school. To this end, Southborough included a structured timetable which included daily Literacy and Numeracy catch-up sessions, all delivered by staff with warmth and encouragement each morning at 'camp'.



Daily Literacy and Numeracy Catch Up Sessions





A personal development and wellbeing activity programme was at the heart of the two week summer camp. To this end, the timetable included a variety of fun-based activities, one of which was some exciting team-building tasks. Put into small groups, the boys were given specific challenges to meet that involved building, testing and experimenting. These tasks gave the boys an ideal opportunity to work as a team, get to know each other better and – crucially- demonstrate their individual, specific strengths and talents to the tasks in hand.



Teambuilding tasks to bring out students' strengths and talents





‘Responding to Landscapes’ Programme

As part of the Y6 Summer school provisions, we also took our new intake of boys to Bushy Park for a series of writing workshops.

The idea behind the ‘Responding to Landscapes’ programme was to provide opportunities for the boys to respond to their experience through writing and photography. This would be guided by workshops taking place not in stuffy classrooms, but the beautiful outdoors.

Ultimately, the boys were able to develop their descriptive writing skills through sensory experience. The woods, the lakes, the ferns and fauna were all used as inspiration to produce poetry, short stories and autobiographical pieces of writing.

“The trip has improved my writing and I know a lot more about the history of Bushy Park and all about Haikus. I really enjoyed it.” George, Y6





Sport, Art, Cooking and Drama

Every afternoon, the boys were given the opportunity to take part in a carousel of Sport, Art, Cooking and Drama activities.

In Drama sessions, the boys took part in a variety of games that helped develop a number of personal skills including keeping focused, effective teamwork, imagination, coping under pressure and decision-making. Above all, though, the boys had lots of fun and laughter along the way.

Sport options included games of rounders, football and taking part in assault courses, which kept the boys active and busy and provided them with the chance to have some fun, run around and let off steam.





Here at Southborough we feel strongly about the importance of our boys being able to cook and our Year 6 students certainly rose to the challenge during summer camp. They had lots of fun cooking pizzas, cookies and other delicious treats which they thoroughly enjoyed eating with their new friends.





Art sessions also provided the ideal opportunity for students to express their creativity, using a variety of materials in our bright and spacious art rooms.





Celebratory BBQ & Awards Presentation



The two week summer camp ended with a special BBQ and prize giving ceremony. Parents were invited to join their sons and it was a wonderful end to what was, for all, a very special and worthwhile experience. Suffice to say, we know that these Year 6 students will feel so much more confident and excited about joining us in September.

As one parent wrote:

'I just wanted to send an email to express our thanks for the Southborough summer school for Year 6. My son thoroughly enjoyed it. Although we booked him in for each day, we were prepared to allow him the occasional day off if needed. However, he enjoyed it so much that he didn't want to miss out single day of activities! This has been a brilliant introduction to Southborough and he is really excited for the new term.'



Catch-up sessions for Year 10 students, too!

Whilst our Year 6 students were making friends and getting to know their new school, we also ran a range of special catch up sessions for our Year 10 students. The students found these lessons really useful and it seems that they, too, feel more confident and prepared for their full time return back to school!

