

# St John's Access Office Summer Roundup

While the College has been emptier than usual with most of our students away for the summer, the St John's Access Office has been busy hosting events for students and teachers in our link regions of the London Boroughs of Harrow and Ealing, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex. Throughout July and August, the Access Office has hosted Speak Up! debating finals, a summer school for Year 12 students and a study week for teachers.

## *Speak Up! Debating Finals*

The CfBT Schools Trust's Speak Up! public speaking and debating competition, launched this year, aims to foster students' verbal articulacy and academic confidence through inter-school competition. On 11 July, St John's hosted 91 students and teachers from Oxford Spires Academy, Oakbank School (Reading), Queensbury Academy (Dustable), St Mark's (Mitcham) and

The Deepings (Peterborough) for the competition's inaugural Finals Day.

The competition fosters different skill sets in each age group; younger students prepared speeches, while at Sixth Form teams of two from each school debated motions against another school. The day's topics included:

- Have British voters lost trust in parliamentary democracy?
- Are schools preparing students for the employment of the future?



*“This meant so much to the students who were very excited to be there and who talked at length to me about the whole day over the next week.”*

– MARIANNE BLAKE,  
PRINCIPAL OF OXFORD SPIRES ACADEMY

## *Inspire Programme Summer School*

The St John's Inspire Programme is a series of events, visits, workshops and online contact for students in Years 9 to 13 from non-selective state schools in our link regions of Harrow and Ealing. Throughout the past school year, the Access Office ran a series of academic twilight sessions at these schools, culminating in a funded residential trip to the College for 44 students during the first week of August.

During this four-day summer school, students participated in academic taster sessions with top academics and graduate students, tours of academic buildings, applications and interview workshops, cultural enrichment trips and evening leisure activities. At the end of the week, each student presented a piece of original research to the group.

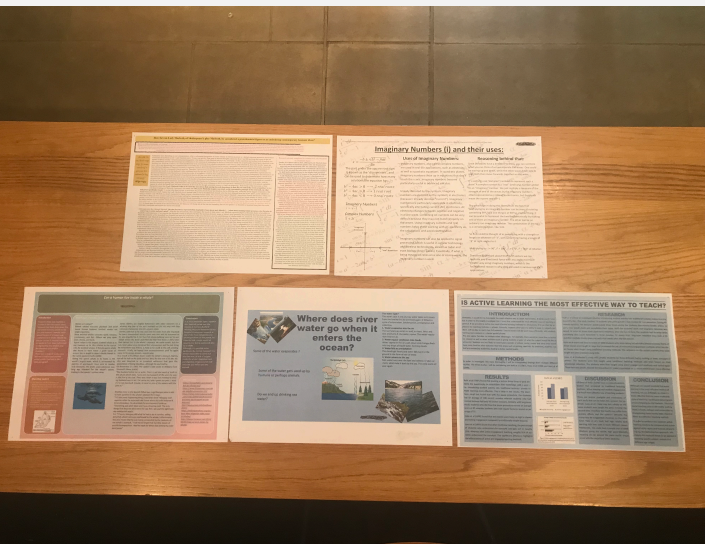


*Student participants in the Inspire Summer School visited the William Dunn School of Pathology.*

This summer school is designed to give students a taste of university life in Oxford, and to provide them with information and guidance about choosing subjects and applying to university. This can be a very daunting prospect for most students, but one participant said of the summer school, 'the applying to university talk helped me see that Oxford could be attainable.'



*Every student who submitted a poster received a certificate of participation in the graduation ceremony.*



*Five winners were selected from the poster presentation during which students presented original research.*

## *Study Week for Teachers and Educational Professionals*

As important as it is for the Access Office to provide opportunities for bright students to engage with Oxford, we also want to make such opportunities available to teachers. In July, the College welcomed ten teachers from non-selective state schools to our annual study week. Between tours of the Bodleian Library, short lectures introducing subjects on offer at Oxford and workshops on what admissions tutors look for in applications, teachers developed a better understanding of Oxford and how to support their students while making applications.

While most of the Access Office's work is focused directly on students, programmes like our study week for teachers ensure that students continue to have expert advice and guidance on hand closer to home. At St John's we are committed to recruiting promising students regardless of background, and through this summer's events we have shown over one hundred bright young students that Oxford is in fact an attainable goal for them. We're hoping to see a few of these faces back here in a few years!



*“A phenomenal experience which will impact on many of my students!”*

– ONE OF THE TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN OUR STUDY WEEK