

Durrington High School

St John's College, Inspire Scholars Programme

2025-2026 Year 9 - Cohort 3



We are delighted to say that Durrington High School is one of less than 30 schools in the south east to continue our partnership with St John's College Oxford as part of their Inspire Scholars Programme. Being part of the Inspire Scholars Programme is a central part of our partnership with the University of Oxford which we hope will support our students in their academic endeavours, provide them with a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities and prepare them for life beyond Durrington.





Who is selected to be part of the Inspire Scholars Programme?

Your child has been selected to be part of the Inspires Scholar Programme in recognition for their academic achievement, potential and commitment to studies.—criteria established by the University of Oxford. Being selected to take part in the programme is a fantastic achievement and all invited students should be proud of this achievement.

What are the benefits of being a member of the Inspire Scholars Programme?

The Inspires Scholar Programme is designed to help your child explore their interest, expand their academic horizons and enable them to take part in a range of exciting opportunities, from classes in subjects they may not have studied before, to University of Oxford visits, virtual and residential summer schools.

As an Inspire Scholar, students will have the opportunity to:

- Delve more deeply into some of their favourite subjects, explore them in new and unexpected ways, and encounter some entirely new fields of study
- Develop their critical thinking skills
- Debate, discuss, and puzzle through some of the most pressing issues facing our world
- Get creative and take part in practical projects and experiments
- Build confidence in their academic ability and potential
- Learn more about university life and study by visiting St John's College
- Meet current St John's undergraduate students



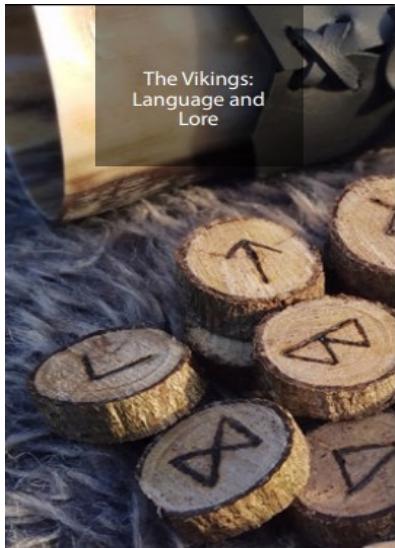
Durrington High School

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The Inspires Scholar Programme Extra Curricular Classes

Over the course of the academic year members of the Inspire Scholars Programme will have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular classes created by University of Oxford professors and accredited teachers, that will focus on subjects that go beyond their usual curriculum.

While each subject session is planned by the University, the sessions are run by our own specialist staff, with each subject session will involve two workshops compete over a 4 week period. At the end of the year students will have the opportunity to present and share what they have been learning about in these classes with parents/carers. Please find below an outline of the extra-curricular classes that year 9 students will get a chance to be part of this academic year.



Extra-Curricular Class - 1: The Vikings: Language and Lore

Work Shop A: Viking History

In the first workshop, students will be introduced to the Vikings, and will question some of the common conceptions (or misconceptions) of Viking history and culture, before learning how to read and write their own messages in Old Norse runes.

Work Shop B : Viking Mythology

In the second workshop, students will learn about Viking mythology, - including characters (Loki, Thor) who are familiar from modern popular culture. They will also learn how to use medieval techniques to write poems like a Viking.

Extra-Curricular Class - 2: Game Master: Beginner's Guide to Computer Game Programming

Work Shop A: Guess the number

Starting off in the 'real world', students will explore – through the unusual medium of jam and toast – how simple human instructions can be surprisingly complex for a computer to interpret, before applying this understanding to creating a number-guessing game, and using computer code to refine and build up the complexity of their games

Work Shop B : Snake

In this second session, students will turn to a different element of game design by looking at how to create a graphical game, learning about how computers use code to visually represent pixels and colours, before building on their knowledge of coding to customise the difficulty level of their game.



Extra-Curricular Class - 3: There is No Planet B: Climate Change and How We Can Solve it

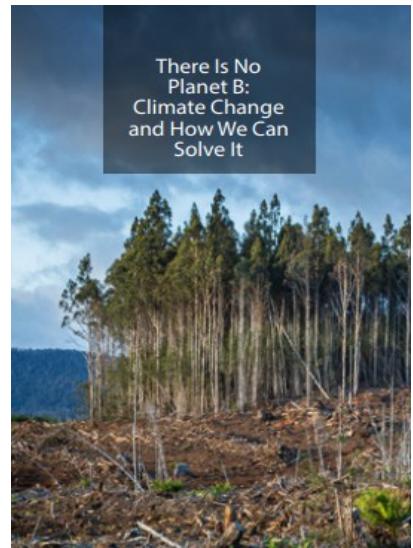
Work Shop A: Why does Climate Change

In this first workshop, students will encounter some of the reasons why climate changes and learn about geological timescales with the aid of a very, very long piece of string. They will then use the example of a simple tin of baked beans, to discover just how complicated and carbon intensive it can be to get even the most everyday objects to our supermarket shelves and into our kitchens

Work Shop B : Solutions

In the second of these workshops, student will begin to look at some of the solutions to the climate crisis, from the cheap and simple to the enormously expensive and complex, weighing up the pros and cons of different approaches and making the case to their classmates for their chosen set of solutions.

There Is No
Planet B:
Climate Change
and How We Can
Solve It



Extra-Curricular Class - 4: Getting to Know You: DNA Progress vs Privacy

Work Shop A: Dynamic DNA

In this workshop students will discover how DNA is structured, learn how to predict protein properties from a DNA sequence, and use tasting strips to find out which students have a particular variant of a common tasting gene.

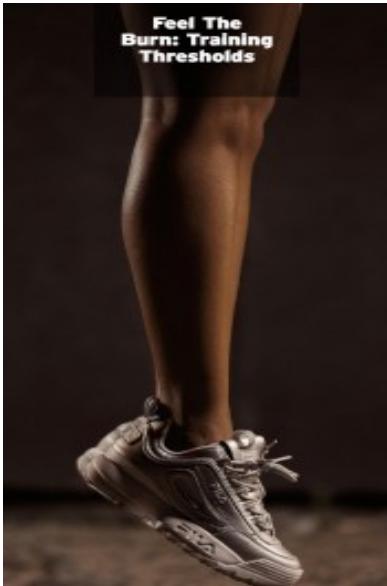
Work Shop B : DNA and Human Health

In this second session, students will learn about gene sequencing and some of the technologies behind it, before engaging in a role play debate about some of the most controversial issues in genetics and medicine today.

Getting to
Know You: DNA
Progress versus
Privacy



Feel The
Burn: Training
Thresholds



Extra-Curricular Class - 5: Feel the Burn; Training Thresholds

Work Shop A: Exercising the mind

Students will learn about different types of exercises, what they are and what effect they have on the body. Using knowledge on resting heart rates and training thresholds students will calculate their own targets and goals in preparation for workshop 2

Work Shop B : Exercising the body

Bringing the personalised training programmes designed in workshop 1, students will be getting active for this session. Splitting their training into aerobic and anaerobic exercise, students will perform their training programme and then evaluate it by considering how it could be improved moving forwards.



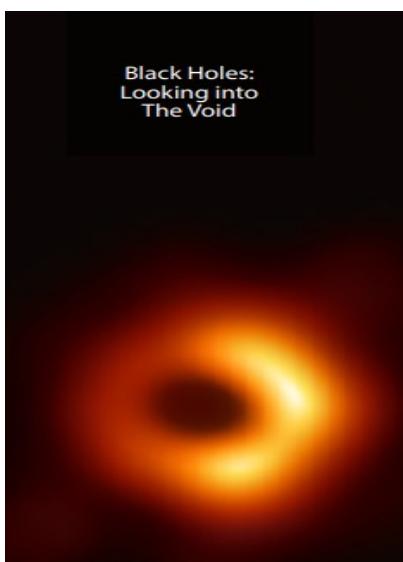
Extra-Curricular Class - 6: Found in Translation

Work Shop A: Exploring Esperanto

Students will be introduced to Esperanto, a constructed language in the 19th century to encourage communication across cultures. In doing so they will develop their language skills and come up with strategies for approaching unfamiliar languages and cultures, before debating the question "would it be better if we all spoke the same language?".

Work Shop B : Family Holiday

Using the skills developed in the first workshop students will decode written and spoken passages in a range of new languages including Croatian, Danish, Icelandic and Kelabit.



Extra-Curricular Class - 7 Black Holes: Looking into the Void

Work Shop A: Imaging a Black Hole

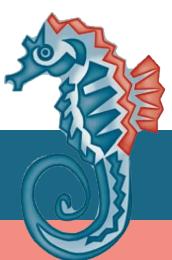
In this workshop, students will use various mathematical methods to construct scale models of the Solar System, before being introduced to one of the most mysterious objects known to science: black holes. Through a series of practical exercise, students will discover how black holes can be observed, despite emitting no light whatsoever

Work Shop B : When Black Holes Collide

Building on what they have learnt in the first workshop, students will probe the boundaries of cutting-edge science by learning about gravitational waves, before recreating their own miniature replica of a ground-breaking experiment which is used to detect what happens when two black holes collide.

University Lectures

After the success of last years public lecture by Professor Kathy Romer to our first cohort of Oxford Scholars, we are also exploring opportunities for other university lecturers to provide subject specific talks and sessions over the course of the year. As and when these are confirmed we will share the dates and topics with students and parents.



Other Useful Information and Benefits of Membership to the Inspire Scholars Programme

In addition to the range of extra-curricular classes, members of the Inspire Scholars Programme will have access to a wealth of other opportunities and support.



Virtual Summer School

St John's College runs a week long online summer school for all Inspire Scholars students. These virtual summer schools enable students to explore Oxford and their academic interests remotely through:

- Through provoking academic taster sessions from Oxford tutors
- Videos, podcasts, articles and activities from the University of Oxford's Gardens, Libraries and Museums.
- Career Interviews from a range of professionals
- The chance to submit work, win prizes and be featured on the college website.

Residential Summer School Opportunities

As a member of the programme Durrington will be able to nominate a small number of students to attend the St John's College Residential Summer school free of charge. The summer school will give students the opportunity to experience student life at St John's college, live like Oxford University students, explore the city and take part in activities ranging from academic taster sessions, to punting and a formal dinner in St John's Hall.



Inspire Priority Visits (Year 10)

Membership schools are given priority in regards to visiting St John's College. A typical Priority Visit includes:

- An Oxford Explained session, introducing what university is with a focus on Oxford.
- A Critical Thinking workshop, which encourages scholars to engage in discussion and debate or an academic taster session.
- A College Tour and guided visit to one of Oxford's museums.



Access to Positively You

A new partnership with a leading education workshop provider, Positively You, means that members of the scholars programme will be given exclusive access to their site which contains interactive video content and high-quality printable study and revision resources. Titles include:

- Super Speedy Study Skills
- Resilience

<https://hub.positivelyyou.org.uk/login-page/>

Username: StJohnsCollege Password: StJohnsPYHUB23



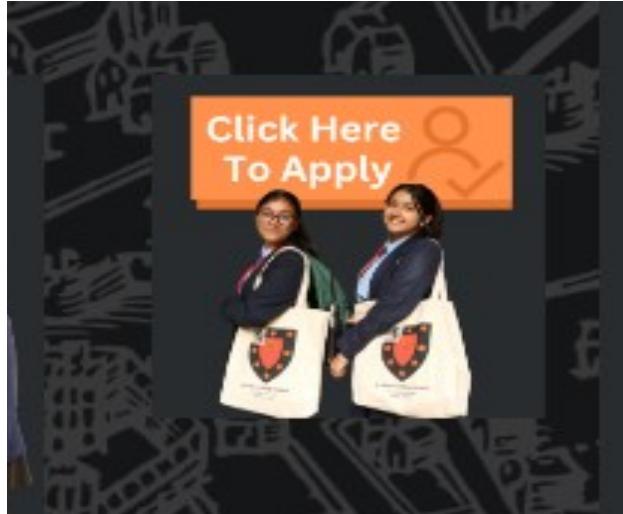
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Next Steps: for students:

All students need to complete the registration form for the Scholars Programme. To officially enrol
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/oxford/inspire-scholars-programme-registration-form>

or scan the QR code. A parent/carer will also need to consent to your participation.



Critical Thinking Workshops:

In addition to attending the extra-curricular classes, once students have registered they will be able to use the above link and password to find out further details about the programme, including information on the face to face and virtual summer schools. Furthermore once registered students can access the "Critical Thinking Workshops". The focus of these 4 workshops for this academic year is yet to be decided, but the topic and resources will be released between January and April 2025. As an example last years theme was "Does Crime Always Deserve Punishment?". Each month between Jan and February a link to each workshop will be emailed to students for them to work through at their own pace. Each workshop has articles, videos, challenges, interactive elements and interviews that students can engage with.

Aside from reading the articles and watching the videos/interviews, students can engage with 4 types of tasks within each workshop. **Think pieces** allow students to explore their own opinions to issues raised in the articles and possibly discuss these with friends and family. If students see a **vote now** symbol, they can vote in a poll and see how their opinion compares with others. They can also write their opinion and ideas in our **Have your say** forum discussion with students from across the UK. Finally, they can complete our **Super Challenges**. These are slightly harder but are designed to push student's thinking. Students can submit one per workshop to the university for a chance to win a prize!



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Next Steps: for parents/carers:

Another major feature of the programme is the high level of parent/carer support on offer. Parent/Carers can access their own portal via the QR code to the side. Like the student portal you will need the following password to access this page: **SJCIInspireGuardian**

On this page you will find recordings of webinars from University of Oxford lectures and admissions officers on a wide range of topics including:

- How do I support my academically able scholar?
- GCSE option choices
- Inspiring Critical Thinking
- Nurturing Motivation

This page will also notify of you of any future parent focused webinars that you may wish to attend.



The Year 9 Parents & Carers Page

Inspire Parents & Carers – Year 9

Katie Inwood
School Partnership Coordinator

Welcome to the home of all Inspire Parents & Guardians Recorded Sessions! Click each of the videos below to view each evening session. Please note that English subtitles are available – these can be activated by pressing the CC button at the bottom right corner of each video.

We hope you enjoy our Inspire Parent & Carer Sessions and find them proven useful.

If you have any further questions or just want to learn more about our programme, please email inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk

Parents & Carers Session 1: How do I support my Academically Able Inspire Scholar?

Parents & Carers Session 2: GCSE Options and Inspire Critical Thinking

Parents & Carers Session 3: Nurturing Motivation

The website features three main sessions: Session 1 on supporting academically able scholars, Session 2 on GCSE options and critical thinking, and Session 3 on nurturing motivation. Each session includes a video thumbnail, a brief description, and a 'Watch Later' or 'Share' button.



Join our Parents & Carers Facebook Community for regular updates!



Inspire Parents & Guardians

As parents/carers you may also wish to join the SJC Inspire Parents and Guardians Facebook page for regular updates on the opportunities available to your child as a programme scholar.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/236722245735563/>

"It is brilliant programme. Some of our pupils who struggle with confidence for various reasons have benefited from this. They have grown in confidence and are more willing to take risks."



If you have any questions regarding the Inspires Scholar Programme please contact Mr Crockett at bcrockett@durring.com.



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