



# SOUTHBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

## *Sixth Form Destinations 2020*



The middle Thursday in August is a special day for all students completing their Level 3 qualifications and graduating from the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. Traditionally, there is a buzz of excitement, anticipation and anxiousness as students enter the building to collect the brown envelope containing an academic transcript of their achievement. Teachers, support and administrative staff, and senior leaders gather early to get the inside scoop, prepare to share in the emotions of the day and play their final role in supporting students as they move on to the next phase of their education and life. If you ever wanted to see all of the Southborough values in action, this was the place to be. In any one snapshot you could capture; Support, Challenge, Respect, Responsibility, Risk-taking, Resilience and Relationships. On this day, the students are rewarded for their efforts, awarded grades based on academic performance and merit, and get clarity on their next steps towards life after Southborough. Of course, UCAS would invariably 'crash', leaving some with offer confirmations and others in limbo; Clearing and adjustment phone lines would play a consistent 'engaged' tone, causing heart rates to skyrocket; and the crowds would dwindle as destinations were confirmed, high-five after high-five and bro-hug after bro-hug.





## The 'algorithm debacle' and how we fought tooth and nail for our students

But this year... things were different. UCAS track confirmed to the students what we already knew. When the students entered the hall, many were almost entirely devoid of emotion. They were devastated.

All along, we had promised that we would provide accurate and fair centre assessed grades (CAGs) that reflected prior attainment, past achievement and realistic growth, in the absence of examinations. We kept our promise, but the government's system for moderating these grades (the algorithm) let the students down.

Much of the scene seemed different to other years, but the consistent element was the presence of our 'culture', our values in action, with resilience leading the way! Every available resource was utilised to make things right and the next five days were a remarkable demonstration of how much a school means to the students and how much the students mean to the school.



### BBC Newsnight filming at Southborough High School, August 2020

In the spotlight was Mithushan Thiagarajah. Just hours earlier, he was an offer holder at Cambridge University, but now, downgraded by the algorithm, his offer had been rescinded based on the absence of a 'star' beside one of his A grades, but with no reference to the outstanding nature of his achievement within the context of his school or his family. Mithushan had achieved nine grade 9's and an A\* at GCSE (less than 250 students nationally achieved these grades), he had passed the rigorous aptitude testing and interview processes to receive his University offer, and this put him at the forefront of our campaign against the injustice. If we, the teachers got his grades wrong, then what proportion of the other students had been downgraded, and to what degree, by a computerised and idealised system that dehumanised the process of moderation. Mithushan represented all students at Southborough; those who had demonstrated aspiration and commitment, but never got an opportunity to prove their excellence due to the withdrawal of examinations. The short clip of his appearance on BBC's Newsnight amassed 764,000 views on Twitter in just over a week and support flooded in for him and his peers. The hashtags #justiceformithushan and #honourtheoffer were trending on social media and by Monday afternoon, when Newsnight returned to get the school's perspective on the results fiasco, the government had no other choice than to revert to CAGs. **Our little school had done its bit in making things right, for our students.**





As a result of the U-turn, our Year 13 leavers have now all gone on to positive destinations with 93.4% of University applicants taking up places to start in September / October 2020. We are immensely proud of our students achievements and the way that they handled themselves throughout the school closures and uncertainty surrounding their grades. Whilst a number of our students in recent years have gone on to Oxford University, Mithushan will be our first ever student to attend Cambridge University, and he will leave as a part of a memorable group of young men and women who aimed high and demonstrated strength of character.



# Sixth Form University Destinations 2020

Forename	Surname	Provider name	Course placed
Jamil	Akram	University of Portsmouth	Journalism
Rana	Alyahya	Kingston University	Pharmaceutical Sciences
Anne	Antaninas Worthington	London Metropolitan University	Early Childhood Studies
Riyadh	Azharul	University of Surrey	Law
Luke	Barker	UCFB	Multimedia Sports Journalism
Jesse	Boloco	City, University of London	Economics
Andreas	Demetriades	Aberystwyth University	Law
William	Donoghue	University of East Anglia UEA	History and Politics
Alexander	Finnie	University of Kent	Biomedical Science
Sumit	Gogar	Pearson College London (including Escape Studios)	Business Management with Finance
Christian	Harper	Aberystwyth University	Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (with integrated year in industry)
Danny	Hearn	Kingston University	Primary Teaching (QTS)
Sungin	Hong	Coventry University	Engineering
Yusra	Jama	Kingston University	Pharmacology
Tharusha	Kariyawasam	University of Roehampton	Accounting
Benjamin	Le	London South Bank University	Product Design
Aaron	Lomanto	ACM (The Academy of Contemporary Music)	Music Performance - Guitar
Anjevan	Mahendran	University of Southampton	Aerospace Electronic Engineering
Visvak	Manojh Kumar	Brunel University London	Industrial Design and Technology with Placement
Alec	Mason	UCL (University College London)	Archaeology
Tom	McAtamney	Leeds Beckett University	Primary Education (5-11) with recommendation for QTS
Benjamin	Mettrick	University of Birmingham	Economics

Continued overleaf./



Sujeethan	Nadesan	Solent University (Southampton)	Accountancy and Finance with Placement
Luke	Newell	University of Warwick	Economics
Alfie	Painter	Kingston University	Media & Commu-
Guy	Parkin	University of Leeds	Chemistry with
Roshan	Parmar	Aston University, Birmingham	Pharmacy
Hariram	Prabaharan	University of Surrey	Accounting and
Ayaan	Rahman	Royal Holloway, University of London	Computer Science
Mithushane	Rajkumar	Kingston University	Civil and Infrastruc-
Ragavan	Ratnasothy	University of Southampton	Civil Engineering with Industrial Placement Year
Christiaan	Sackey	University of Surrey	Electronic Engi-
Yasser	Sad	University for the Creative Arts	Graphic Design
Habisan	Senadiraja	UCL (University College London)	Engineering (Electronic and Electrical)
Reuben	Sinclair	University of Birmingham	Computer Science with Digital Technology Partnership (PwC)
Eshokh	Sripaskaran	City, University of London	Business Manage-
Mithushan	Thiagarajah	University of Cambridge	Medicine
Jamie	Suwankumpoo	University of Roehampton	Scholarship to study Journalism
Sajagan	Varathan	University of Southampton	Civil and Environ-
Sened	Vigano	Coventry University	Electro-Mechanical
Pavithtan	Vigneswaran	University of Surrey	Accounting and
Jack	Westley	University of Surrey	Sport and Exercise
Oben	Wise	Queen Mary University of London	Economics

In addition to our applicants who have gained admission to University, we also have a number of young men and women who have secured wonderful apprenticeships across all levels – Intermediate-Level right through to Degree-Level.

**We wish them all the very best for the future and look forward to seeing them soon as Southborough Alumni.**

