



The fortnightly student newspaper for Stoke Newington School & Sixth Form

## Have our schools failed us? SNS starts the debate



**By Tamar Singer, Year 9**  
**Last Wednesday, in the theatre, Stoke Newington School held its first SNS debate of the year.**

Featuring Toby Young, Deborah Orr and Alasdair Smith, it faced the issue of

why children of different backgrounds are having such different outcomes at the same schools. The audience was packed, mostly sixth formers, and they got very involved.

Deborah Orr, a Guardian



columnist, started the ball rolling by describing her own 1970s school experience. She and her brother went to an average school of the time: with 40-45 students per class, no awareness of special needs  
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### Dear parents & carers

As you will understand our thoughts this week have been very much with Harry Lisle's parents and sister. As a family they have been and are a strong part of Stoke Newington School and the local community. I am sure they are in the thoughts of all of us. If you would like to pass on a card or letter, please do leave them at reception and we will ensure they are delivered.

We are all still grieving for Harry and his loss will continue to be in our hearts and minds for some time to come. It is important for our young people to be able to talk about their grief. Please do encourage your child, if affected, to talk about their feelings to family and friends, or to staff in school. Also do let us know if you have any serious concerns for your child. In particular you can contact your child's Head of Year; our pastoral counsellors - Ms de la Para or Ms Smyth; Mr

MacAskill, Mr Bynoe (Deputy Headteachers) or myself - about any matter related to Harry, the impact on your own child or any other issues possibly linked.

Additional support can be found at the following places:

- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) | Samaritans tel: 116 123
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Cruse Bereavement Care: 0844 4779400
- [www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)

Best wishes  
**Annie Gammon**  
**Headteacher**



# “Free schools are one of the worst inventions.”



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and not many exams. Despite having exactly the same upbringing, they came out with completely opposite results. From this she draws her main point: it's what the child is like, not the background.

Secondly, we heard from Alasdair Smith, a spokesperson for the organisation Parents Defending Education and former Stokey teacher, who put forward the point that it is not the schools which are failing us but society. He started off in typical history teacher fashion by giving us

a brief history of education: starting off as necessity when workers had to become more educated and gradually becoming the “phenomenally successful” comprehensive system it is today. He blamed class size, pass/fail attitude and politicians, and was overwhelmingly popular.

Finally, it was the turn of Toby Young, journalist and co-founder of West London Free School (and recently appointed as director of New Schools Network). Despite arriving late, he immediately started by picking apart Smith's arguments, justifying exams as a crucial

way to measure progress. Proclaiming that there is “no correlation between class size and attainment”, he was not met with much support and the audience booed a lot of his views.

In conclusion, the debate was won by Alasdair Smith, who pleased the crowd with his liberal ideas and passion. Mr MacAskill and Finn (Y8) got the biggest the cheers of the night with their strong arguments against Young's ideas. Mr MacAskill went as far as to say he thought “free schools are one of the worst inventions.”

# Creative day - Shakespeare, treasure hunt and trips!



**By Kyle McCafferty & Jamie Hunt**  
**The Year 8 creative day on Tuesday 18 October was amazing!**

We were told we were going to make the boring old Fives Court into a nice and fun playground. Have you ever seen the fives courts? It's quite dull isn't it? Well it was lots of fun working on a new design to make it a place we want to play in.

We had seven sessions to help us think of a really good place for everyone in the school. The first six sessions included the following subjects: Art, Drama, ICT, PE,

Philosophy and Technology. Overall the ideas were very unique and creative; there were beanbags, swings, slides, snack bars and much more! It was a battle between the 12 groups and they all did their best and showed their creative side. Once they did all their planning, the groups put all their work together and made amazing presentations based on what they want to new fives court to look like. The best presentation would win. Most of the presentations were phenomenal and everyone did a great job in pitching their ideas.

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## SNS live lounge sessions: get in involved!

**By Sam Foxell, Ben Matheson & Jamie Hunt**

**SNS is scouting talent with the new live lounge sessions.**

You can record music whether you are in a band or if you are a soloist, however, you don't have to be a musician to take part, are you a poet, a rapper or even an actor? Open to all ages, the Live Lounge Sessions give a

chance for Stoke Newington School to show their talent.

Mr Mitchell, who is running the sessions, is finding a way to present the tracks outside of school. Two sessions have been recorded so far and I am sure there will be many more. To find out more and get involved go to Mr Mitchell in the music office, SNS wants you!





Stoke Newington School  
& Sixth Form

# SNS DEBATES BLACK LIVES MATTER

## IS RACIST POLICING A PROBLEM IN THE UK?

**WEDNESDAY  
23RD NOVEMBER  
THEATRE**

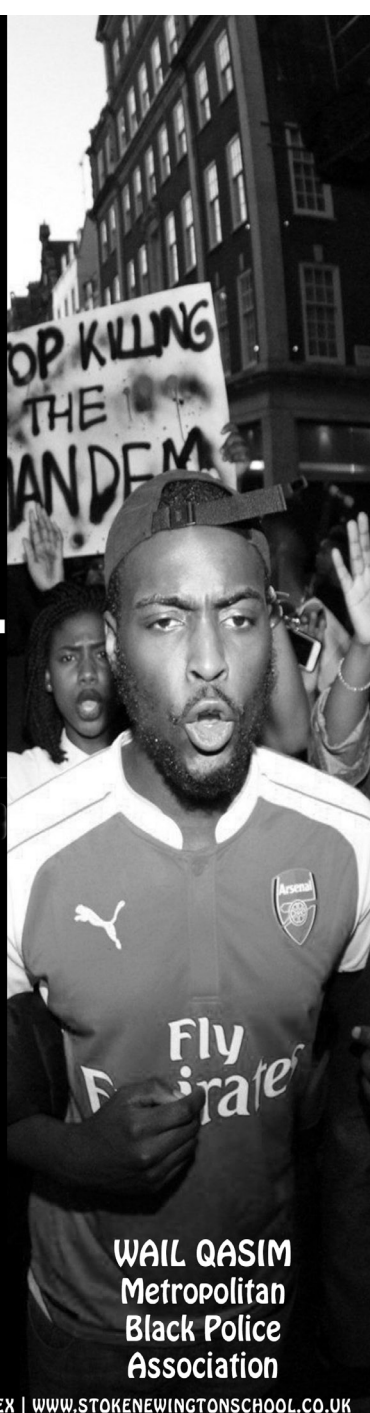
### GUEST SPEAKERS:

**JENNIFER IZEKOR**  
Commissioner  
at the IPCC

**JANET HILLS**  
Metropolitan  
Black Police  
Association

**WAIL QASIM**  
Metropolitan  
Black Police  
Association

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INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

