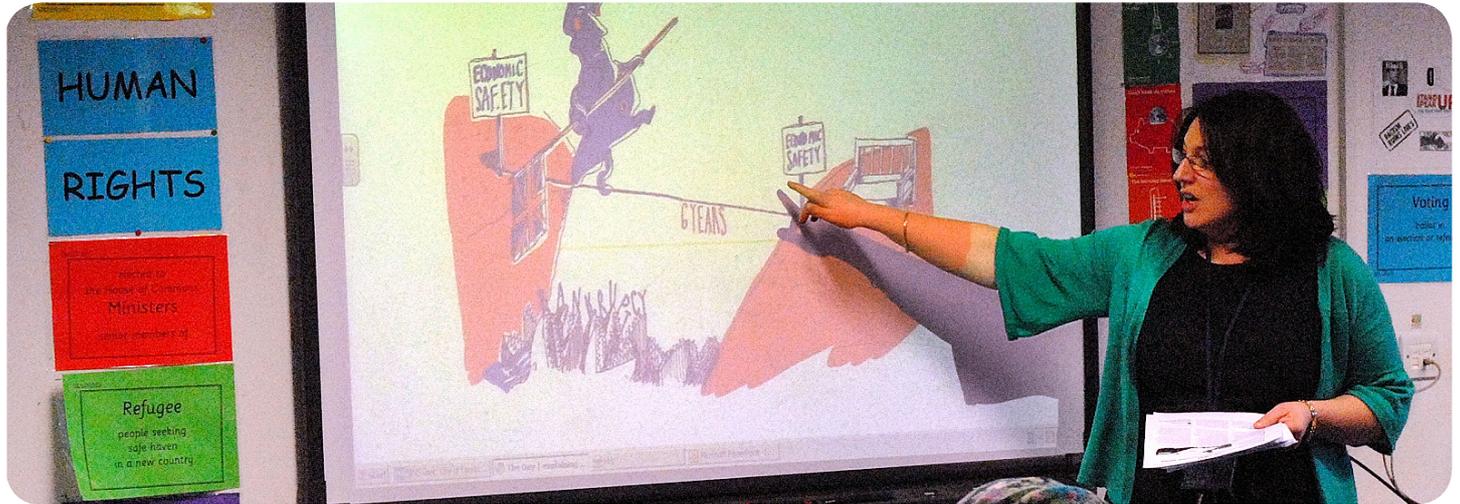


City of London Academy, Southwark



Lucia Giordano uses 'The Day' to discuss the British economy. Photograph by: Eric Baldauf.

What sort of school is this?

The City of London Academy Southwark has 1,100 students aged 11-18. In the last two years GCSE success rates at Grades A- E have doubled to an astonishing 98% pass. Astonishing because the school has many students from non-English speaking homes and 33% are entitled to free school meals. A glowing Ofsted report last October praised the school for its inspiring leadership and motivated staff and recommended the school to concentrate even more on teaching literacy. However most of the children come from homes which do not own a book.

When did we visit?

So when *The Day* visited the Bermondsey school last December we especially asked to sit in on a literacy teaching class, before moving to a Media Studies and finally witnessing a passionate debate in the Citizenship class where the proponents were inspired by articles in *The Day*.

What do they say about 'The Day'?

Every day at the school begins with a tutor group at 8.30 am! Richard Bannister, the new Principal, said: 'When I came to the school last year we were wondering whether we should cut down on the time in tutor groups to much less than 30 minutes. But now *The Day* has changed all this. It provides a very powerful and inspiring entrée to all the different things that are happening in the world.' Lucia Giordano, Head of Citizenship, arranged for every tutor group to spend

at least one slot a week based on the *The Day*'s three main headlines. She said: 'To discuss what is happening in the world updates the curriculum for us in a way that the curriculum itself cannot do. We are busy people. We don't have time to plough through all the newspapers. *The Day* does it all for us.'

Paul Pearce, a music teacher, has a Year 9 tutorial group. He said: 'The particular problem with my form is that they refuse to read. We are meant to have reading sessions once a week to improve their literacy. It may seem to us insane but once you have it on screen, it's a completely different matter. With *The Day* on the

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HEAD OF CITIZENSHIP

whiteboard..... I have only been using it for two months. But I have already noticed some differences. The students are reading much more competently and enjoying having a go at difficult words whereas before they would have dried up.'

And how do they use it?

Every evening as soon as the familiar ping comes through on her blackberry, Laura Taylor, Librarian, e-mails *The Day*'s headlines to all teaching staff. An enthu-

siast for *The Day* ever since its start, she is not shy in coming forward when she spots anything exciting to do with research.

That morning Paul's tutor group had picked on an article which reported that one in three children do not own a book. We arrived as the class were reading out the paragraphs.

We marvelled at how confidently the children whose first language was not English, read out in front us. If there was a difficult word one of the 'g and t's (gifted and talented) had a guess. They knew 'prowess' and 'socioeconomic' but we were all stumped by 'dystopian'!

Lauren Feaver's sixth form media studies group had been using *The Day* to see how the media covered the riots. Richard, gave a 10 minute talk on newspapers from the typewriter to the chip-in-the-teeth age.

Lucia's sixth form citizenship class discussed 'Britain walking the economic tightrope' (*The Day* 28.11.11.) Although everyone had their say, the debate was dominated by two people who no doubt will be facing each other over the dispatch box. On the right Charles Miller, who put it all down to the fault of the last Labour Government, and on the left Loretta Gazette, who had used *The Day* to interpret George Osborne's autumn statement. 'Members of his Government wouldn't even know the price of milk if they went to the fridge,' she scoffed.

Author

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