

The Southend High School for Boys team are celebrating the tremendous achievement of gaining 4<sup>th</sup> place in the World Schools Cross Country championship held in Slovakia, competing against school teams from 25 other nations.

This superb result followed a 28 hour continuous coach journey which culminated in the team missing the start of the opening ceremony after a transport problem in Bratislava.



The Southend High School team performed remarkably well gaining 84 points to place them 4<sup>th</sup> in the World behind Turkey in 1<sup>st</sup> place, New Zealand in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Australia in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*"How the race unfolded: there were 21 schools competing, each with a 6-runner squad. Inevitably some countries couldn't make it due to the travel restrictions. Southend's strongest competitor, Jack Fitsall, tripped*



*over at the start of the race, and was last out of the first bend. He clawed himself back like a man possessed to be our top scorer finishing 11<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile Alex Short was in the lead after the first lap, and ended up finishing 13<sup>th</sup>. The two other scorers in the school team both ran well.*

*Oliver Kyriakiedes maintained a consistent pace and finished 17<sup>th</sup>, as Alex Masterson stormed the last lap, recouping 8 positions to finish 42<sup>nd</sup>. The two remaining members of the squad proved how strong the school's team was as Josh Pepper ran in 48<sup>th</sup>, and Jon Kerridge finished 50<sup>th</sup>. Every runner finished in the top third in the World Schools Race."*

Leading the team, Steve Thomas commented that this is the best result ever for our Cross Country team. Previously the highest position was 5<sup>th</sup> in Lyons, France in 2002.

The boys are a real credit to the school and their country especially after all the trouble getting to Slovakia. They are now relaxing and will be attending an exhibition about Slovakia tonight with all the other schools. Steve is extremely proud of the team and has nothing but praise for the way the boys have conducted themselves.



“The boys have performed superbly. After the challenges of a mammoth trek across Europe by road, the team showed immense grit and determination. Fourth in the world is quite remarkable, and was achieved with three runners in the top 25 places. The school is very proud of all the efforts: from staff, parents and pupils that enabled these boys to train, to travel and to compete at this exceptional level.” (Robin Bevan, Headteacher)

The other England schools team from Guildford Girls School came 5<sup>th</sup> in their competition; and the England’s select International Boys’ team came 1<sup>st</sup>, and the International Girls’ team 4<sup>th</sup>.