



APRIL 2022

Welcome to the second edition of our 2021/2022 newsletter.

It's been another great term at JSCHS where our pupils have continued to embrace all the opportunities that are made available for them. This newsletter gives you a flavour of what has been on offer.

It is now the critical point for our Year 11 pupils as they enter the final stages of preparation for their exams; it is always a daunting time, but we will provide them with the support they need to succeed. We wish them the very best.

I hope that you enjoy reading about all that we've been up to over the past 14 weeks!

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher



SEN DEPARTMENT

This half term, the SEN department in Josh Spence has strived to promote inclusion and awareness of Special Educational Needs.

The following events were promoted across the school: Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month; Neurodiversity Week; World Down Syndrome Day.

World Down Syndrome Day was celebrated with a bake sale, with some of our Year 7 students raising over £100! An incredible achievement that all students involved should be proud of.

Assemblies were also delivered to Key Stage 3 and students and staff were asked to consider and answer the question: what does inclusion mean to you?

We would like to get this conversation started, getting our students to think about inclusion and what it means at John Spence. John Spence is an incredibly inclusive school but it is really important that we are always considering this question and challenging it.

We would be grateful if you could encourage the consideration of this question at home too, starting the conversation about inclusion and the importance of this not just within John Spence but within society also.

*Everybody is unique and should be accepted
We must appreciate others diversities*



YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 7

It has been an unusual Spring term this year. The term is often one of disrupted breaks and indoor lunchtimes due to spells of poor weather but, this year, we have had an almost uninterrupted run of mild weather. Students have been able to stay out and enjoy 'proper' breaks during the day!

Of course, Covid has still had its impact and so the term has not quite been a normal term in all aspects. We have been careful to avoid having everyone together in one space and so traditional aspects of the school week have had to change. Perhaps the most noticeable difference this term has been the loss of our weekly assemblies. Assemblies are the best way to share messages and information and they ensure that everyone present gets the same content at the same time. Happily, over the last few weeks, as covid restrictions have been lifted, we have been able to return to a full programme of assemblies and the year group have already heard about significant events relating to issues such as the conflict in Ukraine, International Women's Day and a Celebration of Inclusion (Focusing on Down Syndrome).

Two of these themes have formed the basis of successful fundraising events: **Hennessey** suggested that we do something to show our support for the families in Ukraine and so we held a non-uniform day that raised

several hundred pounds. To celebrate 'World Down Syndrome Day', **Rowan** led a team of friends who organised and ran a cake bake sale.

Further signs that things are slowly getting back to some sort of normality include the return of rehearsals for a new school production. Mrs Patrick is leading rehearsal sessions and I am thrilled to see that Year 7 students are heavily involved in all aspects of the production.

The commitment of Year 7 students to all aspects of school life is reflected in their attendance figures which show, week on week that Year 7 have had the highest attendance across all five year groups. Particular credit needs to go to 7DGr who seem to top the individual form groups attendance tables on a regular basis but it is good to see they are being challenged by 7SMa and 7JSm who have been giving them a run for their money lately.

Mr Crowe
Head of Year 7

Year 8

Year 8 students continue to impress both in school and outside of school. There have been lots of weekly nominations by subject teachers for a wide range of year 8 students of the week, well done to all of those who have been

nominated. Some individual mentions; Well done to Josh who has had trials for the England National Hockey Team and a massive well done to the Coastal Explorations group who have been scouring the coast line for natural products from which they can make unique musical instruments using recyclable materials.

In addition, Year 8 Community Leaders gathered together an aid package for a local charity and distributed this locally. After Easter they are going to continue to work closely with the charity to develop community links within school.

A heads up that next term Year 8 will be sitting exams so they will be expected to revise and prepare in the lead up to this.

A date for your diary: Tuesday 28th June is Year 8 Parents Evening.

Thank you all again for your continued support with your son/daughter. I hope you all have a lovely Easter break.

Mrs Wyllie
Head of Year 8

YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 9

Year 9 have had a productive term and I am incredibly impressed at the maturity they have shown while working their way through the GCSE options process. Students have taken this seriously and made some informed decisions about their choices for GCSE. Thank you to parents/carers for your input in this process, helping to guide your child and encourage them to make the right choice for them. I must say, it was also great to be able to welcome you back through the doors, which is the first time since the initial tutor review day back in Y7. Attendance has continued to be a big focus in Year 9. 9DGI retain their crown as the best attending form group, closely followed by 9DSA. As we continue to move through year 9, I cannot stress how important good attendance is as children start preparing for their GCSE's.

It has been wonderful to see the children continue to build on their sporting successes for the various teams and clubs in school, attendance at the sporting academies continues to be fantastic. We have also seen the creation of the Healthy Habits group which was set up in conjunction with the YMCA. A group of dedicated Year 9 students have been working together to promote healthy habits within school.

I would like to give a special mention to the girls involved in the This Life 22 group. The girls have attended weekly sessions with Foundation Futures, working on issues related to emotions and relationships. The group has now finished and ended things with a showcase of their work. They also presented JSCHS with three pieces of fabulous artwork which they created. I cannot wait to see this displayed around school.

I hope you all have a lovely break and I look forward to welcoming all students back. As ever, I thank you for your continued support, you do not know how much I appreciate it!

Mrs Brown—Head of Year 9

Year 10

We are two thirds of the way through Year 10 already – where is the time going!

With the snapshot exams having just taken place and the Year 11 exams looming, it will be our year group before we know it. The pressure of GCSE is real. Focus needs to be on revision and I encourage you all to develop a range of revision techniques to suit your learning style.

Revision is so important and should be a tool used continuously to refresh and recap topics and not just the night before the dreaded exam! Remember – fail to prepare, prepare to fail!

I am so excited for you to commence your work experience on Monday 9th May and sample the working world; it has been great to see so many of you independently finding a placement. If you are unsure about what you would like to do after John Spence, do not panic! We have lots of resources to help in school (including Mrs Winder) and you will be given Connexions adviser appointments in Year 11.

Staff nominated students to be awarded 'Year 10 Student of the Term' and I was thrilled with the amount of positivity received. I am pleased to announce that **MARCUS** and **CHARLOTTE** are the winners.

Marcus has had a massive improvement in both his attitude and behaviour in History. Charlotte is flourishing in Science and Health and Social care – always engaged, gives full effort to all tasks and is attending extra sessions. Well done to both students and all who were nominated.

Have a well-deserved Easter break Year 10!

Mrs Knight

Head of Year 10

YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 11

As Year 11 move into their final half term at John Spence it is crazy to think that their 5 years at the school are almost complete.

They continue to prepare for their final GCSE examinations and are finalising coursework to submit their best pieces of work. Intervention classes and extra revision sessions are in full swing and the year group are spending before school, lunch times and after school in class rooms to prepare the best they can for the upcoming exams.

The pupils are extremely grateful to the staff for all their efforts in helping and supporting them to ensure they have all the tools necessary to be successful.

Almost all pupils have secured college, sixth form or apprenticeship positions post-16 for life after school and many have attended interviews and some have had tours at their intended destinations. We continue to guide and support pupils who have not quite made their minds up and encourage all parents and carers to discuss their child's route when they leave John Spence. Please feel free to contact the school if you require any help or support with any Applications.

Mr Burnip
Head of Year 11

MATHS

Year 11 Maths Revision Sessions

In the run up to the year 11 exams, a maths revision session is now taking place for all year 11 pupils on Wednesdays at 3pm. These sessions will cover topics which will appear in the final exams and therefore provide excellent support in terms of revision. Pupils will also be given resources to support them throughout the session.

Year 11 Maths (Foundation) will take place in the main hall

Year 11 Maths (Higher) will take place in room A6

Please support your child by encouraging them to attend these sessions.

Year 10 Maths Challenge

A class of Year 10 students recently took part in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. The students completed a 60 minute, multiple choice online challenge which encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems.

There were over 700,000 entries across all competitions in the UK last year so a massive well done to all those who participated. A special congratulations to Jessica, Fin and Jed who were awarded a Bronze Certificate and a big congratulations also goes to Leo who managed to achieve a Silver Certificate.

The Junior Maths Challenge for Year 8 will be coming up later on in April.



United Kingdom
Mathematics Trust

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD



Since October our year 9 students have been working towards their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

For most students the award gives them the opportunity to try new activities, learn new skills and volunteer their time in helping others.

At the beginning of March the students went out on a training day walk along Hadrian's Wall.

The group, led by Mr Fullard and Mr Dotchin, were able to consolidate their class based learning and practice their navigation outside.



SCHOOL OF ROCK

Every Wednesday after school we run a rock climbing club at Hadrian Leisure.

Students learn how to use the equipment safely, how to tie the climbing knots, learn how to belay each other and learn a whole range of different climbing techniques. The club has proved to be so popular staff have also started to come along.

This makes for an exhilarating and exciting learning environment where both staff and students develop and learn alongside each other.



GIRLS NETWORK



12 girls who are part of the Girls Network programme participated in a workshop for confidence in public speaking called 'Finding Your Voice'.

This pushed a lot of them out of their comfort zone and I was incredibly proud of their resilience and participation!

Girls worked both individually and in pairs throughout the interactive session, describing themselves in one word and being made to reflect on three of their best qualities and achievements to date.

Confidence built throughout and it was great to see each of the girls presenting in front of the group by the end of the session.

Communication was explored with tips and strategies given for how to do this confidently and effectively for example talking slowly, smiling, giving eye contact and use of body language.

A fabulous afternoon in an impressive venue!

TICE FASHION HITS NORTHUMBRIA UNI

TICE Fashion is about exploring the vast and varied world of this incredibly exciting industry.

With the fashion workshops students get to investigate areas such as trend prediction, design, fashion production skills such as sewing, pattern cutting and looking a little into embellishment and craftsmanship. But what we also do is explore many growing areas of the fashion industry such as content creation and fashion communication.

We look at areas such as consumer trends, looking at fashion marketing, fashion film, journalism, styling, photography, fashion technology in retail as well as materials and fashion processes.

We discuss incredibly important topics such as sustainability, equality and diversity.

Students completing the Fashion element of This Is Creative Enterprise had the opportunity to go 'behind the scenes' at some of the fashion courses at Northumbria University. They looked at fashion illustration, fashion photography, fashion marketing, pattern making and design realisation. They learnt new skills, designed short films and we are waiting with bated breath to see the finished results!



LITERACY AT JOHN SPENCE



Whole School Literacy at John Spence

Our 'Communication' programme continues to progress. Every child at the school is fully aware of the different strategies and opportunities that we provide to improve the literacy levels of the young people.

'Literacy plays a vital role in transforming students into socially engaged citizens. Being able to read and write effectively means being able to keep up with current events, communicate effectively, and understand the issues that are shaping our world.'

Our AIR programme will reach Week 25 by the Easter holidays. Every student is expected to read independently for 20-30 minutes outside of school then post a comment about their reading on Google

Classroom. A significant amount of students in the school have completed this activity every single week and their portfolios are extremely detailed and interesting.

Form Time Reading takes place twice a week in Years 7-10. Years 7-9 are reading a modern YA novel whilst Year 10 access a variety of non-fiction articles about local, national and world affairs. Please discuss the novel that your child is reading in form time as part of your weekly routine.

Class Reading takes place in every lesson for Years 7-8. The expectation is that every student brings their own book to each class. Up to ten minutes will be spent reading the book quietly. Students not having their book does obstruct the progress of the class so please check that your child is prepared for the day in the mornings.

Disciplinary Reading takes place in every lesson. Students are exposed to a wide range of subject specific texts that emphasise the fact that literacy is not just something that happens in English lessons.

Tier 2 Vocabulary is learned and revised in every lesson. A variety of challenging words are explicitly taught. Please discuss which words your child has learned today as part of your routine.

Accelerated Reading is an application that is designed to progress the reading competency of students in Years 7-8. All students know their logins. Whenever they finish a book, they need to login to Accelerated Reader and complete the associated quiz. Leader boards are published regularly by Miss Hoe.

Reciprocal Reading is an initiative that we deliver to selected students in Year 7. Mrs Martin leads this programme and we are very pleased with the impact that it is having. If your child is involved with this programme, please discuss their thoughts about it as part of your routine.

Please continue to encourage your child to read widely and to engage positively with the wide range of activities that we provide for them at school. Independence is crucial in order to maximise progression.

Please feel free to contact me about any part of the 'Communication' programme: david.gibson@johnspence.org.uk

Mr Gibson



A number of girls from Year 9 have been working with an external agency, Foundation Futures, on a project called This Life 22.

It was set up to try to find out their views on what it is like being a 13/14 year old girl in school today. The girls were divided into two groups and Sue Davison from Foundation Futures worked with each group separately for an hour a week for 6 weeks.

The group sessions discussed all sorts of topics but the aim was to explore their emotions and relationships and how to better deal with both. Each group then had a full day out of school at the Foundations Futures base where they worked together on producing some amazing pieces of artwork.

The group then invited their parents, Mrs Brown—Head of Year 9, Katharine Angus from the Local Authority and Sue into school to give a presentation about what they had been doing and to donate the artwork they produced.

They are going to consult with Mr Heath as to where the work can be displayed in school. The girls have loved working with Sue and this project has been so successful that we have secured Sue's services to work with other groups of girls in the summer term.



TRIPS

'GHOST PROJECT'

Mischief and mayhem at Delaval Hall. Not from our Year 7 students and staff but the Delaval family and their descendants! They put the drama back into Northumberland's most flamboyant 'party' house.

The story of Seaton Delaval Hall is as dramatic as any theatrical production ever staged. A story of ruin, tragedy and survival, its history spans a thousand years. During our visit we discovered the story of Seaton Delaval Hall and the families and key individuals who helped shape its journey. Also the 'spooky' story of the White Lady ghost.

From its Norman origins to present day, the Hall is now being restored and looked after by The National Trust who are committed to promoting and preserving places like Delaval Hall. The Hall has natural beauty, glorious garden, art installations and historic interest for which they take responsibility for the benefit of the nation, for us and everyone to enjoy. We certainly did on our half day visit. Volunteers, guides and staff kept us entertained and informed throughout the visit and we were particularly lucky with the weather in this beautiful part of Northumberland.

Our students are planning to follow this visit up, working with Miss Griffiths to produce a collaborative installation art piece. Look out for the next instalment...



OLD LOW LIGHT HERITAGE CENTRE



30 students from years 7 and 8 visited the Old Low Light Heritage Centre in North Shields on Monday 28th March as part of their Culture Capital experience. Although the day dawned a bit grey and drizzly, we were able to witness a variety of ships coming into the River Tyne from the North Sea, learn what sort of cargo they were carrying and also how the green and red buoys enable them to steer safely through the deep channel by avoiding the 'Black Middens' rocks on the starboard side (right) and the sand banks on the portside (left) of the river. We learnt the difference between the Old Low Light and Old High Light (350 years old) and the newer Low Light and High Light (300 years old) and how their lights need to be in-line for the ships to enter the river safely.

We visited the Fish Quay and learnt how to tell where the fishing boats come from (eg NS is for North Shields, SS for South Shields and HL for Hartlepool); what kind of fish is usually caught - who knew North Shields is the biggest prawn port in England with an annual catch of 1,800 tonnes of shellfish?

We also had a guided tour of the static exhibition at the Centre, "Women's Work", and learnt about the history of 'The Herring Girls', a local Suffragette and the aunty of one of our group, Angela Blacklock, who has been working

offshore since she was 20 years old. We are very grateful to the staff and volunteers/guides of the Old Low Light who offered their time to impart their knowledge and teach us about an area of our very own local history.

TRIPS

SUN, SEA, SAND AND SOUND



A group of year 8 students have been taking part in an exciting program called: Coastal Explorations. The project sees students investigating the relationship between music, technology and physics. This half term, our students have been on two exciting visits as well as taking part in exciting workshops within school.

Our first visit took the pupils to the beautiful coast of Tynemouth. Here students studied the environmental sounds that were present at the coast. Using recording equipment, students captured the sounds of wildlife, the howling wind and the crashing seas; all of these sounds are being used as a stimulus to create a composition based on the coastline. Students also created their own 'wind flutes' using bottles and other recyclable materials in order to see what sounds they could create with the use of the wind. On our second visit, we attended the Physics Department of Newcastle University where we explored the physics of sound as well as some complex mathematical theories linking to music and sound.

The next stage of the program sees our students designing and building their own musical instruments which will then be used to perform a unique composition to be performed at the Whitley Bay Playhouse.

SCHOOL OF ROCK



Art Academy pupils attended the Theatre Royal production of School of Rock. For many of the students this was their first visit to a theatre.

Arts Academy pupils are busy completing their Bronze Arts Award and as part of their project they must attend a 'live performance' and reflect on how the performance makes them feel, how it inspires them, as well as analysing both the production and performance.

At the end of this academic year, the students will have an internationally recognised qualification which will aid in their development as artists and arts leaders. The afternoon was most enjoyable and the pupils enjoyed participating and experiencing live theatre. Many of the pupils found that the young actors on stage were a real inspiration to them and that they had gained a sense of enthusiasm to develop their chosen art forms in greater depth.

I look forward to updating you with how our young people are developing their creative skills in the next issue.

CLUBS

COOKING CLUB



This year's second batch of students began their cookery club journey in March this year. 12 students from year 7 – 10 embarked on 6 weeks of preparing, cooking and, most importantly, tasting an array of dishes from starters of soup, to main courses of curry and pizza.

They have shown incredible resilience and independence over the weeks, and have gone from strength to strength honing their skills in chopping, frying, baking and making dough to name but a few!

We look forward to finishing with desserts in the final 2 weeks, and seeing the blossoming friendships further develop with one another. Staff have enjoyed the experience too, with many being lucky enough to sample some of the dishes in exchange for their encouraging words and praise for the students' work. It has been a great experience for all, with lifelong skills and learning about the importance of eating nutritious food being just some of what has been learned along the way. All in all, another successful and insightful cookery club!



CHESS CLUB

On Tuesday 29th March, four students from John Spence took part in the country's largest youth chess tournament. The group played as a team, each playing four matches, whose final outcome added to the team's score. The boys put in a tremendous effort, each winning at least one game against some very challenging competitors. All four enjoyed the evening and did the school proud, placing us in tenth place, which is a solid effort for their very first tournament. Well done boys!

Now that the team has a taste for it, they're keen to get back out there. They've also been sharing their experiences with new players in our weekly chess club, which is ever growing in numbers. Watch this space for more developments in the John Spence chess world.



FUNDRAISING



On Monday the 21st of March students of 7CEN, lead by Rowan took part in a bake sale to raise awareness of International Down Syndrome Day 2022.

The team, consisting of Niamh, Sophie and Eva organised and participated in a tremendous bake sale.

Staff, parents and pupils donated and baked sweet treats which went down a storm!

Easter themed chocolate cornflake cakes, freshly baked cookies, donuts, flapjacks and even Miss Hoe's famous Mars bar cakes were all on offer, for a small fee.

The team didn't just stop there once break time was over - they used their best selling techniques to convince more staff members to purchase the goods, that even includes Mr Heath!

The money was counted and the team raised over £100! An astounding amount!

It was agreed that although the bake sale was to raise awareness about International Down Syndrome Day, the team wanted the money to go to the Disaster & Emergencies Fund for the Ukraine via The Red Cross.

