

DECEMBER 2023

Welcome to the December 2023 edition of our newsletter. It has been a really busy term and the articles represent just a fraction of what has been on offer both inside and outside of the classroom; this is a reflection of the commitment of John Spence staff in providing as many opportunities as possible and of the students for getting involved. I hope that you enjoy reading about all that we've been up to and will join me in celebrating the numerous and varied achievements of our students.

Jonathan Heath  
Headteacher

## YEAR 9 DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

On 09/01/24 we are hosting a Year 9 Parents Evening from 5.30pm. We will be sharing key information regarding your child's GCSE options as well as their upcoming Year 9 exams. We would ask that students and a maximum of 2 parents/guardians attend so that we can accommodate everyone in the main hall.



## STUDENT AMBASSADORS

### We're going to China!

We are so excited to announce that two of our year 10 students have been selected to go to China for a week in March.

The student ambassador programme will involve two pupils attending from each PELE trust school, to visit Beijing schools and talk about life in the UK.

Over 20 Year 10 students applied and 8 were shortlisted for interview where they gave presentations on the cultural differences between the UK and China.

The standard was really high and all should be proud of their achievements, but only two places were available. Maisie and Lily-Bow will be jetting off to China in March to visit a range of schools and colleges to explain to hundreds of Chinese students what it is like to live in the UK with the focus on the students coming here to study in the future.

In June or July we are expecting a group of Chinese students to visit John Spence where we will share with them what school is like in the UK as well as showing them what is so great about our region.

I'm sure Maisie and Lily-Bow are so excited to be embarking on a trip of a lifetime and will represent the school and North Shields brilliantly.



## YEAR GROUP UPDATES

### Year 7

As the first term for Year 7 comes to an end I could not be prouder of the way the year group has settled into the routines of life at John Spence High School. The clear message from myself at the start of the year was 'make a great first impression' and Year 7 have done that in abundance!

The year group have risen to the challenge of moving up to high school and have demonstrated this in a mature manner with a willingness to show greater independence. Students who were strangers in September are forming new friendships and it has been lovely to see each of our seven form classes begin to develop their own identities. A special well done to 7NBr who won the Year 7's 'Form Class of the Term' for the winter term! This was based on the consistently positive class chart scores and their excellent response to getting SPARX homework completed. Points now reset as the other 6 form classes try and take NBr's title in the Spring term.

The year group continues to impress me with their general attitude towards all aspects of school life and their willingness to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are available. Registration on Thursday morning tends to be a very quiet affair as large numbers of students attend the various sports academies. As well as this, a large number of pupils within the year group have represented school sports teams: Rugby, Basketball, Netball, Football and Athletics to name a few.

This positive engagement is being reflected in lessons too where, week by week, students are collecting consistently positive class chart scores and being recognised for their resilient, skilled or considerate behaviour across the range of subject areas that they experience.

Can I once again take this opportunity to thank you as parents and carers for your support in helping the year group settle into JSHS. It was always going to be a challenging start to the new term but, as I said at the start, I am immensely proud of the way this term has gone and I look forward to even more progress and success in the New Year.

Mr Betts

### Year 8

The Year 8 pupils have had an excellent first term and there has been so many opportunities for them to get involved with.

They had a visit to Cragside back in September which was brilliant and all pupils were able to get out into the fresh air and wander around the beautiful grounds for the day with their form groups. The team of form tutors were impressed by the way they conducted themselves on the day; being friendly, considerate and polite throughout.

The pupils in the year group have also got involved in the vast amount of extra-curricular opportunities and we eventually managed to get a coach (me) to take on the role of football team manager and they have had an excellent start to the season. Playing each game with great sportsmanship and resilience at times.

I hope everyone has the best Christmas and New Year ever and they manage to recharge their batteries following an extremely long term.

I look forward to welcoming all pupils back in 2024. Merry Christmas.

Mr Burnip

## Year 9

It felt as if the second half of the autumn term started later than usual as we returned having missed both Halloween and Bonfire night. We got into our stride very quickly on our return and within days members of the year group were involved in the very prestigious presentation of the 'Freedom of the Borough' to local superstar, Sting. Our students combined with others from a number of local schools performed some of Sting's own compositions to the audience of invited guests and the man himself - all under the leadership of our very own Mr Grazer. Many students will no doubt already be thinking about their options. Work has started on preparing the year group for these important choices and much of what has happened outside of lessons this half term has been linked to planning for their futures. For example; Miss Benson arranged for the whole year group to partake in a series of workshops which were presented by the Newcastle United 'Futures' programme. Students attended a number of one hour long workshops on alternate weeks focusing on a particular aspect of the 'World of Work'. Around the same time these workshops were starting, a selected group of students spent an afternoon with members of the Royal Navy. The students had expressed an interest in a life in the military and this was an opportunity to speak to serving members of the Senior Service first hand. For those of a political disposition, the annual opportunity to put themselves forward for the position of Young Mayor has also been possible. The process is ongoing and so shortlisted candidates will be shared soon. Another annual tradition – a trip to the Theatre Royal to see this year's pantomime, Pinocchio – took place in late November. More recently, Mrs Wyllie organised for a selected group of students to start on this year's 'Ready for Life' workshops which are delivered by the North East Alliance and Miss Armstrong has selected some of our most talented designers to begin working with professional designers in the annual TICE challenges. Added to all of this are the groups being led by Mr Fullard, we have a 'Boys 2 Men' group and a 'Girls Aloud' group up and running along with a huge new intake of students who are signed up for the 'Duke of Edinburgh' Bronze award. All in all, a very busy half term but the foundations have been laid for the next major milestone in the journey of this year group - their option choices!

Mr Crowe

## Year 10

The Year group has settled into their GCSE option choices well. They have been thinking about post 16 options and visited a careers fair at Burnside school. I was incredibly impressed by the students' maturity and behaviour. Lots of students came away inspired and informed about their post 16 options. Work experience information has gone out to students and they should be looking for a placement during the May term. This is an invaluable opportunity to experience the world of work and see where their hard work could get them. Year 10 have recently completed their snap shot exams. Their first proper experience of the formality of exam conditions and expectations. I was really impressed by how well the majority of the year group performed. A personal well done to the Wellbeing council for all of their thoughtful contributions this half term, alongside the student council. A huge congratulations to Josh who has been selected to compete in the Elite British Selects - Winter Classic - Draft Ice Hockey Tournament. I am continually proud of this year group and all of their individual and collective achievements. They have really matured this year and settled into the demands of GCSE life. I am really proud of the girls that have taken part in 'This Life' sessions with Sue Davidson this term. Exploring relationships, friendships and emotions. They have come such a long way and learnt so much. The work that they have produced is absolutely amazing and will be displayed in the Hub for all to enjoy. Well done Girls!

Thank you so much for your continued support. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a very happy new year.

Mrs Wyllie







The first term of Year 11 is finished and what a busy term it has been! I have been really impressed with how pupils have settled into Year 11, despite the demands and pressures of sitting their GCSE's they have come back to school with a mature and keen attitude. They have also taken advantage of all the opportunities which have been offered to them. Mrs Winder, has done a fantastic job of organising careers and post 16 events and groups, such as pledge day college/6th form trips and mock job interview day. The girls network has now come to an end and feedback from the mentors for the girls involved was nothing short of excellent. I was really pleased to see so many of you attend the careers open evening to support your child in their post 16 choices and it pleases me to see children taking their connexions appointments seriously and really putting some thought into what their next steps will be.

Two weeks ago, pupils completed their second mock examinations of the year, while results are not yet in for these I can say with absolute confidence that the vast majority of pupils have taken these seriously, revising at home and trying their absolute best while in their exams. I was also really pleased with staff comments about how impressed they have been with behaviour, which for the most part has been exemplary.

As you know, I always like to give some special mentions in newsletter updates and this one is no exception. Firstly, I would like to give Finn a big round of applause for his festive efforts during the Christmas jumper/accessory day. Finn was nominated as best dressed Year 11 pupil by senior staff and did not mind at all in posing for a photograph. Another big well done, goes to those children who achieved the most positive points on class charts. These points were allocated by staff to recognise

positive behaviours in and out of lessons. As a reward, the top 20 pupils were invited to a Domino's pizza lunch with myself on Thursday 21st December, which as you can see went down a treat.

At the end of every term, we have developed a little bit of a tradition over the last 4 years of publicly rewarding the form tutor who has managed to keep their form class on track and in line. This term the award goes to Mr Dotchin, who has done a sterling job of keeping DDO on the straight and narrow, much to Mr Gibson's dismay, who came a very close second!

As ever, thank you for your continued support and I very much look forward to welcoming everyone back in 2024. I wish you all a happy and healthy new year.

Mrs Brown

N.B.—If you would like any information about careers or college information post 16 please don't hesitate to get in touch with either myself, Mrs Winder or Christina from Connexions

Leanne.brown@johnspence.org.uk  
Kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk  
Christina.Didsbury@northtyneside.gov.uk



## SPARX FLYING

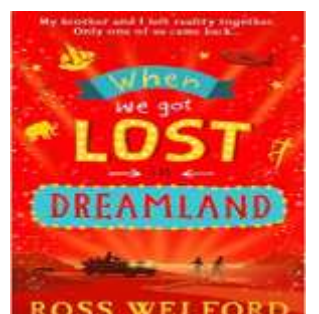
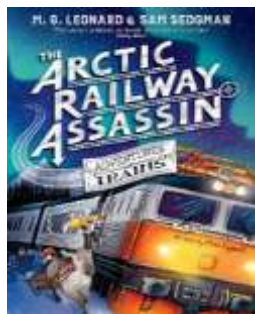
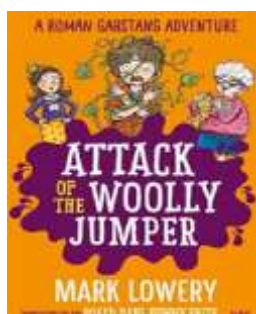
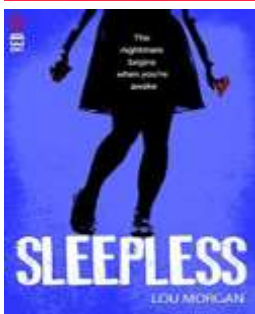
The introduction of the Reading element of the Sparx homework application has proved a great success this term. Over 300 books have been read on Sparx and over 3000 hours of careful reading has taken place. The first figure doesn't even include those students that have taken advantage of the 'swap' facility on Sparx to move on to a new and exciting text if the vibrancy of their initial choice has dulled. The vast majority of students have bought into the project whilst some have exceeded our expectations spectacularly. Anisha K, in Year 10, is closing in on 30000 Sparx Rewards points whilst Emma N in Year 11 has pushed on past 20000. For context, the set homework is to achieve 300 SRP per week (which equates to half an hour of careful reading). By the end of the current term, a student who had completed only that requirement in each of the ten weeks to date would have achieved 3000 SRP. Anisha has managed ten times that. Heroic. Sparx Reader encourages the students to read slowly and carefully. Details must be considered and meanings interpreted. Sparx doesn't allow a student to rush through a text and make random choices when it comes to the challenge elements. These are crucial skills that can only benefit the children both in school and outside of the classroom.

We look forward to continued progression next term.

## NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

It has been a busy term in the library at John Spence with lots of changes. Firstly, the library has changed in appearance with a total re-organisation of the fiction book section into genres. This has made it easier for students to access the type of books they like, with books now arranged according to whether they are science fiction, mystery, adventure, fantasy etc. Secondly, alongside the visual and practical changes in the library, the new reading scheme, Sparx Reader, has been introduced for all students and is being used for English homework for every year group. In association with this, the library has been promoting a Sparx Reader Challenge which sees students gaining 'Achiever of the week' for the best overall performance each week in their English group, and also an on-going highly competitive leader board for the school displaying the top students in each class, each year and in the whole school. We have seen some excellent effort over the term across all year groups and some amazing results. Library lessons have continued across years 7 – 9 with a different format this year, allowing students to engage with a wide variety of texts to improve their understanding and increase their enjoyment of reading, in addition to providing a great opportunity to explore the lovely books on offer in the library and develop their reading habit.

Some of the new books available to students and new to the library this term include:





# CAREERS

As always, a busy term, with lots of careers related activities and trips!



## Year 11 Mock Job Interviews

All of our Year 11 students got the chance this half term to apply for a fictional job, complete an application, and then interview for the job. Twenty five employers joined us to Conduct the interviews, who all were extremely positive about the professional and ambitious manner in which the students conducted themselves. Well done Year 11!

## Year 8 STEM Roadshow

In October, the whole of year 8 took part in the STEM workshop in partnership with BEA systems where they explored different job roles in the science, technology, engineering and maths sectors.

## Royal Navy Workshop

Every half term we are now giving students the opportunity to participate in an employer workshop. This half term it was the turn of the Royal Navy. The students really enjoyed hearing about the various roles available and the routes in the armed forces. Next half term we will hear from Train'd up, a local engineering apprenticeship and training provider.

## North Tyneside Live Careers Fair

Burnside College hosted this year's North Tyneside careers fair with over 30 stalls to visit, from the Army to Kirkley Hall. Our year 10 students thoroughly enjoyed talking to potential employers and exploring college and apprenticeship options.





# PLEDGE DAY



## Pledge day

As part of our school's personal development, last year we launched our 'Fit for life' pledge: a promise to our students that during their time with us, they will be offered a list of opportunities to participate in, giving them a greater understanding of the wider world. As part of our pledge, the entire school got involved on the 20th September, Pledge day.

Year 7 stayed on site and got to know their form classes and tutors through taking part in a series of form group challenges. Year 8 donned their walking boots and spent the day exploring Craggside while year 9 took a trip on the metro to visit some of our local landmarks such as Segedunum and the Baltic art Gallery.

Key stage four pupils spent the day considering their future, with Year 10 visiting Northumbria University for a tour of the facilities and workshops around student finance, while year 11 visited some local post 16 Colleges

and Sixth forms including Whitley Bay and Newcastle College.

It was an amazing day with smiles all round, and a lot of tired feet!





# Calling all alumni!



**Did you go to school at John Spence?**

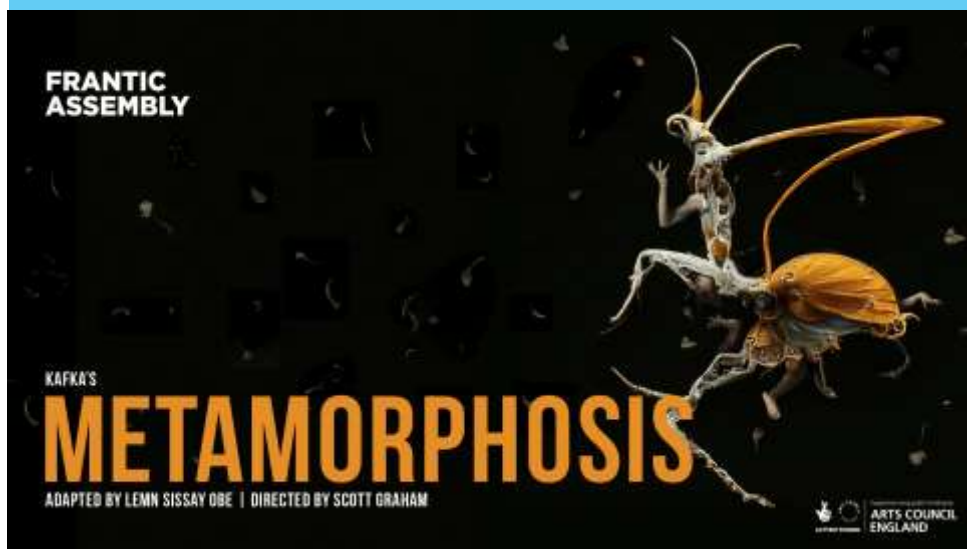
**If so, we'd love for you to get involved in a Careers event in January, where you will discuss your career path with some of our younger students.**

**If you like to be part of this event, please contact**

**[kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk](mailto:kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk)**



## METAMORPHOSIS



On the 6th October 2023 Year 9, 10 and 11 drama students attended the Northern Stage Theatre in Newcastle to watch Frantic Assembly's latest performance of 'Metamorphosis.'

Metamorphosis is the retelling of Franz Kafka's shocking tale of cruelty and kindness; a visceral and vital depiction of humans struggling within a system that crushes them under its heel.

The plot follows Gregor Samsa, a hard working travelling salesman, who one morning wakes to find himself changed. To those around him he is dangerous, untouchable vermin. Worse than that, he is a burden. A word said, an action out of place, the opening of old wounds, none of which can be undone. Until now Gregor has woken every morning, quietly left to take the same train, and worked to pay off the family debt. But that world explodes on this morning of brutal metamorphosis.

A very physical ,powerful, thought provoking and visually engaging production enjoyed by all of our students.



# TRIPS

## NEWCASTLE COLLEGE WORKSHOP & TOUR

On the 20th October the year 10 and 11 drama students spent the afternoon at Newcastle College visiting the Performing Arts department.

The halls of the Performance Academy were alive with sounds of music and drama as students toured the world class facilities and spoke with many of the industry experts. Students visited a range of performance spaces including rehearsal rooms, performance studios and even the 200 seat theatre and gig space that hosts around 15 large performances a year.



Students were even lucky enough to take part in a dance and acting workshop where they were given an insight into their next career steps within the arts.

An informative and enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

## PANTOMIME TRIP

A group of 36 KS3 students went on their annual trip to see the Pantomime again this year. We went to the first performance of 'Pinocchio' on Tuesday 28th November. Here is a review from two of the students, Megan and Billie (Year 8s):

Danny Adams is Pinocchio and he's really funny (he kept saying "accideeent") and pointed the camera to people in the crowd and made them say rude things! My favourite part (Megan) was when he was on the unicycle and when he gave a member of the audience who'd volunteered to go up on stage a wedgy! I ate lots of snacks that were very yummy, like chocolate milkshake, chocolate bread, chocolate biscuits, crisps, Haribos and jelly! The whole cast did 'YMCA' and we all joined in; and they did 'Titanic'; and they did a Geordie version of 'Barbie'. We both loved the bit when Danny Adams kept singing song lyrics every time they matched what a character said. We felt the heat off the fire when the fire dancers were performing - they were really impressive. It was a great show. I loved the singing (Billie), but we were tired on the coach home. We're already looking forward to next year's Panto: 'The Little Mermaid'...





# TRIPS

## ‘A CHRISTMAS CAROL’



### *"Bah Humbug!"*

Miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is about to have a Christmas Eve like no other, thanks to three ghostly visitors taking him through past, present and future as they try to show him the error of his ways and teach him the power of kindness and compassion.

Written in 1843, Charles Dickens seasonal short story is as popular and enduring as ever. This celebrated stage adaptation sticks closely to Dickens original and includes traditional carols, making it the ideal pre-Christmas treat to get the whole family in the mood for the festive season!

This was an amazingly enjoyable performance from the People's Theatre. Full of Christmas cheer and brilliant memorable quotations as our year 10

and 11 prepare themselves for their GCSE courses.



# TRIPS

## ASDAN STUDENT TRIPS

EST. 1835

**GRAINGER  
MARKET**  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

The next few articles about the ASDAN course in school come from Jack (year 11), Ashley (year 11) and Lottie (year 10) .

ASDAN is an education charity and awarding organisation providing courses, accredited curriculum programmes and regulated qualifications to engage, elevate and empower young people aged 11 to 25 years in greatest need.

Their goal is to engage them through relevant and motivating courses to achieve meaningful learning outcomes, which elevate them to go on to further education, training and work, and empower them to take control of their lives. They do this by developing courses with an accessible and practical pedagogy for learners; and by working with their partner educators to foster the personal, social and work-related abilities of young people in greatest need.



In this photograph, me and my group were all lined up by Georgie Banger for our first free sample of the trip



In this photo, the John Spence trip group visited Chirton Fisheries and sampled the Lindisfarne Oysters. I was the first to volunteer to try an oyster - it didn't actually taste like fish, rather like salty cucumber.



For this photo, we visited Nan Bei Chinese Dumplings and tried a sample of what was titled "dumpling roulette" which had 3 full of duck and plum sauce, the other beef and chutney.



For this Photo, we were sat down at King Baby Bagels and had some store-made orange juice and a cream-cheese bagel.



# TRIPS

## ASDAN STUDENT TRIPS

### LITTER PICKING

#### You will need:

- Water proof coat.
- Sensible shoes.
- Water bottle
- Protective gloves.
- Hand sanitiser.

#### FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER

time: 9am to 3pm

Going around the Rising Sun Country, Park Whitley Road, Benton, NE12 9SS

You will get equipment from the school

the Rising Sun  
Country Park

John Spence



### Litter-Pick Images from Lucas.C, Kyle.E and Jack.W

Image 1: This is a photo of me, Kyle and Lucas that Kyle took to show how hard we were working to keep things clean.



Image 2: This was a photo taken of a clean area in the park; it was taken to boost morale for all of the groups to show us how beautiful our labour was making the area look.



Image 3: This is a photo of a duck - there wasn't much reason behind it I think, but it was of an animal at the Rising Sun country park in a clean, safe habitat.



# TRIPS

## ASDAN—FIRST AID TRAINING



This picture shows me in the recovery position. You go into this position when your blood pressure has gone down. You put your legs up in order to get the blood back up to your brain.

I found this part quite easy to remember.



This picture shows people lying on the floor.

You go into this position when your blood goes out of your brain so you have to get it pumped back up.

I found this part easy to remember.

The people in the back are doing the Heimlich Manoeuvre. You do this when someone is choking. You put your fist above the belly button and below the rib cage then pull 10 times till your friend is not choking and the object is moved.



This is a picture of my group looking at first aid equipment that we picked up from this box. We had to figure out what equipment was supposed to be in a first aid box.



# TRIPS

## ASDAN STUDENT TRIPS



The ASDAN and Music students from years 10 and 11 enjoyed a trip to the (newly re-named) Glasshouse (formerly the Sage) to look at a range of careers in the music industry. They participated in a careers' 'speed dating' exercise in small groups, along with other schools in the Newcastle area, and were given the opportunity to ask employees about their varied roles at the site. We were also given the chance to watch a musician/storyteller in rehearsal in one of the studios and ask questions.

The event was organised by NE1CAN (Business Improvement District Company) and proved to be so popular, they are considering putting-on another similar event in January.

## THIS IS CREATIVE ENTERPRISE



### It's TICE time again!

T.I.C.E stands for 'This is Creative Enterprise', a non-profit organisation that, since 2008, has been working with businesses, schools, colleges and universities to support young people in discovering careers and job roles within the creative sector.

Selected Year 9 students have been given the fantastic opportunity to develop their creative skills and explore real briefs with real designers!

Students will take part in a mix of workshops, talk to guest speakers, have real-world experiences, and be given exclusive access to professionals and workshops around realistic career opportunities.

We will keep you updated with their progress!

## CLUBS

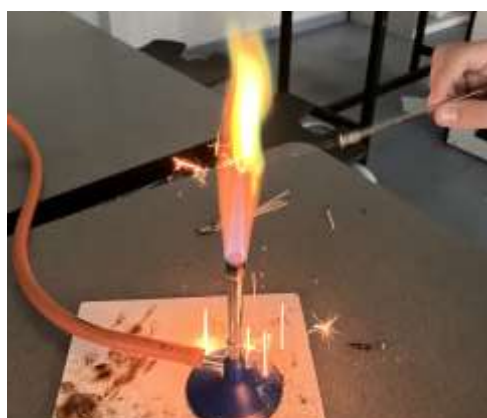


This term saw our KS3 students getting stuck into extra science sessions with STEM club returning and opening up for years 7-9. We are delighted that the club has continued to prove so popular with our students and as always, our students continue to engage with every activity with enthusiasm and curiosity.

We started the year with our usual range of dissections and chemistry experiments. Students competed in our 'neutralisation challenge' which required a steady hand and patience in using the burettes to neutralise an alkali accurately using acid. Students also proved themselves to have strong stomachs as always by dissecting eyeballs and kidneys. We also brought back our classic STEM club Halloween and bonfire themed activities with amazing pumpkin carvings and lots of homemade fireworks in the lab!

Finally, a huge thanks to our latest guest speaker; Guy at Bugs n Stuff who was kind enough to visit us with his menagerie of creepy crawlies and other cool creatures. We loved meeting the tarantula alongside various lizards and snakes!

STEM club alternates between Wednesday and Thursdays after school in U13. Students are more than welcome to attend and should see Mrs Owens if interested or check the morning noticeboards for updates.





# SPORT

## NO REGRETS



No Regrets has been our motto for our Rugby League teams for sometime now and we have enjoyed really good success this term. We have fielded 5 teams across all age groups and 80 players have been involved in over 20 games so far, across 7 different venues! The Rugby Academy is thriving and it is fantastic to see the pupil's resilience, determination and enthusiasm grow with each playing opportunity.

Over the course of the term, each team has represented school on two occasions, one after school and one during the afternoon. The teams have battled it out with other schools which are positioned North of the River Tyne. The idea being that the two best teams represent the North against the South of the Tyne.

On this occasion the following teams have gained recognition and been asked to represent North of the Tyne:

### Year 11 Runners Up

### Year 10 Winners

### Year 7 Runners Up

Year 8 came joint third with Year 9 facing more opposition and coming out in fourth place overall.

The games between North and South are held at Kingston Park, the home of Newcastle Thunder and the majority of finals are pencilled in for after Christmas. However, on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 4pm till 6pm, the Year 11 team went to face off against Whitburn Academy of South Tyneside who had been ranked the top South of the Tyne team.

Although the team didn't win on this occasion, losing out 16 – 4, the true grit and determination was evident in an exceptional second half performance.

Huge credit to the players for sticking at it and getting their rewards with a try in the second half. With some Year 10 players stepping up an age bracket it will surely motivate them to perform when their finals night arrives in January.

After Christmas we aim to get the Girls game back up and running after a year or so without teams so we are all very excited about that! The sheer numbers of pupils involved has seen Rugby boost its way up to 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the most popular played sport in school, with many now joining community teams and continuing their love of the game at weekend.



# SPORT

## MISH MASH



Over the course of this half term, five Year 9 pupils have been leading on a National Pilot Project by the charity Youth Sport Trust. The idea was to create a Multi Sport Club for participants aged 11-13 to take part in after school. It wasn't going to be your traditional teacher lead Football or Netball session, but a bespoke programme for Young People to lead based on six main themes:

**Connect**  
**Culture**  
**Confidence**  
**Challenge**  
**Creativity**  
**Choice**

Before the sessions started we were invited to a National Training event which would be delivered by the charity in Loughborough. We joined this training virtually but were set challenges and had to promote our ideas via Zoom. The group did an amazing job, thinking of the branding, setting, name and target audience. The CEO of the charity was very impressed by our enthusiasm and the marketing company were astounded by some of our ideas and feedback. It was on this day, MishMash was formed!

After the half term break we held our first MishMash session, inviting along 12 Year 7 pupils to help with the pilot on Wednesday nights 3.00 – 4.00. Over the course of the six weeks we had laughter, competition, fun and treats! All the sessions were planned and delivered by the Year 9 leaders and the feedback from the Year 7s has been brilliant. The sessions had to be delivered using a set structure which was; Welcome, 'Kick It Off', 'Step It Up', 'Have a Go' and finally 'Over to You'. The games and activities were brand new to everyone involved and intrigued the participants week by week. We even got a visit by the coordinating officer from Loughborough who saw the Challenge night in action and was extremely impressed by what she witnessed.

Not only have the participants enjoyed the after-school sessions, but the Year 9 leaders have also. They feel it has helped them with their employability skills and delivery skills. As part of their DofE commitments they have agreed to work with a new cohort in 2024, continuing the club which is MishMash!

Well done to everyone involved.





# MESSAGE FROM KIERAN MCGRANE

## CEO OF PELE TRUST



Dear Parents

As CEO of Pele Trust, I am incredibly pleased and proud to welcome the whole John Spence High School community; staff, pupils, parents and governors. Earlier this term, I shared a letter with all members of staff with the following content.

*'Our Trust is founded on a clear vision and set of values, and prominent in this is the desire to work with 'schools brought together by choice'. This has driven the early work within our founding group of schools and has enabled us to avoid growing the Trust for growth's sake. I believe we now have a well-established and strong Trust that is in an excellent position to welcome additional schools who will add value to our work as we seek to be the best schools we can be.'*

*John Spence is clearly a school with a strong commitment to its pupils and local community. School leaders and staff are rightly proud of their school and there is a shared and deep commitment to providing the best educational experiences and outcomes for the young people in the school, both now and in the future. This matches the commitment in existing Trust schools and I am certain that, as we all work together, we will be more successful in realising our ambitions.*

Part of working together is about opening our schools to external scrutiny as part of a

supportive process leading to improvement. As such, I had the pleasure of leading a 2-day peer review in John Spence in mid-November with colleagues from other Trust schools. In late January, colleagues from John Spence will join me as we carry out a 2-day peer review in Duchess's Community High School (Alnwick) as well as a sixth form review at Ponteland High School in mid-February. These reviews are a key part of our work in schools to ensure we have an accurate picture of our relative strengths and areas for improvement.

If any parent has a desire to meet with me or just make contact then please feel free to do so via my email address - [k.mcgrane@peletrust.org.uk](mailto:k.mcgrane@peletrust.org.uk) and I will respond promptly.

Yours faithfully

Kieran McGrane





*Please remember*

Pupils return to school on ***Monday 8th January 2024***