

JULY 2025

Yet again our students have excelled themselves in engaging with the opportunities available to them at school and it has been great to celebrate the many successes this year with you all. Our Sports Presentation Evening was incredibly well attended and recognised the achievements of not only those that excel in sport, but also those that actively participate. Our Year 11 Prom at Percy Park was a hugely enjoyable occasion where the students threw themselves into enjoying their last hurrah as a year group.

As ever, our newsletter just gives a flavour of what we have got up to this term and I hope that you enjoy reading about it all.

Finally, thank you to the amazing staff we have in school who go above and beyond to provide students with fantastic high quality learning and extra-curricular opportunities throughout the year.

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JR



For two nights only, the drama studio was transformed into 18th Century France as our students took to the stage and whisked the audience into Belle's world.



Around 40 students were involved in the production from designing the set and props to advertising the event and selling tickets. The production told the story of an arrogant prince and his castles servants who fall under the spell of a wicked enchantress, who turns him into a hideous beast. The spell will only be undone if he learns to love and be loved in return. The spirited and headstrong village girl Belle enters the castle after he imprisons her father Maurice. With the help of his enchanted servants including the matronly Mrs Potts, Belle begins to draw the cold hearted Beast out of his isolation.

All parents and staff were amazed by the complexity of the roles and songs the students had



learned. The students had worked incredibly hard to create such a professional performance and we were thrilled that we had two sold out shows. Beauty and the Beast was a real hit! A huge well done to everyone involved!

Mrs Patrick.



Year 7

As we reach the end of the school year, I want to take a moment to celebrate what has been a truly fantastic start for our Year 7 students here at John Spence. It has been an absolute joy to watch them grow in confidence, maturity and positivity since arriving in September. They have brought so much energy and enthusiasm to the school community, and I couldn't be prouder.

Our Year 7s have really thrown themselves into everything John Spence has to offer. They've truly embraced the school ethos and this is clear in the incredible number of positive points earned through Class Charts over the year. A very special mention must go to our Top 4 pupils: Isaac, Harry, Hannah and Mollie. All four have not only earned the highest number of points but have done so without receiving a single negative – a phenomenal achievement!

Huge congratulations to Mr Gibson and 7DGI, who have claimed the title of Top Form Class (again) with an incredible 7,944 points– something I know he will be over the moon about! This friendly competition has highlighted the importance of attendance, homework and behaviour, all of which our pupils have taken full responsibility for and shown high standards in throughout the year.

Year 7 currently holds the highest attendance record in the school – an incredible accomplishment! Nearly half the year group have kept their attendance above 96%, and several pupils haven't missed a single day. I hope they continue this amazing effort into Year 8 and beyond. It would be wonderful to see how many could make it all the way to 100% attendance by Year 11, as happened in my last year group. Punctuality has also been excellent – thank you to both pupils and parents for supporting this.

At the start of the year, I encouraged pupils to get involved in as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible and they certainly delivered! From academy sports teams and school clubs to the young carers NUFC coaching sessions and support groups, our students have shown real commitment and enthusiasm.

The Year 7s shone at the recent Sports Awards – a few of the highlights to mention go to: Lily and Oliver – *Most Improved in PE*, Jack – *Outstanding performance in Football Academy*, Charlie, Ella, and Emily – *Individual successes both in and out of school with a special congratulations to Ella who earned a spot in our hall of fame and finally Tyler and Ella who are the Y7 Sports Personalities of the Year*. I could go on and on – I'm proud of every single student who received nominations and awards.

Several Year 7 pupils were involved in the school's recent production of *Beauty and the Beast*, which received fantastic reviews from parents, staff and students alike. A special mention to Jack, who was a real standout in the cast – well done! I'd also like to thank the Year 7 pupils who helped with our recent Year 6 Transition Events. The feedback about their behaviour, maturity and caring nature was lovely to hear. They truly were role models.

Though the year is nearly over, we're not finished yet! There's still lots to look forward to, including: the reward and recognition events in the last week of term, the exciting Ford Castle trip and the much anticipated challenge walk! Photos and highlights from these events will be shared in the first Year 8 newsletter in September! I truly can't believe how quickly this year has flown. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to all parents and carers for your continued support – it really does make a difference. And of course, a massive thank you to the children – you make me laugh every single day, and it's an absolute privilege to be your Head of Year. I hope you have a fantastic summer break and I look forward to seeing you all again in Year 8

Mrs Brown
Head of Year 7

Year 8 have enjoyed another fantastic year at school with so many activities and opportunities for the cohort to enjoy and participate in. There have been so many highlights starting at the beginning of the school year with a day trip to Cragside Hall. The trip to Cragside provided a unique chance to explore the intersection of history, technology, and nature. Pupils were encouraged to develop curiosity and critical thinking through hands-on experiences with Cragside's innovative hydroelectric power systems and beautiful gardens. These visits were instrumental in broadening pupils' horizons, fostering a passion for discovery, and supporting their understanding of environmental sustainability. The day was a wonderful experience for all the children with a tour of the grounds in their form classes and the chance for them to develop their skills and knowledge of the environment and wildlife.

Mr Fullard took pupils to the Simonside Hills earlier this year. These were amazing days for the pupils to experience the great outdoors, learn new skills and make memories they would keep for the rest of their lives. The Simonside Hills, with their rugged landscapes, stunning views and rich local folklore, offered the pupils a unique opportunity to connect with nature and appreciate the beauty and challenges of the natural environment. They navigated varied terrain, developed teamwork and resilience and learned about the local ecosystem and geology first-hand. A massive thank you to Mr Fullard for his hard work in organising these trips and for continuing to support the children with his positive attitude, ensuring pupils have these valuable opportunities.

As a PE teacher, commitment to sport is an integral part of my ethos within the Year group. We have had some excellent team results in Rugby, Girls Futsal, Netball, Dance and Rounders but also some excellent individual performances throughout the athletics season with a number of Year 8s representing North Tyneside at Gateshead Stadium last month. At the recent Sports Celebration evening I was again amazed by the number of Year 8s that achieved awards. Sport is a major part of a child's development and I would love to see more pupils gain recognition in year 9 and I encourage parents and carers to promote sport during the summer holidays with a hope to see everyone in our year group attend at least one of the many activities our fantastic PE staff provide each year. Notable mentions go to; Lacy, Shelayne, Evie, Mya, and Charlie who remain in the schools 'Hall of Fame' due to their involvement in high level sport outside of school as well as Lily-May joining them this year. A massive well done to them and to all who received awards on the evening! Alongside celebrating achievements we were treated to a variety of dance performances on the evening. What was extremely pleasing to see was the high number of Year 8s involved in this and their confidence to perform in front of a massive audience.

Finally, a number of the year group were involved in the recent Beauty and The Beast production which received acclaim from parents, families and staff. Prominent roles in the show, Chip and Lefou were played superbly by Year 8s own Layla and Sadie and the show was complemented by 3 excellent Narrators from Year 8; Anna, Ella and Abigail. However, I must congratulate each and every pupil who played a role in the performance, they were fantastic and a credit to our school. To see them perform with such confidence and composure at such a young age gives me a massive sense of pride and admiration with staff blown away by the confidence they have shown, their ability to handle extremely tense and stressful situations, and more importantly the talent they possess.

It has been a privilege to support the year group through their 2nd year at John Spence. I look forward to seeing what exciting opportunities and moments that Year 9 brings as we tackle it together! Next year will bring the options process, as well as the introduction of a new cohort of pupils into the year group. I have no doubt that the year group will take this in their stride and lead by example in representing the school effectively. I do hope that each child, and their families enjoy a restful, but exciting summer break and I urge you all to spend time together, doing what you all like to do in your free time. I know me and the form tutors will do the same and we look forward to seeing you all back in September.

Mr Betts
Head of Year 8

Year 9

The Year 9 cohort really have had an awesome year and it has been a pleasure to see them mature into caring and considerate young adults. Across all classes I have been able to witness some excellent pieces of work, but seeing the pupils participate in additional opportunities has been a highlight. From the Duke of Edinburgh group, to the cast of the recent *Beauty and the Beast* show, from the sporting achievements celebrated at the recent Celebration of Success awards and Varsity Cup, to the amazing work the pupils have produced supporting mental health in school, it has been a pleasure to see. I am proud of each and every one of the pupils who go 'above and beyond' for the school community, improving their own skills and at the same time creating a better and happier place for others.

In September we welcome 21 young people from Monkseaton High School and the recent transition day was a huge success. It was a joy to see our pupils welcome the new students with open arms and make them feel apart of the year group, whilst making new friends along the way. The year group has now been given new form teachers for the remaining 2 years at school. The form classes have been carefully and meticulously selected to maximise the chances of each student being as successful as they possibly can.

I was overwhelmed by the huge success at the Sports Awards ceremony in which Year 9 claimed all 3 top awards on the night; The Bobby Graham Cup, awarded to George S for his amazing achievements in cricket, The Helen Blair cup, awarded to Harley P for his fantastic resilience in boxing and the Team of the Year cup, awarded to the Year 9 rugby team. To say I watched on with immense pride was an understatement.

I do hope everyone enjoys a restful and fun filled summer break and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September as Year 10 pupils.

Mr Burnip
Head of Year 9

Year 10

As we reach the end of what must have been the warmest summer term for many years, it's been wonderful to see Year 10 students making the most of every opportunity on offer. One of the standout moments this term was the Bazaar Mental Health and Wellbeing event, which brought the whole school community together to explore important topics surrounding self-care, resilience, and support. Year 10 students engaged with a range of activities and resources aimed at promoting positive mental health – a timely reminder of the importance of looking after ourselves and one another.

A major milestone for Year 10 came with Work Experience Week in May, where students stepped outside the classroom to gain a valuable glimpse into the world of work. From offices to workshops, primary schools to retail, students embraced the chance to explore different careers, build confidence, and develop key workplace skills. The feedback from employers has been overwhelmingly positive – a testament to the enthusiasm and professionalism shown by our young people. Well done, Year 10!

Special congratulations go to 10FWL, who have, on two occasions, completed *all* SPARX tasks; been 100% present and not picked up a single negative ClassChart point – a brilliant demonstration of commitment and consistency. 10DDO also deserve a big shout-out for regularly topping the attendance leader board. Keep up the great work!

We must also celebrate the incredible efforts of the cast and backstage crew of this year's school production, *Beauty and the Beast*. It was fantastic to see Dylan H and Maggie M in leading roles with back up, behind the scenes, from the likes of Frankie H and Ellie L showcasing creativity, teamwork, and dedication. New technological wizardry added to the spectacle to create a truly magical performance and a highlight of the school year.

Continued overleaf.

YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 10

As we move into the final stretch of the academic year, things are ramping up: coursework submissions have begun; Geography field trips have just started and a dedicated group are preparing for their challenging 3-day Silver Duke of Edinburgh assessed expedition - a chance to apply their classroom learning in real-world settings. It's a busy time, but an exciting one too. Finally, we hope everyone enjoys a restful and well-earned summer break, recharging for what will be an important and rewarding Year 11 in September. See you all then, refreshed and ready!

Mr Crowe
Head of Year 10

Year 11



Good luck and well done to Year 11.

Wishing you all the best in the future!

Mrs Wyllie

REFUGEE PICNIC



Some of our year 7 students really enjoyed themselves at the Refugee Picnic at Segedunum Roman Fort in Wallsend as part of Refugee Week!

They played football with others they didn't know, shared food with students from other schools and enjoyed the views from the top of the tower.

It was wonderful to see Diana

meet people she knew and join in with familiar songs in Persian.

Even Layton commented that "I'm glad I came" (after nearly changing his mind at break) and Oliver made some lovely crafts to take home!

Ms Haswell and Mrs Bell



TRANSITION

What a fabulous impression year 6 have made during their two transition days. They exceeded expectations and demonstrated the ethos of our school to be skilled, resilience and considerate.

Year 6 took part in English, Technology, PE, History, Science and Music lessons over their two day transition.

The feedback from our teachers was incredibly positive about all groups. I am very much looking forward to being their head of year in September.

Well done Year 6!

Mrs Wyllie and Mrs Murray



YOUNG CARERS CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION



I've been a young carer for five years. It was really hard at first. It was Covid when my sister was born and I wasn't allowed to see her for at least six months. When she came home in November, everything felt different. I wasn't used to all the baby stuff. But I managed to get used to it. She was born premature. The reason why she was born early was because my mum's placenta erupted. Luckily, I managed to save her life by calling 999. My mum was so proud of me for what I had done. When my mum came home after two weeks, she looked really ill. I wanted to cry because I hated seeing my mum look ill. Everyday while I was at school, she would go visit her. I felt

jealous. But in November, I came home from school and my sister was laying in my mum's arms. I kept on blinking. I couldn't believe it. Tears of joy ran down my face. As she grew older, she had oxygen and a feeding peg. I managed to deal with it. And recently, I've had a new sister.

YEAR 8 MATHS CHALLENGE

The 8X1 and 8Y1 Maths classes have recently received their results for the UKMT Junior 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 difficult problems.

A big congratulations to Connor G and Heidi C for achieving a Silver Certificate and a huge well done to Logan C, Nathan M, Grace F, Harry H, Layton L-W, Lily-May C, Riley W and Anna M who were awarded a Bronze Certificate. Well done to all of those who took part as it took a lot of resilience to even attempt the challenge!



Spence Staff - 3 Year 11 2025 - 2

It was a glorious summer's evening on the Astro as this year's leavers locked horns for the final time with the staff team. Both sides looked confident and lined up in modern 3.4.3 systems designed to press, harry and contain the respective opposition. Pressing, harrying and containing haven't necessarily been strengths of the older lads in recent years but everyone was eager to look cool and give it a go.

The opening exchanges were shaded by the Year 11 team. Their approach was front-footed and assertive. Composure on the ball was evident and passing was crisp and sharp. Lindsay and Hildreth were confident in the engine room of midfield and the staff team struggled to impose themselves.

Gradually, the elder statesmen managed to establish a foothold in the game as Alex Downey and James Redpath in the middle began to connect. This then allowed Burnip and Betts to forage on the flanks and the team as a whole were able to play higher up the pitch.

So, of course, this is when the Year 11 team scored. It was a very direct move as a splendid long through ball left the staff back three struggling. Geoghegan scampered into the left hand channel and finished smartly past Waterston in the staff goal.

The staff showed great resolve though and heads didn't drop. Urged on by what seemed like another typically huge crowd, more and more pressure was put onto the younger team. They started to fray a bit and resorted to hauling Gibson to the turf after a couple of neat pirouettes escaped the flailing legs of his markers.

A goal looked likely and it soon came - entertainingly after a steady period of pressing, harrying and containment. Betts did all of the donkey work and badgered away at the student back line. He nicked the ball and, a few ricochets later, found Gibson in space who finished smoothly past Gault to equalise. Cue delirium on the side-lines.

Presentable chances were spurned at either end whilst important last ditch challenges limited offensive forays. Craig Downey, Brierley and Pilkington were robust in the tackle and it was evident that both sides were trying hard to find men, maintain possession and keep the ball in play. Under the broiling sun, with the chanting hordes on the touchline, this sometimes proved rather more difficult to execute. A curiously card happy official provided an amusing sub plot as several found themselves walking the disciplinary tightrope for what seemed like relatively minor infractions. New FIFA directives were clearly being applied regarding physical contact.

Then a moment of genuine quality as Geoghegan, threatening throughout, danced past the defender and arrowed in on goal. Everyone waited for the cross but instead this flamboyant character zipped a rising drive into the near post and wheeled away in celebration to the disbelief of those present. It was a great goal and he's assured the doubters that he meant it. Two one at half time; it looked promising for the students.

Encouragement was delivered to the staff team and the resolve for that extra bit of impetus was clearly there from the off. A flurry of corners created by exciting play had the younger team creaking as they became reliant on counter attacks that were largely extinguished by Brierley and a combative Alex White. The latter took a heavy challenge from an excitable opponent but bounced up and brushed it off. Psychologically, the staff had the edge and another corner routine bore fruit when Brierley's header was palmed away by Gault only for Craig Downey to gleefully slam home the rebound at the back post. Game on.

A Brierley free kick on the edge of the box was fingertipped around the post by Gault whilst both Alex Downey and Burnip came close. Cook was a real menace up front for Year 11 and he impressed with both his awareness and hold up play. At this stage, anyone could have won it.

Continued overleaf.

NO GO JOE AS STAFF HAVE THE LAST LAUGH

But it was the staff who scored the all important fifth. It came after a wonderful slaloming run from Alex Downey that eventually resulted in Betts being found in space. He slung over yet another accurate cross and, for once, Gibson escaped the attentions of Hildreth. A firm header was dispatched back across Gault and into the net for what would surely be the winner.

It was never going to be that straightforward as Year 11 continued to push. Rafferty and Hunter probed and pestered Pilkington and Waterston made some more smart stops. Nobody could do anything about a splendid effort from Geoghegan who controlled a dipping and swerving effort from the edge of the box that looked like a certain equaliser. It crunched against the post and everyone breathed again.

That was how it finished after another enthralling and closely contested affair. The Year 11 team conducted themselves pretty well with Geoghegan and Cook to the fore. Their management team of Taylor, Reid and Woolley were sharply dressed and insightful in their tactics. But the staff were delighted with the victory as it was the first one for a while. As we get older, it obviously gets more difficult so the mood was very positive after the final whistle. The congratulations of the crowd were meted out to both teams and we were very appreciative of the support. It was a lovely way to spend the late afternoon.



Spence Staff: Waterston; Pilkington, Downey (C), Brierley; White, Redpath, Patterson, Downey (A); Burnip, Betts, Gibson.

Year 11: Gault; Johnson, Dunning, Curry; Hunter, Hildreth, Lindsay, Dickson; Geoghegan, Crichton, Cook. Scott, Orton, Rafferty.

TRIPS

UK CHINA AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME



Our recent trip to China was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, an unforgettable experience that we will treasure forever.

It was an honour to be selected to represent our school and country, and the journey from applying to actually being there made it all the more rewarding. We were chosen through a competitive process that began with a written application. From there, a shortlist of candidates was selected, and we had to create and present a presentation explaining why we were the best students to go on this incredible trip. It was a proud moment for each of us when we found out we'd been selected. Before the trip, we were filled with excitement - curious about what it would be like, eager to meet new

people, and ready to immerse ourselves in a new culture. We couldn't wait to try the food, visit schools, and explore the lifestyle in China.

Each day was packed with new adventures. We visited local schools where we interacted with Chinese students, attended classes, and shared our different cultures. We tried delicious traditional food, joined in activities like calligraphy, painting and even played basketball with the students. Every day was full of learning and laughter. Some



of the highlights included sightseeing trips to historical landmarks, tasting authentic Chinese dishes (some we had never even heard of before!) and most of all, building friendships with the local students. The school we visited was incredibly welcoming, making us feel right at home from the moment we arrived. The hospitality and kindness shown to us was amazing. What surprised us most was how much we had in common despite living in different parts of the world. While there were many differences in lifestyle, food and culture, we



found joy in sharing these differences and learning from each other. It was fascinating to compare school life, family routines and daily habits - and it helped us appreciate both their way of life and our own.

Sophie and Abigail
Year 10



TRIPS

GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORD



The day began with our arrival at Commercial Road, a residential street in central Byker. This was the location we were using as our “near Quayside” case study for our human fieldwork enquiry, does housing quality increase the further you go from the Quayside?

Students assessed litter concentrations, noise, pollution and vandalism, roof quality and parking accessibility. Generally considered to be the lowest quality residence, we recorded our results and returned to the coach. Minutes later, we had arrived at the Quayside, a commercial area on the banks of the River Tyne. This was our “at Quayside” case study for the previously mentioned human fieldwork enquiry.

The data collected and assessed was identical to that gathered at Byker, with differing results. This was considered to be certainly higher quality than Byker, partly due to the urban regeneration project that had taken place there. We continued onto Graham Park Road, a residential area in southern Gosforth. This was our “far from Quayside” case study location. Again, the same enquiry and the same assessments. This was generally considered the highest quality area, while also being the most expensive and reserved for the bourgeois upper classes.

Our day finished by arriving on the shores of the North Sea at Whitley Bay’s famous Longsands Beach. Here, we collated data in many forms including field sketches, beach profiles, constructive and destructive wave counts and cost benefit analyses.

These were collected and analysed for our physical fieldwork enquiry, does Longsands need sea defences? While these results are still believed to be inconclusive, they seem at a glance to prove the necessity for these sea defences.

Sean A
10FWL



TRIPS

KIRKLEY HALL

A group of year 10 students spent the day recently at Kirkley Hall College to explore careers in Horticulture, Equine studies, veterinary nursing and farming!

The pupils had a great day, getting really stuck in to worming and herding sheep, practicing CPR ON model dogs, and naming the various bones of a horse anatomy,

The college offers a coach from North Shields to their college in Ponteland and is a great option for anyone wanting to pursue a career in outdoor activities.



CLUBS

STEM

STEM club returned this term after its annual hiatus during Y11 exam time. This term we've investigated the viscosity of various shampoos- which made U13 smell amazing! We also collected pond and sea water samples and investigated what was living inside them. This allowed students to use microscopes to view some incredible underwater life including microscopic worms, snails and various larvae.

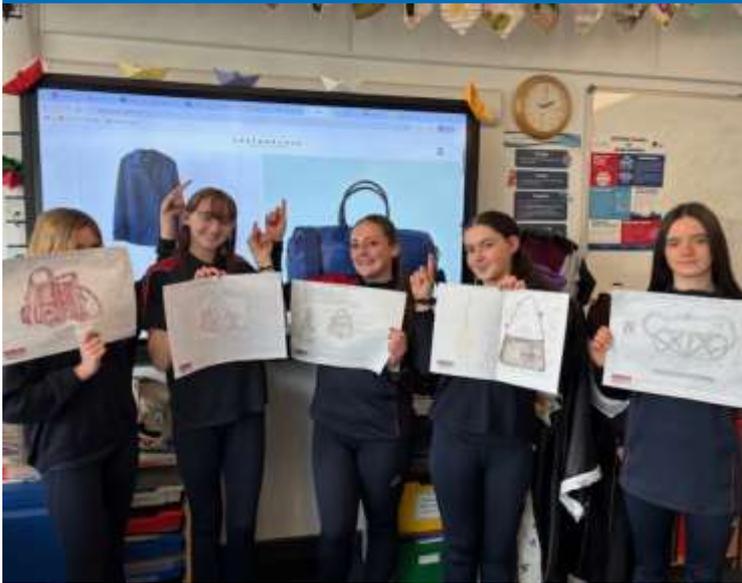
We have also made ice cream this term and also had a go at making sparkly lava lamps which the students then took home (sorry if messy!). The most exciting STEM event this term was definitely our return to Chopwell Woods for the survival day. Ran by one of our John Spence alumni, this hands on activity day saw our students learn about foraging for woodland food and how to avoid eating toxic plants and mushrooms! We also built some dens which were amazing - some groups even created seating areas inside theirs! We also investigated biodiversity in the area looking for minibeasts and we even played a game of hide and seek using our compasses to learn orienteering.

As always, our students had a great go at everything and made us proud. Any students who are interested in science and technology are welcome to join STEM club which runs 3pm until 4pm in U13. Ask Mrs Owens for details.



YEAR 10 TEXTILES

HANDBAGS AT THE READY!



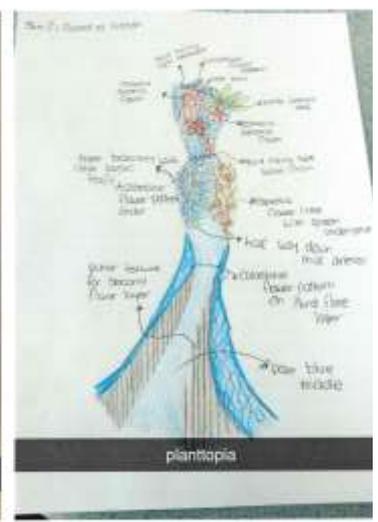
Year 10 D&T Textiles students have been working with Sally Bradford, a designer who designs bags for companies including Marks and Spencer, Next and Oliver Bonas.

We had a great Zoom meeting to set the briefs and away they went! Students had to start by making a Moodboard on a current trend of their choice; once their inspiration was flowing, they had to decide on their target customer and write a specification to fit their vision. Initial designs were drawn and Sally joined us for another Zoom meeting to give some industry feedback. The final designs with measurements and full detail have been sent for Sally's approval. One of these bags will be made into a prototype and we can't wait to find out which one!

PLANTOPIA

Last Newsletter you will have seen the fantastic photos from Belsay Hall where our year 9 and year 10 D&T students were gathering inspiration from the nature and grounds of the hall. We completed our sketches and designed outfits based on the photos and bark rubbings and all sorts of information!

Year 10 Textiles students then completed their designs and asked AI to create the outfits, we are pretty pleased with the results!



LAUNCH OF OUR OWN COMBINED CADET FORCE

A Life-Changing Opportunity Begins September 2025

Throughout this half-term, we've been dropping hints about an exciting new chapter for John Spence — and we're now thrilled to officially announce the **launch of our very own Combined Cadet Force (CCF)**, starting in the **2025–26 academic year**.

This initiative has been **three years in the making**, and we are proud to be in a position to finally bring it to life. With the support of the **British Army**, the CCF will provide a **transformational opportunity** for our students — one that focuses on developing **leadership, resilience, teamwork, and life skills** that will serve them well beyond the classroom.

Currently, **five members of staff** are undergoing intensive

training to lead the unit, working alongside the staff to ensure our cadets receive a high-quality, structured, and meaningful experience. The team recently returned from a **five-day residential at Otterburn**, where they took part in a superb cadet training experience and came back energised, inspired, and eager to get started.

“The staff returned buzzing with excitement and a real sense of pride. This will be a powerful addition to our school community,” said Mr Pilkington.

As we wrap up a busy academic year, preparations are already underway for September. We are now looking to **recruit a School Staff Instructor (SSI)** for a two-day post starting in the autumn term. This will be a key role in supporting the smooth and professional delivery of our cadet

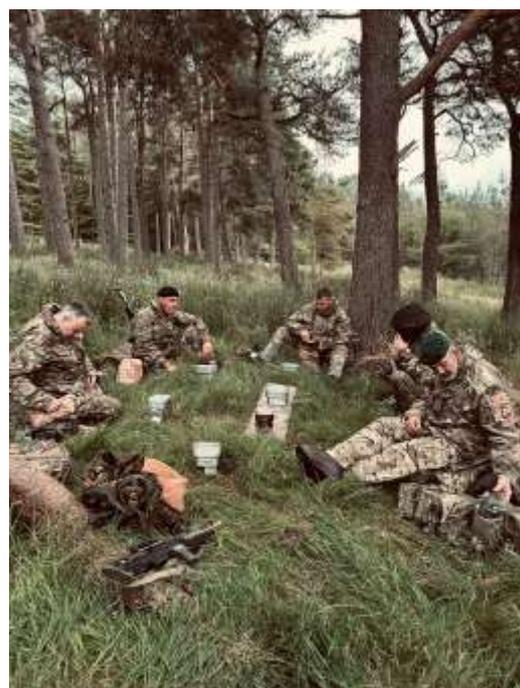
programme. We have also adopted the cap badge and will proudly represent the **Northumberland Fusiliers**.

Our goal is to **recruit 30 cadets** to take part in weekly **parade nights every Monday from 3pm to 5pm**. These sessions will blend military-themed training with personal development opportunities that promote responsibility, discipline, and confidence.

We're proud to be **the only school in North Tyneside** currently offering this opportunity — and we can't wait to get started.

For more information about the cadet programme please contact **Mr Pilkington** in school.

Adventure. Leadership. Challenge.
The John Spence CCF is coming — September 2025.



BIZARRE 2025



On **Wednesday 7th May 2025**, we proudly hosted our second **Bizarre** event — a celebration of physical, social, and mental wellbeing, all in support of a fantastic local mental health charity working tirelessly to support young people, uS Active.

The evening was a vibrant showcase of community spirit and opportunity. Over **15 local providers** attended, each offering insights and experiences around how they support youth wellbeing. From fitness and creative arts to mental health services and youth engagement activities, there was something for everyone. Alongside these, **five professional business stallholders** offered wellbeing products, adding an extra layer of value to the evening.

The event wouldn't have been complete without our much-loved **fun stalls** — including tombola, raffle, “adopt-a-toy,” and lucky dip — which brought excitement and helped raise vital funds for our chosen charity.

Special thanks go to **Bob, our local ice cream man**, who served up frozen treats with a smile, and to **Miss Johnson and the amazing team from Yr10** who provided free refreshments for all attendees throughout the evening.

Entertainment was in full swing too, with brilliant performances from the **North Tyneside Music Hub**, our talented **Dance Academy**, and an exciting teaser of the **summer production – Beauty and the Beast**.

The event was incredibly well-attended, and we received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both stallholders and families.



Thanks to everyone's generosity and support, we proudly raised **over £400** for our local charity, who were incredibly grateful to receive the donation.

Bizarre is a biannual event, and we're already looking forward to its return in **2027** — promising to be even bigger and better!



SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY



A Day of Welcome – Strengthening Our School of Sanctuary Commitment

Through our ongoing partnership with *Walking With North Tyneside* — a fantastic charity that offers a wide range of services and activities to help individuals feel safe, welcome and part of the community — we were proud to once again open our doors for a special **Day of Welcome**. As part of our continued commitment to the **School of Sanctuary** initiative, **Friday 13th June** marked a truly heart-warming day at John Spence. We were joined by several of the charity’s clients, who were invited to experience life inside our school. Guided by our superb **Young**

Leaders, guests took part in various lessons, including **numeracy, literacy, food technology**, and a thought-provoking session sharing **personal stories and countries of origin**.

The day was rich with learning, mutual respect, and cultural exchange. A highlight was the **magnificent buffet lunch**, lovingly prepared by the group, which created the perfect setting for conversation, connection, and plenty of shared laughter. The only downside was how quickly the day flew by. After an inspiring afternoon, we escorted our guests back to their base and said a warm and heartfelt goodbye — ending what had been a moving and meaningful experience for all involved.

Celebrating Refugee Week – Community, Connection, and Culture

In the week that followed, we marked **Refugee Week** with a series of activities designed to promote inclusion, empathy, and solidarity.

A group of our pupils attended the **North East Museums’ “Picnic in the Park”** event at **Segedunum**, where they joined like-minded students and local refugees in an afternoon of food, fun, and cultural sharing. Live entertainment and conversation made for a vibrant atmosphere and lasting memories. We also

organised a **joint bike ride**, starting from the Walking With Centre and weaving along a scenic **six-mile route** around Tynemouth, returning to John Spence. With **over 20 riders**, the journey was full of teamwork, encouragement, and plenty of photo-worthy moments. Despite the warm weather, our pupils looked after one another brilliantly — stopping for water breaks and cheering each other on. The afternoon ended with a warm welcome back at school, where cold drinks and **home-cooked treats** were ready and waiting. What made this event even more special was knowing that some of the bikes used by the refugee riders had been **donated by our school community** just a year earlier — a true full-circle moment of generosity and inclusion.



Looking Ahead

We are incredibly proud of our strong relationship with *Walking With* and the work we do together to create meaningful, supportive experiences for everyone involved. Being a **School of Sanctuary** is more than a title — it’s a commitment to action, empathy, and

continuous growth. We look forward to **expanding this programme** in the new academic year and continuing to build a school where **everyone feels safe, seen, and supported**.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS SPORTS WEEK



This year's **National School Sports Week** took place from **Monday 16th to Friday 20th June**, and what a phenomenal week it was! Themed around **empathy**, the week aimed to highlight the importance of understanding others through sport – celebrating teamwork, inclusion, leadership, and personal growth.

We launched the week with a powerful **Key Stage 3 assembly** on Monday morning, introducing empathy not just as a concept, but as a lived experience. Using personal stories and sporting examples, we encouraged students to reflect on how empathy can be demonstrated on and off the field. The assembly was incredibly well received and set the tone for a meaningful and active week ahead.

Across the week, we hosted **over 14 different sporting activities** involving both our own students and pupils from local feeder schools. The events offered opportunities for both **competition and leadership**, with many of our students

stepping into leadership roles to support younger participants. It was a true team effort led by the **PE department**, supported by a wide range of staff and student volunteers.

One of the standout moments was undoubtedly the **annual Varsity Cup**, part of the **PELE Trust's inter-school competition** between **Ponteland High School, Duchess's Community High School**, and our very own **John Spence Community High School**. Held on **Wednesday 18th June**, this incredible event brought together **450 players**, representing **36 teams across 12 different events**, all taking place across our school's superb sporting facilities.

The competition was fierce yet friendly, and at the end of the day, the final points table reflected just how close the contest had been — with only **three points separating first and second place**. In a true display of sportsmanship and equality, **John Spence and Ponteland** finished on equal points and were named **joint winners of the Varsity Cup 2025**. A shared victory that perfectly captured the spirit of empathy and unity the week was all about.

We closed the week with a **final Key Stage 3 assembly**, where we celebrated all the achievements, moments of kindness, and acts of leadership that had taken place. Students and staff shared reflections, highlights, and examples of empathy in action, reinforcing the lasting impact of the week's message.



National School Sports Week 2025 was yet another **fantastic success**, thanks to the dedication of the PE department, the energy of our pupils, and the support of our wider community. It was a week of celebration, competition, compassion, and connection — and one we will remember for years to come.

SPORTS CELEBRATION EVENING

On **Monday 7th July**, we proudly hosted our **annual Sports Celebration Evening** — a truly special occasion dedicated to honouring the **achievement, commitment, and passion** of our young people in sport.

Held in a **full-capacity Sports Hall**, the evening welcomed **over 850 attendees**, creating an electric atmosphere of celebration, pride, and community. The event was a fantastic blend of **performance, reflection, gratitude**, and of course, **awards** — recognising not only sporting excellence but also participation, leadership, and personal growth.

This year, we were delighted to be joined by **two inspirational presenters**:

- **Lucy Welsh**, a former **John Spence student**, returned to co-present alongside Mr Pilkington. Lucy, now studying at **Northumbria University** while supporting **grassroots football with Heaton Hawks**, brought enthusiasm and positivity to the evening. Her journey continues to inspire our pupils and her presence was a proud reminder of where a John Spence education can lead.
- **Adam Ball**, a remarkable young man completing an extraordinary challenge: to **swim all 13 publicly accessible lakes in the Lake District** — a total of **44 miles**. What makes Adam's story even more inspiring is that he lives with **cystic fibrosis** and was once given a life expectancy of 30 years. Now, at 30, he is defying the odds and raising awareness through resilience and determination. His message of courage and perseverance added a powerful dimension to the evening.

The evening flowed seamlessly with a vibrant **mix of music, performance**, and a crescendo of awards that celebrated everything from team spirit and dedication to elite performance. As always, the highlight was seeing our students beam with pride as they stepped onto the stage to receive their awards — each one thoroughly deserved.

A huge **congratulations to all of our award winners**, and indeed to every student who participated in sport this year. Your efforts, whether on the pitch, in the pool, on the track or behind the scenes, are what make our sporting community so strong and special.

It was truly a **fantastic night**, and we're already looking forward to what promises to be an even bigger celebration in **2026**.



INSPIRING DIGITAL ENTERPRISE AWARD

In Year 9 Computing lessons, students are working towards the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA). This nationally recognised programme allows students to show their digital and enterprise skills by completing online modules. They can progress through three levels—bronze, silver, and gold—similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The iDEA Award is highly valued by both employers and universities, making it a brilliant addition to any student's CV or personal statement.

A big congratulations to the students named below who have already achieved their silver or bronze awards:



Silver Award
Kaiden B
Bronze Award
Isa H
Balian H
Lena Y
Felix B
Abigail R



These students have gone above and beyond, completing extra badges independently in their own time. Their commitment to developing digital skills outside the classroom shows fantastic initiative and a real enthusiasm for learning. They are now working towards their silver and gold awards.

We're incredibly proud of their achievements—and encourage all Year 9 pupils to keep going, challenge themselves, and take full advantage of this fantastic opportunity to build skills that will support their future success.



FAST FORWARD TO FLUENCY



During the Autumn and Winter terms this academic year, John Spence was one of 21 schools in the North East to take part in a trial for a new Reading Fluency intervention. This was a completely new type of intervention that hadn't been tried before and was an exciting opportunity for us.

Without a suitable level of reading fluency, students can struggle to progress in their reading comprehension and this can impact not only on their reading for English, but also for all the subjects across the curriculum. Improving reading fluency is therefore key to academic success for a student, but also improved fluency has a strong correlation with improved confidence for the student.

Reading fluency is not just about speed and how many words a student can read correctly over a period of time, it also involves expression, accuracy, rhythm and smoothness. All of these things work together when we read aloud to impart meaning to what we are saying and make us understood by others.

The reading fluency intervention worked by making sure students were reading aloud repeatedly, and reading sentence and phrases with the correct intonation to impart meaning. It was fully resourced with a compendium of unique texts about interesting subjects varying from *The Loch Ness Monster* to *Blackbeard the Pirate*. All the texts were interesting, informative and fun.

14 of our current Year 7 students were chosen to be part of this intervention trial over a 12-week period, where they were given a 25-minute intervention in form time twice a week, totalling 24 sessions over the time period. In addition to this, the students were assessed with regular WCPM tests (Words correct per minute).

At the end of the trial period, The Shotton Hall Research School (who were running the project) evaluated all the data from the 410 pupils who were part of the research project. The **results were overwhelmingly positive** in the impact that the intervention had had on the pupils, and showed the following:

- WCPM increased in the sample group by 19.7 words (a **19.5% improvement**) as compared with just 5.8% improvement for students not receiving the intervention.
- Scores on expression, accuracy and rhythm increased by **35.4%** as compared with just 6% for students not receiving the intervention.

Not only were these figures an impressive result, but **pupils at John Spence also outperformed** the average improvement seen across **all the other schools in the trial**. **Well done to our students!**

The Intervention proved so successful that it was rolled out to other students in year 7 and next academic year even more students will be able to benefit from it.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

At John Spence Community High School registration starts at 8.35am every day. Pupils who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and picking up important messages. Pupils who miss the start of a lesson are disadvantaged as they miss recap of prior learning and instructions for that lesson. There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. Lost learning time due to lateness is obviously something that we want to avoid.

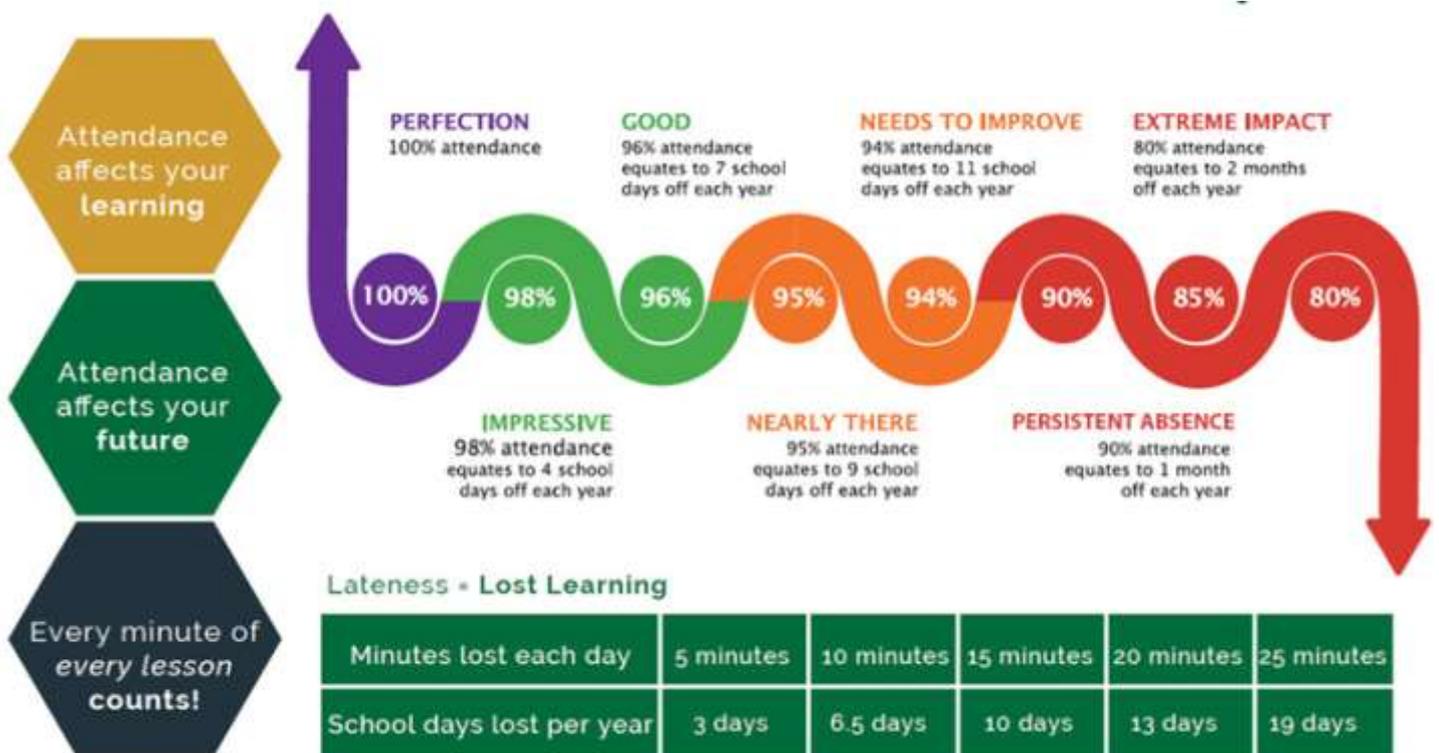
**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

- 5 minutes late each day means 3 missed days of school in a year
- 15 mins late each day means 10 missed days of school in a year
- 20 mins late each day means 13 missed days of school in a year

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others. In order for parents to be informed of their child's lateness to school, we will be sending out a daily message to parents to inform them of late arrivals.

We are required to monitor pupil punctuality and attendance. Lateness (after the registers close which is 9.05am) is classified as an unauthorised absence, and therefore ten periods of lateness will result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when a pupil is unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when your child will arrive. If you have any concerns regarding punctuality, please contact your child's Head of Year or the Attendance team.



ONLINE SAFETY INFO FOR PARENTS

As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping students safe and informed online, we recently carried out a short survey with them to find out what apps they're using most often.

Unsurprisingly, some familiar names topped the list – **TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, YouTube** and streaming services like **Netflix and Disney+**. Many students are also regularly using **Instagram, online gaming platforms** and increasingly, **AI tools like ChatGPT**.

While these platforms can offer creativity, connection and learning opportunities, it's important to be aware that many of them come with age ratings for a reason. These ratings aren't just guidelines – they're designed to protect young people from content or contact that may be inappropriate, overwhelming or even unsafe.

SO, WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Here are just a few of the common concerns linked to underage or unsupervised use of popular apps:

- **Inappropriate content:** Even 'child-friendly' apps like YouTube Kids or Roblox can expose children to harmful language, violence or distressing content.
- **Online strangers:** Apps with messaging features, like Snapchat, Discord or Instagram can lead to contact from unknown users – including those with harmful intentions.
- **Pressure to share:** Social platforms often encourage likes, streaks, and photo-sharing, which can make young people feel pressured to act or share in ways that don't feel right to them.
- **In-app purchases:** Games and shopping apps can easily lead to unintended spending or promotion of unhealthy habits.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

We know that parenting in the digital age isn't always easy. But you're not alone.

Here's how you can support your child this summer:

- **Check the age ratings** of apps and talk together about what they use and why.
- **Use privacy settings** and parental controls where available.
- **Keep communication open** – if something worries your child, you want them to feel safe telling you.

If you ever find yourself unsure how to start conversations at home about the online world, we highly recommend the excellent "**Ask the Awkward**" video series and resources from CEOP Education. It's designed to help parents tackle tricky topics with confidence, and it's well worth a look: www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/ask-the-awkward

If something **doesn't feel right** – whether it's online grooming, inappropriate messages, or worrying content – there are places to turn:

- **CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection):** You can report serious online concerns or get advice directly at www.ceop.police.uk
- **Childline:** Offers free, confidential support for children and young people 24/7. Call 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

From September, we'll be sending out regular updates based on our knowledge of what our students are doing online. Both parents/carers and students will receive practical information to help everyone navigate the online world confidently and safely. These updates will sit alongside the online safety curriculum delivered in Computing lessons, ensuring all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to make smart, informed choices in the digital age.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Organisation	Contact via...
CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)	111
PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide)	0800 068 4141
Childline	0800 1111
SHOUT (Free confidential text support 24/7)	Text SHOUT to 85258
Kooth (Free confidential online counselling)	www.kooth.com
NSPCC (Domestic violence and abuse)	01642 856 400

HELPFUL APPS



[Self-help App for the Mind \(SAM\)](#)

