



APRIL 2026

ASHTON'S TREE OF HOPE

Welcome to the second edition of our 2025/2026 newsletter.

It's been another great term at John Spence 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 GCSE exams; it is always a daunting time, but we will provide them with all of 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 12 weeks!

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher



Help Us Grow Ashton's Tree of Hope!

Ashton's Tuesday Club at John Spence Community High School has been given a truly special gift - a sapling grown from the iconic Sycamore Gap tree. This remarkable symbol of strength and resilience will soon take root in our school garden, where it will become "Ashton's Tree of Hope."

This tree is being planted in loving memory of Ashton Clothier, a dedicated PE teacher and a valued volunteer at the Tuesday Club. Ashton brought energy, kindness, and encouragement to so many young people, and her impact continues to be felt every day.

We want to create a beautiful, peaceful space around the tree - somewhere students and members of the community can reflect, feel supported, and be inspired. A place that truly reflects Ashton's spirit of care and positivity.

To make this happen, we are aiming to raise £350. The funds will go towards:

- Preparing and landscaping the garden area
- Plants, flowers, and seating to create a welcoming environment
- Memorial plaque
- Materials to help maintain the space for years to come

Every donation, no matter the size, will help us turn this meaningful project into a lasting tribute.

By contributing, you're not just helping plant a tree - you're helping grow a space filled with hope, remembrance, and community.

Please support us in creating Ashton's Tree of Hope.

<https://tinyurl.com/AshtonsTreeofHope>

Year 7

Year 7 are now approaching their third term at John Spence. I asked a selection of Year 7 students for feedback as to how they have found this year so far and in particular their transition to High School from Primary.



Geordie H 7KBL

When I first came I was very nervous and scared. I have settled in really well because of the comfort of the teachers in the school, because of this I feel welcomed and part of the school community. My favourite thing about the school is my form class and form teacher.

Violet A 7LPA

I was excited and nervous to start at John Spence. I was able to settle really well through making new friends quickly and learning more about the school. I feel great about school now because of my friends and I feel really used to it by now. I love seeing my friends and all of the extra curricular activities, especially the academy.



Maisie R 7KBL

I felt nervous to begin with because my friends were going to a different school. I have really enjoyed making new friends who are amazing! I love the food here and all of the practical lessons that we do. They are the best part!

Molly J 7KBL

I felt nervous because a lot of my friends were going to a different school. I settled in really quickly here by making new friends. I feel really happy here, I have lots of new friends and I love the food! My favourite things about John Spence are my friends, lunch, Technology, PE and all of the opportunities we are given to try new things.



Congratulations to both Year 7 'Strength through challenge groups' who have taken to their outdoor expeditions with resilience and confidence. They have been hill walking in Simonside, rock climbing and surfing!

The year group has just completed their recent tests and it was clear that the majority of students took these in their stride. I can not emphasize how important revision and preparation are in the lead up to assessments.

As we head into the Summer Term, Year 7 has a lot to look forward to and a lot to be proud of. Including our trip to Ford Castle in July (more detailed information to follow).

Thank you for all of your ongoing support this year. I hope you all have a lovely Easter break.

Mrs Wyllie
Head of Year 7



As the spring term closes, there is no better way for it to end than with students having the opportunity to do some hillwalking in the great outdoors. Mr Fullard has been taking groups of Year 8 pupils to the Simonside Hills, providing them with an unforgettable experience in the stunning Northumberland national park. These have been truly special days where pupils have had the opportunity to learn new skills, build resilience, and create lasting memories with their form class and form tutor.

The rugged landscapes, stunning views, and rich local folklore of the Simonside Hills has offered a unique setting for pupils to connect with nature. Throughout the trip, they navigated varied terrain, developed teamwork, and gained first-hand knowledge of the local ecosystem and geology.

In addition to this, Mr Fullard has also run the 'Strength through Challenge' programme with a number of year 8 pupils. This consisted of a series of classroom-based sessions focused on communication and problem-solving skills, building resilience and confidence. These were supplemented with some challenging but fun physical activities such as rock climbing and surfing.

A huge thank you to Mr Fullard for his hard work in organising these trips and for his continued enthusiasm and support. His positive attitude ensures our pupils benefit from such valuable opportunities. As a geography teacher, I fully support using outdoor experiences for young people as a key part of their education and personal development.

We continue to celebrate pupil success through our Class Charts points system. A special mention goes to 8DGI, our current champion, with 8JWE close behind—both having achieved an incredible total of over 5,000 merits. 8DGI is also leading the way with an outstanding attendance figure of 96.1% so far this year—an excellent achievement – Well done Mr Gibson and 8DGI!

Attendance remains a key focus. While we have seen a slight dip in Year 8 attendance recently, we are working hard to improve this before the end of the academic year. A range of celebration, incentives and rewards continue in weekly assemblies to encourage strong attendance.

Our most recent initiative, the *Spence Attendance Streaks*, rewards pupils who maintain 100% attendance over the 28-day period of this last half term. I am delighted to share that:

- 13 students currently have 100% attendance for the entire year—an exceptional accomplishment.
- 131 pupils are on track to complete the 28-day attendance streak challenge and will receive a well-earned treat on the last day of term.

Please note that the Year 8 Parents' Evening is scheduled for **15th June**, it would be lovely to see as many of you as possible. Further details will be shared closer to the time.

Finally, thank you, as always, for your continued support, it really does make all the difference, working together to get the best for your child. I hope you all have a well-earned rest over the holidays and I look forward to seeing your children back after Easter, for the final leg of Year 8

Mrs Brown
Head of Year 8

Year 9

Year 9 Newsletter Update – Spring Term

It has been another busy and productive time for Year 9 as they reach the halfway point in their journey through John Spence Community High School.

A wide range of opportunities and experiences continue to be provided. Thanks to the hard work of Mrs Winder, on Thursday 5th February, all Year 9 students visited the NHS Manufacturing Plant in Seaton Delaval. This trip proved to be a fantastic cornerstone of our school's careers programme, offering students a rare behind-the-scenes insight into how the NHS operates beyond the clinical environment. The focus on the industrial and logistical elements of healthcare gave students a broader understanding of the sector. Staff at the plant were highly complimentary of Year 9's maturity and enthusiasm, noting how engaged they were throughout the visit. It was clear that students gained valuable insights, helping them to make more informed decisions about their future career pathways.

In the lead-up to Options Day on 16th March, form tutors delivered a series of sessions designed to support students in making informed choices. This preparation clearly paid off, as it was fantastic to see so many families attend on the day. Students arrived at their meetings well-prepared, with clear ideas about their subject choices. Senior Leadership colleagues commented positively on the quality of conversations they had with both students and parents. From my perspective, this process has significantly supported the development of maturity within the year group and has further engaged pupils as they prepare for the transition into Key Stage 4.

There have also been many sporting successes across the year group. A strong contingent of Year 9 footballers are key members of the U15 girls' team, who continue to progress impressively in the English Schools National Cup. Following a recent victory against opponents from Leeds, they now look ahead to facing a team from even further afield. In addition, the Dance Academy, again with a strong Year 9 presence, continues to showcase its talent and resilience. Students performed brilliantly at the North Tyneside Dance Festival and also demonstrated great confidence when performing in front of their peers during a recent assembly. Special thanks go to Mrs Condliffe for providing these valuable opportunities. As a PE teacher, I am incredibly proud of all the sporting achievements across the year group and look forward to seeing what the summer term will bring.

As we move into the second half of the year, it is important that standards in school remain high. Uniform, punctuality and attendance are all paramount, and we ask for continued support from parents in maintaining these expectations. This will ensure that the transition into Key Stage 4 is smooth and allows staff to focus fully on supporting students' academic progress, rather than revisiting basic expectations.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Mr Betts
Head of Year 9

Year 10

The Year 10's have enjoyed a good start to 2026 in the Spring term. Our attendance has improved and we are now one of the best attending year groups in school, thanks to the resilience of our pupils.

Regular communication from staff and parents has ultimately supported pupils and their families to ensure pupils are attending school consistently. Prizes are awarded to pupils on a weekly basis during assemblies and these pupils are celebrated with the whole year group present. In addition, end of term awards and prizes have enthused pupils and there is excitement from all pupils in school when these awards are handed out. The introduction of the 'Streaks' attendance challenge has also motivated pupils, and it is really positive to hear pupils talking about this around school.

The cohort will also take part in the Year 10 Work Experience week in May and it has been a pleasure to see so many of the year group arranging their own placements and building the confidence to communicate with organisations and businesses to secure their placements. The work experience week is an excellent opportunity for pupils to gain first-hand experience within a workplace; building skills that they will hopefully take into their own working lives in the future. A wide range of placements have been secured and I look forward to hearing the pupils talk about their experiences when the week is complete.

It has been a real pleasure for me to hear the stories from Charlie A and Ella B about their amazing trip to China with Mrs Winder. From their encounters with a wide range of different food choices to the countless numbers of people they met throughout their visit. It was so nice to see them beam as they shared them with me and I know how much they both appreciate this opportunity of a lifetime and the support and guidance they received from Mrs Winder.

It has been a great start to 2026 for the U15 girl's football team who have made it through to the county cup semi-final and will play Marden for a chance to compete for the Merchant Navy cup; a trophy that has not been seen in the Spence trophy cabinet for a few years now. In addition, the girls have also made it to the halfway stage of the prestigious national ESFA competition and will face a school from either Derbyshire or Doncaster in round 5; beating teams from Easington, Durham and Leeds along the way.

I do hope you all have a fantastic Easter break and I look forward to seeing you back at school for the final term of school and my personal favourite, the Summer!

Marc Burnip
Head of Year 10

Looking Back: A Productive Spring Term for Year 11

As the days finally begin to brighten, it's the perfect time to look back on what has been an incredibly focused and fast-paced Spring term for our Year 11 cohort. From battling the elements to hitting new heights—both literally and academically—our students have shown remarkable resilience.

The term began with a reminder of just how unpredictable the British winter can be. We returned from the Christmas break to some particularly challenging weather, which unfortunately claimed its first "casualty" early on: the Year 11 Rugby event in Whitburn. While the cancellation was a disappointment for our players, others found a way to stay warm while still pushing their physical limits when a group of GCSE PE students visited the Sunderland Climbing Centre, where they successfully completed a key practical element of their course.

On the court, our students continued to represent the school with pride. A huge well done goes to Abi H, Sophie Mc, Rosa C, and Ellen H, who competed in the North Tyneside County Badminton tournament, displaying excellent skill and sportsmanship. Beyond the sports field, Year 11's creative talents shone brightly at the Glasshouse. Maggie Mc, Dylan H, Kerrie R, and Frankie H did the school proud by performing at this prestigious public event. They were truly superb—remaining ultimate professionals even when Mr. Grazer momentarily lost his music!

As the term progressed, the extracurricular events naturally slowed to make room for the most important goal: GCSE preparation. Students sat their mock exams at half term and these results have now helped to generate their final reports which have been shared with families at the recent SLT Review Day. I hope these reports will highlight the significant successes achieved over the year while providing a clear roadmap of areas to focus on in these final weeks.

The atmosphere in the Year 11 corridors has shifted toward quiet determination. We have been particularly impressed by the commitment shown during:

- Registration Intervention: Targeted sessions held three mornings per week to bridge gaps in knowledge.
- Lunchtime Support: These voluntary sessions have been well-attended.
- Lesson 6: Now into our third round of after-school sessions on Tuesdays.

Finally; As we head into the Easter holidays, I would encourage all students to find a healthy balance between well-earned rest and a structured revision timetable. You've put in the hard work this term—keep that momentum going!

Simon Crowe
Head of Year 11

January was Futures month here at John Spence, with pupils from each year group taking part in Career related activities throughout the month. Futures Month allows pupils to explore career possibilities, take part in employer encounters and learn about life after school. Whether that is through an apprenticeship or University degree course, there is something for everyone.

Year 7: As part of their fit for life lessons, year 7 pupils have been exploring the skills and attributes they possess that will support them in later life. Pupils completed the **icould** buzz quiz to find out their personality type and analysed the skills required for a successful employee.

Year 7 also took part in our annual Alumni Event! 15 ex John Spence pupils from all ages visited the school and discussed their current employment status and their career journey with our Year 7 students. If you are an ex John Spence pupil, and would like to get involved with events like this, please contact kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk

Year 8

The Year 8 program explored the world of work, types of jobs and local labour market information. Pupils explored gender stereotypes, types of work and the opportunities in the North East.

As part of our work to ensure every students has at least one employer encounter every year, the year 8 students participated in our 'Growth sector carousel', a morning of talk from 7 employers, all linked to one of the region's fastest growing industries (Health science, manufacturing, digital and energy). Employers included the NHS, the police and local Engineering companies.

Year 9

Year 9 focused on options and pathways after John Spence, which coincided with their GCSE option choices. They experienced lessons from each subject outlining the career options they could pursue in relation to that subject, as well as reflecting on their skill set and which lessons they enjoyed.

The Year 9 drop down event was an exciting first for us: Working with our school Enterprise Advisor Rochelle Gonsalas, we arranged a visit for the whole of Year 9 to the NHS manufacturing plant in Seaton Delaval.

Pupils saw first hand how the various NHS uniforms are constructed and got to talk to employees from surprising sectors of the NHS such as security and upholsterers.

Upcoming events:

We have a huge variety of activities throughout the year here at John Spence and here are a few that are coming next term.

- **Durham University workshop** - We will be visited by Durham University in May to discuss University life with some of our top performing year 10 students.
- **Year 10 work experience** - students will be out on their placement in May. If you are in a position to offer a work placement please contact the school.
- **Apprenticeships support drop in** - Tracey from Connexions is hosting a drop in once a week in G4 to support any year 11 pupils looking for an apprenticeship next year.

Tracey is part of North Tyneside's Connexions team, and is more than happy to answer any careers related questions. If you, or your child would like to get in touch, please email her at tracey.green@johnspence.org.uk.

TRIPS

UK CHINA AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME



This term, our school's global horizons expanded significantly as we embarked on an unforgettable journey to the Far East. Following a **rigorous application process**, two exceptional students were selected to represent us as Student Ambassadors on a prestigious tour of Chinese schools.

I had the immense privilege of accompanying them as we travelled through three distinct and fascinating cities: **Qinhuangdao**, **Baoding**, and **Beijing**.

This programme wasn't your typical sightseeing tour. Our students were there to work, lead, and bridge the cultural gap. We were even invited to a family home for dinner, where we made dumplings with the grandmother of a Chinese school pupil.



Watching our pupils handle their presentation with such confidence and poise was a personal highlight. They truly represented the very best of our school's values, and talked about:

- **Daily life in the UK:** From our hobbies to our snacks!
- **Our School Community:** What makes our school unique.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Engaging in Q&A sessions that often lasted long into the break times.

Of course, the learning went both ways. Between school visits, we were immersed in traditional Chinese heritage. Our hosts were incredibly gracious, teaching us the delicate art of **calligraphy** and the (much more difficult than it looks!) skill of **Peking Opera**.

We couldn't travel all that way without taking in the sights. From the coastal beauty of Qinhuangdao to the historic streets of Baoding, and finally the bustling metropolis of Beijing, the scale of the country was breath taking. Walking along the Great Wall and exploring the Temple of Heaven provided a profound sense of history that will stay with us forever.

While the landmarks were impressive, it was the **friendships made** that truly defined the trip. Our students didn't just visit China; they connected with it. They swapped social media handles, shared stories, and realized that despite the thousands of miles between us, teenagers in the UK and China share many of the same dreams and humour.



I would like to personally congratulate our two ambassadors for their impeccable behaviour and for being such fantastic representatives of our community.

They have set a very high bar for future international programmes!

Mrs Winder

TRIPS

ARMY CADETS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE



This year has seen the John Spence Combined Cadet Force begin their journey towards a bright future full of opportunities for our students. With five adult volunteers, a school staff instructor and support from the Army's Cadet Training Team, the unit has grown from nothing into a flourishing and successful unit - in only 5 months!

Beginning last summer, staff underwent a stage of training and planning, and in October recruitment began. After a series of well attended taster events, the unit began parading in earnest in half term 2. Since then, the cadets have learned a wide range of skills including first aid, skill at arms, fieldcraft and teamwork.

Now fully in uniform and parading every Monday evening from 3-5pm, the unit has made its first foray into the wider world, having visited Albermarle Barracks for an extensive training day. The cadets had an excellent time building shelters, cooking in the field and refining their fieldcraft skills further.

Looking ahead, the unit has a full calendar of activities: 'The Great Tommy Sleep Out' (a charity camp out on the school field to raise money for struggling veterans) happening in March, two weekends away in April and May and our ultimate goal of attending summer camp in July.



It's been a great year so far and as a school we are very proud to see how much our young people have learned, matured and grown in confidence during that time. This however, is just the beginning and we can't wait to see where the unit heads to next.

If you are interested in joining the cadets, all you have to do is show up at the Hub on a Monday at 3pm. We parade between 3-5pm and are open to anyone in Year 8 - Year 10. For those in Year 7, we will be running some taster activities near the end of the summer term. If you would like more information, please get in touch.

TRIPS

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELCOME SUMMIT 2026



As part of our commitment to the Schools of Sanctuary programme, on Thursday 12 February a group of pupils from John Spence attended the Young People's Welcome Summit 2026 at the Linskill Centre in North Shields. The group was made up of members of the School Council and pupils for whom English is not their first language.

Along with groups of pupils from other North Tyneside schools, we took part in a number of thought provoking and practical activities during the day. These gave the pupils a sound understanding of why and what it is like to flee a country because of war or unstable political situation and arrive in a country where you either don't speak the language at all, or have very limited understanding and ability to communicate in it.

Presentations were made by a number of organisations from across the North Tyneside and North East region, including Walking With the North Tyneside refugee centre, the International Rescue Committee and the North East Migration Partnership.

Some of these presentations told the stories of the reasons for leaving and journeys of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. Pupils learned a huge amount about the actual facts and figures involved in this, rather than the myths which are promoted by various groups.

Other presentations gave personal testimonies from people who had been actively involved in rioting and public disorder in towns and cities across the UK, including outside of hotels housing asylum seekers. There was a particularly challenging and moving story of a young woman from Middlesbrough who had been arrested and gone to prison for her part in these, and had since realised how wrong she had been and wanted to share her story as widely as possible in order to promote understanding and prevent anyone else from making the same mistakes.

The response of our pupils to all of this showed great thought and maturity. A number of the organisations involved commented on how impressed they were with John Spence pupils, which made both myself and them incredibly proud.



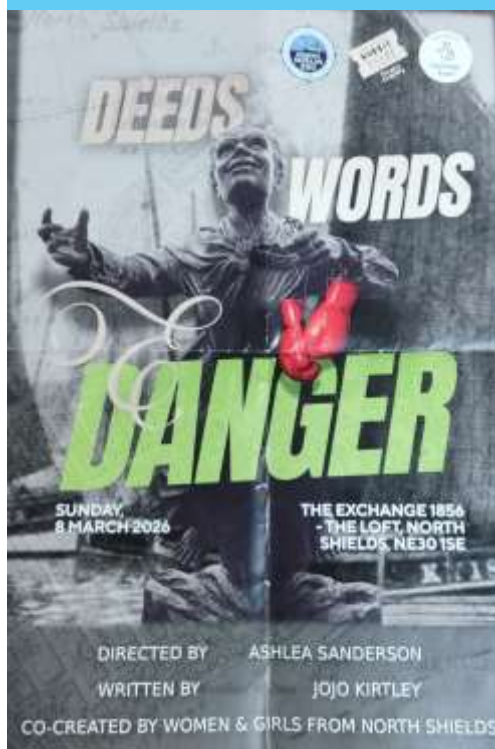
This was a day full of challenges and surprises which really made everyone involved think a lot about the issues faced by asylum seekers, refugees

and migrants within the UK and around the world. All of our pupils came away with a much better understanding of the situation and a feeling that they wanted to go away and share what they'd learned with as many people as possible, both in and out of school.



TRIPS

YEAR 9 'GIRLS ALOUD' GROUP



Tilly K, Charlotte H, Lily C, Shelayne G, Neveah T, Hollie H, Mya P, Aimee T and Mayleigh J all took part in this girls' project over 8 one-hour sessions, working with 'Workie Ticket Theatre Company' to devise a main character for their play "Deeds, Words & Danger", as part of North Shields 800.

The final performance, at The Exchange on International Women's Day (Sunday 8th March), was a moving and inspirational piece of drama that took all of us by surprise - by its depth, relevance and realism to a fictional teenage girl who could have been any one of this group.

The girls' group gave her the name of 'Ruby Carter' and based her character on a student from John Spence. She liked boxing but not wearing the school uniform or following all the school

rules - but she showed resilience and ultimately 'did good'!



During the performance, Ruby was introduced to various local, historical women and the differences their deeds and words made to North Shields: Mary Ann Macham (an enslaved woman who escaped from danger in Virginia and managed to reach North Shields with the help of the Spence sisters); Ellen Lee (a fire warden who helped survivors to safety during the bombing of Wilkinson's Lemonade Factory); and Norah Balls (a suffragette who spoke out about women's rights to equality).



We went to see the two blue plaques and

newly-installed statue on the quayside, before visiting Nina Brown at The Old Low Light Heritage Centre, where she explained more about Mary Macham's dangerous journey and the interesting stories of other local women, like the herring girls.



We are really hoping that further funding will allow a performance at school, with more students having the opportunity to "laugh, think and maybe feel a little braver", just like Ruby Carter.

TRIPS

NE1CAN CAREERS EVENT

A group of our drama students were invited on a special visit to the Theatre Royal in Newcastle in January, as part of the NE1CAN Careers Events - not to see a show, but to take part in a **backstage tour!**

They had a really amazing time, getting to see props, lighting, the green room, the prompt chair, as well as the parts the public are invited to at front of house. The tour leader was great and made the opportunity all the better with his humour and interesting anecdotes.

The students all behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school - at the theatre, as well as on the metro. The visit was really well-worth doing and all invited got a lot out of it and asked loads of questions to add to their theatre portfolio, knowledge and experience. Watch out for the next opportunity!



YEAR 10 VISIT TO NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Year 10 recently visited Newcastle University to watch 3 really interesting films made by independent Chinese film-makers about:

1. the inequalities that exist in rural/urban China
2. world views from primary school children
3. a traditional Peking Opera company trying hard to continue their craft living in New York



Both staff and students thoroughly enjoyed the day and the students behaved themselves overall - although there were some childish antics over rainbow laces!

YEAR 10 MATHS CHALLENGE

The 10X1 Maths class have recently received their results for the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. The students completed a 60 minute, multiple choice challenge which encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve difficult problems.

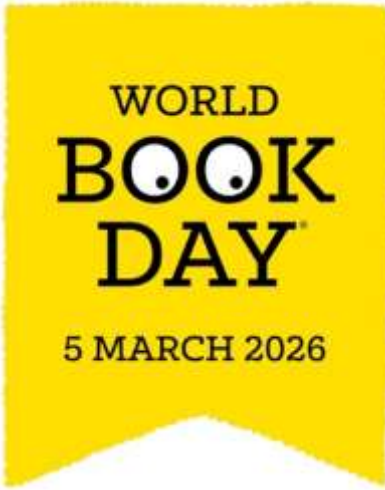
A big congratulations to Charlie, Riley and Evan for achieving a Silver Certificate and to Felix, Lena, Ella, Eryn and Kaiden who were awarded a Bronze Certificate.

Well done to all of those who took part as it took a lot of resilience to even attempt the challenge!

The UKMT Junior Year 8 challenge will return in April.



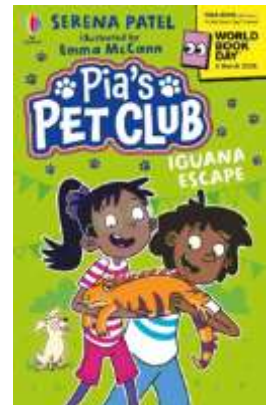
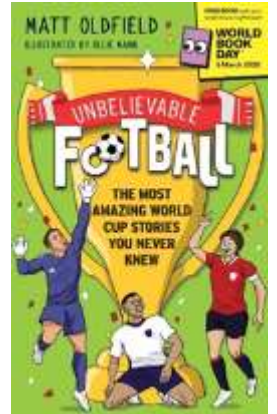
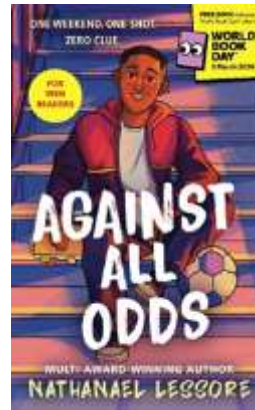
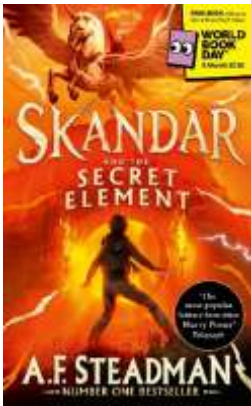
WORLD BOOK DAY 2026 @ JOHN SPENCE



This year for the first time, our school was chosen to be a Distribution Hub for World Book Day. What this meant was that as well as making available £1 book tokens to all students in school which they could use to exchange for a specially written free World Book Day book or use as part payment for any book of their choice, we were also holding copies of 12 of the specially written books.

Instead of having to take their book token to a book shop or other designated outlet to get a book, students had only to make their way along to the library and exchange for their chosen book. This made the whole process easy and convenient, and ultimately more successful. The uptake on books was much higher than it would have been otherwise. So far, just short of 500 books have been distributed to our students, for reading by themselves or alternatively to be given to other family members.

The choice of books was wide and varied (shown below) and copies of all the books (apart from Peppa Pig) are still available from the library. Please feel free to ask your son or daughter to bring home more copies of any of the books below.



SPORT @ JOHN SPENCE

GIRL POWER



We have had a fantastic season in both Netball and Cricket.

The U16's, U14's and U13 Netball girls have all won the North Tyneside Netball tournament through fantastic commitment and dedication to the sport but also through excellent skill levels!

The U13's took part in the qualifying county cricket tournament and came 1st. This then put them through to the regional county cricket final.

To say that I am beyond proud of all of these girls (both all years Netball and Cricket) which I have coached this academic year is an understatement.

Mrs MacLeod



SPORT @ JOHN SPENCE

GIRLS FOOTBALL EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS!



On Friday 7th March, we proudly hosted our annual girls' football event as part of a national initiative led by The FA to inspire more girls to get involved in football. The campaign continues to grow each year, with over 500,000 girls taking part across the country last year. It has become a fantastic celebration of the game, with schools nationwide joining in.

This year saw an excellent turnout, with over 50 girls signing up in our morning session. Supported by Simon Brown from North Shields Juniors, students took

part in two hours of fun games and challenges. Despite the wet weather, spirits remained high, and it was fantastic to see so many girls experiencing football for the very first time. There is clearly some outstanding talent, and we look forward to supporting their continued development.

In the afternoon, we welcomed over 50 students from eight special schools across the North East. Our brilliant Year 9 Young Leaders played a key role in delivering activities, helping students rotate through a range of engaging, game-based sessions. Once again, the weather did little to dampen the enthusiasm, and the event was a wonderful celebration of participation, teamwork and enjoyment.

The FA continues to champion girls' football through its #MadeForThisGame campaign, and it is clear to see the positive impact it is having, with more girls than ever getting involved in the sport.

A huge well done to everyone who took part and helped make the day such a success!



BIG PEDAL AND WALK SUCCESS



From 16th–27th March, our pupils joined schools nationwide in the Big Pedal and Walk challenge, tracking walking, cycling, and scooting (staff included!). Thanks to our strong cycling community, we achieved 5th place locally in the Northeast and 8th nationally for secondary schools, with 52% of pupils actively travelling to school daily.

We encourage everyone to keep moving—our secure bike storage and maintenance facilities make it easy, and with brighter evenings, there's never been a better time to travel actively to school!



RUGBY LEAGUE RETURNS TO THE NORTH EAST



This term has seen an exciting revival of Rugby League across the North East, with a number of new schools joining the competition and helping to grow the game across the region.

We were delighted to organise two rounds of fixtures, hosted at venues ranging from Park View in Chester-le-Street through to Blyth Academy. These events provided both afternoon and after-school opportunities for students in Years 7–11 to take part in competitive Rugby League.

A special mention must go to John Spence School, who achieved the impressive feat of entering teams in all 10 rounds of fixtures, supported by a strong and committed squad of 15 players.

For many of our Key Stage 3 students, this season marked their first experience of Rugby League, following a successful block of curriculum teaching. It has been fantastic to see their enthusiasm, enjoyment, and rapid development throughout the term.

Despite some challenging weather conditions impacting a few rounds, there were plenty of standout moments. One of the highlights was the Year 10 round in January, hosted at North Shields Rugby Club. With six teams competing, our players performed exceptionally well, securing a commendable third-place finish.

We are excited to continue building on this success and further develop Rugby League opportunities both within lessons and through our academy provision for Key Stage 3 students.

For those who have enjoyed taking part, we strongly encourage continued involvement through local community clubs such as Cramlington Rockets.

This provides a fantastic pathway for students to further develop their skills, confidence, and love for the game beyond the school environment.

[https://
www.cramlingtonrockets.co.uk](https://www.cramlingtonrockets.co.uk)

Mr Pilkington

Try rugby for free...
**JOIN THE
ROCKETS**

- TRAIN AND PLAY EVERY SATURDAY
- TEAMS FROM RECEPTION TO YEAR 11
- VISIT CRAMLINGTON ROCKETS ON FACEBOOK
- OR EMAIL INFO@ROCKETSFOUNDATION.ORG.UK

CRAMLINGTON
ROCKETS

SPORT @ JOHN SPENCE

PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS



This term has been incredibly busy, with our school proudly hosting and supporting over eight primary school competitions. In total, more than 12 schools - including our five key feeder primaries - have taken part, with over 1,500 pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 visiting our site across a range of exciting events.

A huge part of this success has been down to our outstanding young leaders. Acting as officials, umpires, scorers and event helpers, they have worked brilliantly alongside staff to ensure every event has been enjoyable, rewarding and, at times, competitive.

The term kicked off with basketball in January, followed by a

variety of activities including hockey, multi-skills, dodgeball and badminton. Alongside this, our Littleton League football competition has

continued to thrive, providing regular opportunities for pupils to represent their schools.



We would like to congratulate all pupils and teams who have taken part this term. These events highlight the strong partnerships we have built with our local primary schools, as well as the dedication of their staff in providing such valuable opportunities for their pupils.

With plenty more planned, we are excited to carry this momentum into the summer term—there's lots more fun to come!



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we head into the spring term, the digital world continues to move at a lightning pace. At school, we are constantly updating our curriculum to reflect the latest guidance and the real-world experiences our students face online.

In this update we are focusing on the theme of **Critical Thinking**.

Thinking Critically: Fact vs. Fiction

The internet is full of amazing information, but it is also home to content designed to deceive. It is helpful to understand the difference between the two main types of "Fake News":

KEY DEFINITION: Misinformation

This is information that is false, but the person sharing it **does not realise it is wrong**. It is often shared by people online who think they are being helpful (e.g., sharing a "health tip" that hasn't been proven).

KEY DEFINITION: Disinformation

This is false information that is **created on purpose to deceive people**. This is often used to spread fear, influence politics, or cause division between different groups of people.

Spotlight: Global Conflicts & Deepfakes

There has been a significant increase in misleading content relating to global conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. This content is often pushed to students via social media.

This includes:

- **Video Games as "Real Life":** Clips from combat games (like *Arma 3*) are edited to look like real-time war footage. BBC News recently reported that these clips are often shared with "breaking news" banners to trick viewers.
- **AI-Generated Images:** Fake pictures of explosions or emergency responses designed to cause panic or outrage.
- **Recycled Content:** Old videos from different years or countries being "rebranded" as current news.

This "emotional whiplash"—scrolling from a dance video to a war zone—can be very distressing.

How to help: The "Digital Detective"

Encourage your child to check their sources before they react or share. Ask them:

ONLINE SAFETY

1. **Who shared this?** Is it a person, a brand, or an anonymous account?
2. **Why did they share it?** Are they trying to inform you, or just make you angry?
3. **Where is the evidence?** Check trusted sites like the **BBC**, [Full Fact](#), or [Snopes](#).

SOS Where to get help

These are organisations that can help with a variety of issues, not just those from this terms update.

Organisation	Purpose	Contact
School	Support when issues may impact a student in school	https://www.johnspence.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding/
CEOP	Reporting inappropriate contact or grooming	www.ceop.police.uk
Childline	24/7 confidential support for young people	0800 1111 / childline.org.uk
Internet Matters	Practical guides for parental controls	internetmatters.org

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students safe online. As always, if you have any specific concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our safeguarding team at school.

Head of Computing- Fleur Wilkinson

John Spence Community High School

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