



JULY 2026

Important information for 2026

Pupils return to school on
Wednesday 2nd September 2026.

There will be a staggered start to
the day with year groups arriving at
the following times:

Year 7 to arrive at 8.30am ready
for registration at 8.35am

Years 8-11 please arrive at 11am
and head out to break, after break
please make your way to your form
classes for 11.15am

Please note that from **Thursday**
3rd September, all students
should be in school by 8.30am and
inside their form room by the
8.35am bell.



GOODBYE FROM MR HEATH

Welcome to the final newsletter of my tenure as Headteacher at John Spence. Whilst some days have undoubtedly been harder than others, it has been a joy to work here because of the staff, the students and the strength of our community. My message to students from the first day I joined is simply to seize the opportunities that are put in front of them and my goodness they do just that.

This newsletter once again showcases the amazing achievements of so many that get involved and embrace the chances that come their way. Without question, those that embrace the most get the highest reward in terms of progress and outcomes as well as readiness to face the world.

This offer is wholly reliant on the staff going above and beyond for our students and the same can be said for the wonderful support that helps all children navigate their way through school; I would like to thank what is a truly wonderful team for everything that they do every day.

Headship is always a process of transition between one individual and the next. I know that my successor, Miss Marshall, will continue to drive the school forward with the necessary combination of high expectations and compassion as she steers the school through the next stage of its journey.

As for me, more family time awaits, something I am very much looking forward to. I will leave John Spence with sadness, as it really is a school that gets under your skin, but also with real hope for the future of all children who are lucky enough to come here. Thank you all for your support over the years; we may not always agree on everything, but what we can always agree on is that we want the very best for every child.

All the very best for the future.

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher

Year 7

Year 7 have had a super year and should be proud of how well they have transitioned into high school. Many students have taken advantage of our extra-curricular activities such as Sports Academy, Music Academy, our sports teams and STEM club to name but a few. It has been lovely to see so many new friendships develop and so many individual successes this year.



The Year group completed their end of year exams in June and the majority of students were focused and well prepared. This sets them up for a successful transition into Year 8 next year.

A special mention to the following Year 7 guides who did a terrific job of supporting me to welcome the new Year 6 into Year 7 on Monday 30th June. They were polite, positive and ideal role models for our new students. Violet A, Max C, Ollie W, Ripley H, Isaac M, Poppy T, Sienna G, Molly Mc, Freya G, Jay M, James H, Lily S, Molly J and Geordie H.

We took 96 students to Ford Castle this year. All students demonstrated real resilience and team work! I was incredibly proud of them for giving the activities a go and for their behaviour whilst they were away. They were a credit to the school.

The year 7 Northumberland county athletics took place on Saturday 20th June at Gateshead stadium. Among the highlights were:

- Ace H – Gold Medal, year 7 High Jump
- Stan B – Gold Medal, year 7 Discus and Gold Medal, Javelin
- Connor N – Bronze Medal, year 7 High Jump

Pixie H also performed superbly, securing her place in the Year 7 100m final against a strong field of competitors. Eve R also impressed in the Year 7 100m, narrowly missing out on a place in the final by mere milliseconds after a determined performance in the heats. On the track, Max D competed well in the Year 7 300m, finishing 4th in his heat and narrowly missing out of the finals. There were also strong performances in the Year 7 Girls High Jump, where Willow B jumped brilliantly to finish in an impressive 4th place, while Gracie D also competed well to secure 7th place in a highly competitive field. Gracie also represented the school in the Shot Put and finished in the top 10. Violet A also enjoyed a successful day, securing top-10 finishes in both the Year 7 Discus and Javelin competitions. In the Year 7 Discus, Archie M achieved an excellent 6th-place finish, a fantastic achievement at county championship level. Amber R and Maisie R both represented the school in the Javelin and Discus events. Amber achieved an excellent 7th-place finish in the Javelin, while Maisie finished 11th in a competitive field.



The students represented both John Spence and North Tyneside at the championships. They conducted themselves impeccably throughout the day and should be incredibly proud of their performances. Competing in very warm conditions, every athlete showed tremendous determination, resilience and sportsmanship. I was immensely proud of the effort, commitment and positivity they displayed throughout the championships.

Thank you so much to all the Year 7 parents and carers for your support this year. I hope you all have a lovely, well deserved Summer Holiday and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

Year 8

Year 8 have enjoyed another fantastic year at school, filled with a wide range of activities, opportunities and achievements. It has been wonderful to see the year group embrace everything on offer, creating lasting memories while continuing to grow in confidence, resilience and independence.

The year began with an exciting visit to Cragside Hall, where pupils explored the links between history, technology and the natural world. Through hands-on experiences with Cragside's pioneering hydroelectric power system and its stunning gardens, pupils developed curiosity, critical thinking and understanding of environmental sustainability. Guided tours also expanded their knowledge of local wildlife and the environment, making it an enjoyable and enriching day.

Earlier this year, Mr Fullard led a number of trips to the Simonside Hills, giving pupils the opportunity to experience the outdoors, learn new skills and develop teamwork, resilience and problem-solving. The breath-taking scenery and rich local history provided the perfect setting to learn about the area's geology and ecosystems first-hand. A huge thank you to Mr Fullard for his dedication in organising these valuable experiences.

Throughout the year, pupils have also taken part in a variety of enrichment programmes. The ever-popular Goals programme has continued to make a positive impact, alongside the introduction of the Strength through Challenge initiative. Both have provided valuable opportunities to develop teamwork, communication and problem-solving while reinforcing our Fit for Life ethos of being resilient, skilled and considerate.

Sport continues to play a significant role in Year 8 life, with superb attendance at Academy sessions and participation across our school sports teams. I look forward to celebrating these achievements at the annual Sports Celebration Evening. We also have the Challenge Walk and Activity Zone Day to look forward to during the final week of term.

Attendance has been a key priority throughout the year because every day in school matters. Strong attendance is vital for academic success, I am incredibly proud of those who have attended every day, as well as those who have made significant improvements. Congratulations to the eight pupils who achieved 100% attendance this year, the thirty pupils who achieved 100% attendance during the final half-term, and to 8DGI, who once again finished as our highest-attending form with an excellent attendance figure of 96%. Well done to Mr Gibson and the whole class.

I would also like to thank our form tutors for the care, encouragement and compassion they show every day. We are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated staff who put pupils' wellbeing and success at the heart of everything they do. I would also like to wish Mr Keers every success as he begins his new role as Head of Year 7. He has made a tremendous contribution to Year 8 and will be greatly missed.

It has been a privilege to support this year group throughout their second year at John Spence. I am incredibly proud of everything they have achieved and the way they continue to represent the school with maturity and enthusiasm.

As we look ahead to Year 9, there are many exciting milestones to come, including GCSE options and the arrival of new pupils. I have every confidence that this year group will embrace these opportunities, warmly welcome new classmates and continue to lead by example.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our pupils and their families a restful, enjoyable and well-deserved summer break. I hope you are able to spend quality time together and return in September refreshed and ready for another exciting year. Thank you for your continued support. It really is a team effort, and I look forward to working with you all again in Year 9.

Mrs Brown
Head of Year 8

Year 9

As we come to the end of another year, I would like to congratulate all of our Year 9 students on what has been an excellent year.

A particularly warm welcome and congratulations go to those students who joined John Spence in September. Starting a new school can be daunting, but you embraced the transition with confidence, quickly settled into school life, and have become valued members of our Year 9 community. Your positive attitudes, determination and willingness to get involved have made a real impact, and we are delighted to have you as part of the John Spence family.

To those students who have been with us throughout, thank you. You have played a significant role in helping our new students feel welcome and included. The kindness, support and encouragement you have shown truly reflect the values of our school.

This year has been filled with many memorable moments, and it has been fantastic to see so many Year 9 students throwing themselves into wider school life. Sporting success has once again been a real highlight, we are incredibly proud of the commitment, resilience and teamwork shown by so many students. A special mention goes to the Year 9 girls who helped our Under-15 football team reach the national final. To compete at such a high level is testament to your hard work and determination, everyone at John Spence is immensely proud of your achievement.

I would also like to recognise the fantastic group of students representing the Dance Academy. Your commitment, creativity and passion have been evident throughout the year, your countless hours of rehearsal and performance have not gone unnoticed. You continue to inspire others and are outstanding ambassadors for our school.

Another real success this year has been the outstanding uptake of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It has been fantastic to see so many students embrace the opportunity to challenge themselves beyond the classroom. The award develops resilience, independence, teamwork and leadership, I look forward to seeing how these experiences continue to shape you in the years ahead.

Year 9 is often described as the 'warm-up' for GCSEs, and this year has been an important stepping stone towards KS4. It has been encouraging to see so many students developing the attitudes, resilience and work ethic that will help them succeed. As you move into Year 10 and begin your GCSE courses, the commitment you show from the very start will be key to a successful transition. I have every confidence that this year group will continue to achieve great things.

One of the greatest factors in ensuring success, both academically and personally, is excellent attendance. Every day in school provides opportunities to learn, develop skills, build relationships and take part in experiences that cannot be replicated outside the classroom. As GCSE study begins, attending every day, arriving on time and being ready to learn will play a vital role in helping every student achieve their best outcomes.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of our parents and carers for your continued support throughout the year. We know that educating young people is most successful when school and home work together to give every child the very best opportunities to succeed. Your encouragement and partnership have been invaluable, and I am incredibly grateful for everything you do to support both your child and the wider John Spence community.

Thank you again for making this such a successful year. It has been a privilege to watch our Year 9 students grow in confidence, maturity and ambition, I look forward to seeing all they achieve as they embark on the next stage of their journey. I wish all of our students and their families a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break, and I look forward to welcoming you back in September as our newest Year 10 students, ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges that KS4 will bring.

Mr Betts
Head of Year 9

Year 10

The Year 10's have enjoyed a great end to the Summer term with lot's of opportunities for them to develop and broaden their skills both inside and outside of the classroom. Many of the cohort have seized the opportunity to build upon their own individual life skills and this was evident in the amazing messages sent by employers as part of the feedback process from the work experience week. Reading through them all I was so proud of how well they coped in the work environment and how so many demonstrated resilience, initiative and a passion to learn within their workplace. The week is a massive task to prepare for, with countless jobs to be completed in order for the pupil's to attend and I must thank Mrs Winder for all of her amazing hard work to ensure the week is as successful as possible for our pupils.

There has also been other opportunities arranged for some of the year group to attend Cambridge University to take a look at what life is like and hopefully encourage students to be inspired to follow their dreams. The Duke of Edinburgh group enjoyed an excellent practise expedition back in April in which I was able to go along as a support teacher and thoroughly enjoyed seeing those pupils work independently and as a team. I must say waking up at 5am to the dulcet tones of some of our boys was not my best memory, but popping my head out of the tent to see everywhere was frozen outside soon made me crawl back into my sleeping bag. They completed their real expeditions for the Silver Award and I was informed by the group leaders they were exceptional for the entire weekend. I would like to thank Mr Fullard for his tireless work in arranging these expeditions for the pupils and inviting me to be part of it; giving me the opportunity to see the pupils outside of the classroom and in the wilderness. I have also had the opportunity to take a small group of pupils to Kirkley Hall college this term where pupils had the chance to experience life within a college that focuses on education relating to land-based, animal and agricultural courses. The group really enjoyed the day and saw how the college operates and asking questions to some professionals who work there.



FC. The boys battled and fought throughout the game, but were just beaten by the better team on the day. As for the girls team, what can I say? They have been amazing all season; winning the central venue league, the Merchant Navy County cup and being finalists in the national ESFA cup. They have conducted themselves with style, class and demonstrated high levels of sportsmanship and skill. They beat Gosforth Academy 5-2 in the Merchant Navy cup to lift the trophy and this was the first time our school had won it since 2018, an incredible achievement. However, their efforts in the ESFA were nothing short of phenomenal! Each game they played they proved that they were on track to do something special this season; blowing some teams away with countless goals and as we progressed through the tournament they showed amazing levels of skill and resilience to over come each opponent on their way to the final. This game was played at Stafford Town FC as this was a mid-way point for our team and the opponents from Bournemouth. The game was played under the blazing sun and in temperatures to be expected in the Mediterranean, let alone the Midlands.

I am fortunate enough to coach both the girls and boys football teams and it has been a pleasure to have seen both sets of players develop their skills and ability throughout this year. The boys team remained unbeaten in the league for the entire season and finished second in the league behind STM. It was STM who also beat the boys in the North Tyneside U15 cup final which was played at the Daren Persson Stadium, home to North Shields



Year 10



The game ended 2-2 and unfortunately our girls lost on penalties, but the girls should be proud of their efforts throughout the season and cherish the memories of their journey to be the first girls team for school to reach a national final. I know I will forever be grateful to them for giving me the experience and am immensely proud of them.

As we move closer to their final year at school, I would like to reinforce the importance of attendance. The final year is a chance for pupils to fine tune their skills in preparation of life after high school and it is essential that pupils are present in all lessons in order for them to be fully prepared for their GCSE's next Summer. I remember telling them back in Year 7 that these would be the quickest 5 years of their lives and I am telling them now, that Year 11 will be the quickest year of their lives so far.

I do hope you all have a restful Summer break and I look forward to welcoming everyone back in September for the last leg of our journey together.

Mr Burnip
Head of Year 10





To the Phenomenal Class of 2026, and their Families!

The final exam desks have been cleared, the hall is quiet, and just like that, an era has come to an end. Writing this final newsletter article is always a moment of immense pride, but this year carries an extra weight of emotion. Watching our Year 11s walk out of their final GCSE exam; the last assembly and their spectacular Prom were truly unforgettable milestones.

The focus and dedication shown throughout the GCSE exam season has been nothing short of exemplary. The late-night revision, the early morning intervention sessions, and the sheer mental stamina required for this intense period would challenge anyone, yet our students have handled it with grace and determination. Now, the hard work is done.

While it is completely natural to feel a bit anxious about **Results Day on Thursday 20th August**, I look forward to that morning with absolute optimism. This year group has put in the groundwork, and I have every confidence that their results will reflect the incredible effort they have poured into their studies. But remember: whatever those envelopes hold in August, your education has already equipped you for the exciting next steps. Whatever your plans for September, you are ready! The skills, friendships, and character you have built here are your real foundation. Nobody gets to the end of Year 11 alone. It takes a village, and this year group has had the absolute best village supporting them.

To Our Unwavering Form Tutors: You have been the bedrock of this journey. For five years, you have been the constant, familiar face every single morning. You've checked uniform, listened to worries, celebrated the small wins, and kept everyone on track. Thank you for your tireless dedication, your patience, and for being the guiding anchors our students needed.

To Our Incredible Inclusion and Pastoral Support Team: Words cannot fully express my gratitude to the brilliant inclusion staff attached to Year 11. You have been the safety net, the listening ears, and the champions for so many of our students when things got tough. Your empathy, boundless energy, and tailored support have ensured that no student was left behind.

To Our Parents and Carers: Thank you for the endless encouragement from home, the late-night pep talks, the taxi services, and the gentle nudges to revise. Your partnership with the school over the last five years has been vital. We could not have guided them to the finish line without your trust and unwavering support.

A Personal Note, My Final Farewell: As this wonderful year group prepares to turn the page to their next chapter, I find myself preparing to do the same. Alongside the Class of 2026, I too am leaving the school gates behind as I officially retire from education.

After many rewarding years in the classroom and in pastoral care, I am stepping into a very different world of work and indeed, a very different pace of life! To the students, parents, and staff who have made my time in education so rich and fulfilling, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Leading this year group through to their graduation has been the ultimate privilege to bookend my career.

Year 11

The Final Word: To the Class of 2026: go out into the world and make us proud. We are both embarking on new adventures now, and I have no doubt that your futures are incredibly bright. Be kind, be ambitious, and never forget where you started.

Have a wonderful, safe, and incredibly well-deserved summer break. I look forward to seeing you all one last time to celebrate on **August 20th!**

With warmest wishes, deepest gratitude, and utmost pride,

Simon Crowe

Head of Year 11



CAREERS

Year 10 Students Power Up at the Newcastle College Energy Academy!

On Thursday, July 2nd, our Year 10 students visited the Newcastle College Energy Academy in Wallsend for an inspiring morning focused on future careers. Organized by our Careers Lead, Mrs. Winder, the trip aimed to introduce students to the booming engineering and renewable energy sectors right here in the North East.

It was a fantastic event that offered students a first-hand look at the diverse pathways available in renewables. A major highlight of the morning was a presentation from a drone pilot, which demonstrated how cutting-edge technology is used within the energy industry.

Students also rolled up their sleeves for a practical task involving engineering drawings, giving them a taste of the precision and skill required in the field. Beyond the activities, the group toured the academy's state-of-the-art facilities, gaining valuable insight into what post-16 technical qualifications and apprenticeships actually look like.



Hands-On Learning at Kirkley Hall College!

On Monday, June 29th, a select group of our students visited Kirkley Hall College for an exciting and hands-on Taster Day. The trip was specifically designed to provide meaningful career insights for those interested in land-based industries.

It was a great day with pupils getting stuck into practical activities that brought their potential career paths to life. Students had the opportunity to try herding sheep, gaining a first-hand understanding of Agriculture and modern farming techniques. Others delved into equine anatomy, exploring the world of Equine Studies and horse management.

This visit allowed our students to "step out of the classroom" and experience what vocational training in Animal Management, Equine Studies, and Agriculture truly looks like. By using the college's fantastic specialist facilities, students are now better equipped to make informed decisions about their post-16 or post-18 options in these vital sectors.

Calling all employers!

We are always looking for employers and businesses to help support our careers program so if you would like to get involved, please email our Careers Lead kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk.



TRIPS

REFUGEE PICNIC



Seven of our KS3 students enjoyed a lovely day out at Segedunum Roman Fort in June, as part of Refugee Week celebrations. The sun shone and we were all able to appreciate the good food and company out in the open air.

We travelled there by school minibus, and as we arrived a little early, we were able to take advantage of free entry into the museum and watchtower, from where we got an excellent aerial view of the whole site.

After a quick packed lunch at the picnic tables provided, our students dove straight into a game of football with some of the guests, together with other students from a local primary school.

While the match continued, a few of our students chose to have a go on the play tower in the grounds, while



Geordie preferred to sit in the shade and do some crafts.

Later, after juice and doughnuts, most of our students played as a team with a parachute, trying to keep the ball up in the air.

We were sorry to have to leave the fun to get back to school for 3pm!



A DAY OF WELCOME



A group of students from years 8, 9 and 10 were part of an online workshop looking at how to make students from other countries feel more welcome in our school community.

We met in the SCITT classroom and spent time listening first-hand to people's stories about their journeys to the UK and how they've managed to settle here and make a new home in safety. The group were asked to make suggestions about how they could make

students welcome at John Spence and a number of our group participated in the joint, live discussion (one suggestion was that we give them fish and chips, which made the commentator laugh!). The group was later asked to give feedback about the session, which was passed-on to the organisers.

There were a number of recommendations for books about migration and related topics - a few of which are now available to read in our library!

TRIPS

THE ROAD TO SUMMER CAMP



Over the last few months, the cadets of John Spence CCF have been training hard to prepare themselves for summer camp, the epitome of the cadet calendar.

In order to get themselves ready, the cadets have attended two training weekends at both Albermarle Barracks and Otterburn training camp to learn a vast array of skills,

including campcraft, skill at arms, teamwork, communication and leadership.

On each trip, the cadets have represented themselves and the school in an exemplary fashion, garnering praise from the army instructors for their eagerness, focus and aptitude for learning. As a result, they've learned a great deal and more importantly had a lot of fun along the way.

There has also been plenty of on-site training, alongside a visit to Newcastle University's Officer Training Corps, where the cadets had the opportunity to practice their shooting on the DCCT (digital shooting range). All of which have helped our young people to access the cadet experience - absolutely free of charge.

Lastly, each cadet recently received a ruby badge from the Royal Veteran Society, for their part in the Great Tommy Sleep Out back in March where as a unit we raised over £500 for homeless veterans, something they should be very proud of.

2025-2026 has seen the John Spence CCF begin from nothing into a developing and healthy unit. As we wind down for the summer, planning is already underway to see where the next



academic year takes us. As a unit, we would love to bring more young people along for the journey, so if your son or daughter wishes to get involved, all they need to do is show up or ask a member of staff for more details.

Weekly parade evenings are Monday 3-5pm. New members just need to meet us at the Hub to take part.

TRIPS

CAREERS CULTURAL TRIP



Students enjoyed an inspiring careers and cultural trip, exploring some of the North East's most iconic venues: Theatre Royal Newcastle, Newcastle City Hall, and the Great North Museum: Hancock.

The day offered a unique opportunity to go behind the scenes, step onto the stage at the Theatre Royal, and discover how these renowned venues operate.

Students met a range of professionals working in the arts, culture, events, and heritage sectors, gaining first-hand

insight into the variety of careers available across the North East.

Throughout the visit, students took part in engaging discussions about local career pathways, the skills employers value, and the many opportunities within the region's creative and cultural industries. The trip was both informative and inspiring, giving students a greater understanding of the exciting careers on offer while showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the North East.

It was an enjoyable and memorable experience that encouraged students to think about their future ambitions in a new and exciting way.

Mrs Patrick



TRIPS

Y10 CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY RESIDENTIAL



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

At the beginning of July, five Year 10 students had the exciting opportunity to take part in a two-day residential visit to Cambridge University.

Staying at Jesus College, Cambridge, the students experienced a taste of university life, gaining an insight into what it is like to study and live at a Cambridge college. During their stay, they took part in seminars and sample lectures, while also enjoying some well-earned downtime and a range of fun activities.

The visit also included a tour of another Cambridge college, with the highlight being a private tour of King's College, which was closed to the public during their visit. This unique opportunity gave the students an exclusive glimpse into one of the University's most iconic colleges.

Despite the exceptionally hot weather, the trip was a fantastic experience for everyone involved. It is hoped that the visit has broadened the students' horizons, inspired their ambitions, and encouraged them to consider progressing through school and into higher education in the future.



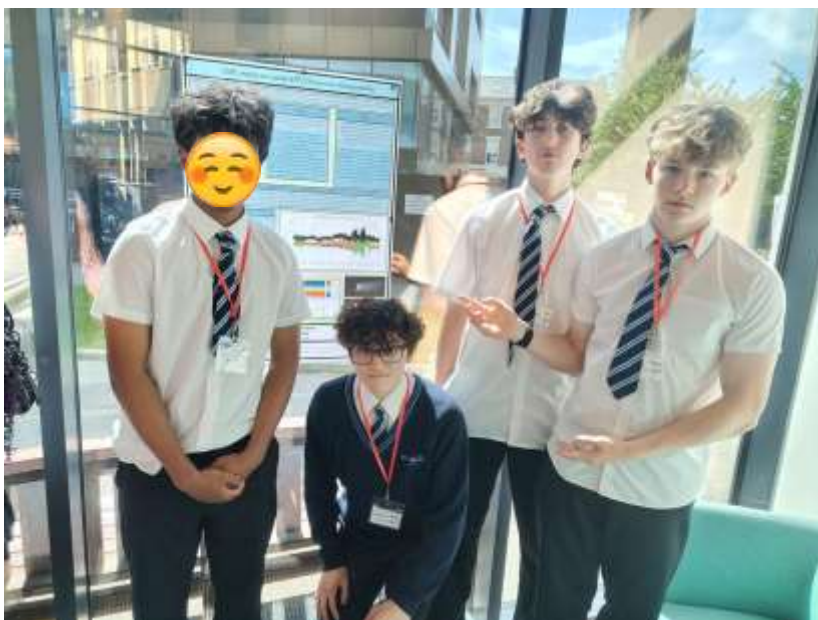
TRIPS

ORBYTS

On the 23rd June, twelve year 10 students from John Spence visited Northumbria University to take part in the annual [Orbyts](#) conference. Orbyts is a national project that brings together schools and academics to collaborate on real physics research.

The students had been working on their own research using real spacecraft data with the help of two academics - Ruben Doyle-Morgan and Callum Jones - from Northumbria University. Their research was focussed on the effect of coronal mass ejections (CMEs) on comets. They had to learn how to code using Python (a programming language) to analyse the data. On the trip they presented their findings in the form of an academic poster. They also had the opportunity to tour the Northumbria University Space Lab (where they held a real satellite!) and heard talks from organised speakers.

The students represented themselves extremely well on the trip. Dr Willet and Mr McKeen were very impressed with their maturity and willingness to get involved. They presented their work effectively, answered questions from real scientists and even quizzed students from other schools about the work they had done. Special mention should go to Abigail R and Isa H who were the stars of their respective teams. A career in academic research awaits!



TRIPS

GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK



Pupils at John Spence took part in an outdoor activity on Friday 26th and Monday 29th of June, as part of the GCSE Geography curriculum's fieldwork module. Mrs Pilkington, Mr Langley, Mrs Murray and their classes of students travelled to and collected primary data from Byker, the Quayside and Gosforth as part of their human module, where they analysed living conditions and housing quality in those respective areas. Students were given the task of trying to conclude whether *"Housing quality increases as you travel further from the quayside"*.

As part of their physical module, students were given the task of evaluating the data they collected to decide: *"Does Longsands need sea defences?"*. This was determined by observing wave patterns through wave counts and measuring beach profiles with specialised paraphernalia.

After interviewing one of the students, they said they particularly enjoyed the human section of the coursework, remarking the significant difference in housing quality between the three sites they surveyed. In general, it is clear that all of the students thoroughly enjoyed their trip away from the mock exams

Both days were, as a whole, largely successful considering the magnitude of pupils taking part on the trip, and each of the students gained the necessary knowledge to answer and deduce a conclusion to both statements comprehensively. Although students who travelled on Friday faced a wide variety of weather conditions, from heavy rain in the morning to extreme heat in the afternoon, making the trip more memorable for both the students and teachers.

In conclusion, the data the pupils collected determined that, in the human section, housing quality does improve the further you travel from the Quayside, and in the physical section, the students deduced that Longsands does need sea defences, as it is very vulnerable to coastal erosion processes, due to its beach profile and destructive wave archetype.

To carry out fieldwork, a lot of preparation and time is needed. So a huge thanks to Mrs Pilkington, Mr Langley and Mrs Murray, for their hard work and commitment.

By Isa H and Charlie A



YEAR 8 MATHS CHALLENGE

The 8X1 Maths class 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 the 13 students upon receiving your Silver/Bronze certificates, our best results yet. Well done to all of those who took part as it took a lot of resilience to even attempt the challenge.



YEAR 7 AXIOM MATHS UNIVERSITY TRIP



The Year 7 Axiom Maths students recently visited Newcastle University for an inspiring, educational day designed to spark a lifelong passion for Mathematics. The pupils dove into three core activities: an interactive lecture, a collaborative Maths Circle lab session, and an eye-opening presentation from an AI industry guest speaker. Throughout the event, our students represented the school brilliantly through their excellent contributions and high-level questioning. The trip perfectly rounded off a fabulous year as the first of hopefully many year groups to work with Axiom Maths. Very well done to all 8 students who took part, a credit to the school!

JED TALKS: STUDENTS TAKE THE STAGE

Last half term, our John Spence Educational Talks—affectionately known as JED Talks—reached an exciting milestone. After a year of attending inspiring presentations delivered by our staff, it was finally the students' turn to take the mic and share the topics they are truly passionate about.

We were treated to an incredible variety of presentations, with students diving deep into complex and creative subjects including Art, Psychology, the fascinating mysteries of the Uncanny Valley, and the evolution of Video Games.

Standing up to speak in front of peers takes incredible confidence, and every single presenter did an outstanding job. A special mention must go to Isaac M and Jamie-Lee G, who both went above and beyond by preparing and delivering two entirely separate talks on subjects they find fascinating.

Thank you to all our brilliant student speakers for sharing your knowledge and inspiring us all!

Y10 FIND THEIR VOICES



Year 10 Find Their Voices: A Day of Oracy and Confidence Building

A group of Year 10 students recently stepped off their regular timetables for an empowering, full-day workshop delivered by the Speaker's Trust. The day was dedicated to mastering the arts of public speaking, oracy, and communication.

Overcoming Nerves and Embracing the Stage

The morning began with a mix of anticipation, nerves, and apprehension. Public speaking can be a daunting prospect for anyone, let alone a large group of teenagers. However, the expert facilitator for the day, Dominic, utilised highly engaging, dynamic methods that quickly broke the ice and put everyone at ease. Within a couple of hours,

pupils were confidently telling stories to their peers, taking part in speech-based games and talking in front of the entire room without notes or prompts.

Our students were magnificent. Throughout the entire day, their behaviour was absolutely brilliant, and the supportive atmosphere they built for one another was wonderful to witness.

Key highlights of the day:

- **100% Participation:** By the final session, every single student had stepped up to perform a speech in front of their peers - an incredible milestone for those who started the day feeling anxious.
- **Progress:** Dominic was immensely impressed by the group's rapid development, noting their outstanding engagement and the massive leaps in confidence they demonstrated from morning to afternoon. The resilience the students demonstrated was highly impressive.
- **Essential Skill Building:** Students learned how to structure an argument, project their voices, use body language effectively, and manage stage fright. These qualities will serve them well in school and their life after school.



A Stepping Stone to GCSE Success

Beyond building lifelong self-confidence, this workshop served a vital academic purpose. The skills practised during the day directly support the work Year 10 are currently doing in their English Language lessons. We, as a department, are confident that the Year 10 students that took part in the workshop will have a much greater sense of confidence and belief in their own speaking and listening, which will hopefully be shown in their spoken language endorsements.

A huge congratulations to all of our Year 10 participants for stepping out of their comfort zones and representing the school so brilliantly. We look forward to seeing them bring these newfound skills back into the English classroom!

JOHN SPENCE LITERACY GOES GLOBAL



We were pleased to be contacted by Mr Sakanya from Kelmscott Senior High School in Perth, Western Australia, recently.

Our reading resources are accessible through the school website and Mr Sakanya was impressed enough to request access to a wider selection. Now, many of the short stories we offer to our students, to be delivered in form time and also as part of an independent reading programme, have been written in house by school staff. It's gratifying to know that the work of John Spence staff is being enjoyed on the other side of the world.

SPARX LIFE

So many people have accessed our Sparx Reader programme consistently this year. Regular reading builds vocabulary, structural awareness and technical skill.

The more a child reads, the more effective they are at accessing the curriculum, in a range of subjects, over their school careers. The benefits of reading in wider life are also enormous. At the time of writing, John Spence students had completed 4645 books through the Sparx Reader application this year. I'm sure this number will be closer to 5000 by the time this newsletter is published.

Huge congratulations must go to those students who have gone above and beyond; the impact upon their learning has been immense. Our top students in terms of Sparx Reward Points (SRP) achieved this year, at the time of writing, are Charlie K, Tyrese O, Macy-Leigh H, Alivia B and Sam Mc. That's representation from Years 7-10 as well which is particularly pleasing. Well done.

Mr Gibson

SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY REACCREDITED!



School of Sanctuary – Reaccredited for Three More Years!

We are incredibly proud to announce that John Spence has been **reaccredited as a School of Sanctuary for a further three years**, recognising our ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive school where everyone belongs.

This year has been packed with memorable experiences. In **March**, our students attended the **A Day of Welcome Summit**, working alongside schools from across the region to celebrate inclusion and belonging.

During **Refugee Week**, we welcomed **City of Sanctuary** virtually for **A Day of Welcome: Asylum Speakers**, giving students the opportunity to hear powerful personal stories and reflect on the importance of empathy and understanding.

Our popular **Day in the Life at John Spence** returned, with visitors experiencing lessons including **Science**, while our Young Leaders proudly showcased life at our school.

Students also enjoyed another fantastic **bike ride** with Walking With North Tyneside and attended the **Picnic at Segedunum** with **North East Museums**, building friendships through sport, culture and community. We rounded off the year with a special **Celebration Afternoon in July**, recognising the partnerships, friendships and achievements that continue to make our School of Sanctuary journey so special.

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported our journey. Here's to the next three years of welcoming, learning and belonging!



STRIKING AND FIELDING SUCCESS



Our girls have enjoyed a fantastic few weeks of sporting success in both rounders and cricket, with impressive performances across all year groups.

The Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 rounders teams have all excelled at the recent North Tyneside Rounders Tournaments. Each team remained undefeated throughout the competition, winning every match with some outstanding batting, excellent fielding and superb teamwork. Just as importantly, the girls represented John Spence impeccably, demonstrating excellent sportsmanship and behaviour throughout the tournaments. We are incredibly proud of every player.

A special mention must also go to our Year 11 rounders team as they prepare to leave John Spence. Over the past five years they have established an outstanding record, finishing as tournament champions on four occasions and runners-up once. Their commitment, talent and

dedication have been exceptional, and they have been fantastic ambassadors for the school. The PE Department will certainly miss this wonderful group of girls and wish them every success in the future.

Our success has continued in cricket, where the Under 13 girls were crowned county champions following an outstanding performance at the recent outdoor competition. This achievement comes after they finished third at the indoor county competition back in January, making their improvement even more impressive. The team will now go on to represent Northumberland at the regional cricket finals in the coming weeks, and we wish them the very best of luck.



Congratulations also to our Under 15 girls' cricket team, who have reached the county finals.

Well done to all of our players for their commitment, determination and the fantastic way they continue to represent John Spence both on and off the field.

Mrs Cockburn



ATHLETICS SUCCESS AT COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS



It has been another fantastic athletics season, with a large number of our students proudly representing the school at both the Northumberland Minors County Championships and the Year 9–11 County Athletics Championships.

Our athletes competed with determination, resilience and sportsmanship throughout the events, producing some outstanding performances against the best young athletes from across the county.

Northumberland Minors County Championships

Among the highlights were:

Ace H – Gold Medal, High Jump

Stan B – Gold Medal, Discus and Gold Medal, Javelin

Sophie W – Silver Medal, High Jump

Connor N – Bronze Medal, High Jump

Charlie C – Bronze Medal, Javelin

Several track athletes also impressed throughout the championships. Scarlett B qualified as the third-fastest athlete for the Year 7 Girls' 100m final, setting a new personal best of 13.4 seconds. Unfortunately, due to injury, Scarlett was unable to compete in the final but should be incredibly proud of her achievement.

Pixie H also performed superbly, securing her place in the Year 7 Girls' 100m final against a strong field of competitors. Eve R also impressed in the same event, narrowly missing out on a place in the final by mere milliseconds following a determined performance in the heats.

Max D represented the school in the Year 7 Boys' 300m, finishing fourth in his heat and narrowly missing out on qualification for the final.

In the field events, Emily C competed in both the Year 8 Girls' High Jump and Shot Putt, producing an excellent performance to finish 5th in the Shot Putt.

The Year 7 Girls' High Jump also saw strong performances, with Willow B jumping brilliantly to finish in an impressive 4th place, while Gracie D secured 7th place in a highly competitive field. Gracie also represented the school in the Year 7 Girls' Shot Putt, finishing in the top 10.

Jessica R competed in both the Year 8 Girls' Javelin and Discus, achieving top-10 finishes in both events. Violet A also enjoyed a successful day, securing top-10 finishes in both the Year 7 Girls' Discus and Javelin competitions.

In the Year 7 Boys' Discus, Archie M achieved an excellent 6th-place finish - an outstanding achievement at county championship level.

Amber R and Maisie R both represented the school in the throwing events. Amber produced an excellent performance to finish 7th in the Javelin, while Maisie finished 11th in a strong Discus field.



ATHLETICS SUCCESS AT COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS



In total, 17 students proudly represented both John Spence and North Tyneside at the championships. They conducted themselves impeccably throughout the day and should be immensely proud of their performances. Competing in challenging, very warm conditions, every athlete demonstrated tremendous determination, resilience and sportsmanship. They were outstanding ambassadors for the school, and the PE department is incredibly proud of the effort, commitment and positivity they showed throughout the championships.

Year 9–11 County Athletics Championships

Our older athletes also enjoyed tremendous success:

Ray B – Gold Medal, Intermediate Boys' Shot Putt and Gold Medal, Intermediate Boys' Javelin

Charlie A – Gold Medal, Intermediate Boys' Triple Jump and Silver Medal, Intermediate Boys' Shot Putt

Hayden T – Gold Medal, Junior Boys' High Jump

There were also excellent performances from **Finley T**, who competed superbly in the Year 9 Boys' Discus to finish in the **top five** at county level, and **Isa H**, who also achieved a **top-five finish** in the Year 10 Boys' Discus. Both students should be extremely proud of their performances against strong county competition.

Regional Inter-County Success

Following their outstanding performances at the county championships, Hayden T, Ray B and Charlie A were selected to represent Northumberland at the Regional Inter-County Athletics Championships—an exceptional achievement and recognition of their outstanding talent.

Competing against the very best athletes from across the North East, all three students performed exceptionally well. Ray and Hayden both secured top-six finishes in their respective events, while Charlie produced another outstanding performance to claim the silver medal in the Triple Jump.

A Fantastic Athletics Season

This has been one of the most successful athletics seasons in recent years for John Spence. Across both county championships, our athletes have won numerous medals, achieved personal bests, reached finals and earned the honour of representing Northumberland at regional level.

Every athlete has demonstrated commitment, resilience and outstanding sportsmanship, representing the school with pride both on and off the track and field. Their achievements are a testament to the hard work they have put in throughout the year, and they should all be incredibly proud of what they have accomplished.

Congratulations to all of our athletes on a truly exceptional season. We look forward to seeing even more success next year.



NATIONAL SCHOOL SPORTS WEEK



This year's **National School Sports Week** took place from **Monday 15th to Friday 19th June**, with our school embracing the theme of **Superpowers and Integrity**. Throughout the week, pupils explored how integrity underpins success in sport and everyday life, demonstrating honesty, respect, resilience and teamwork in everything they did.

We launched the week with a whole-school assembly introducing the theme before pupils took part in a packed programme of sporting activities, leadership opportunities and competitions. Students once again showed fantastic commitment, with many taking on leadership roles to support younger pupils from our local feeder schools.

A highlight of the week was the annual **Varsity Cup** on Wednesday, bringing together teams from across the PELE Trust in a brilliant showcase of sporting talent, teamwork and school pride. Every event was played in fantastic spirit, with pupils representing John Spence superbly throughout the day. Congratulations to **Ponteland High School**, who were crowned this year's overall Varsity champions.

We rounded off the week by celebrating the achievements, effort and leadership shown by our pupils, recognising those who truly embodied our Superpowers and Integrity theme. National School Sports Week was another outstanding success and a fantastic reminder of the positive impact that sport has on developing confident, respectful and resilient young people.



SPORTS CELEBRATION EVENING 2026

Our Guest

Jessica Brown



Fans
Player of the Year



**Sunderland
AFC Women**



100+
Caps

Fit For Life

John Spence Community High School

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

Held in a packed Sports Hall, the evening welcomed over 850 attendees, creating an electric atmosphere filled with pride, celebration and community spirit. The event combined performance, reflection, gratitude and awards, showcasing not only sporting excellence but also participation, leadership and personal development across all year groups.

This year, we were delighted to be joined by two inspirational guests who helped make the evening so

memorable.

We welcomed former pupil Lewis Gault, who is now studying Sports Coaching at Newcastle College and is a Level 7 referee, regularly officiating matches at Newcastle Academy.

Our main guest of the evening was Jessica Brown, former Sunderland Women's player with over 100 appearances. She spoke passionately about her experiences at the highest level of the women's game, highlighting dedication, professionalism and the mindset required to perform consistently at elite level.

The evening featured a vibrant mix of music, performances and a wide range of awards, celebrating everything from team spirit and dedication to outstanding individual achievement. One of the most special moments, as always, was seeing students take to the stage to receive their awards — each one richly deserved.

A huge congratulations goes to all of our award winners, and to every student who represented the school in sport this year. Whether on the pitch, in the gym, on the track or supporting behind the scenes, your contribution continues to strengthen our outstanding sporting community.

It was a fantastic evening and a fitting celebration of another remarkable year in school sport.

Helen Blair Award

Winner

Amy



Fit For Life



John Spence Community High School



Bobby Graham Award

Winner

Charlie



Fit For Life



John Spence Community High School



NCA Guidance to Parents: Children's Images Online

In line with the guidance to schools, the National Crime Agency and the Internet Watch Foundation have now issued guidance for parents.

AI is being used to turn ordinary photos of children into sexual abuse material. The National Crime Agency and Internet Watch Foundation have issued new guidance to help parents make informed choices about sharing images of their children online. It covers reviewing privacy settings, revisiting consent with your child as they grow, and what to do if you're worried.

The parent's guidance can be found here: <https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/ai-child-abuse-imagery-parent-guide/>

To help you stay informed about issues to do with online safety we will soon be launching a new area of our website.

