



George Stephenson  
High School

16 November 2023

**“Once you have read a book you care about, some part of it is always with you.”**

**Louis L'Amour**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you are all well and had an enjoyable half term. There has been a distinct change in the seasons as students have returned but it has been a pleasure to have them back and see them continue to give their best. I would also like to thank you all for your non-uniform day donations to the Bay Foodbank and the Walking With Centre before half term. They pass on their thanks and were once again humbled by your generosity.

A reminder that the school is closed for a training day tomorrow. We hope that Year 11 can take advantage of this as they prepare for their mock exams that start next week. We wish them all the best of luck. It is hard work, but by preparing well they will reap the rewards in the summer.

The rest of this newsletter has been given over to our librarian, Mrs. Spencer, to highlight and celebrate all the fantastic work and effort from our students over Literature Week. I hope you enjoy this small window into their experience.

For all the latest from George Stephenson High school please follow us on 'X'  
[https://twitter.com/GSHS\\_School](https://twitter.com/GSHS_School)

Wishing you all the best,

Mr. P. Douthwaite  
Headteacher

## #GSHS Literature Week November 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 2023

Wow! What a week we have had! Firstly, a huge thank you to all the students, staff and authors involved in making our Literature Week a success.

To build excitement for our Literature Week, Mr. Wallace and various staff members spoke to pupils during assemblies about the books that they have enjoyed, and tutor groups had access to book quizzes and author chats for form time inspiration.

### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> - 2 virtual author visits for Yr9 students.

**Steve Tasane** rapped, recited poetry, and explained to the students how he creates poems by taking key words from his novels. He read a passage from 'Hound of The Baskervilles' by A C Doyle and then asked the pupils to use the descriptive words from the passage to draft a poem about the hound. An exciting, inspiring workshop.



**Amy McKale** reciting her poem to the author Steve Tasane.



A Victorian crime 'Choose Your Own Adventure' with author **Matt Wainwright**

**Matt Wainwright** shared his inspiration for his historical fiction books and the pupils selected answers A or B in a Victorian crime 'Choose Your Own Adventure' to decide the fate of the protagonist Billy, from Matt's book 'Out of the Smoke'. Poor Billy did not fare well! An enjoyable fun session followed by a Q & A. If you would like to purchase 'Out of the Smoke' we are selling these books for £5, or his latest book 'Through Water and Fire' for £6. Please get in touch.

### Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> – Competition Day open to all years

We held a 'Book Review' Competition and 'Design a Front Cover' competition in the library. Students wrote reviews of their favourite books and reimagined the front cover of the well known 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo. We were blown away by the entries and so pleased that many of our students took part. It was a difficult choice. Well done to the winners, announced on Friday at lunchtime.

#### **Design a Front Cover**

1st Prize - Indie O'Donnell (£10 voucher & signed book) photo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - Holly Parr (signed book)  
Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - Rufina Maurice and Sarah Foggon (sweets)

#### **Book Review Prize Draw - randomly selected.**

1<sup>st</sup> Prize - Indie O'Donnell (£10 voucher)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - Mya Lees (sweets)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - Sophie Dunn (signed book)



### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> – Yr7 Seven Stories Trip

A group of Year 7 students had a fantastic day at the amazing Seven Stories – The National Centre for Children’s Books. The students took part in roleplay, creative writing workshops, had a white glove experience where they could handle original manuscripts and illustrations and we had the whole building to ourselves to explore the incredible exhibitions. As you can see from the photos below the students really enjoyed their day. Thank you to the team at Seven Stories for making it such a memorable day.



**Creative Writing Workshop**



**Original art work**



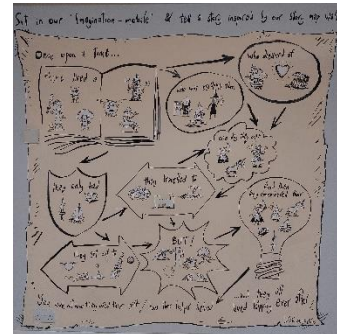
**Fun group activities**



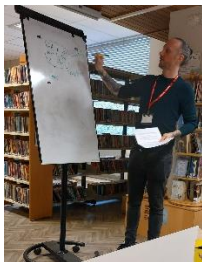
**Roleplay to release our imagination**



**Exploring the exhibitions**



### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> – Author Visit Matt Wesolowski Yr10 and Yr11



Matt is well known for his love of the macabre and this certainly went down well with our older students. Matt challenged our students to create a character and then ‘throw rocks at them’ – in other words set them some challenges, barriers, and obstacles to overcome. The pupils shared their writing and Matt was impressed with the creativity and enthusiasm shown. He kindly donated a signed set of his books to the library and is currently working on a TV series based on his work. We are lucky enough to say Matt is happy to visit again next year. Thank you to The Bound independent bookshop in Whitley Bay for making the introduction.



On Thursday evening Mr. Jarvie held a Macbeth lecture in the hall for our Yr11 students. It was a lively event showcasing our amazing English department's knowledge and Mr. Jarvie was in his element bringing Shakespeare's work to life.

### Friday 10th – Author Visit Dan Smith Yr8

Two groups of Yr8 students attended a writing workshop with well known author Dan Smith. Dan led a fun, creative session where students chose a numbered question at random and then had to write an answer, e.g., 'Describe the worst sandwich you can imagine.' The students really enjoyed releasing their inner writer and by the end of the session had all started their own story. Dan showed a short film 'The Black Hole' (YouTube) to illustrate how quickly good writing can hook the reader and how an author should make the reader ask questions. This was followed by a Q & A session and book signing. If you would like to purchase Dan's book 'Nisha's War' we are selling these books for £6 in the library.

Dan has written 12 books for young readers      Reading the opening paragraph to illustrate 'the hook.'



### Harry Potter Film Night

We ended our week of Literary events with a celebration of all things Harry Potter. The library was transformed into Hogwarts (Courtesy of a very kind teacher sharing her prized collection) for our Harry Potter Film event. Students watched The Philosopher's Stone, completed puzzles, were sorted by the Sorting Hat, and had photos taken with props and characters. We enjoyed some themed snacks and had a fun night!



## Meet the Staff



**Name:** Mrs. Spencer

**What is your role at GSHS?** I am the Librarian and Learning Resource Centre Manager.

**How long have you worked here?** I joined in September 2022 so I am still a new girl at George Stephenson, but I really feel like part of the team.

**What does your job involve?** I run the Accelerated Reading Programme with all Yr7 and Yr8 pupils, taking classes and supporting teachers. I listen to readers and recommend and select books of interest, all with the goal of developing the student's confidence and ability in reading. I work alongside the Literacy Team and English department to assess Yr9, 10 and 11 students to help progress their reading ability. The best part of my job is interacting with our students in the library at social time, at Book Club and when organising extra activities and events that help to promote reading for pleasure. I also maintain the library budget, research and order books and develop relationships with external providers to support the development of the reading attainment of our students.

**Do you have any hobbies?** I love to bake cakes, go for long walks, especially in The Lake District and spend time with family and friends. I'm also mad about films and my favourite genres are Film Noir, 80's and Period Drama. Finally, a good day involves many cups of tea, a cosy corner and a book.

**Favourite thing about GSHS?** I love the school culture, the team I work with and of course the children. They never cease to amaze me with their imagination and enthusiasm. No two days are the same!

**Favourite memory?** Even though I don't have a long history here I have some great memories already, including World Book day, a trip to NT Council with Politics students, witnessing all the hard work of the drama team behind the scenes at Mary Poppins and how festive and fun last Christmas was around the school.