



26 October 2023

Ambition Respect Community

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we come to the end of another busy half term at George Stephenson High school, and the days get shorter and colder we hope you and all of our students have a relaxing break and return refreshed and energised.

Ambition

We have grown our Modern Foreign Languages department at George Stephenson over several years. Some schools insist students take a language at GCSE however we have always wanted students to choose a language because they want to study one, not because they have to. Several years ago, after consultation with staff, parents and students we added Spanish to our French offer and redesigned the curriculum at KS3. The numbers opting to take a language at GCSE increased fourfold. The results the students achieve are fantastic, contributing to us being one of the top three schools for students achieving a grade 5 or above in the EBacc in North Tyneside. In addition, the department places a great emphasis on the cultural aspects of MFL.

This week we invited parents into school to learn more about the benefits of learning a language and how they could support their students with French. We had a language graduate from Newcastle University talk about her experience studying languages and living abroad in Paris on her 3rd year of her course. She discussed how parents could support their child which the parents found really useful and enjoyable.

Last week 48 Students from Y10-13 studying for GCSE and A level Spanish examinations went on visit to Barcelona accompanied by 6 members of staff.

It was a packed experience with Students sampling authentic Spanish cuisine at "La Boquería" food market on 'las ramblas' before walking down to the port area to visit the aquarium. They visited Parc Guell, a park designed by Antoni Gaudí and the home of Barcelona FC 'Camp Nou' and an evening was spent on the 'Barceloneta' beach, allowing the students a bit of time to relax and enjoy their surroundings.

They visited Barcelona's most iconic landmark 'Sagrada Familia' where they were able to also take advantage of the weekend market stalls, visited one of Barcelona's most impressive art museums to explore the shopping centre in the renovated Bull ring.

All of our students were role models for our core values as they were impeccably behaved and exhibited exceptional attitudes towards experiencing all that Barcelona had to offer them.

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Respect and Community

Yesterday I received this letter, and the author has agreed to share it with you. It is a shining example of our Respect and Community values. We don't know who this was but if it was your child, please could you contact the school to let us know.

Dear Mr. Douthwaite,

I am writing this communication in the hope that I am able to express my sincere gratitude to what I believe to be one of your pupils.

To give some background I shall explain that I had an accident and took a tumble in the very early hours of Monday morning this week, on my way for an early morning swim. The location was on East Bailey, just along from the school.

In falling I hurt my knee and was, for a while, unable to get up. I grew concerned about how long I might lie there on the pavement when through my peripheral vision I saw someone across the road on a bicycle. That someone was a young man (possibly anywhere between 14-16 years of age) and he crossed over the road and stopped to offer his help. I explained to him that he would not be able to help me up and, bless him, he said he could try.

Within minutes other adults came to offer assistance and I was eventually able to stand and then be taken home by a local resident. Throughout all of this time the young man remained with me and helped, along with the others.

I did not get his or any of my rescuers' details, but I am pretty sure he wore a George Stephenson uniform. If I knew who he was I would thank him in person, but as I do not I wanted to make you aware that I believe his behaviour and his concern and compassion were exemplary and to let you know he is a credit to the school and to his family.

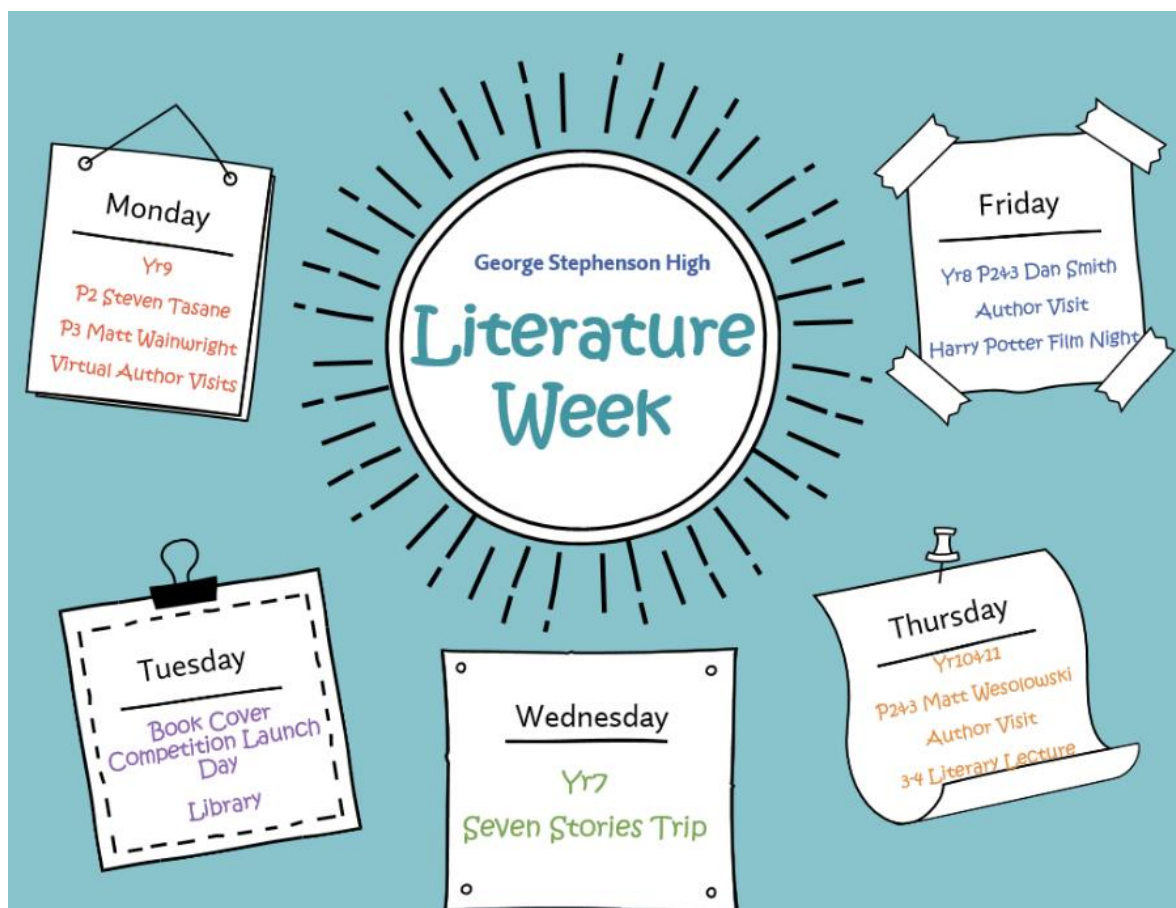
Too often these days people either bemoan our young people, or are reluctant to express appreciation and give credit when it is due.

So, please accept my thank you to the young man and to your school community. Please keep educating our young people in the same vein (academically and pastorally) and we shall all benefit from their growing to be courteous, considerate and productive citizens for the future.

The first week back after half term we hold our literature week with a range of authors and activities. This week we held assemblies where members of the leadership team read a passage from one of their favourite books to different year groups – it was a challenge to narrow it down, but I opted for Fever Pitch by Nick Hornby, other year groups had Charlie and the Chocolate factory and James and the Giant Peach.

The important message was to find the book that resonates with you. As Nick Hornby says, 'Find a book that will enthrall you – not what you think you should be reading!'

We also hosted a fantastic Halloween read this week after school in our library, although Mrs Spencer said her reading from Dracula may have been a bit too scary looking at the student's faces...



Tomorrow we are holding a non-uniform day. I am always humbled by the generosity of our community and know this will be another occasion well supported so thank you all in advance for your support.

Donations for this week are for The Bay and Walking With (refugee centre in Wallsend)

The Bay have advised us that the following items are their most sought after: Tinned mince, steak, chicken; Tinned ham; Tinned hot dogs; Tinned/packed custard; Jam; Pot noodle; Individual custard/rice pudding; Snacks

The Walking With Centre are in great need of clothing, especially winter clothing, clothing for children and school uniform (shirts, trousers, skirts). If you have any clothing that you would like to donate at any time during the year (not just non-uniform days), it would be gratefully received. This can be done by dropping items off at our Main Reception.

Continuing with the uniform theme we would like to thank students and parents for their support with maintaining our high standard with regards to uniform. As you know, we made some considerable changes to uniform last year to improve affordability and provide additional choices of skirts, trousers, and footwear. We are delighted with how students present themselves every day; they look smarter than ever.

Last week our first official post-pandemic results were published by the DFE, and we are pleased to say they matched the excellent results we achieve last year and before the pandemic which is a credit to the work of staff, students and your support as parents. We continue to offer a broad curriculum with a wide range of enrichment opportunities and option choices and still achieved higher average attainment grades than North Tyneside and England with some excellent destination data. We are proud of everyone's efforts.

As I always say, the students are our biggest advocates so I will leave the last words of this half term to one of our ex-students who I was delighted to receive a video from last week. James is aiming to be the youngest director of his company in Dallas, Texas and he says how George Stephenson High School helped him achieve this. Seeing our students grow and succeed is the ultimate reward for everyone's hard work and we also hope it hope inspires our next generation of young people. Please click [here](#) to see the video.

Wishing you all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Douthwaite'.

Mr. P. Douthwaite
Headteacher