



28th April 2023

“If we are to encourage future generations to build a better society, free from discrimination, I believe that we must teach tolerance and inclusion from an early age”

Doreen Lawrence

I hope you had an enjoyable Easter break. I am sure many of our Year 11 and 13 students spent a great deal of time revising and preparing for the summer exams as the exam season gets under way. We wish them the very best of luck and remind them that we are here to support them all the way through if they need any help at all.

Most of this newsletter will be given over to Mr. Tyson this week as he has been delivering assemblies to all of our students marking the 30th anniversary of the death of Stephen Lawrence. Mr. Tyson used to teach Stephen so these have been particularly poignant.

Well done to our Year 11 boys football team who, despite a great equalising goal by Ben Mordue narrowly missed out on winning the County Cup final against Whitley Bay High School 3-2. To concede a goal in the last minute of injury time felt crueler than going to penalties but the team should be proud of their achievements.



We would also like to wish our Governor Katrina Moffat best wishes next week. Katrina has one of 400 people who have been invited to Westminster Abbey to be present at the coronation of King Charles. To be part of such an historical occasion is quite remarkable and is also a fitting recognition of the work Katrina does for the young people in our area.

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Thank you to several of our Eco-Enthusiasts who organised a litter pick on the last day of last term. They are making an excellent contribution to the school environment and are looking to extend this further. It is hoped that all of our young people take on board their personal responsibility around the positive contribution they can make to the environment and shape the future. The team strongly believe that if everyone makes small changes there can be a hugely positive impact.



Today we also host our first session for parents on how to support your child's mental health. I personally found these sessions really interesting and useful and are something we are pleased to provide them to a wider audience and will look to run in the future if the demand is there from parents so we hope they are successful and look forward to the feedback we receive from those that attend.

Once again, we are pleased to say that we are full in Year 7 next year and are proud to be the school of choice at the heart of our community. I am look forward this term to meeting the new parents and students who will begin their exciting and rewarding journey through George Stephenson High School.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Douthwaite". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mr P. Douthwaite
Headteacher

Instead of the usual 'Meet the Staff' this week Mr Tyson has contributed the following in memory of Stephen Lawrence



In my assemblies this week I have been speaking to students about the racist killing of Stephen Lawrence in Southeast London 30 years ago this week. This is always a difficult assembly to deliver as it is very personal to me. Stephen was in my school's Sixth Form at the time, and I was his physics teacher. I remember the shock and horror of being told about his murder on that Friday morning as I was due to teach him that afternoon. His killing had a devastating effect, on me, the school and the community, and this only increased as the horrific nature of his death and the errors in the subsequent police investigation came to light.

I have also talked a lot about what Stephen was like as a person. He was a quiet and shy boy when I first knew him, but he had a growing air of confidence about him, and he was beginning to find his feet socially as he moved through sixth form. He was friendly and hardworking and had a relaxed, trusting nature. He was certainly not aggressive or someone who would go looking for confrontation – quite the opposite in fact. Stephen had an ambition to be an architect and his parents were strongly supportive of him in this ambition and were keen for him to do well at school. I well remember talking to them about this at a parents evening earlier that year.

Although some of the things I have talked to students about are uncomfortable to hear I think it is important that students understand the real story of Stephen's death and why it became a significant event in our country's history, leading to changes in policing, changes in the law and the official recognition of 'institutional racism' in the police force, as acknowledged in the Macpherson report published in 1997.

I have tried to end my assemblies with a positive message around Stephen's legacy, not only regarding remembering Stephen as a person, but about their role in building a kinder, better future, in which we don't make judgements about people based on their appearance, where they are from, or the colour of their skin. These messages are as relevant today as they were 30 years ago, and I have shown students a video produced by the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation which have provided a link to below. I would encourage you to watch this for yourselves and talk to your child about it. Living out the messages in this video would be a truly great way to remember Stephen and one which I'm sure the Stephen I knew, would have approved.

[Stephen Lawrence Day - A Legacy of Change - FULL VERSION - YouTube](#)

Mr. S Tyson