



11 November 2022

**“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them.”**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Today, like the rest of the country, we held a two-minute silence to mark the end of World War 1 and reflect on the sacrifices made for others around the world.

We were also honoured to have a group of young people joining other members of the community to pay their respects on behalf of our school at the White Swan Centre this morning.

Kindness and caring for others are values we actively promote and encourage at George Stephenson and from the sheer number of donations you gave to the school for ‘Maggies’ it is something that is important to you too. We have received a huge number of emails and cards from families who received the packs the students put together that were incredibly touching and humbling. I thought I would just share one example so you can see the impact your donations made.

*“Good Evening, I just wanted to email to say a HUGE thank you to your pupils for the lovely thoughtful toiletry bags they gave to the Freeman hospital recently. My Dad is currently a Cancer patient there going through chemotherapy treatment. It made his day to think that the youngsters even thought of doing something like this. Their generosity and we guess, the time and efforts it would have taken to get the donations together and prepare the bags are greatly received. We commend them for this and want them to know, we are very grateful. The message on the bag said ‘To make you smile’ and I can confirm, as well as my Dad and I, the number of patients I saw being handed the bags, the smiles spread amongst the ward and albeit it was just a ‘small’ gesture, it meant the world to them. Once again, THANK YOU to all involved. Sending much love”*

At George Stephenson the personal development of students is important, and the professional development of colleagues reflects this. On Friday (18th) we have an in-school training day where colleagues are looking at how we can support students’ mental health with workshops including anxiety, trauma, eating disorders and low mood.

As part of my next few updates I would also like to give you an insight into some of the key development areas we are focussing on as a school this year.

In this update our Assistant Headteacher in charge of Teaching and Learning, Miss Bailey, outlines the work we are developing around literacy and metacognition.

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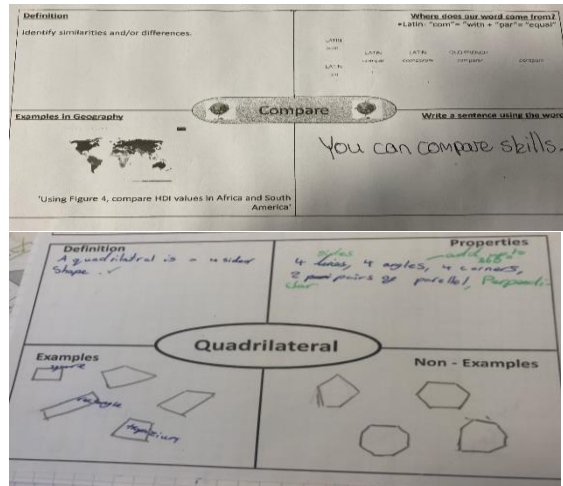
**Headteacher:**

Peter Douthwaite BSc (Hons)

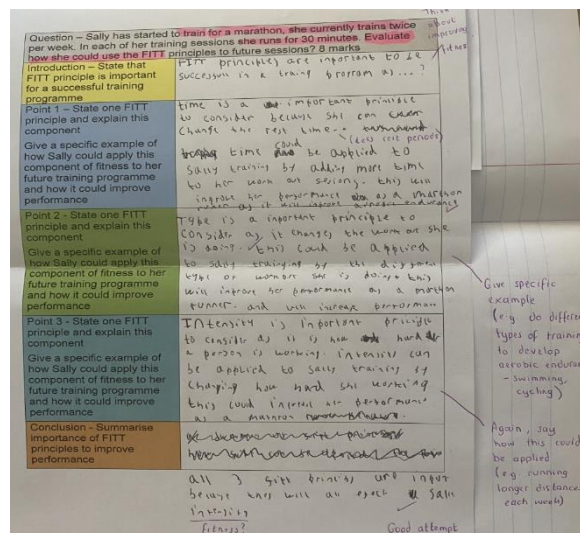
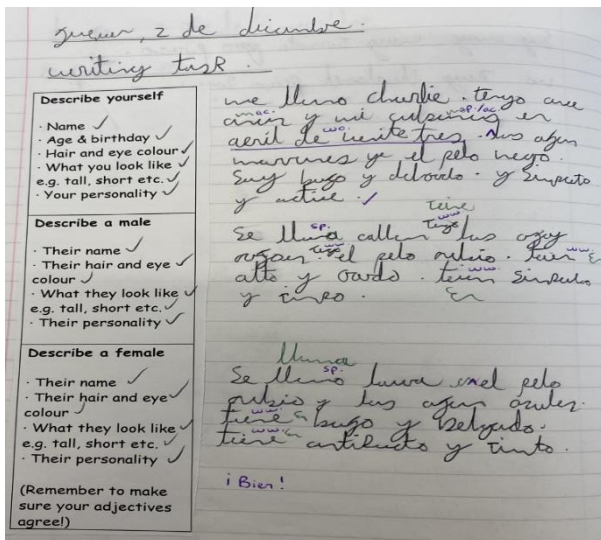
**Deputy Headteacher:**

Kathryn Williams BA (Hons)

Our teaching and learning strategy is key to us providing excellent teaching with high aspirations and standards for all. Improving all student's reading accuracy is at the heart of our current approach. The tutor reading programme is one of the ways we are aiming to improve reading accuracy. This is when the tutor reads to their form class. The class then discuss the themes of the text and the meaning of new words. The aim is to develop all student's vocabulary, comprehension and confidence when asked to read an unseen text. Tutor reading also creates a calm, positive and purposeful start to the school day.



Across all KS3 subjects we are also explicitly teaching tier 2 vocabulary through a range of different methods including explaining the meaning of the word, looking at where the word has come from, providing examples of how to use the word in different contexts and when not to use the word. Tier 2 vocabulary are words that occur frequently across different contexts and are more common in writing than in speech e.g., process, contrast and sequence. This will develop all student's understanding of texts and allow all to make greater progress across subjects.



Metacognition is another key area. The aim of metacognition is to develop independent learners who are aware of the strategies that they use to learn. For example, understanding each step taken to solve a problem in Maths will make it easier to solve an unseen problem as the student understands what to do at each stage to solve the problem. To support students to become independent learners it is important that teachers model their thinking, provide model worked examples, allow time for guided practice and time for students to practice

independently. Embedding these strategies and others into our teaching practice will allow all students to make greater progress creating independent learners.

Supporting every student emotionally, developing their character and values whilst achieving their best academically, underpins everything that we do at George Stephenson High School.

To finish, I would like to thank you for your insightful feedback on the future vision and values for the school, what we do well and what you think we could improve. This feedback is now being collated and I will share this with you in a future newsletter.

I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Douthwaite'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mr P. Douthwaite  
Headteacher