



25 November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a busy fortnight with governors' meetings, Maths Week, Anti-Bullying week, Mock Exams and an excellent training day on our school improvement priorities. One of the highlights of my first term has been talking with parents and working with teachers and governors and seeing first-hand the dedication across our community to do the best by our students.

It is difficult to see people working hard to achieve more with less. Recently our governors wrote to our MP, Mary Glyndon, expressing our frustration at the lack of funding for schools and the impact this will ultimately have on our students and asked her to impress upon the government the importance of improving funding for schools in the Autumn Statement. She replied to say she would raise it at the presentation of the financial statement last week where it was pleasing to hear Jeremy Hunt commit more money to schools saying:

"Being pro-education is being pro-growth. But providing our children with a good education is not just an economic mission, it's a moral mission."

After several years in which education has often felt low down on the priority list – this seems like a significant step forward. The devil will be in the detail, but our young people really do deserve to be supported more than students were 12 years ago.

In my previous newsletter I mentioned the training staff were involved in last week. The focus was on Self-Regulation and supporting student's mental health. I attended sessions on Low Mood and Anxiety. The mental health team were excellent and the morning session about the adolescent mind provided a thought-provoking backdrop to the day. It was informative as a teacher but also as a parent. I think there is a lot for us to learn as parents and sharing this information further was something that our new parent governors mentioned in our governors meeting this week. We have asked the mental health team to run some sessions after school for parents. We will inform you of the dates once they have been arranged. I would strongly recommend you sign up if you can.

Last week was anti-bullying week and we had a range of activities taking place to highlight our responsibilities towards each other as members of a community and encourage positive behaviours.

- Anti-Bullying Week lessons have been delivered as part of the Health Education Curriculum.
- Anti-Bullying Week activities have been led every break time by the CSI team which have included:
- Anti-Bullying Graffiti Wall
- Kindness Tree
- Messages of inspiration given out

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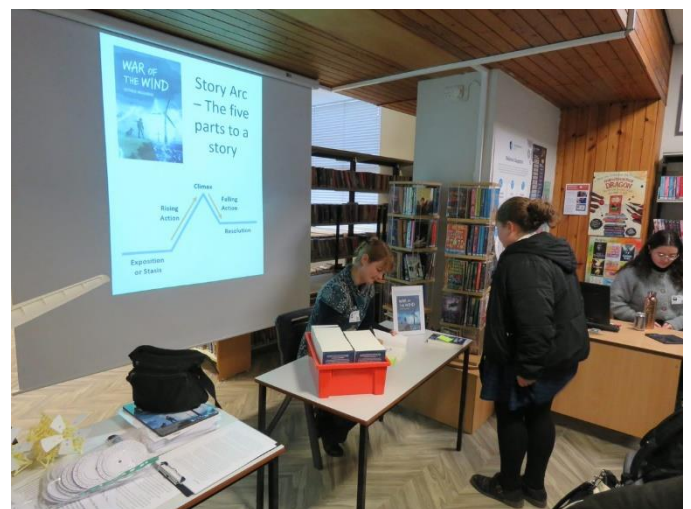
- Arts and crafts for Reaching Out
- A Buddy System in which students who may feel isolated during social times can talk to our Buddies who make themselves highly visible with rainbow lanyards



The Celebrating Student Individuality Team (CSI) team delivering an anti-bullying assembly.

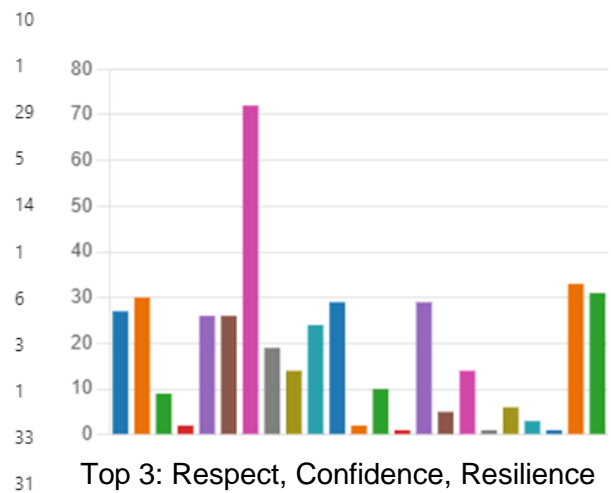
If you as a parent/carer would like further information and support on Anti-Bullying Week please go to: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/parents-and-carers>

Our promotion of literacy and a love of a reading was enhanced by an experience organised by our fantastic librarian Mrs Spencer on Thursday. We were proud to welcome children's author Victoria Williamson to George Stephenson library for a book talk, in conjunction with Seven Stories. Pupils were nominated to attend and enjoyed listening to excerpts from her fourth book, 'War of the Wind'. Victoria said she was "very impressed by the imagination and enthusiasm of our students".



Students received a signed copy of Victoria's book

Thank you to all the parents who completed the survey on our strengths, areas for development and values. This is an ongoing piece of work which we have just finished with students too. I will share more details with you next term when we pull all our findings together but in the meantime a summary of the 'most important values' question below



Results from Parents Values Survey

Well done to our very own Year 8 'Lionesses' who won five out of their six matches in a tournament at Marden Bridge last night. Watch out Beth Mead! Fingers crossed, Trippier, Pope and Wilson are as successful.



Finally, I would like to say well done to all the students who have been sitting mock exams. Their conduct in the exams has been exceptional as always and the invigilators have once again been impressed by the high standards of behaviour and courtesy they have shown. I hope their results reflect their efforts and they use the experience as a springboard for success in the summer.

I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Best wishes,

Mr P. Douthwaite
Headteacher