



HT2 Autumn 2020

Principal's Christmas Message – Mrs Corbett:

Last year I wrote of Christmas and New Year being traditionally times to reflect on the past and look forward to what the future holds in store. Little did we know that 2020 would be a year like no other and would lead to children experiencing disruptions to their education, development and well-being that we would never want to impose on them but find ourselves without our usual choices because of a global pandemic.

I know I speak on behalf of the staff body in sharing how proud we are of our students. They have demonstrated a great sense of warmth towards each other and at George Spencer Academy there has been a clear sense that 'we are in this together'. On a daily basis our students have shown strength, determination, and kindness. Each child has had their own unique experience this year and we have aimed to support every child as individuals while also aiming to provide them some sense of normality. Our students have continued to focus on their future, both in terms of their academic achievements and drive for realising their dreams. Our Ethos of Excellence remains central to all that we do and the challenges of this year have highlighted how excellent our students are. Many of our students are going above and beyond in modelling our core values. Our half termly virtual Excellence Assemblies have seen so many of our students being awarded for: striving to be the best they can be; being supportive; showing resilience; respecting individuality, being polite, fair and honest; and for having a love of learning. So far, this academic year 943 students have been awarded in these areas through their virtual Excellence Assemblies, with a further 274,300 positive PARs points being given out by teachers for demonstrating these values in lessons.

George Spencer Academy continues to be a happy and vibrant place with the students at the heart of everything we do. Our website includes information about our Curriculum Statement which we use as our compass to map out the direction of the school and to also plan our formal and wider curriculum offer with the happiness, energy and innovation of our school woven into this. If you haven't yet had the chance please do visit our website and have a read.

Our partnership and communication with parents and carers remain a fundamental part of our vision. We are developing our ways of keeping you informed this year and have asked our students to be at the centre of this. We have recruited a group of student journalists who have been working hard to launch The GSA Times. Our first edition is available on our school website: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oYPT2vFGovAmipbY-ET602G7Xa3MTemM/view?usp=sharing>

Please also follow us on twitter to keep up to date with the latest information, activities and celebrations in the day to day life at George Spencer Academy. https://twitter.com/George_Spencer
May I wish you and your family joy, peace and happiness this Christmas. We will look forward to welcoming our students back in the new year to new opportunities and new possibilities.

Best wishes and warmest thoughts, Mrs Corbett.



COVID-19 track and trace of positive cases from Friday 18 December until Wednesday 23 December:

Following on from the letter sent to parents and carers on 9 December we will continue to track and trace confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 from Friday 18 December until Wednesday 23 December.

If your child receives a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result please inform the school via our general info@george-spencer.com email address. In the email, please provide your child's name, when they first developed symptoms and your contact number. A member of our leadership team will then get in touch with you to start our track and trace process.

Once we have completed our track and trace process, we will inform parents if their child has been identified as a 'contact' to the positive case via text and email. The text will ask that the email is read to gain details from Public Health England on the actions you would need to take and the date for the end of the self-isolation period for your child.

Update for parents/carers of Y9 Students – the GSA Guided Pathway Process:

After the Christmas break, we will begin the important process of guiding our Year 9 students through their pathway of subject choices for study in Year 10 and 11. The process will launch with assemblies for students in the week beginning 11/01/2021. Students will receive a booklet with subject and pathway information, and parents will receive a link to a presentation which explains the process. Before half term, students will be able to gather information on the subjects they are interested in during normal timetabled lessons. Parents will also be able to request information to help with the choices, both in terms of finding out about particular courses and in terms of checking how well a student might be suited to a particular subject. These steps are designed to replicate as far as possible the face-to-face events which normally make up the Pathways process but are not possible at this time due to current restrictions. Subject choices will be submitted by parents via a Google form, with the deadline being Monday 15th March 2021.

Mr Allen, Assistant Principal - pallen@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk

Did you come to George Spencer as a student?

If so, we would like to hear from you. We are looking to develop our Alumni so that past students can keep in touch and current students can benefit from your experience.

If you feel that this is something that you would like to get involved in, please email us at info@george-spencer.com with your contact details and we will be in touch.



George Spencer Digital Library Service:

We are very excited to launch a brand new, online digital library available to all our students. Simply download the app (search: *eplatform by wheeler*) and/or follow the link. <https://georgespencer.eplatform.co/> As well as popular fiction books, there is also non-fiction and well-being categories to support our students. Using their school login details, it is quick and easy to get logged on and there is no need for remembering extra passwords. They can browse the selection of books in their age range, choose to sample it and then download one book or audiobook for 14 days. Audiobooks could be shared with the whole family too. Please encourage your son/daughter to have a look and give it a try over the Christmas holidays and contact Ms Stevens if they have any requests for books that are not available.

Miss Jenkinson, Vice Principal

Developing our Community presence:

Mr Spears linked our Y12 tutor groups with other year groups to develop our community presence. Y8 have been collecting sweet treats (selection boxes etc) for the foodbank – Canaan Trust. Y9 have been collecting non-perishable food for the homeless, to be given to homeless shelters and a Sikh gurdwara who provide meals for the homeless. Y10 have been collecting items to be given to care homes, such as puzzles, hats, gloves, mugs, dvds, books... Y11 have been busy collecting food for the Long Eaton and Sawley food bank. Sixth Form have been collecting both food and nappies for the Broxtowe Community project.



Well done all, a great effort.

Student Leadership:

This half term we have launched a new student leadership structure to provide more opportunities for our students to learn and develop leadership skills and qualities. Over the course of the last few weeks, each form has elected two form representatives that will sit on the year council for their year group. Form Representatives (or 'Prefects' in Year 11) will play a key role in collating the views and opinions of their form and feeding back to their Director of Learning who will oversee Year Council meetings. Two members of each year council will also be elected to the Student School Council who will collate and respond to the views and opinions of the student body. Over the last couple of weeks, staff and students have also been involved in an election process for a Head Girl and Head Boy from Year 13 who will lead the Student School Council. Votes will be counted and the winners will be announced at the end of term. Student leaders will play an important role in developing the work we do within the school and wider community as well as providing meaningful student voice that can support the school in its ethos of excellence. Mr Dakers, Assistant Principal



FrOGS – Mr Platts:

Did you know that FrOGS (Friends of George Spencer School) are a volunteer charity body who raise money for projects within school? Most of the current FrOGS don't even have children at our school anymore! They have raised an amazing £54930.25 which has been donated to school projects. As you will be aware, raising money at this time has been severely limited due to covid.

How can you help?

When you are shopping online, with Christmas coming or just in general, could you shop via the links below:

[Easy Fundraising](#)

[Amazon Smile](#)

FrOGS receive a donation for each purchase you make but you pay the same as you would do normally. A win, win!

We are also always looking for new volunteers. If you are interested in supporting the school and joining the FrOGS group, then please contact Laura Richmond (Chair) –

friendsofgeorgespencer@gmail.com

For more information, please visit the school website: <http://www.george-spencer.com/frogs/>

Parents' Forum – Mr Hartley:

Thank you to the parents who attended Monday's virtual Parents' Forum, it was fantastic to be able to engage with everyone even though it couldn't be done in person. It was great to hear their feedback in an open and positive way on how we can further develop our rewards system to ensure all students are included. I look forward to meeting with them again in the new year to discuss other topics, we will advertise and share the link with all parents in order for all parents to take part if they wish. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day – 11th December:

Students raised an incredible £885.84. The additional competition this year for the best/most imaginative home-made Christmas Jumper seemed to go down very well and there were some fantastic examples.



Well done everyone.

Y7 develop pen pals link with residents in a local care home:

At George Spencer Academy we aim for our students to become "well-rounded" adults who will make a difference in the community and to the lives of others. With this in mind, Y7 have been exploring links with local care homes with a view to creating long term pen pal links with the residents. After much care, thought and hard work, the students have created some excellent packs which we will be delivering to the care home before Christmas. We hope that this will bring a ray of sunshine to the residents and form the basis of a meaningful lasting relationship.





Y7 – Mr Smith:

This has been another half term of excellence for students in Year 7 and myself, Miss Sipson and the team of Learning Managers continue to be hugely impressed with the way students have started their journey at George Spencer Academy. This second half term has been about making the most of opportunities - students have had the opportunity to put themselves forward to form part of our school's new Student Leadership structure, the opportunity to build positive relationships and create lasting memories with their classmates and Learning Manager during Teambuilding Sessions, the opportunity to celebrate excellence during our celebration assembly and the opportunity to be rewarded for demonstrating the Core Values of "striving to be the best we can be" and "showing resilience" during our first two Excellence Weeks. Year 7 recently joined forces with 6th Form to write and send Christmas cards to care home residents, and a number of students went to the extra effort of making their own cards to send. On Tuesday, students arrived to school early to put together their packs to send to the residents in time for Christmas. We are immensely proud that, in a year which has been so challenging for so many, our students have dedicated so much of their time, effort and energy into making this a special time of year for others. A very "Happy Christmas" to all students in Year 7 and their families from the Year 7 Team.

Y8 – Mr Richardson:

I would first like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas. At this time of year, it is important we take a moment to think of the things we are thankful for and it is with great pleasure that I am able to convey to you all, my thanks for the positive attitude and effort demonstrated by the students this half term. Once again, the students have proved an unwavering resilience to an ever-changing climate and produced some fantastic work. I was so pleased and proud to see these endeavours rewarded with a massive 24,208 positive PARs points, received this half term. When we return in January, the students will be given an opportunity to cash-in their points for some great prizes. We have also seen the students take to the ballot box and vote in their representatives for the form and year council and I look forward to seeing what fantastic ideas they come up with. No doubt it has been a long first term back after the upheaval of lockdown, but please take heart that the students are fully deserving of a much-needed break. Have a great Christmas, stay safe and we look forward to seeing you in 2021.

Y9 – Miss Johnson:

As the end of the year approaches, the Year 9 students have been reflecting on and sharing their experiences and accomplishments this year. The cohort have continued to impress me daily with their positivity, drive to succeed and resilience to overcome challenges. During our 'Excellence Week' this half term an additional 2,096 points were awarded to Year 9 students for displaying our core value, 'we strive to be the best we can be'. In total, the Year 9 students have earned an impressive 50,000+ positive PARS points from September – December and will have the opportunity to cash these in for some great prizes in January. The cohort have always been great at making the most of the opportunities available to them and we were thrilled by the high number of Year 9 students who put themselves forward to be part of our 'Form Representative' team. Well done to the 20 students who were successfully elected to be part of the final team and the 2 students who will contribute to our School Council. Finally, I wish all of our students and families a Merry Christmas and I look forward to welcoming you back to school in the new year.



Y10 – Mr O’Toole:

Year 10 have had a fantastic term and should be hugely proud of all their achievements since returning to school in September. The level of focus and engagement that myself and Mr Kerry have observed when visiting Year 10 lessons continues to be great source of pride.

It has been clear that Year 10 continue to strive to adhere to our Ethos of Excellence on a daily basis and demonstrate a love of learning and determination to achieve that will be fundamental to their future success. This half term Year 10 have been awarded 23,972 positive PARs points by teaching staff, in total 50,800 positives since September. This is a fantastic achievement and illustrates just how much Year 10 have been going above and beyond in the classroom. The cohort also recently took part in the Christmas jumper day in support of the charity Save the Children, and have been donating items for a local food bank.

On a personal note it has been an absolute pleasure working with the cohort and I look forward to their continued good work in the new year. Take care and have a wonderful Christmas.

Y11 – Miss Wilkinson:

After another very busy half term for Year 11, I continue to be incredibly proud of the effort, focus and commitment shown by year 11 students. We began, in November, with PPE examinations which students worked very hard at in more difficult than usual circumstances. There were some excellent individual performances and as a year group they performed brilliantly. Students took part in a Study Skills morning last week, which allowed them to reflect on their learning so far and set targets for the coming months, as well as learning how to revise effectively. We have also seen excellence within our newly-elected Student Leadership team of 26 prefects and two Student Directors, who will be working hard over the coming months on a range of issues. It has been really pleasing to see the number of PARS points for positive achievements and behaviours rising throughout this half term. Over 44,000 points have been awarded since September and more certificates and rewards will be distributed after the Christmas break. Many students have also made strong applications to sixth forms, colleges and apprenticeships, showing excellent dedication and drive. The excellent aspirations of these young people are incredibly pleasing to see – the Learning Managers and I are very proud of them all. We look forward to their continued progress in 2021.

Y12 – Mr Spears:

There really has been a hype of activity in Year 12 this half term! During registration, each form has been preparing for RAG week. Whilst not being able to prepare for RAG week in the usual way, the form groups have done a fantastic job in organising the collection of food products, items of clothing and Christmas cards to be sent out in the community and to help those who are vulnerable, isolated or lonely this Christmas. I want to pass on my personal thanks to everyone in Year 12 for the role that they played in organising this. Not only have Year 12 continually shown commitment to their timetabled lessons they have also shown commitment to other projects offered to them: The Brilliant Club, Young Enterprise, HE+ (organised by Cambridge University), the UKMT Maths Challenge and the EPQ. A group of our computer scientists have taken part in the cyber centurion competition, where they have progressed through to round two! This half term has also seen two more students being awarded their Silver Duke of Edinburgh award, showing great commitment to their local community and their own love for learning. Merry Christmas and a Happy New year to you all!



Y13 – Mrs Fawcett:

What a fantastic first term, the focus and dedication to their studies has been second to none and they have truly embodied our Ethos of Excellence. Whilst pursuing their studies they have also been focussing on their plans for progression Post-18. Many UCAS applications have been complete, with a number of students being involved in online interviews ... new to them and us, but all coped well following some practice. Offers have already been received for some courses and I am sure this will be followed by many more in the New Year. We are continuing to support students with their Apprenticeship applications and it is pleasing to see that the number of positions available are starting to increase again. Of course, we also have students that are considering their options and we are here to help with their plans. PPEs were completed in early December and students were well prepared, and organised, even those that could not join us did their examinations at home. Finally, our annual RAG week event focussed on supporting local community projects and it was great to see our Sixth Form students in their fancy dress outfits on Friday 11th December and donating many items for the Broxtowe Community Projects and the Haven Church Food bank. Wishing all of you a peaceful and restful Christmas and a bright New Year.

OUR CORE VALUES



We strive to be the best we can be.

We show resilience.

We are supportive.

We respect individuality.

We are polite, fair and honest.

We have a love of learning.

ETHOS OF EXCELLENCE