





Welcome!

Thank you for picking up the new issue of The GSA Times, giving you another glimpse into life at GSA and our community. In this issue you can find: features on wellbeing and careers, alongside the galleries showcasing student work and news about what's been happening around the school,

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and if you have any feedback or ideas for future features, we would love to hear from you. You can find details of how to contact us at the end of this issue.

- The GSA Times News Team, May 2021

News from around the school...

Our front cover picture is by Katie Fecowycz who created the winning entry for the Principal's Challenge for Year 7, to creatively show your understanding of the school's ethos and values. Mrs Corbett was impressed by the hard work and creativity shown by Year 7 and it was very difficult to decide the winners! Second place went to Stevie Curtis and Lucy Riley for their fantastic Core Values jigsaw, with third place being awarded to 7DHY for their wall poster. Special mention went to Saisha Mamboinga and Rosey Malins for their 'We are GSA' rap. The summer term challenge will be for Year 8 and we hope to showcase some of their work in our next issue.



7DHY's wall poster - on display in the library/EN1



Stevie & Lucy's Core Values Jigsaw

Well done to:



- The students in Y9, Y10 and Y12 who have completed the National Scholars Programme/Brilliant Club
- Anya Y8 on reaching the semi-finals of the #CyberFirst Girls Competition
- Finley Y11 competing in R2 of the Perse Coding Competition
- The Y12 team of students participating in R3 of the #CyberCenturion competition
- Grace in Y9 for her amazing March where she raised raised over £500 for @combatstress by walking/cycling 70+ miles, and earned a bronze CREST award on a Humanitarian Engineering course with the @SmallpeiceTrust.
- Oliver, Matthew and Martha in Y7, Nick and Revan in Y9 for their winning entries in the World Book Day '5 Word Frighteners' competition.
- Erykah and Allie in Y7 and Imogen and Olivia in Y9 for their winning entries in the World Book Day 'Rock and Roll' Challenge.



Never too young to make an impact

by Anya

Age doesn't have to be a barrier for doing amazing things and these 3 people show that. All of these people go to local schools and are under the age of 16. I think these are all brilliant people and great examples of how you don't need to be an adult or be famous to make an impact!

Jay Martin is a Year 11 student who does regular podcasts as well as setting up and running The NG9 News. You can find the podcasts on <https://anchor.fm/backboard-podcast>



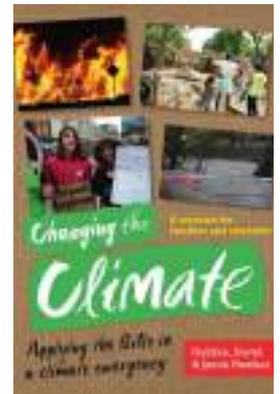
"My podcasts are about anything and everything whether it be politics, sports, comedy, anything! We've interviewed fighters, former MPs and CEOs amongst many others. Being a teenager you just want to do everything while you can. What motivates me is the idea of making an impact on someone, evoking emotions and getting to know people.

I've liked podcasts for a while, and loved talking for all my life, so I thought why not combine them? I'm not afraid to meet new people, and it's super enjoyable! Also, NG9 News came around because of my new passion for media, and getting to know people and getting to know our community is good fun.

It sounds cheesy, and everyone says it...Work hard, do what you love and don't give up. If something isn't right, adapt, if something is difficult solve the problem, if you give up, you remove something from your life that had huge potential."

James Hawker is a Year 9 student who has written and published a book (during lockdown) with his parents about climate change.

"My book is called Changing the Climate" and explains, all the main areas of Climate Change and what you can do to help prevent it from getting bad so quickly. It includes around 12 tips every chapter of what you can do to take action. The tips are my main part. There are many things young people can do to help act against Climate Change. Key ones include flying around less, walking or cycling instead of driving for short journeys, eating less red meat, re-using shopping bags and donating money to Eco-friendly charities. This all helps to reduce your carbon footprint. The troubles of Climate Change and hearing we must act very soon (before 2030!!) before it's too late are my main inspirations for this book. If you want to do something great and follow your passions, 'make sure to act, experiment with ideas, believe there will be a good outcome and don't give up."



Lowri Moore is a Year 7 student who wrote a letter to Disney asking them to make some princesses with glasses. When they didn't respond, she took it to the next level by writing a book about a princess who has glasses.

"I think it is an issue if someone is watching/reading something and they think that something is wrong with them because the people on the tv show/film/book look or sound perfect and amazing. All I wanted to do is show people that no matter what people might say about you or no matter how you feel about yourself from maybe watching a program with someone who seems perfect, you are beautiful and you don't have to worry about what other people think of you because you are amazing inside and out.



I think a way that young people can help with this is knowing they don't have to be ashamed of who they are and also they can talk to other people maybe not in their friendship group and just get to know other people for who they are and just be yourself not a different person who you think you need to be.

My inspiration was when I was younger I didn't feel beautiful because the Disney princesses and other character in films didn't wear glasses and they were classed as beautiful. Then when people had glasses on they would be a nerd or a geek and when someone was transformed its normally with glasses at the start and then they have no glasses and suddenly they're beautiful, and I just thought that if that is how I felt maybe other people would feel that too. So that was what gave me the inspiration to try and make a difference. I am also in the early stages of writing a second book!"



Alumni in the spotlight!

Ben Ward used to attend George Spencer Academy, and is currently pursuing music at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He is an inspiration to many with his own band, exceptional skill on the sax and piano and a musical in progress all at the age of 20! We asked him some questions about his musical life:

When did you start your band and what is it called?

My band was started in February 2018 and is called The Ben Ward Big Band.

Why is music important to you?

Music is my whole life! I think it's such a great way of telling stories and expressing emotions. I'm so lucky to be able to do what I love for a job!

How has your band suffered during the pandemic?

We haven't been able to rehearse or gig for a whole year! It's been such a shame but we're happy that we can get back to concerts soon.

What instrument(s) do you play?

I mainly play piano in theatre and saxophone in jazz, but I can also play the clarinet and flute.

Can you tell us about the musical you are writing and what inspired you to write it?

It's called 'Upside Down' and is about learning to accept yourself and growing up happy! I've always loved musical theatre and wanted to give writing it a go! It's such a great way of expressing yourself and your emotions through a story.

What would you say to teenagers who want to follow their passions?

It's always possible! Work hard and believe and you can do whatever you want to do!

Thank you for your time, Ben! You can visit Ben's website at www.benwardmusic.co.uk



Calling all GSA former students...

The GSA family are keen for all ex students with LinkedIn profiles to join our Alumni network. Here is the link if you would like to add us to your educational profile:

[George Spencer Academy | LinkedIn](#)

You can also contact pburrows@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk for more information about the alumni network.



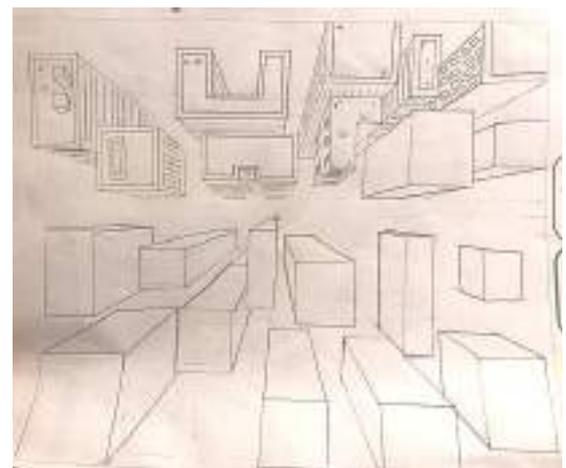
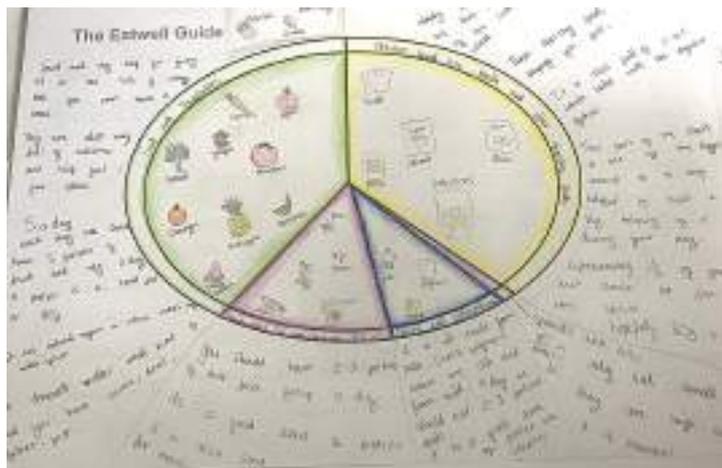
Our Spring Term Artwork Gallery....



From top, L-R:
Y7 Ocean Life, Y9 Everyday Monsters & Doodlebomb project, Y10 Photography, Y7 and 8 entries for the Royal Mail Stamp competition



Examples of some of the projects Design & Technology students have been working on this term...



From top, L-R:
Y10 Hospitality: Airline Food and portion control, Y10 Food & Nutrition work, Y7 Drawing skills & healthy eating project



Interview with Mr Burrows

by Anya, Y8

What do you do as head of futures?

My role is to support the curriculum and pastoral teams to prepare students for successful employment and life as an active citizen. I'm a link between school and the workplace looking to develop and build links to create exciting opportunities for students to learn and become informed about their future. More than ever, students need to be adaptable to the changing nature of the workplace and be able to 'develop skills and learn on the job'



What advice would you give to students making their options?

Be aware of the workplace/industry and what they need to progress. Employers need skills but more importantly they want people with the right attitude and application. One phrase I keep hearing is "we can teach them the skills but we can't teach them to care", it is about finding your interests, passions and wanting to be inquisitive to learn more.

Sometimes people might think that their learning isn't as important when they aren't doing GCSE work, what what you say to these people?

For the very small numbers that don't view learning as important, I would say this; "Where you end up tomorrow is based on your efforts today!" My sporting background has been a big influence in all aspects of my life. The idea of giving your best effort and seeing what you can achieve has been a driving force for me. Surround yourself with people/friends who celebrate your efforts and don't accept you being average.

Many people may be uncertain about their future careers, what would you say to help them?

Take advantage of the resources on offer to support your explorations. Every student has a personalised UNIFROG account which allows you to search a wide range of careers and routes into them. Recent additions include webinars, MOOCs and other methods of learning about work and skills. From Year 9 onwards, students gain access to personalised guidance discussions in order to prepare for transition points in learning.

It is normal sometimes to not have fixed ideas about what you want to do, many adults also experience this after doing a job for a number of years. Very few people have a plan that 'comes true' which is why I want people to focus on developing their SKILLS. The path of life is not straight, so be ready for the bumps and turns that come your way. It is true when we say that we are preparing some of you for jobs that haven't been invented yet. The simplest example I can give is the skill set required by a car mechanic will change as we introduce more electric vehicles to the marketplace. At the same time, some current jobs will be phased out as the world evolves.

Is there anything else that you'd like to say to students regarding futures and careers?

Talk to us - we want your input and feedback to this process as it is there to support YOU. Be open to ideas/change but get to know yourself, your values and what is important to you – then you'll fly!



Wellbeing and Mental Health

by Emma, Evelyn and Sophie

Living in the 21st century as a teenager can be exhausting. There is so much you have to deal with everyday and sometimes, it can get too much. School is an important part of our lives and staff are trying to help, but there's nothing they can do if you don't ask. We interviewed Mr Steane (part of the wellbeing team) to find out how we can help each other and ourselves



What effects can mental health have on school life?

It has infinite effects from academics to social life within school. It often blends into family life so there really is no set point into where mental health affects you and whereabouts it does not. With things being unaccounted for and not facing your problems, problems can escalate to uncontrollable points and it is our job to ensure this does not happen, and for you to be comfortable in your skin and comfortable talking to people who can help you.

How can George Spencer improve the wellbeing of its students?

By talking and hearing other people's point of view on this. Raising awareness of mental health is extremely important as this can help people feel more comfortable talking and help realise the school is a safe environment to discuss your problems.



The Pop-up library visited the year group bubbles during Mental Health Awareness Week with a selection of books and resources

How can students help each other?

Start by being non judgemental and being kind to your fellow classmates. Put yourself in other people's shoes. Avoiding negativity such as bad friends, bullies... Always remember that 2 wrongs do not make a right, be the bigger person. The problem cannot be fixed by what caused it.

How can you help yourself?

- boost your self-esteem whether that is surrounding yourself with good people or being productive
- self care and exercise
- keeping yourself busy and finding a hobby
- spending time with family and talking

You are never alone, and sometimes just talking about your feelings really helps. Remember, you can talk to your friends, family, teachers, pastoral support team and your head of year. You can contact our Wellbeing line 0796 203 860, or if you don't feel like talking to someone you know, there is a childline 0800 1111 and many other options. Take a look at the Wellbeing page on the Student Hub where you can find lots of links and resources that may be helpful. Speak out and find help, likewise be a helpful friend to someone else.

Have your say!



Student leaders are reviewing the school's provision for mental health and wellbeing. As part of the project they are asking all students to complete a questionnaire:

<https://forms.gle/7FC8UxyUMnfZFt6W6>

They will then use this information to explore ways in which our provision can be further developed and improved. The deadline for completing the questionnaire is **Sunday the 6th June.**



Have your say.

by *Harriet*

I would like to talk to you about Bullying, which is a really strong topic for me.

Bullying is not okay, it never will be. I don't know why people find it so appealing to bully someone, because all it does is bring someone down to bring someone else up. I will probably never get why people bully, but what I can do is spread a positive message that bullying should stop.

Bullying is not tolerated in George Spencer. Just because you don't like someone doesn't mean you have to bully them. People have grudges, but that doesn't give you the right to bully someone, does it? You don't know what goes on in someone's head or in someone's personal life, and even if you do know what they are going through, does that give you the right to spread that or bully them? I should think not.

Bullying can lead to mental health issues. It could also lead to physical harm where people can start to hurt others too.

I think there are a lot of people who want bullying to end, but it will never end if we don't do something about it. We may not be able to stop bullying everywhere and forever, but we can do something about what goes on in our area in today's generation. All I'm asking for you to do is speak up if you know someone's being bullied, help them out, help them get to the light at the end of the tunnel. If we all do that, we can accomplish many other things too.

If you do need help, or if you want advice for someone who is being bullied you can call 0800 1111 or 0808 1000 143 .

You can also visit these websites for help and advice:

- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/bullying/>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying.htm>
- <https://sites.google.com/george-spencer.notts.sch.uk/studenthub/wellbeing/help-advice>

Thank you for reading, and I hope that you will take in my message.

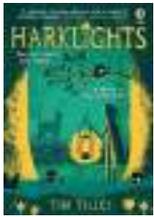


If you have a subject that you feel strongly about and would like to have your say, let us know and we may be able to feature it in our next issue.

Use this link: <https://forms.gle/tbWrMJAAGJ6XDXZW9> to go straight to our contact form or email us at gsatimes@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk

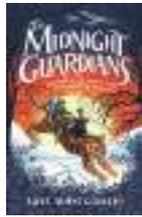


#GSAReads Recommendations: Our reviewers said...



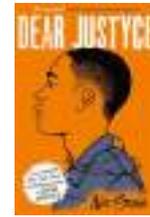
**HARKLIGHTS
BY TIM
TILLEY**

"This is a great book with a gripping plot. It tells the tale of a young boy named Wick and his dreadful life in a matchstick factory, until it all turns around when Wick is given a new life. The beautiful illustrations on the pages also give this book a magical feel and transport you to the enchanted kingdom of the Hobbs."



**THE MIDNIGHT
GUARDIANS
BY ROSS
MONTGOMERY**

"The blurb was instantly captivating and the images and colours on the cover made it look exciting. The characters were believable and relatable."
"It's quite sad in places but can also be very funny as well, so you get bits of everything!"
"I liked the mix of fantasy, magic and adventure and then setting it within a realistic time during our history."



**DEAR
JUSTYCE BY
NIC STONE**

"This was a hard hitting read but there were also elements of humour, and love and friendship. It was very emotional to read."
"I think everyone should read these books so that they can try and understand what happens. Racism and injustice happens everywhere and we all need to do better."



THE NEWS TEAM FOR THIS EDITION WERE:

Year 8: Anya, Emma, Evelyn, & Sophie

Year 9: Harriet

Staff Support: Ms Stevens

Photo credits: Miss Johnson & Mrs Tapp

The news team are already at work on Issue 3 which will be published in July 2021.

We would love to hear from you if you:

- are a student and would be interested in joining the news team
- have an idea for a feature
- have something you would like to share in the Creative Corner
- would like to give us some feedback on this issue.

Contact us



Scan the QR code or use this link: <https://forms.gle/tbWrMJAAAGJ6DXZW9> to go straight to our contact form

You can also email us at gsatimes@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk