



HT2 Autumn 2021

Message from the Principal: Mrs Corbett

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of another year and we reflect on the school's achievements and priorities our thoughts always come back to the wonderful students we have here at George Spencer Academy.

It is firmly rooted in our ethos that it is our students who drive our decision making and our students who, in turn, are at the forefront of our minds as we take the time to reflect and look to what the future will hold. Our Ethos of Excellence has become more widely understood and recognised within our student body over this past year. Our students know that 'excellence' does not mean perfection or getting it right all the time. 'Excellence' at George Spencer Academy is striving to be the best versions of ourselves through living our core values of support, resilience, respect, kindness and a love of learning. Through our core values we have together created a 'new norm' in our school since September by building on our strong foundations to provide ambitious opportunities for our students post lockdown and post government restrictions.

We have found it heart warming to see so many of our students engaging in our extracurricular clubs and sporting teams, after a year of not being able to provide these important opportunities. We have found it humbling to listen to many of our 6th Form students mentoring Year 11 students to support their progression and achievements in their GCSE subjects. We have found it encouraging to watch our students rehearse after school for our next school production in January. We have found it rewarding to observe the impact of students across the school having their first ever Excellence Days, with them gaining strategies on how they learn which have then been applied to their formal curriculum and lessons. In summary, we have found our wonderful students to be truly excellent, with bright futures ahead of them.

Next year is an exciting time for our school as we aim to be reaccredited as a World Class School in the spring term. The rigorous process for this prestigious award is led solely by the students and is awarded based on the students successfully developing World Class characteristics.

Through our reflections we recognise that we want to 'shout louder' about the memories being created, the opportunities being grasped, and the accomplishments being achieved and so from January we will be developing our communication with our families. Twitter will play a key role in this so if you are not already following us on Twitter we urge you to do so. https://twitter.com/George_Spencer

I conclude my Christmas message for thanking you as parents for everything you are doing at home to support your child's success in school and for working with us to shape them into the wonderful young people they are. 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 for more ambitious opportunities.

Best wishes.



Message from the Head Boy and Head Girl:

As 2021 comes to a close, it's a great opportunity to look back on the year and recognise all that we have achieved. Despite the challenges that the year has presented, it's important to acknowledge everyone's hard work over this difficult time. As a school, we have continued to succeed through lockdowns, adapted to on-line and socially distanced learning, and built a stronger school community.

However small your achievements this year, we encourage you to celebrate them this Christmas and use the last year as motivation for improvements to come. For instance, seize the opportunity to become involved in the school's new partnership with local charities, or the many extra-curricular activities now being offered. The pandemic has affected everyone in different ways, and we are proud to see how George Spencer has offered varied support. At a time like Christmas, it is important to help everyone be together. We hope that the new year brings lots of joy and everyone has a restful break.

Tom Playford (Head Boy) and Beth Wild (Head Girl)

On-Site Testing:

Mr Dakers, Assistant Principal

A reminder that on-site lateral flow testing will take place when students return to school. Testing for each year group will take place on the following days:

Wednesday 5th January: Y11, Y12, Y13

Thursday 6th January: Y7, Y10

Friday 7th January: Y8, Y9

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please provide consent on the link below. If you already provided consent for onsite testing in September then you **do not need** to complete the form again.

<https://forms.gle/pqehda9CZne5Yk9A7>

Home testing kits were distributed to students last week. In line with government guidance, we are asking all staff and students to do a lateral flow test before returning to school on the morning of or evening before **Wednesday 5th January**.



Charity and Community Update:

Mr K Hartley, Assistant Principal

As outlined during the 'Parent Information Evenings' at the start of term a focus for this year, is for our students to take a more active part within the local and school community. We are really pleased with the progress made during this term with the contributions our students have been making both in and out of school.

All Year Groups have selected a charity they would like to support this year, they will be organising events to help raise awareness and support for their chosen charity. This includes students have the option to 'cash-in' some of their PARS points for their charity and a donation will be made on their behalf. The charities selected by each year group are:

- Year 7** - Young Lives Against Cancer
- Year 8** - Cancer Research UK
- Year 9** - Nottingham Wildlife Trust
- Year 10** - Pasic Cancer Support
- Year 11 & 6th Form** - Broxtowe Youth Homelessness

Our students have made a fantastic effort with fundraising this term. It was great to see so many students get involved with our non-uniform day for Children in Need. Many students chose to go the extra-mile to 'Grow their Pound', organising bake-sales, guess the sweets and many other activities. In total we raised £1,583.73 for Children in Need. Most recently we supported Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day, there were some fantastic jumpers on display, as well some 'unique' homemade designs.

Throughout December each Year Group has also been involved in some festive fundraising for local charities:

- **Year 7** have been collecting items for SEWA Day's Christmas shoebox appeal. This charity provides Christmas gifts to the more disadvantaged members of the Nottingham community.
- **Year 8 and 9** have been donating their old books for the Children's Book Project. This charity redistributes books to children who do not have regular access to reading material.
- **Year 10 and 11** have been collecting items for local foodbanks as part of the Mayor's Christmas Appeal. We have been partnered with Montrose Court foodbank in Stapleford, who will be distributing all our donations.

In addition, the Directors of Learning have been liaising with the NHS Community Trust to look at how our students can be involved in supporting vulnerable groups within our local community. They are all really excited at the opportunities and looking forward to supporting these as we move into 2022.

Thank you to all of you who have donated and supported our charities and fundraising this term. We have had a phenomenal response. We are really looking forward to continuing to make a difference in the community as we move into the New year.



Excellence Day 2:

Mr Furber, Assistant Principal

Last Wednesday 8th December saw the whole school engage in our second 'Excellence Day' of the year and after the first one focused on strengthening the students understanding of how they learn effectively, this one concentrated on the transferable skills and attributes that students need to develop to be excellent 'team players'. The core skills of supportiveness, co-operation, communication and creativity were developed through a series of teambuilding activities in Years 7-10 with students constructing different structures with a limited range of resources and then evaluating the process through the using the 'Plan, Do, Review' cycle of learning. Paper towers, bridges and devices to protect eggs adorned the school in the morning with the afternoon used to equip students with strategies to develop their confidence and motivation. Sixth Form students engaged with a wide variety of workshops that launched the VESPA programme with Year 12 and covered a range of topics in Year 13 including UCAS support, coping with exam pressure and making revision effective through the strategy of the 'Power Hour'.

Year 7 students had the opportunity to do something a little different, and while the P half undertook a 'murder mystery' investigation with the Science department, developing a young legion of budding forensic scientists, the S half worked with the Walesby Forest Activity Centre in a day long sequence of teambuilding and outdoor activities. The students were fantastic, with the Walesby staff praising their behaviour, enthusiasm and resilience (given the blustery conditions) and this was reciprocated by the students' positive experiences of the day as they participated in activities like bush craft, laser tag and circus skills.

We look forward to welcoming the Walesby team back on the next Excellence Day for the turn of the P half of the year group.

All in all, it was a brilliant day that exemplified how teamwork makes the dream work.





Futures – Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG): Mr Burrows, Director of Futures

This term has seen the return to some 'normality' in the Futures world. Our 'Futures Focus Week' at the end of November allowed the faculties to showcase 60+ careers. Showing the wealth of links between learning and earning through our **career ideas** focused week. Y8 and Y12 forms have embarked on the first phase of our work with Skills Builder to enhance student understanding of their skill set for the workplace. Welcoming Deborah and the Futures+ team back on site for personalised guidance sessions is a big support to the student body. We have also seen the post-16 taster day where we welcomed Confetti, Rolls Royce, NTU Brackenhurst and Nottingham College to provide insight to making informed choices. 48 Y11 students were also lucky enough to explore post-18 opportunities at a careers fair at the Magna Science centre near Sheffield. We are planning for 2022 to be a 'cracker' of a year and we'd love you to support us. Contact: pburrows@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk if you would like to get involved.

Family Christmas challenge: Have a go, as a family, at some of the Skills Builder challenges on the [HOMEZONE](#) (click on the link to enter the site).

Next term sees the launch of the National Citizens Service offer for Y11 and a mock interview day. Sixth Form will be supported to develop and enhance their online profiles to network with employers and industries. Y7-9 will have opportunities to develop their understanding of the working world through a variety of routes including their UNIFROG accounts. Y10 will begin the transition to looking beyond GCSEs and where they might want to take their talents. This offer will be further enhanced by the new Nottinghamshire South careers hub which is due to be launched as part of the Careers and Enterprise Company expansion.



Y7: Ms Wilkinson, Director of Learning for Y7

Year 7 have successfully completed their first term at George Spencer Academy and have embraced our Ethos of Excellence in all areas. Students support each other in form time, in lessons and in out of lesson activities and we have had a great uptake to our extra-curricular clubs. Our Excellence Day last week focused on team building and developing group work skills, which saw our students flourish and have a really enjoyable day. Lessons are focused and productive and during recent assessments, students are able to demonstrate all that they are learning. It is great to see the progress they are making and their love of learning.

Our form representatives have been leading form discussions, focusing on community projects and environmental issues in and around school. We look forward to seeing how these develop. Charitable endeavours have also been fantastic this term with Children in Need, a shoe box appeal, Christmas jumper day for Save The Children and we finish December with our sponsored Race to the North Pole, raising money for the year group's chosen charity Young Lives Vs Cancer. I am really proud of how our students show compassion and care for others. We are currently 'cashing in' Pars points, where students can exchange positive points gained with prizes and rewards. These are very well deserved. 7KSY and 7CDE won our recent Principal's challenge; a presentation on an inspirational person who has demonstrated resilience. They have won a non-uniform day on Friday for their efforts – well done everybody in these form groups.

Next term, we will be developing our community links further, organising visits and opportunities for our students to see the impact of their money-raising efforts. 'P' half of the year will experience the Walesby outdoor activities on our third Excellence Day and we will be celebrating the achievements of all students from Half Term 2.

Finally, I would like to thank the parents and carers of Year 7 students for their support and help in ensuring that the young people in our cohort are dressed smartly, well-organised, completing homework and generally prepared for their time at school. I wish you all some lovely family time over the holidays and I look forward to seeing students fresh and ready for another term in January.



Y8: Mr Smith, Director of Learning for Y8

This half term students in Year 8 have continued to make the most of the opportunities available at George Spencer Academy, with a particular focus on developing as a community and as part of a community. In Year 8 students initially nominated, then subsequently voted for, their Year Group Charity – Cancer Research UK – and have already spent time in Form Time Learning discussing how to raise awareness and fundraise within school for their charity in the year ahead. Students were set the challenge of ‘growing their £1’ for the recent non-uniform day for Children in Need, including one group of students in Year 8 who organised and set up their own cake sale where they raised over £150 for the charity, an amazing achievement. Students have recently been generously donating books for the Christmas Book Drive, and also had the opportunity last week to exchange their school jumpers for Christmas Jumpers for a £1 donation for Save the Children.

This half term students were also set a new Principal’s Challenge, this time to put forward as a tutor group their entry for the ‘Year Group Hall of Fame’ – selecting and researching an inspirational person who has demonstrated courage and resilience and in turn gone on to achieve great things. It is testament to the level of effort and dedication of students in Year 8 that three winning groups were selected and able to wear non-uniform before the end of term as a reward for their excellent entries.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to say thank you – to Parents and Carers for your support since the start of Year 7, and to students in Year 8 for being excellent and making the most of being at George Spencer Academy. I wish students all the best with the rest of your journey at George Spencer Academy and hope to continue to work with you over the months and years ahead.

I hope you have an excellent Christmas and a restful break.



Y9: Mr Richardson, Director of Learning Y9

It has been a very positive half term. The cold and wet autumnal weather hasn't dampened the spirits of the students who have fired up their drive and determination to make the most of this oh so important time. The students have been amazingly focussed this half term but at the back of their minds was their GCSE Options, and when we return the students will be making those important decisions. I am pleased that this was not lost on the students and they have been fully engaged in their subjects ensuring they can make an informed decision in February.

The positivity demonstrated was not lost on us and we rewarded the students with a massive 24,554 positive PARs points. They have been given the opportunity to cash those points in for some prizes or keep hold of them until next term. We nominated our Year 9 charity this half term which is the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. It is hoped we can get down to Attenborough Nature Reserve in the New Year and support this worthwhile cause. We also saw the second of the Principal's challenge and once again the student rose to this task. The students had to come up with an inspirational leader, and as much as I was overlooked, two worthy nominations of Malala Yousafzai and Nelson Mandela were, and as a consequence two forms were given a non-uniform day. Remembrance Day also saw our forms create some amazing poppy designs that highlighted the sacrifice given by those in all conflicts.

As we come to the end of another half term, I wish not to sound like a stuck record. But once again I say to you how proud I am of the effort, resilience and the joy I see, day in day out by our students. They never cease to amaze me and they have rounded this year off on a high. In my opinion no-one needs to be on Santa's naughty list this year.

Wishing a Merry Christmas to you all. I hope that you and your family have a festive holiday and see in the New Year with new hopes and dreams.



Y10: Miss Johnson, Director of Learning Y10

As the end of the year approaches, the students have been reflecting on their experiences and accomplishments throughout the Autumn Term. We have had an exciting half term with a variety of activities, opportunities and events taking place in the last seven weeks. I was hugely impressed by the high number of entries that we received in response to the Year 10 'Principals Challenge' where students reflected on their experiences, recognised their inner champion and shared their stories with us. Mrs Corbett and I thoroughly enjoyed reading the entries and were thrilled to reward twenty copies of Marcus Rashford's book "You are a champion" to inspire and support students on the next steps of their learning journey.

During Form Time Learning, students have explored the topics of mental health in the media, stigma and stereotypes, working patterns, commuting and working from home. In addition, our Form Representatives have led sessions and gathered student voice for their current project focused on our environment and community. Last week, the cohort experienced their second Excellence Day that was focused on teamwork, motivation and self-esteem - I really enjoyed visiting the tutor group and seeing fantastic examples of teamwork taking place with students encouraging, motivating and supporting one another.

We have recently launched the 'GSA Excellence Award' to celebrate students' fantastic achievements both within and outside of school; we are looking forward to hearing about the way students embody our core values to fulfil the criteria for this prestigious award. The cohort continues to impress me with their effort in lessons, their enthusiasm to take part in the opportunities on offer and the resilience they have shown with their GCSE studies thus far. When we return in January, the students will be undertaking fundraising activities for their chosen charity, which I am pleased to announce is the Nottinghamshire based children's cancer charity, PASIC.

In Form Time learning, the Year 10 students will be starting the 'Relationships' topic in Personal Development and further exploring GCSE Pod and revision techniques during Computer Time sessions.

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.



Y11: Mr O'Toole, Director of Learning Y11

It has been another very positive half term for Year 11 who have been working incredibly hard. Back in November the students sat their second set of PPEs, as we continue to prepare for the exams in the summer. Again, the students did us proud, demonstrating a real focus and determination to be successful. Alongside this, our Strive sessions are also proving popular and it has been fantastic to see the cohort making the most of the opportunities for extra support and guidance on offer. Our Excellence Day this half term was Maths focused for Year 11, as the students spent the day with Maths specialists to gain invaluable extra input and support. Year 11 have also been busy supporting a number of worthy causes, for example Save the Children through our Christmas Jumper Day and Broxtowe Youth Homeless, a local charity that we will continue to support throughout the year. Year 11 have been awarded 22485 positive PARS points this half term and enjoyed sporting success with the boys' basketball team winning the Broxtowe Borough Council Tournament.

When we return after Christmas Year 11 will again be busy. We will be continuing preparation for the March PPEs and as a Year group we will be continuing to support our local community through fundraising led by our Student Council. Furthermore, in January Year 11 will receive their Progression Interviews with our Leadership Team, to ensure each of our students receive targeted support and guidance with their post-16 options.

Have a wonderful Christmas and see you in the new year.

Y12: Mr Spears, Director of Learning Y12

I can't quite believe that we are here. It feels like only yesterday since I was writing last half term's bulletin message.

Year 12 this half term have been engaged in a number of activities delivered through registration and on the Excellence Day to build their mindset for success at A-Level, using the VESPA model. On the Excellence Day, last week, they were looking at activities surrounding their Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice and Attitude. This included...getting set up and familiar with unifrog to start researching their different options for life after Sixth Form, reflective activities for effort and attitude with some experience in developing their coaching skills to help each other. To throw paper balls into boxes to look at the difference between mechanical and flexible practice techniques.

Year 12 have also been a pilot year group for the skills builder programme where they follow a bespoke programme of sessions developing their competencies for the workplace such as communication and problem solving. We look forward to working with Mr Burrows to develop this further.

The next round of assessment point reports sent home will have predicted grades on to help give students more focus in their research for their next steps after Sixth Form.

I hope everyone enjoys this holiday period, we look forward to seeing our students back in the new year.



Y13: Mrs Brown, Director of Sixth Form

As the term draws to a close, we can reflect on what our Year 13 students have achieved. Their PPE week gave them vital experience of exams, and enabled them to work on effective revision strategies and how to keep their nerves in check. The Excellence Day gave students space from their normal timetable in order to consider their well-being, and how best to look after themselves when they are feeling the pressure of a busy year. In addition, they tried out a number of effective studying techniques, and paused to organise themselves with a 'weekly review.' Students fed back that it was very useful, and helped them focus on studying not just being about time sat at a desk, but about using strategies that develop strong understanding and recall.

There has been a real focus this term on Futures, from apprenticeship to university applications. Now is the time to get the remaining UCAS applications sent off and so registration time has been a key opportunity for students to access the advice they need. We continue to support the students, and having the Well-Being Team available each breaktime provides a useful opportunity for many.

I wish you and your families a restful Christmas break.

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