



Thank you for picking up this latest issue of *The GSA Times*. Inside we have an expanded round-up of school news and events, it's been a busy couple of months. We have features on Reading for Empathy, RAG week, Friendships and LGBTQ+ History Month.

Our wonderful cover artwork for this issue is called 'Peekaboo' and is by Evie Richards in Year 7. This piece won the KS3 GSA "Best in Show" award and has been entered into the Royal Academy of Art Summer Show competition.

We hope you will enjoy reading Issue 4 of *The GSA Times* 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, April 2022



AROUND THE SCHOOL

Reporting by The GSA Times Team

It's been a busy few months for all year groups at George Spencer Academy since our last issue. Here's a round-up of some of the exciting things that have been happening involving our students.

FEBRUARY

The month began with students in Year 7 and 8 taking part in activities in their English and Drama lessons for National Storytelling Week, learning about one of the oldest forms of storytelling - Myths and Legends - and working on their vocal skills so that they can share their stories.

Time To Talk day on February 3rd saw students reflecting on how important it is to look after your mental health. Form time discussions and mindful colouring sessions at break and lunch time gave everyone some time to reflect. There was also the opportunity for students to sign up to be Mental Health Ambassadors and help to promote good mental health in school throughout the year.

In IT and Computing, there was a focus on staying safe online to celebrate Safer Internet Day and Coding Club continued to produce some fantastic programming in Python. The Year 8 girls team also got through to the East Midlands finals of the CyberFirst competition, organised by the National Cyber Security Centre, at DeMontfort University in Leicester.

14 students from Years 7 and 8 achieved fantastic results in the 25th Anniversary Maths Challenge run by the UK Maths Trust.



Harry Potter Book Night was celebrated with an after school event on February 10th. Activities included: Seek the Snitch, Pin the Spectrespecs on Luna, Time Turner Triva/Boggart bowling and rounding off the evening with HP Book Bingo. A magical time was had by all.



Students and staff helped local residents celebrate Valentine's Day at the Helpful Bureau in Stapleford.

The Year 10 Catering students made and served a delicious afternoon tea, whilst Swing Band provided the music for everyone to enjoy and dance to.

Y9 Sports Leaders were kept busy organising the Years 3-6 Primary Rowing Competition. They were responsible for leading individual challenges, recording results, time keeping and more.

The Principal's Challenge for February was to get creative and work on mosaic designs for the Stapleford Town Council's competition commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The standard of entries was very impressive and all of them were passed on to the Town Council. The Council received so many excellent ideas from residents that they are trying to incorporate as many of them as they can into the finished designs which will go on display in Queen Elizabeth Park.



MARCH

A team of Year 11 and 12 students from the Excellence Programme competed in the Young Citizens UK 'Mock Trial' Competition on March 3rd. They had been working hard on preparing their cases since October and their hard work paid off as they triumphed in the East Midlands Region section.



National Careers Week provided lots of fantastic information for students, parents and carers to help everyone make informed decisions about their future. The virtual careers fair was a great success and is still available to view online at <https://ncw2022.co.uk/>

For Red Nose Day on 18th March, a non-uniform day raised £1,229.10 for Comic Relief.



The school collected blankets, sleeping bags, medical supplies and baby milk to support the #sleep100 campaign. These essential items were delivered to a refuge in Poland providing safe spaces for refugees arriving from the Ukraine.



In Maths students celebrated Pi day on 14th March and a team of students from Year 10 competed in the Advanced Maths Awesome Maths Feast competition in Nottingham



The Manga Masterclasses which are running in EN1 on Thursday lunchtimes have started to produce some excellent results. Run by Sixth Form Student Fred and Mr Solly, students have been learning manga drawing techniques and how to create a comic book story, with the aim of producing their own A4 page or story by the end of the year.

Students also produced some amazing art work to be entered in the Royal Academy of Art Summer Show competition. We'll be keeping our fingers crossed that our artists are selected for the show!





On March 17th our World Class Schools representatives visited Houlton School to work with other World Class Schools on various projects which included creating a mural to go on display at Houlton School.

In Design and Technology, the construction students have been progressing well with their projects and have finished making a stud wall which will have lighting and electrical sockets added to it.

Students have also been taking part in an exciting extra-curricular opportunity with YarnBomb Stapleford to create a tapestry based on the local industry and history.



The Year 9 Sports Leaders organised and led the KS1/KS2 Boccia competition; marking out the playing areas, setting up the equipment, leading warm-up activities and officiating the competition for the visiting Primary schools.



In English and the Library, there were celebrations for World Poetry Day, World Book Day and the start of the Carnegie Award Shadowing Group. The Carnegie group will be trying to read as many of the shortlisted books as they can before the winner is announced in June. They will have an opportunity to vote for their favourite to be awarded the Shadower's Choice Award. If you'd like to see which books made the shortlist this year, and perhaps read them yourself, you can find all the information on their website:

<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/yoto-carnegie-medal-shortlist-2022/>

The last week of Spring Half Term 2 was RAG (Raising and Giving) week, where each year group took part in various activities to help raise funds and awareness for their chosen charities.

Year 7's chosen charity is Young Lives Vs Cancer, particularly Billy's House in Nottingham. Billy's House is a residential home in which young cancer patients and their families can stay so that they are closer to the hospital. Year 7 had taken part in a Race to the North Pole event for the charity in December raising £300. For their RAG week fundraising the year group put their baking skills to the test and held a number of cake sales outside the Maths block at lunch time, raising another £350 for the charity.



Year 8 are supporting Cancer Research UK. Their Race for Life event was scheduled for before the holidays, but had to be rebooked for Thursday 21st April due to some rainy weather. Students were able to choose a distance (1,3 or 5k) to skip, jog or run in their PE lessons. They also got the chance to write a backcard, a personal reason for why they are running, which will hopefully be used in a display in school after the race. Everyone completed their distance and received a 'Race for Life' medal. The year group have raised over £1,000 so far on their donations page which is amazing.



Year 9 are fundraising for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, making bird boxes, which, when finished, will be placed around the school site. People are able to sponsor the boxes and have a name inscribed on a finished box. There has also been a spare change collection for the #ChangeForTrees campaign, which protects ancient woodland.

Year 10 have used the rowers in the Sports Hall foyer to 'Row the Trent', which is a total distance of 298 km. They are raising money for Pasic, which supports young people and families with cancer. However, the year altogether rowed 326.4km, going further than the Trent and raising £688 for charity.



Year 11 and Sixth Form supported Broxtowe Youth Homelessness by collecting food and sanitary products to create care packs. They visited the charity to drop off the donations and had a talk about the work the charity does in Broxtowe.



Sixth Form also supported the charity by holding a number of staff vs student challenges. The staff won the staff vs student netball but the students came back with a draw in the quiz.



BACK TO THE EIGHTIES SCHOOL PRODUCTION

Report by Saul Radford, Year 9

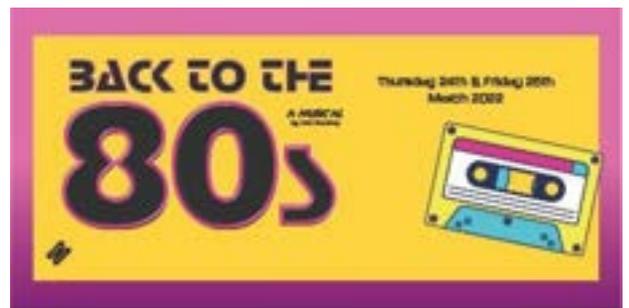
From the era that brought the world the Rubik's cube, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Back to the Future and The Karate Kid, Back to the 80's tells the story of the senior class at William Ocean High School. The cool kids, the boys next door, prom night and teenage dreams for the future made this musical one not to miss.

On the 24th and 25th of March more than 50 students from all across George Spencer helped put on the Back to the 80's school production which they had been working tirelessly on since October last year. Despite being held back due to Covid and complications on the night, the show was a huge success with tickets selling out both nights! I asked some members of the cast and audience for their thoughts on this year's production.

Interview with some of the cast

Did you enjoy working on the production?

Yes I love how close everyone became during rehearsals and how many friends were made. When we were all signing scripts and taking photos .It was like a family.



Did any moments stand out to you?

'Time of my life' was great and I loved the Megamix at the end, although all of it was great and we all had such a good time throughout.

Any other thoughts on the production?

I'd like to thank everyone who took part as such a big effort was made and it really showed. In particular I would like to thank Ms Skitt, Ms Askew, Mrs Brown and Mr Hopkins-Burke all of whom helped us put the show together. Also everyone who came to see us and support the show!

Interview with Mr Furber (who was in the audience both nights)

What did you think of the play overall? – Overall, I thought the play was great – brilliant fun, not too serious and with a healthy dose of irony and self-deprecating jokes about high school culture in America that made it hugely entertaining and the love stories involved not too earnest or emotional. It's hard, however, to look past the songs, the choreography and the band that gave it a real sense of freshness and urgency – they were all brilliant.



Did any moments stand out to you? – I love 80s music so ‘Girls Just Wanna Have Fun’, ‘Material Girl’ and ‘You Give Love a Bad Name’ were excellent numbers, well sung and performed (especially the emotion from Tom Deeley with the Bon Jovi tune!) but I also loved the big numbers with all cast involved (Kids in America, Video Killed the Radio Star, the Megamix), it was great seeing all of you out front working in sync. Most of all, I loved the teacher romance that ran alongside the main story, it was delivered in such a funny manner!

Any other thoughts on the production – Lucy and Tom in the lead roles were superb, as were the gang of boys led by Zaki, and Jack as the ‘nerdy’ unpopular candidate for president was so funny, delivered his lines brilliantly, but everyone was excellent. Big shout out to the band, they were on fire both nights, they really made it come to life compared to having backing tracks.

CELEBRATING LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

Report by saul Radford, Year 9

February was LGBTQ+ History Month the school focused on promoting uniqueness and how to support both LGBT youth and young adults. The community at GSA tries to focus on promoting diversity and acceptance of everyone while creating a safe environment for pupils to feel they can freely express themselves.

Pride Club runs after school on Monday and is open for everyone, and the school library has many LGBTQ+ based books ranging from: ‘*Boy Queen*’ by George Lester to ‘*Heartstopper*’ by Alice Oseman.

Alice Oseman donated a copy of the first volume of the ‘*Heartstopper*’ graphic novel series to the school library some years ago and the series, there are currently four, is one of the most borrowed.. The series is about **love, friendship, loyalty and overcoming mental illnesses together**. It encompasses all the small stories of Nick



and Charlie's lives, the main characters, that together make up something larger, which speaks to all of us. The graphic novels have been turned into a Netflix series (rated 12+) as of **April 22nd** and deals with topics that tie in well to the school's values and is overall very enjoyable. Alice Oseman has also written other novels for young adults including: *Solitaire* (the first book to feature Nick and Charlie), *Radio Silence*, *I was born for this* and *Loveless*. You can borrow these book from the library and look out for them on the EPlatform as well.



INTERVIEW WITH FORM REPRESENTATIVES

Report by Livy Halford, Year 9

The Form Reps are like a school council, allowing students to have their say on school issues. There are two for each form in each year, with two separate year representatives. Here, I interviewed three Form Reps from across the year groups to get the lowdown on their roles in school.

What is the role of a Form Rep?

Our role is to pass on the form's ideas, concerns and suggestions to the year reps, or the head of year.

How are you connected to the year representatives and what do you discuss?

Occasionally we meet up for a talk, in which we discuss ideas that the form came up with, and what the form has to say about school issues. We also make announcements and presentations to our form.

How can you identify who is a Form Rep?

From the red badge we wear.



How can someone approach you with ideas?

You can find us either before or after break, in form, just at any time that isn't lessons or when we're at home.

What kind of things have Form Reps changed in school?

We have helped pick a charity for our year and a number of questionnaires. We help with presentations and also gather information for what could be improved around the school.

What qualities make a good Form Rep?

Kind, passionate, caring, you've got to be able to listen and take responsibility. You've also got to be quite organised and be able to speak in public. Confidence too.

What is your favourite thing about being a Form Rep?

Being able to pass on the form's ideas and help people. Also being able to be trusted by people and having responsibility.

Thank you to the Form Reps for your time. Don't forget to speak to your Form Rep if you have anything you'd like to put forward for discussion.



READING FOR EMPATHY

Report by Saul Radford, Year 9

June 9th is Empathy Day, which is run by the Empathy Lab group to encourage everyone to improve their empathy skills through reading, listening and storytelling. The event has been running since 2017 and each year there are different activities and sets of specially selected books that you can read to help improve your empathy skills.

What is empathy?

“Empathy is a quality of character that can change the world” **Barack Obama**

The Oxford dictionary defines empathy as “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” Basically it is the ability to step into someone else's shoes and imagine how they are feeling based on the situation they are in. It is also being able to sense someone else's emotions and imagine what they are thinking or feeling. Scientists say that we can train our brain by reading, the more you empathise with characters the more you understand others feelings.

Why is it important?

Empathy is important because it helps us understand how others are feeling so we can respond appropriately to the situation and there is lots of research showing that greater empathy leads to more helping behaviour.

You've probably heard the quotes “Do unto others as you would be done unto you” or “treat others the way you want to be treated”. This involves using empathy, often you don't do bad things to people because you don't want them to feel bad. Without empathy this would not happen and people would do things without thinking about how it would make others feel, which is why empathy is so important.

Empathy Day - June 9th 2022

The theme for this year is Empathy- our Human Superpower- a special skill you can develop to transform your life, your relationships and the world itself.

If you would like to boost your empathy skills, why not have a go at the Empathy Superpower Challenge, or read one of the books from the 'Read for Empathy' lists. You can find a lot of these books in the school library and/or the E-Platform, or ask at your local library.

For everything you need to know to take part in Empathy Day take a look at their website: <https://www.empathylab.uk/>



THE ONE WHERE YOU MAKE FRIENDS...

by Livy Halford, Year 9

Friendships are an important part of life - some we make and keep for the rest of our lives, others might be just short term. Whatever your friendships are, it's important to surround yourself with a large group of friends, to support you, make you laugh and be there in your time of need. A lot of people struggle with making new friends though. Here are a couple of ways you can beat the fear, and become a social butterfly.

Tactic 1: Make yourself approachable

Many people when looking for new people to interact with, look for somebody who is approachable, and with similar interests as them. If somebody approaches you, don't laugh or walk away. Get to know them a bit, ask what their interests are or if they do any sports or if they attend any after-school clubs. Be kind, and once people know that you will listen and have an open, enjoyable conversation with them, they are more likely to want to hang out with you..

Tactic 2: Branch out!

A lot of people like to keep their friend group exclusive to their year, and sometimes this limits them to the amount of friends they have. Maybe try to talk to people in the year above or below and expand your friendship group.

Tactic 3: Improve your self confidence

Most people don't approach others because they don't think they will like them - most of the time it's self doubt that prevents them from interacting. Don't assume other people's opinions of things. Tell yourself that you are cool enough for them! You're cool enough for anyone! And why does everything have to be cool these days anyway? A person's character shouldn't be judged on their 'coolness', and if the people are judging you, don't approach them. It can be hard, but hold your head up high and know that there are other people that would value you and your presence a lot more.

Remember though, don't pressure yourself into a friendship that's making you unhappy. Friends should support you and raise you up, maintain positive friendships and leave negative ones behind. Friends are vital in our day to day functioning, so get yourself some brilliant friends and thrive in life!





PUZZLE CORNER

Hidden in the grid below are the titles of some of the most borrowed books from the library this year. One of the titles is missing from the grid, can you find out which one it is?

C	S	H	A	T	T	E	R	M	E	O	A	T	A
R	N	B	D	H	G	L	T	C	I	C	H	H	R
O	A	U	R	E	R	R	R	A	K	T	T	E	E
O	R	L	O	C	E	I	R	N	O	O	I	F	Y
M	U	C	U	O	P	G	E	E	L	B	M	E	O
R	T	T	C	U	P	I	T	W	S	E	S	A	U
E	O	S	G	S	O	M	L	A	R	R	R	R	W
H	S	O	L	I	T	A	I	R	E	O	E	Z	A
T	U	H	N	N	S	N	P	R	D	C	D	O	T
R	U	G	S	S	T	U	R	I	Q	T	N	N	C
U	U	D	I	E	R	S	I	O	U	O	U	E	H
F	D	A	S	O	A	T	M	R	E	B	W	O	I
T	T	S	H	S	E	T	E	S	E	E	I	H	N
O	N	C	E	N	H	R	R	U	N	R	A	R	G

- OCTOBER OCTOBER
- TSUNAMI GIRL
- THE CROSSING
- THE FEAR ZONE
- SOLITAIRE
- ONCE
- FURTHERMOOR
- ARE YOU WATCHING
- WUNDERSMITH
- NARUTO
- SAD GHOST CLUB
- CANE WARRIORS
- PRIMER
- THE COUSINS
- HEARTSTOPPER
- LOKI
- SHATTER ME
- RED QUEEN

GET IN TOUCH

Our next issue will be our final one for this academic year and will be published in July.

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 an article
- would like to give us some feedback on this issue.

Use this link to go straight to our contact form

<https://forms.gle/tbWrMJAAGJ6DXZW9>

You can also email us at

gsatimes@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk

