THE GSA TIMES

December 2024 NEWS FROM GEORGE SPENCER ACADEMY Issue 12

From the News Team ambassadors... have a happy Christmas!





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Meet this year's Student Presidents

Our students review this term's trips!

George Spencer in the Community

Mind-mapping like a pro





And more...

Meet the Student Presidents

***Emma Geddes** (Year 12) spoke with our two Student Presidents this year - **Nyree Preddie** and **Rohan Bilkhu** (Year 13) to find out what they have planned for the 2024-25 academic year.*

The student leadership, led by the Year 13 Presidents, are a collection of elected form representatives who have been trained and supported to carry out their important role. They encourage students to have their voices heard, and the whole school council works to ensure that happens.

The Student Presidents and Vice-Presidents in Year 13 are dedicated to improving our school to increase student satisfaction with their experiences at school. They also help to create a thriving community both within the sixth form, and within the school community as a whole, working with Year Reps from Years 7-12 and Form Reps from form groups in each year.

Nyree Preddie is one of our Student Presidents. She studies A Level Psychology and Criminology and BTEC Sport. Some of her hobbies include football and supporting her local guide group.

Rohan Bilkhu is our other Student President. He studies A Level Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Further Maths. His hobbies include playing the piano, tennis and self defence.

Here are some of the things our Student Presidents for 2024-25 have said...

What inspired you to become Student President?

"I have a natural flair for leadership and work alongside other people. From being a form representative since Year 7, I am experienced in exactly what this role entails. I am excited for this upcoming year and what we as student presidents can do for the school."

"The role of student president allows me to advocate for others to ensure everyone's voices can be heard. I want to work to address key issues like improving school resources, promoting mental health awareness, and creating a stronger sense of community."

What are some of the plans you have for the school?

"Improving accessibility in the LSRC, especially for younger years at first break. This would be beneficial to students who may not have access to computers at home or need to seek help on their homework."

"A culture day and a sixth form sports day would help make the school more fun and enjoyable."

What should people do if they have any suggestions?

"Talk to your form reps or directly to us!"

Odd Socks Day

Following on from last year's article by Tom Webb on Anti-Bullying Week, ***Alex Carlile*** *(Year 9) writes about George Spencer's Odd Socks Day.*

Odd Socks Day is an annually celebrated event in schools during Anti-Bullying Week to help children and the school community embrace individuality. In 2024, it took place on **Tuesday 12 November** and George Spencer Academy marked the occasion.

On this day, children and staff are encouraged to wear a pair of odd socks to school to symbolise uniqueness.

We wear the odd socks to show that each child is their own, we are all different, and we need to celebrate that fact. Odd Socks Day is also important as it raises awareness of bullying and other social issues in primary and secondary schools.

Odd Socks Day is celebrated on the second Monday of November during Anti-Bullying Week and was started in 2017. It was created by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, a UK-based organisation set to combat bullying and prejudice for young people. Since it was introduced in 2017, the day has gained in popularity worldwide with school communities celebrating diversity and communicating the message that it's okay to be different. It will continue to grow in the years to come.

Below, you can see some of the odd socks combinations worn by our George Spencer students and staff. Which is your favourite?



Inside the GSA Classroom

Mind-Mapping

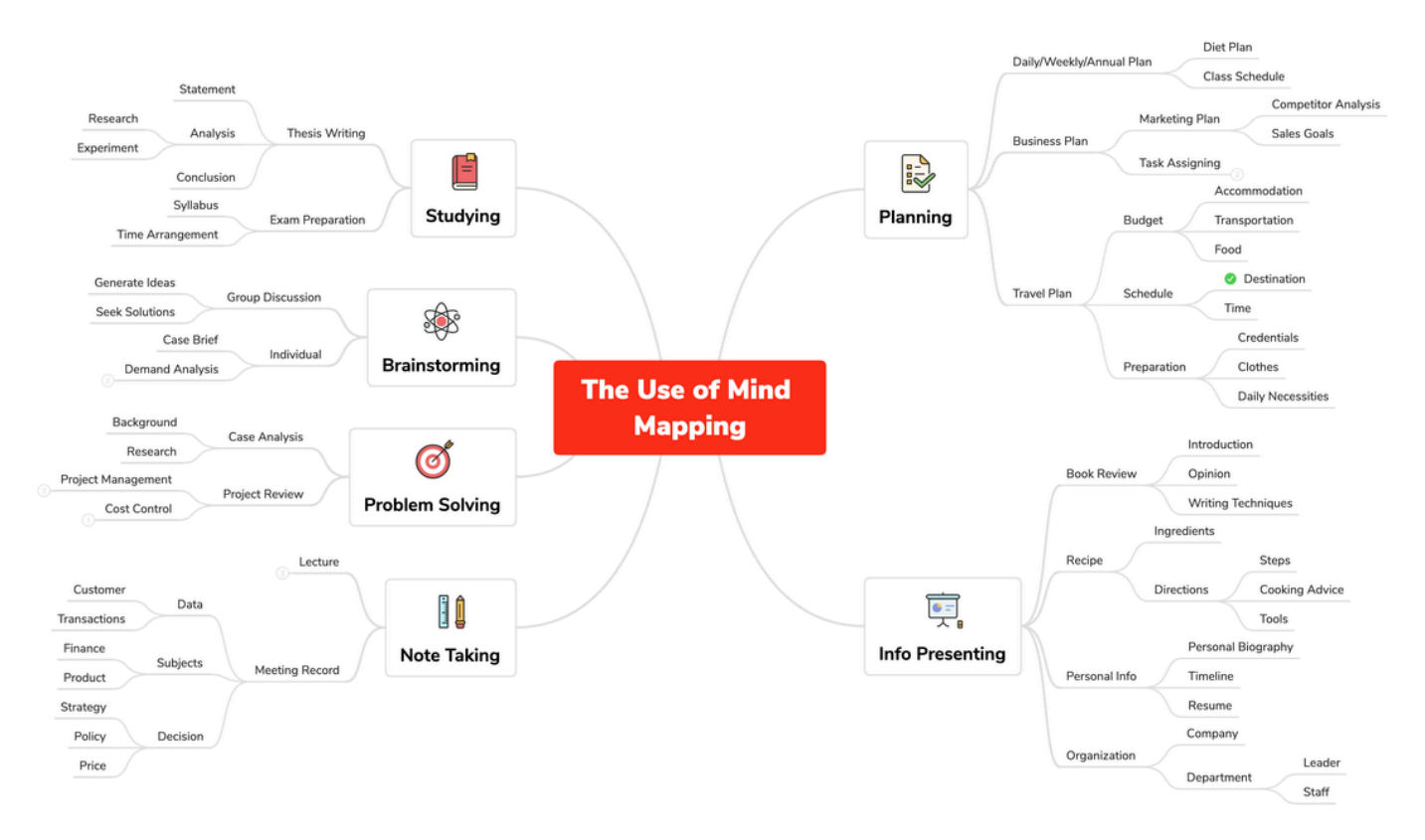
*Making her debut in the GSA Times is **Leela Armstrong** (Year 8) who writes about Excellence Day 1 and how mind-mapping boosts learning.*

At George Spencer Academy, mind-mapping is an important tool for improving learning and maximising revision. Mind-mapping is a visual technique that helps orgnanise information and shows how different ideas connect, making it easier to understand complex topics.

On Excellence Day, students got to try this method by using special booklets to create their own mind-maps, linking various ideas and subjects.

Many students found mind-mapping to be more effective than other revision methods because it encourages creativity and keeps them actively involved in their studies. This approach not only helps with remembering information, but also sharpens their critical thinking skills.

By using mind-mapping as an effective revision tool, students at George Spencer Academy are able to take control of their learning and build skills that will help them succeed in the future - whether that is in in-class assessments, their future GCSEs and A Levels, or once they have left school and entered the wider world.



Sixth Form Spotlight

The Senior Maths Challenge

Daisy Kaye *and* ***Lucy Cushing*** *(both Year 13) wrote about the Senior Maths Challenge, in which they and many other sixth formers participated this term.*

The Senior Maths Challenge (SMC) is an extracurricular competition for A Level Maths students to push themselves and extend their learning.

it consists of a series of 25 multiple-choice questions which evaluate students' abilities to solve problems and think laterally.

Over the course of 90 minutes, unique and stimulating questions are presented to the candidates who, in order to be successful, must think beyond their taught curriculum and apply their general understanding of the subject to more complex problems.

The contest is tough: marks are lost for incorrect answers, and unusual and thought-provoking situations are tested, determining how well students have comprehended the basic principles of maths and applied them to complex problems.

Despite its difficulty, the challenge also proves itself immensely rewarding and fulfilling to those who approach it with an open mind and willingness to try. Participants who perform well can receive bronze, silver or gold certificates depending on what bracket of overall marks they fall into, and those who performed to an exceptionally high standard are invited to follow-on rounds and regional finals.

As well as these rewards, the SMC provides an opportunity for students to think critically around the subject of mathematics, developing their passion and providing an incentive for their future mathematical pursuits (whether this is at university or in their future career).

The George Spencer Academy sixth form cohort had a large turnout of mathematicians for this year's competition, with a range of impressive scores and many students improving on their rank from previous years. Well done to all who took part!

United Kingdom Mathematics Trust

Black History Month

*October was Black History Month and, at George Spencer, students entered a Project Competition to research an inspiring Black individual. The winner, Lilia Orr (**Year 13**), wrote about her creation...*

When I heard about the Black History Month competition, I knew I wanted to take part and give my everything into my painting. I ended up researching the legends Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. From what I had already known about them, the two of them did not necessarily see eye-to-eye during the Civil Rights Movement, and therefore I believed the two had never met. However, they had, and when I saw the image of them together [right], I knew immediately that this would be the one I would paint due to the way it made me feel.



The monochromatic image lends itself well to any media, but I chose oil because it would make it easier for me to blend their faces.

Although this powerful interaction lasted mere minutes, this photo was so meaningful as two dedicated men, who were so significant and influential in their time, met for the first (and last) time. This image was taken not long before the Civil Rights Act was signed into law (2 July 1964) - an act in the USA that ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour, religion, sex or national origin. It is considered one of the crowning legislative achievements of the Civil Rights movement.

I wanted to capture as much detail of the image in my painting as possible, and so I spent many hours perfecting it until I was happy with how it looked. Through the media of oil paint, I was able to depict both characters with considerable accuracy, smiling as they set aside their differences for the greater good of equality and diversity.

Art Club

*The first rule of Art Club is to tell absolutely everyone about Art Club. And that's what **Leela Armstrong** (Year 8) set out to do for the GSA Times...*

At George Spencer Academy, creativity and environmental awareness have taken centre stage with a recent project focused on recycling. Students from various year groups have come together to create stunning sea animals entirely out of recycled materials. This initiative not only sparked their artistic talents, but also highlighted the importance of sustainability and protecting our oceans.



Under the guidance of the Art department in the Creative Arts faculty, students collected items like plastic bottles, old newspapers and cardboard, transforming them into vibrant representations of marine life.

From colourful turtles to majestic jellyfish, the creations have showcased student imagination and ingenuity.

The project aimed to raise awareness about ocean pollution and the impact of plastic waste on sea creatures, encouraging students to think critically about their own consumption habits. You can see one of the projects in progress on the left.

By turning trash into treasure, students have been learning valuable lessons about creativity and the importance of caring for our planet. Along with our recent eco-schools award, it shows that George Spencer Academy continues to lead by example.

Anyone can attend Art Club on a Thursday after school in AR2 on upper site. Feel free to join us until 4.20pm - everyone is welcome!

Operation Orphan

What is Operation Orphan's Forget-Me-Notts Christmas Appeal? And what do George Spencer's Community Ambassadors have to do with it? ***Daisy White*** *(Year 8) told us more...*

A few weeks ago, we had hundreds of Christmas chocolate selection boxes from students and staff that were donated to Operation Orphan, a charity who work tirelessly to protect vulnerable children across the country and in different countries.

Currently, they have projects in Hungary, Romania, Moldova, DR Congo, Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe. They have schools for the deaf, homework areas and homes for vulnerable children.

Operation Orphan was started by Cyrilin and her husband Brad in February 2010, and every single penny that is donated is used on countless projects to help children who have been orphaned. It began after a trip to Uganda in 2003, where they dreamed of a charity to help and support orphans.

As Community Ambassadors at George Spencer, we are so thankful for all your donations - they took so long to wrap as there were hundreds of them! All these donations will go to children less fortunate than us. Hopefully, it will have a big impact for those who might not have a present to open on Christmas Day, and it takes Operation Orphan one step further in the journey to keep a child safe, warm and healthy.



Food Bank Fridays

Why does George Spencer run Food Bank Fridays? And where does the food go? ***Daisy White*** *(Year 8) found out for us...*

Food Bank Fridays are when each form aims to bring in as many items of long-life food to donate towards a charity (Hope Nottingham Food Bank) for those less fortunate.

Food Bank Fridays are organised by Miss Hembrow and the Community Ambassadors [right], who help others in the local area. As well as organising donations for food banks, they visit Stapleford Memory Café and local care homes.





At the food banks, the foods most appreciated are long-life foods like baked beans, UHT milk, tinned fruit, pasta and cereals. And did you know that by just bringing in a donation on Food Bank Fridays, you can provide a meal for families in our local community?

Simply bring in your donation to the Lower Site Resource Centre (LSRC) where they are collected and taken to Hope Nottingham Food Bank to provide food for others.

It makes a huge difference to our local area and the lives of others, and is greatly appreciated. You can make a difference!

To find out more, information can be found on the slides during your form-time learning sessions in the mornings.

The Trips Review

Year 8 trip to the International Slavery Museum

To support Year 8's learning on transatlantic enslavement, a group of students went to Liverpool to visit the International Slavery Museum. ***Tom Webb*** *(Year 8) was one of them, and here's what he learned along the way...*

On Friday 22 November, a group of around 30 Year 8 students visited the International Slavery Museum and Maritime Museum in Liverpool. This trip co-ordinated with what we had been learning about in History this half-term, transatlantic enslavement.

It was an early start, as we had to be at school for 7.45am. After receiving the emergency contact number and having a quick briefing about appropriate language, we loaded our belongings and ourselves onto the coach and left at 8am. Two hours later, we arrived at the museum and we were separated into two groups. My group looked around the Maritime Museum first. There, we learned about the ports in Liverpool and the Titanic and its journey. We even saw some recovered artefacts from the ship which you can see on the right!





We then moved on to the Slavery Museum and explored the exhibits with a trail to guide us. I learned that Liverpool was the largest slave trading port in Europe, and that before the trade, it was just a small fishing town.

After lunch, we went into a workshop guided by a member of the museum's staff and our teachers. We learned about how cowrie shells were used as currency and studied some documents about the prices of enslaved people. Then, at 2.30pm, following a visit to the museum's gift shop, we travelled back to school on the coach to arrive three hours later.

Did you know that adulterising (doing the same jobs as adults) took place on the plantations from the age children could use their hands and crawl?

The Trips Review

The Veolia Trip

A group of students from a variety of year groups visited the Veolia Recycling Plant in Mansfield to find out exactly what happens to their waste. ***Tom Webb*** *and* ***Daisy White*** *(Year 8) told us that the trip was not exactly "rubbish"...*

On 15 November, George Spencer Academy students visited the Veolia Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) as part of Eco Week.

As it was during the school day, we all had to meet up in the lower site car park to board the coach. After the 45-minute drive to Mansfield, we walked to the Education Room where we met our guide, Lesley, who gave us a run-down of health and safety and held a recycling quiz for all year groups to test our knowledge of waste. We learned that fruit punnets aren't actually recyclable!

Then, we were split into two groups. One would take the tour of the plant first, and the other would take the tour after doing some activities.

Before the tour, we were all given hard hats, hi-vis jackets and headphones with an audio guide so we could listen to the tour, led by Lesley, as it was really loud!

During the tour, we were given the opportunity to view the many stages of how rubbish is brought to the MRF, filtered by machine and by hand, compressed into bales and distributed to recycling centres and incinerators. We were shown just how much waste is put in the wrong bins, like nappies, wallpaper and pizza boxes, and often have to be sorted by hand.

Finally, Lesley quizzed us in pairs or threes on what we had remembered from the tour, with opportunities to win prizes.

We really enjoyed this visit and would recommend it to others interested in learning about recycling, waste and protecting the environment!



The Trips Review

The Italy Trip

*Slightly further afield than Mansfield, our older students spent most of their half-term in Italy. Among them was **Viktoria Farkas** (Year 11)...*

On 17 October 2024, a group of staff and students set off to go on a Geography trip to Italy.

Early in the morning, we began the journey by heading off to Luton Airport, from where they would arrive at Naples at 9am. From here, we took taxis to the Hostel of the Sun, where we explored the area. Some students participated in pizza-making!

After some well-earned sleep, we left to visit the ruins of Pompeii - even though it chucked it down for almost the entire time (reminding us of October in Stapleford), it was a great historical site to explore.

Next up was a visit to the base of Mount Vesuvius, which famously erupted in 79 CE. At the base, there were so many souvenirs



The shoreline from Naxos



The Valley of the Temples, Agrigento

to choose from, including (but not limited to) jewellery from the rocks, crystals formed by the volcano, hoodies and t-shirts and key chains.

That night, we had a three-course dinner and slept on an overnight ferry to Palermo. When we arrived the following day, we headed towards Catania. On the way, we took a stop at a village: some students took a swim at the beach, while others took a hike. Our accommodation for the last few days in Italy was at Ostello degli Elefanti hostel.

On the fourth day of the trip, we visited Greek monuments (above) at the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento and took another swim. As there was still time left in the day



The view from Mount Etna

and so many students wanted another beach visit, the group split up, with half going to a nearby beach and the other half heading straight back to the hostel.

On day 5, we visited Taormina (a gorgeous hilltop town) before heading to the Alacantra Gorges, where we would learn about the history of its formation and its geographical importance from a lovely guide.

On the last day, mostly exhausted but joyful, we visited Naxos before heading up Mount Etna. We took cable cars 2,500 metres above sea level and climbed the rest of the way up, where we were welcomed by the most amazing views. From this moment onwards, all the students could claim the bragging rights that we had climbed a volcano.

Finally, we headed to Catania airport and arrived back home in the early hours, having enjoyed the trip and the memories we made.



Pizza-making!



Inside Ostello degli Elefanti Hoste

List of contributors

Daisy Kaye (Year 13)
Lucy Cushing (Year 13)
Lilia Orr (Year 13)
Emma Geddes (Year 12)
Ezra Draper (Year 11)
Viktoria Farkas (Year 11)
Alex Carlile (Year 9)
Tom Webb (Year 8)
Daisy White (Year 8)
Leela Armstrong (Year 8)



Thank you for reading this term's edition of the GSA Times. Please pass on your feedback to the students using this QR code - including what you enjoyed reading and what you would like to see featured in the future!