

Stone Soup Academy News



Issue 20 | April 2025 **Half Term 4**

Not Just Raising Aspirations

Katy Smith

As an academy, we strongly believe in giving back whenever we can and we try to instill a sense of good will and community within our students. One of our core values is collaboration and this term we teamed up with Comic Relief for Red Nose Day. This year's theme was about supporting those in need during the current living crisis and focused on issues such as lack of food and homelessness.

Our students and staff commemorated the day by all donating £1 each and wearing their pyjamas to school on the 21st March. In keeping with the idea behind Comic Relief, the students certainly had a good laugh at the staff in their cosies; there were dressing gowns, onesies and slippers galore! We were delighted with the money that we raised, which will be donated to Comic Relief.



AP Football League Late Drama

Duncan Bennett

The Stone Soup Academy Football team represented the Academy in fantastic fashion once again at the annual AP Football League. We performed brilliantly during the league stages winning eight games in a row with a narrow loss to eventual winners NCFC AP. We cruised through the semi final with a 3-0 win and narrowly lost on penalties in the final. It was a brilliant day for all involved and we have now qualified for the East Midlands AP Football League which will be held next half term in May. The football team can be proud of what they achieved and we are looking forward to competing in our next tournament very soon.

Sport students have also been making great progress in their coursework and we are preparing to finish the academic year strong with the year 11s. A number of our year 10's also attend the Forest Futures programme this term being involved in mentorship, coaching and completing the course with a final trip to the City Ground. Year 9s continue to select the sporting enrichment opportunities and this term sees us attending the Forest Sports Zone for some football in the sunshine. It's been a great term and we are looking forward to more great sporting moments next term too.



The Final Stretch of their School Journey

Younes Henini

Year 11 students at Stone Soup Academy are in the final stretch of their school journey, working hard to prepare for their exams and complete their coursework. With deadlines approaching, they are focused and determined, putting in the effort needed to achieve their best results.

Every day, students engage in revision sessions, attend extra support classes, and refine their coursework to meet the highest standards. Teachers provide guidance, ensuring each student understands key concepts and exam techniques.

The atmosphere is one of perseverance and dedication, with students balancing multiple subjects and managing their time effectively.

Stone Soup Academy fosters a culture of hard work and resilience, encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning. With the right mindset and commitment, they are ready to face their exams with confidence. Their efforts now will shape their future, and they are determined to make the most of this crucial time.

Trips Galore

Oli Sillito

Term 1 – Week 5: Wednesday 2nd October – Alton Towers

We opened up a whole-school trip to all students to build relationships and give staff and students a chance to have fun together outside the classroom. Many of our students were new, so this was a great way to bring everyone together.

Term 2 – Week 7: Christmas Dinner – High Pavement & Milbie House

We invited all students to enjoy a Christmas dinner together. We know that some students don't get a traditional Christmas meal at home, so this was a great opportunity for staff and students to sit down, share a proper festive meal, and celebrate together.

Term 2 – Week 7: Thursday 19th December – Maysum

To mark the end of the year, we took all our students to Maysum restaurant in town. It was a lovely way to say our goodbyes before 2025 and enjoy a meal together as a school community.

Term 2 – Tuesday 17th December – Laser Quest

A reward trip for the top 20 students, giving them a well-earned break and a chance to have fun in a completely different setting. It was a fantastic reward, and the students enjoyed being celebrated for their consistent hard work.

Term 3 – Friday 14th February – Lagan

Another reward trip for the top 20 students, this time to an Indian restaurant right on our doorstep. It was a great experience for students to celebrate together and try foods they might not have had before.

Upcoming Trips For 2025

Thursday 3rd April – Go Karting

Wednesday 21st May – West Midlands Safari Park

Thursday 3rd July – Drayton Manor

Thursday 17th July – Lockwell

Multi Skills

Fred Slaney

This term we have begun our Mechanics course again and the multi skills course at Basford College has gone very quickly. The two courses running on Thursday for the year 10 and Friday for the year 11 are both moving with gusto. Both groups have worked hard and the year 10s are now moving on to complete their third assessment. At the start of the new term year 11 will be completing two more assessments. These are in joinery and then in plastering which they are relishing the chance to shine in. The courses are running very well and the students are out performing other students from other schools and Academies. Keep up the good work guys.



Knife Crime Event & Suits Day Update

Oli Sillito

This year's Suits Day and Knife Crime events are well underway, with planning, booking acts and organising both the day and evening events. These are incredibly special occasions for us as an academy, and I'm excited to keep you all updated on their progress as the year unfolds. We are involving students more than ever this year with the Knife Crime event, from taking photos to being on stage to presenting films they've helped create—films featuring both past and current students. The distribution of this film is a huge milestone for them and for us as a school. Our SU2KC event is scheduled for Wednesday 23rd July 2025

You can read more about the Knife Crime event in this article:

<https://leftlion.co.uk/features/2024/07/live-review-stone-soup-academy-presents-stand-up-to-knife-crime-at-metronome/>

Our Year 11 students are eagerly anticipating Suits Day. Everything is now booked, and we're in the

process of organising all the details to ensure it's another memorable event. The year book is shaping up to be the best one yet for our learners, especially as this will be our fifth year doing it. If you would like to get involved in any way with these events, please don't hesitate to let me know. This year's Suits Day is scheduled for Friday 27th June 2025.



Music

Paolo Iannattone

As we progress into the fourth half term, students across all year groups continue to build on their musical knowledge, refine their technical and creative skills, and engage in practical applications that enhance their understanding of music. Each group is progressing through tailored activities that not only develop their expertise but also foster creativity, problem-solving, and a deeper appreciation for different musical styles and production techniques.

Year 9: Recognising Music Styles

This term, Year 9 students are focusing on identifying and distinguishing different musical styles, strengthening their understanding of various genres and their characteristics. Developing the ability to recognise stylistic elements is an essential skill that will support their musical development and future practical work.

To make learning more interactive and engaging, students are participating in Kahoot quizzes and Google Form competitions. These activities encourage active listening, reinforce knowledge through friendly competition, and help students develop the critical listening skills necessary to analyse and differentiate between styles effectively. The use of digital platforms ensures an accessible and dynamic learning experience, allowing students to test their understanding in real time.

This phase of learning serves as a preparatory stage for Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles, which they will engage with in greater depth as they progress. Through this component, students will explore how different musical styles are structured, produced, and developed, providing them with the foundational knowledge necessary for future music production tasks. By understanding key genre characteristics now, students will be well-prepared to apply this knowledge in practical and

analytical contexts as they advance in their studies.

Year 10: Advancing Music Production and Analysis

Year 10 students have officially started Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles, a core part of their BTEC studies. Through this component, they are investigating different musical styles, learning how music is created, structured, and produced, and understanding the creative decisions behind professional compositions. By examining and analysing a wide range of music products, students are developing a deeper appreciation of how different elements contribute to the overall sound and success of a piece of music.

Alongside their theoretical studies, students continue to develop their music production expertise within Logic Pro, expanding their technical skills in:

- **MIDI sequencing** – learning how to input and manipulate MIDI data efficiently.
- **Digital audio effects** – exploring how reverb, EQ, delay, and other effects shape sound.
- **Arrangement techniques** – understanding how to structure compositions for coherence and impact.

These hands-on production skills are essential for their progression, preparing them to work independently on original compositions while refining their ability to produce high-quality, professional-standard music.

Moreover, students are actively analysing professional music products to gain insight into how music is developed in a commercial and



creative setting. By critically examining different genres, production techniques, and compositional structures, students are deepening their understanding of industry standards. This analysis not only enhances their technical skills but also encourages creativity and innovation in their own work.

Year 11: Completion of Unit 2 and Introduction to Unit 7 – Music Sequencing

Year 11 students have successfully completed Unit 2: Managing a Music Product, a mandatory component of their BTEC certification. This unit required them to plan, develop, and promote a musical product, incorporating both creative and business-oriented skills. Their completion of this unit demonstrates their ability to:

- Apply project management techniques to music production.
- Develop and market a musical product effectively.
- Collaborate creatively while adhering to deadlines and professional expectations.

This marks an important milestone in their BTEC journey, as it consolidates the practical skills they have developed so far and prepares them for more advanced aspects of music production.

With Unit 2 completed, students have now moved on to Unit 7: Introduction to Music Sequencing. This unit introduces them to advanced digital sequencing techniques, allowing them to work within a fully digital production environment. They will focus on:

- Creating and manipulating MIDI data to compose music digitally.
- Understanding virtual instruments and their role in modern production.
- Developing structured compositions using sequencing software.
- Refining editing techniques for professional-quality audio.

By mastering these skills, students will be able to produce their own music with greater control, precision, and creative intent, preparing them for further studies or professional opportunities in music technology.

Looking Ahead

This term has been a productive and engaging period for all students, as they continue to develop their skills in listening, analysis, composition, and production. With each year group tackling different aspects of music education, students are gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to progress confidently in their musical studies.

In the coming weeks, students will:

- Expand their practical skills in Logic Pro, applying them to more complex tasks.
- Continue analysing professional music, deepening their understanding of musical styles and production techniques.
- Refine their creative and technical abilities to enhance their own compositions.
- Prepare for upcoming coursework and assessments, ensuring they demonstrate their full potential.

We look forward to seeing their continued progress, creativity, and passion for music as they advance through this term!



Student Success, Progress and Creating Unimagined Futures

Molly Champion

Again we have seen YR11 go from strength to strength in their mock exams this term, demonstrating resilience and determination. Almost all year 11's have completed their functional skills exams across both English and Maths. We are still thriving as a cohort across the multi skills and hair and beauty courses with all students passing modules with flying colours. Well over half of the year group have accepted college offers following on from successful interviews supported by their personal coaches and we have had 12 students show interest in the Stone Soup Bridge to Employment Sixth Form which is just amazing!

Year 11 have taken part in the ingenuity project, workshops focused on finance and several apprenticeship talks delivered by Nottingham College. Eight YR11 students took part in filming for a Netflix programme through their media studies and four year 11 students are having their English work published next year after winning a writing competition. To top it off four of our year 11 students have earned their place on the Disneyland Paris trip taking place in April which speaks for itself. Well done YR11!

Attendance

Alongside our attendance team, referring schools and other external agencies we continue to closely monitor, support and improve YR11 attendance.

Behaviour

Year 11 have really worked hard to focus on improving their behaviour and this really shows as we have gone down from 39 suspensions in HT2 to 15 during HT3. Overall you can really see them wanting to knuckle down and concentrate on achieving their full potential. A whopping 26 out of 37 students achieved a behaviour score of 7 or above consistently over HT3. The relationships now formed with personal coaches and the staff body overall is wonderful to see and although at times

they hate to admit it, YR11 are working alongside us in order to support them through their last academic year at Stone Soup.



Careers Update

Jordan Senior

DREAM Workshop Concluded

The DREAM workshops run by Queen's Medical Centre (QMC), part of Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) NHS Trust, have now concluded. The participating nurses praised this cohort of students for their high level of engagement and enthusiasm. The workshops aimed to give students an understanding of PSHE topics such as mental wellbeing, online safety amongst others. Also the nurses had brief chats about careers in A&E & medicine, as well as the skills and attributes required to work in the NHS. This experience has helped students understand more about certain PHSE topics and have qualified nurses delivering and answering questions. It's also helped raise awareness of career opportunities in the healthcare sector.

Experian Finance Lesson

The finance lesson delivered by Experian was a great success, with students gaining essential knowledge about banking, personal finance, and money management. They engaged in discussions about credit scores, budgeting, and financial planning, equipping them with the skills to make informed financial decisions in the future.

HMRC Work Experience Success

The work experience programme with HMRC has now concluded, and students Ibz, Asia, and Paris received outstanding feedback on their presentations. Their professionalism, confidence, and ability to communicate complex topics were particularly praised. This experience has provided them with invaluable exposure to the workings of a government organisation and has boosted their employability skills.

"I was really impressed with the way the group presented to us. They stood up and read through their slides without looking at the screen, this showed me how much knowledge they had on their presentation. I really enjoyed how the presentation showed the different points in a career journey, which I think is a clever way of covering a big audience."

"This was a really confident group who were very engaging in their delivery. They worked really well together and it was a very thoughtful presentation. The passion for the topic and engaging delivery was the highlight for me. It was 10/10."

"Ibz has received excellent feedback from everyone he spoke with, made an excellent impression from the beginning and stood out as bright and driven."

"Overall, we were all impressed with the effort Asia made to continue in the programme and grow in confidence being in a new environment, this shows resilience and determination which are both qualities that will help her to succeed."

"In particular we were impressed with how well Paris came across during the student's presentation, even more so for saying she'd only just joined the programme yet she didn't let this hold her back. Confidence is key and we think Paris will have a bright future."

University of Nottingham Visit Booked for June

A visit to the University of Nottingham has been scheduled for June, designed to "myth-bust" common misconceptions about university life and raise aspirations among students. The visit will include campus tours, student talks, and interactive sessions aimed at providing a clearer understanding of higher education opportunities and encouraging students to consider university as a potential pathway.

Nottingham College Apprenticeship Talk for Year 11s

The Nottingham College apprenticeship team visited to deliver an informative talk to Year 11 students about apprenticeship opportunities. The session covered the benefits of apprenticeships, entry requirements, and progression routes, helping students explore alternative pathways to traditional A-levels and university. Many students showed interest in pursuing apprenticeships following the talk.

Alumni Talk from Former Student Jai

Ex-student Jai returned to school to deliver an inspiring talk about life after school, sharing his experiences of employment and personal growth. His talk provided students with a real-life perspective on post-school opportunities and motivated them to take charge of their future career paths.

Sixth Form – We are currently holding meetings with businesses participating in the pilot project.

These meetings are focused on finalising job specifications, ensuring alignment on roles and responsibilities, and discussing the overall expectations of the pilot sixth form. The aim is to establish clear objectives and ensure all businesses are well informed and prepared. We have also received a high number of letters of interest from Year 11 students keen to take part in the programme. The level of interest has exceeded the number of places available in the sixth form, demonstrating good demand and enthusiasm among students.

Photography

Emily McCann

This term Year 9's are learning about Graffiti. They will be researching Nottingham artist Kid30. This will include offsite walks around the city centre, photographing the city's wonderful plethora of street art including new murals created by Kid30. They will then be using the photographs taken to create a city map highlighting graffiti hotspots.

Year 10

Year 10 will be creating their first independent projects, preparing them for Year 11 where they are expected to work independently. The title for this project is 'Identity' which can be interpreted in many different ways by each individual student. They will be researching relevant photographers and then creating their own Photo shoots inspired by the artist.

Year 11

Year 11 are deep into their preparations for the upcoming GCSE exam in May. Every student has chosen from the list of starting points – Flora & Fauna, Erased, Narrative, Angles, Humans, Transformation & Landmarks – The most popular themes have been Humans & Landmarks. Students have been undertaking independent research and development of their chosen theme to create their final pieces within the 10 hour exam. Due to the confidential nature of the exam, images can only be shared after the conclusion of the GCSE.

Motor Vehicle

Chelsey Reid

Students have been busy at the motor vehicle course over the last 2 terms, completing coursework while also engaging in hands-on activities, such as taking the wheels off a go-kart and reattaching them. The practical experience gives our students a deeper understanding of mechanics and vehicle maintenance. As well as completing theory and practical work, students have enjoyed taking part in go-karting races and putting their skills to the test in a competitive environment.



The Correction Unit

Khia Lewis-Todd

Year 11: Netflix – The Correction Unit & Final Major Project

Year 11 students have gone from the classroom to on set. Working with a professional film making team, participating in a film called The Correction Unit which will air in the USA. This opportunity showcased their creativity and media skills.

Having successfully completed their media exam, they are now fully engaged in their final major project. This includes creating compelling magazine articles, participating in interviews, and meticulously collating research to ensure their work is of the highest standard.

A huge congratulations to Jake Hopewell for his outstanding interview skills, demonstrating confidence and professionalism beyond their years! Angel and Ava have also produced an incredibly insightful magazine article that has impressed myself and peers, we can't wait to see the final published product. Well done to the entire Year 11 group for their dedication and enthusiasm.

Year 10: Exploring Media Products from Different Cultures

Looking ahead, Year 10 will be moving into the next phase of their media studies coursework, exploring media products from different cultures. They will analyse how cultural influences shape media content and compare portrayals of key themes across the world.

The whole class has shown a keen eye for detail in their research, everyone's contributions to class discussions have been exceptional. Well done to all of Year 10 for their curiosity and engagement.

Year 9: Investigating Fake News

Meanwhile, Year 9 students have been diving into the world of misinformation, analysing fake news stories to develop their critical thinking and media literacy. They have been dissecting viral hoaxes and discussing the impact of misleading information in today's digital world.



Year 9 Progress Report: Achievements and Improvements

Michelle Rogers

Since the last report, significant efforts have been made to support Year 9 students in key areas such as attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement. Collaboration with parents/carers, teachers, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been crucial in addressing individual student needs. The use of an up-to-date tracker has enabled timely interventions and continuous communication with personal coaches and parents. Since November, numerous milestones have been reached, showcasing the progress and development of Year 9 students.

Attendance Year 9 students have shown remarkable improvement in attendance, achieving an average rate of 84.65% in HT3. This reflects a 5.5% increase from HT2 and a 21.65% improvement above the national average for other APs.

Key Attendance Highlights:

- 1 student achieved 100% attendance
- 4 students achieved between 90% and 99% attendance
- 6 students achieved between 80% and 89% attendance

For students with attendance below 90%, personal coaches, referring schools, and the attendance team are actively implementing interventions. Although some data has been impacted by suspensions and previous school attendance challenges, it is noteworthy that 14 out of 26 students improved their attendance upon entry, including the student who achieved 100%.

Behaviour improving student behaviour and reducing suspensions has been a major focus.

The current average behaviour score is 7.0, reflecting a 2% improvement from HT2.

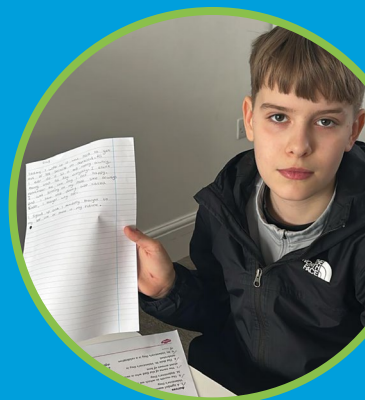
Key Behaviour Highlights:

- 14 students achieved an average score of 7 or above
- 12 students maintained an average score of 6 or above

To encourage positive behaviour, incentives such as reward trips and personalised postcards from personal coaches have been implemented. Additionally, 11 students achieved a Class Dojo score of above 95%, while all but 8 students scored above 90%.

Enrichment Activities Students have engaged in diverse enrichment activities, balancing education with enjoyment. Weekly sessions have included:

- Offsite sports sessions
- Art and design projects
- Games room competitions
- Ready Steady Cook challenges
- History-themed workshops
- Movies in our cinema room



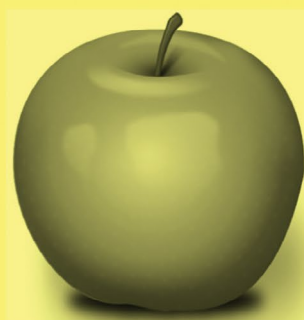
It's That Time of Year Again – Pi Day!

Darrell Drummond

When it's the 14th of March, it can only mean one thing – it's Pi Day! This is the one day of the year given over to celebrate the most famous irrational number in the world. So, here at Stone Soup we mark the day with the now customary Pi Dingbat Extravaganza! All our forms have the opportunity to win a chocolate prize for correctly guessing the

meaning behind forty dingbats ranging in difficulty from mild to extreme. It's all a lot of fun and brings awareness to how Pi as a number starts: 3.14 (and then it goes on and on and on ...). This year's winners were Kayman, Riley, Adam, Lillie, Laceygrace, Chloe and Cameron who are all in Micha, Dom and Taylor's Y9 form. Well done to you all!

π 'n



Stepping up to the Challenge!

Darrell Drummond

This year six of our students stepped forward for the Intermediate Challenge as hosted by the UK Maths Trust. This is a nationally recognised competition that all mainstream schools aim to enter because it is the most challenging and prestigious competition available to secondary age students. Certificates are awarded for participation and also for scores achieved. Our students more than held their own in this elite competition which is a significant achievement for all of them and something that they can take great pride in. Angel K and Jace were awarded Certificates of Participation, Asia-Renee and Riley received a Bronze Certificate and Kaden, and Jake were awarded the highest award of a Gold Certificate. Because of their high scores, Kaden and Jake have merited further participation in the follow-on challenger event – the Pink Kangaroo – which will take place in mid-March. We wish them both every success!



Reach up for the Sunrise!

It's been another great year for all our Year 11 Stone Soupers in all things Functional Skills. So far this year our roll call for passes at Level 1 is (deep breath)

Amaya, Angel, Asia-Renee, Ava, Brandon, Brooklyn, Carey, Cerys, Cian, Ciara, Cienna, Darin, Declan, Ella, Ethan, George, Harley, Ibrahim, Jace, Jake, Jamil, Jody, Kaden, Karim, Khotso, Korie, Liam, Maisie, Megan, Mya, Paris, Riley H, Riley, Romarae, Ronnie, Sade, Shamas, Shaner, Shaye, Taylor A, Taylor C, Thor, Tyler and Wahaab.

Wow! That's 44 students! Congratulations to them all!

Not only that though, our Year 11s have also been super busy passing those Level 2 qualifications too. Angel, Asia-Renee, Ava, Brandon, Carey, Cian,

Declan, George, Harley, Jace, Jake, Kaden, Megan, Paris, Riley, Taylor C and Wahaab have all been successful at the top Functional Skills Level. Much kudos to them all!

Now, as Simon Le Bon once sang "Put your hands into the big sky and reach up for the sunrise" and it is with this attitude that our Year 10s have decided not to be left behind by the success of our Year 11s. Arthur, Jamarl, Javier, Josh, Kian, Lewis, Lillie-Mai, Maisie K., Skye and Tia have already successfully sat their Level 1 exams. Reach up, indeed!!!

And remember Year 11s, now all you need to do is focus on your summer exams, be confident, work hard and reach up for that sunrise!!!!

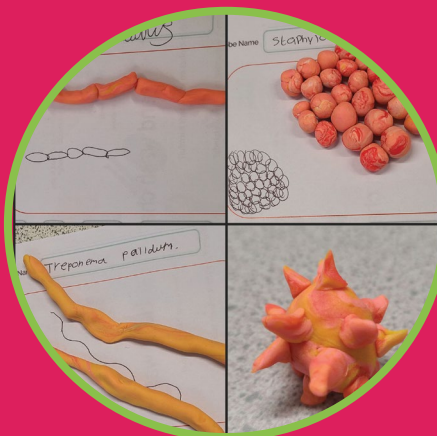
Heart Dissections, Microorganisms and Mock Exams

Hannah Smallwood

The students at Stone Soup have continued to work hard in science this term. Our year 11 students are getting more confident sitting science exam papers and sat a full GCSE Chemistry mock exam in January. These were our most successful mock exams so far and provided the students with confidence ahead of their real exams. There were some really promising results so we are excited to see what they can achieve in their real exams!

Our year 10 science classes are making great progress on the GCSE topics. They have just finished a biology topic about organisation in the body, which involved them dissecting a heart to help them understand the structure and flow of blood. They have also observed blood and small intestine cells under a microscope.

The year 9s have been learning about cells and microorganisms, understanding how they cause diseases. They have used play-doh to make different types of bacteria and to make their own imaginary bacteria.



Attendance and Parent Engagement

Siobhan Stevenitt

So far this year at Stone Soup Academy, we're excited to see a positive shift in attendance across the school, and we're thrilled that our students are reaping the benefits! It's clear that consistent attendance leads to success, both in the classroom and beyond, and our students have shown fantastic dedication so far this academic year.

To celebrate these improvements, we've been treating our top attendees to some exciting and delicious rewards. In December, students had the chance to visit the Christmas Market, where they tried all the festive food! From crisps on a stick to churros, everything went down a treat. Of course, no trip would be complete without a warm hot chocolate with marshmallows to keep everyone cozy. These treats were not only a fun reward, but also a chance for students to enjoy the flavors of the season together.

We've also enjoyed trips to Five Guys and Tortilla. This term, we're stepping it up with a special treat at Zapp Thai, where students will have the chance to try something new and exciting. In addition, our Weekly Lunch Passes to McDonald's continue to be a popular reward for our top attendees and most improved students, with many students looking forward to their chance to grab a tasty treat.

But it's not just about the rewards. We believe that introducing our students to different cuisines and cultures can play a big role in broadening their horizons and teaching them about the world beyond the classroom. It's a fun way to mix learning with experience, and we're so proud of how our students are engaging with these opportunities.

Let's keep up the great work! Attendance continues to improve, and we look forward to even more exciting rewards in the future. Keep it up, everyone, the world is full of experiences waiting to be explored.

At Stone Soup Academy, we believe that building a strong connection between home and school is key to creating a supportive, thriving community for our students. That's why we've been hosting our Parent Afternoons, where parents are invited to join us for a lovely afternoon of conversation,

delicious cream cakes, and hot beverages. These informal gatherings are all about fostering open communication and creating a welcoming space for parents to engage with the school and each other.

The Parent Afternoons have been a huge success so far, with many parents sharing their thoughts, asking questions, and building relationships with teachers and staff. We've loved hearing everyone's feedback and ideas on how we can continue to support our students and make Stone Soup Academy an even better place for learning.

One exciting highlight from our recent Parent Afternoon was the Hamper Winner! A lucky parent won a hamper full of goodies as a thank you for their consistent communication and engagement with the school. It was a small gesture to show our appreciation for the parents who take the time to stay connected and involved in their child's education.

We're excited to announce that Parent Forums are now going to be a regular part of life at Stone Soup Academy. These forums will provide ongoing opportunities for parents to come together, share ideas, and work with us to build an even stronger school community. By continuing to work with parents, we can ensure that our students receive the best possible support both at school and at home.

We look forward to seeing even more parents at our upcoming Parent Afternoons and building a school culture where everyone feels valued and involved. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of our students and continue to grow as a community together.



Stone Soup Academy's Valentine's Day Writing Challenge: Celebrating Creativity and Expression

Lovelle Pennant

At Stone Soup Academy, we believe in fostering creativity and self-expression through the power of words. Our latest writing challenge, themed around Valentine's Day, invited students to explore the many facets of love – whether through poetry, storytelling, or heartfelt letters. Students really showcased their best work, which was great to see.

Participants were challenged to craft at least three paragraphs while incorporating language features such as similes, metaphors, and emotive language. The response was incredible, with students pouring their hearts into their writing and demonstrating their imagination and creativity.

After careful consideration, we are thrilled to announce the talented winners of this challenge: Cartia, Billie, Kaden, Logan A, Logan P, Darin, Skye, Oli, George, Lewis, Sienna, Maisy, Kyan, Asia, Korie, Jake, Maisie, and Mya. Each of these students impressed with their creativity, thoughtfulness, and writing skills, truly capturing the essence of the challenge.

To reward their hard work, the top 15 entries received Valentine's Day chocolates and a red rose, which were tokens of appreciation for their dedication to the art of storytelling.

At Stone Soup Academy, we are committed to nurturing a love for literacy through engaging and inspiring initiatives like this. We can't wait to see what our students create in the next writing challenge!



SEND me an Unimagined Future

SEND team – Steve Thompson, Michelle Bramhall, Channon Cross

The SEND team have enjoyed collaborating with a variety of staff and students recently to create unimagined futures for our young people. We continue to strive to be an exemplary model of cutting edge SEND support, in line with best practice from the SEND code of practice.

The SEND team have investigated trends from the past and looked forward to setting aspirational targets for the unimagined SEND future.

Literacy Profile

At Stone Soup Academy, we are committed to ensuring that every student develops strong literacy skills, equipping them for success in education and beyond. Through targeted interventions, using a range of effective tools, including Dyslexia Gold, Touch Typing, and Accelerated reader, we support students in improving their reading and writing abilities.

Our students have been engaging well within their literacy interventions. Currently, 22% of students at Stone Soup Academy are reading above the national average reading age, while 54% are reading above the level of a functional reader, meaning that they have the literacy skills needed to access their qualifications.

Celebrating Success

Many students have made exceptional progress, with some achieving over a year's growth in just one term. Students who have managed this are:

Khotso	Asia
Jake	Kaden
Riley W	Ethan
Wahaab	Cian
Taylor C	Maisie W-M
Billie	Josh
Armani	Callum
Logan P	Tyler H
Archie	

Intervention

The SEND team continues developments in the interventions provided at Stone Soup Academy. The SEND team continues to deliver an exemplary package of bespoke intervention, expertly matched to the needs of our students. The following are some examples of our innovative SEND interventions.

We are now proud owners of a small greenhouse and boxes of seeds and students are starting to grow herbs, fruits and vegetables. We are hoping to provide our cooks with some added extras. The entrepreneurs have even suggested we could provide our local restaurants with fresh produce – watch this space!!!

Time with dogs – (based around dog therapy) – Harry Henton is a valuable part of our school community and our send department is so grateful to have this amazing dog in school.

Harry brings a gentle comforting presence; he helps create a stress free and welcoming environment, Harry is a source of emotional support, providing students with a sense of security and companionship. By simply being present in the school Harry helps reduce stress levels and promotes positive interactions. When we take Harry out on walks students open up emotionally

Sensory Circuits – continue to be a great success. They have been shown to enhance regulation and improve behaviour and attitudes within the students who require this type of intervention.

English type – A current focus has been Year 11 Students are using their certificates in college interviews to talk about their success and efficiency in touch typing.

PAGS (Profile assessment and goal setting) – Our current focus is using the rich evidence base, contributed to by professionals such as educational psychologists, to create meaningful, robust targets for our students.

SEND in an Unimagined Future

The SEND team continues to explore ways of positively influencing as many areas of the Stone Soup family and extended community as possible for example in areas such as attendance, personal development and careers. Research and strategic planning has taken place in preparation for the part that the SEND team can play in using theories based on trauma and SEMH influencing attendance, personal development and careers specifically.



Personal Development

Katy Smith

It was another busy term in terms of personal development and cultural capital opportunities for students. In business, our young people have started work on a social enterprise project where they identify an issue in society and create a workable solution to solve it, before pitching to a professional. We are really excited to see how this plays out.

Students were also able to take part in a film for Netflix which was written and directed by Derry Shillitoe from Nottingham. This took place in the Creative Quarter and they turned the space into the film set. A group of Year 11s were involved in filming a piece of an advert which will be edited into the film when the camera pans to a TV screen showing the commercial. Students were involved in front of the camera and behind the scenes and this was a fantastic experience for them.

The whole school also celebrated LGBTQIA+ Allies week. "Ally Week is a national youth-led effort encouraging students to be allies with the LGBTQIA+ members of their community in standing against bullying and harassment". Staff supported this by wearing a pin badge to show their support of the community. Activities in lessons were themed to give a nod to, reference, study or celebrate a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, look into a cause, create artwork, write poetry, learn about an artist or focus on a business/charity etc... Some of the work produced was outstanding, especially in photography, and there were some fantastic conversations happening around the school.

Looking Ahead

Work on the Stone Soup Academy Sixth form continues to be a priority. The admissions policy is now complete so we will be reviewing the student applications and looking at who meets the admissions criteria ahead of offering places to ten of our young people. We will also be looking at the space put aside for the Sixth Form at High Pavement. The year 11s from the student leadership and wellbeing team (SLWT) will be leading on the design of these areas, making sure they have everything to contribute to a successful learning environment, whilst also supporting their wellbeing.

The SLWT will also be having a bit of a shake up, with new students being recruited to ensure all year groups are represented equally. An extra staff member will also be joining the running of this to help provide extra capacity. The students will be leading on a 'Kindness Pledge', the sixth form space and ensuring student voice is strong over the coming weeks.

We look forward to seeing all that this next term brings.



Business: An update into the studies

Amy Dennett

It has been a big term for the students in Business. From a day by day point of view, Year 9s have been working on the topic credit and have been looking at the different ways people get credit and the impact it can have if it gets too much. We have had many conversations around the pros and cons of spending on credit and allowed them to see there can be some benefits to using credit but if you do not manage it correctly it can have a lasting effect. The Year 10s have massively impressed me since Christmas with the amount of coursework they are doing from the theory work being taught. They have nearly completed their first full Unit which is exactly where they should be at this point. Lewis in Year 10 is the furthest along student and is engaging well with all the work. Finally Year 11s are working hard to finish all their coursework by Easter. Korie was the first to finish all his coursework with Brandon, Riley, Ethan and Wahaab who finished a week after him. I am super proud of all my students but these 5 now can focus on catching up on other subjects in my lessons.

For the last 6 Wednesday afternoons 9 students have been participating in the My Way Project (previous years called the Ingenuity Project). Students have been thinking about a social element that they see as a problem in society and came up with a potential solution they pitched to a panel of professionals. Students have picked different subjects including; fast fashion, bullying, fuel poverty, homelessness and loneliness. Students have come up with some brilliant solutions including boxing sessions to encourage team work, creating sessions to help people fill in forms to get the support they need. I have been very proud of how they have conducted themselves during these sessions and how they have approached these sensitive subjects.



PSHE: Empowering Students with Essential Life Skills

Lovelle Pennant

At Stone Soup Academy, our PSHE curriculum plays a vital role in equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to support their health, well-being, and future decision-making. This half term, we continue to deliver engaging and relevant lessons using high-quality resources from the PSHE Association.

Our curriculum covers a diverse range of topics tailored to each year group:

- **Year 9:** Students have been learning about making healthy lifestyle choices, including managing diet and exercise. They have also explored the importance of physical health and received training in basic first aid, ensuring they are prepared for real-life situations.
- **Year 10:** The focus has been on understanding influence, covering key topics such as gang involvement, its risks and consequences, the dangers of vaping, drugs and alcohol, and the impact of media on emotional well-being. These lessons help students develop awareness and critical thinking skills to navigate external pressures.
- **Year 11:** As they approach adulthood, students have been exploring belonging and community, including valuing diversity and understanding extremism. They have also learned about staying safe, with topics covering road safety, drug risks, and first aid training. Additionally, they will be gaining valuable knowledge on testicular health and breast cancer awareness, empowering them to take charge of their well-being.

Beyond PSHE lessons, we continue to embed Votes for Schools into our curriculum, sparking discussions on real-world issues such as Should we be more worried about drone use? Does learning about your emotions help you feel better? These debates encourage critical thinking and informed decision-making.

Additionally, last half term we proudly celebrated Ally Week, promoting inclusivity and support for the LGBTQIA+ community. Through various activities, students reflected on the importance of ally-ship, helping to foster a school environment where everyone feels respected and valued.

Through these lessons and initiatives, we remain committed to preparing our students with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to make informed, responsible choices – both now and in the future.



Year 10

Alesha Rogers

Since January we have been actively monitoring student progress, celebrating their achievements, and addressing any challenges that arise. We have continued to see significant development among our Year 10 students. They have successfully completed another round of mock exams, another term of work experience and have secured reward trips to Euro Disney, a London shopping trip and a meal for being in the top 20 students of the Academy.

Attendance

We have continued to work very closely with our attendance team so we are able to provide continued support for students who are low attenders. Attendance is higher at MH in both HT1 and HT2. We have seen an increase in attendance in Milbie House and have seen a great improvement in attendance with students Attendance Upon Entry (AUE). 93% of students that had below a 60% AUE have had a positive attendance progression. To

motivate those students who are achieving their target attendance we hold form rewards, form competitions and a weekly chance to claim a lunch pass. For those that are not meeting their target we are actively engaging with them through focus groups, home visits, attendance meetings, referrer meetings, and additional interventions to encourage improvement.

Behaviour

Improving student behaviour remains a key focus, and we have been proactive in identifying patterns early to implement timely interventions. This has been supported by regular communication, including weekly student concern emails and fortnightly Engagement Team meetings. Currently, 65% of students have met their behaviour target of a score of 7 or higher, while 100% students are at a score of 6 and above.



Stone Soup's Young Chefs Cook Up a Storm!

Dominique Maragh

It's been a sizzling term in the kitchens of Stone Soup Academy, where our budding chefs have been mixing, whisking, and plating up some truly mouth watering creations. From dietary-friendly delights to show stopping desserts, our Year 10 and Year 11 students have been proving that the future of food is in very safe (and very skilled) hands!

Year 10: Recipe Remix Masters!

Our Year 10 students have spent the term on a delicious mission – adapting their favourite recipes to suit different dietary needs. Whether it was swapping out ingredients for gluten-free alternatives or making dishes completely plant-based, they took on the challenge with enthusiasm and creativity.

The result? A feast of unique dishes that didn't just tick the nutritional boxes but also looked and tasted amazing! More importantly, students gained the confidence to tweak recipes without losing flavour or texture, a must-have skill for any modern-day chef.

Year 11: Cooking at a Whole New Level

Over in Year 11, the stakes were even higher. With coursework in full swing, students have been pushing their culinary skills to new heights, all leading up to the ultimate challenge: designing, preparing, and serving a two-course meal from scratch!

Some of the menus we can't stop talking about include:

- Crispy Lemon & Herb Chicken with Roasted Garlic Mash – a comfort-food classic with a gourmet twist.
- Vegan Butternut Squash & Sage Risotto – proving that plant-based meals can be just as rich and delicious.
- Decadent Chocolate Lava Cake with Raspberry Coulis – because no meal is complete without a bit of chocolate magic!

The students' talent, creativity, and technical skills have been nothing short of incredible – watch out, MasterChef!

A Standing Ovation for Jake!

One student took things even further. Our very own Jake represented Stone Soup Academy at the regional Future Chefs competition, wowing judges with his show-stopping profiteroles. While he didn't take home the top prize, he certainly stole the show, with one judge even suggesting he should start selling them!

Jake's dedication, flair, and passion for cooking have made the whole school proud. Keep an eye on this one – we wouldn't be surprised if he ends up running his own bakery one day!

What's Next?

As we roll into the next term, we can't wait to see what our talented chefs cook up next. With more challenges, more creativity, and plenty more delicious dishes on the horizon, the future is looking very tasty at Stone Soup Academy.

A huge WELL DONE to all our students for their hard work, imagination, and dedication – you've made this term one to remember! Keep cooking, keep creating, and most importantly... keep having fun in the kitchen!

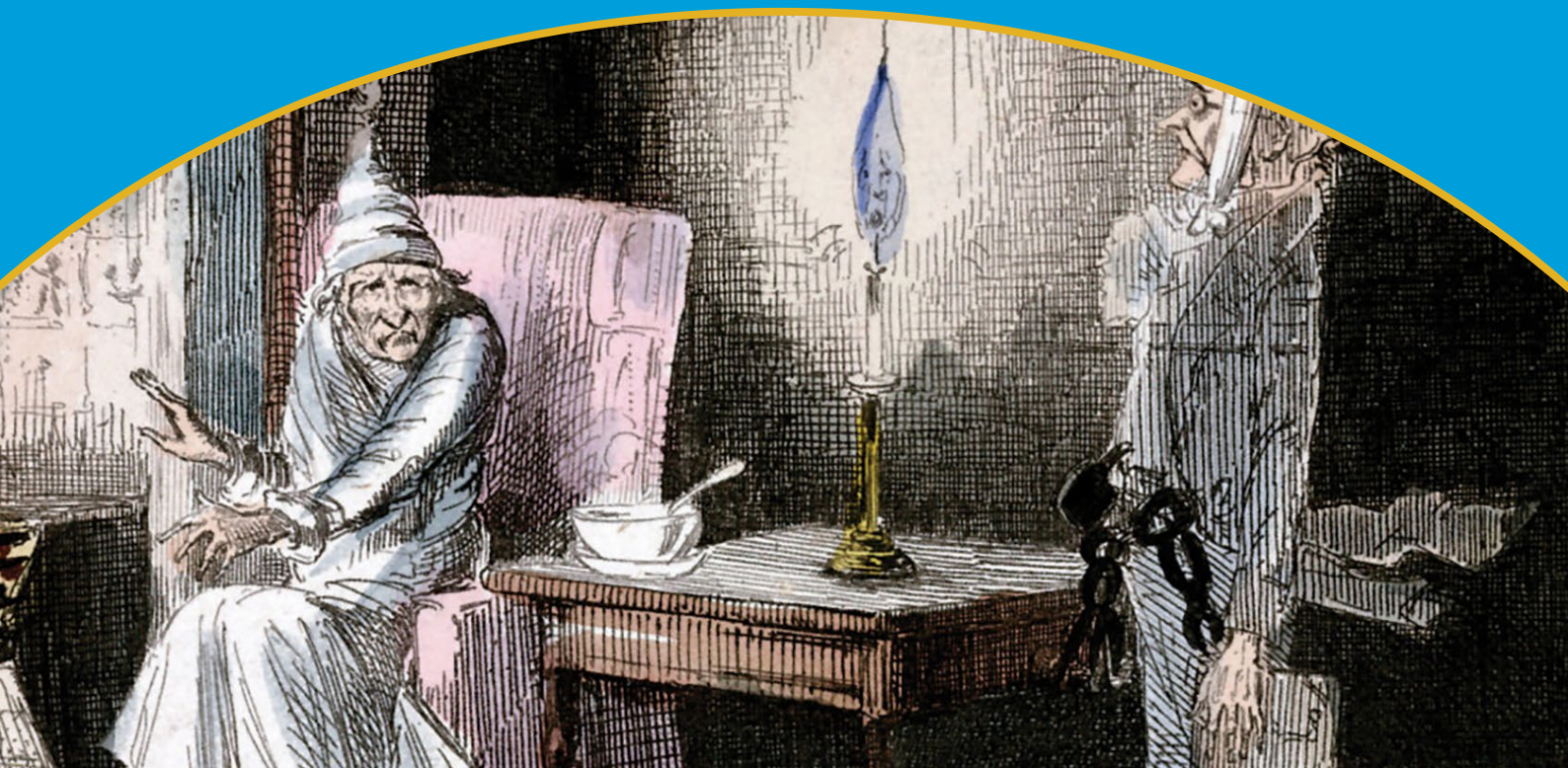


Stone Soup Academy Students Shine in English and Writing

Taylor Gilmour

Stone Soup has been committed to identifying students with attendance concerns early in the term, ensuring we can act swiftly to support them. This early intervention is tailored to meet each student's individual needs and circumstances.

- **Engagement with Families** – We have initiated early conversations with families to better understand the underlying reasons for Students at Stone Soup Academy have had an impressive term in English, with strong exam results and national writing success highlighting their hard work and progress.
- Half of the Year 11 cohort has already passed their Level 1 English Reading and Writing assessments. The focus now is on helping the remaining students achieve their Level 1 qualifications and preparing a select group for Level 2 assessments. Students will also complete their Speaking and Listening presentations this term, securing their full Functional Skills qualifications – valuable for college and job applications.
- Year 10 students have started studying A Christmas Carol, exploring key themes of charity, social inequality, and responsibility. The blended curriculum means all students will engage with GCSE-level material, helping them make informed choices for Year 11.
- KS3 students have been diving into short stories and historical narratives. The school is also trialling an AI-powered feedback platform, providing quick, personalised writing feedback to support student improvement.
- In a major achievement, all Stone Soup Academy entries for the Fight or Flight – UK Legends writing competition have been selected for publication. The collection will be released on 7th April 2025 – a huge confidence boost for students and a testament to the school's focus on literacy and creativity.
- With solid exam progress, engaging coursework, and national recognition for creative writing, Stone Soup Academy's English department is helping students build strong futures.



Art

Annie Gadsby

At the end of last term, our year 9 art students concluded their Fantasy themed project resulting in bold illustrations of fantastical creatures where they could show off their learned skills and imaginations. Our year 10s had focused on popular street artists such as Keith Haring and Jon Burgerman and enjoyed designing their own mash up characters, free line images and exploring bold colour and hidden meanings and our year 11s began their GCSE final exam portfolios.

Since the start of the new term, year 9 have begun focusing on the topic of Pop Art. During the duration of this topic they will be introduced to classic pop artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein and will experiment with these artists' creative process; Ben Day dots and printmaking. So far they have enjoyed learning about what Pop Art is and discussing what is part of our current pop culture. They have been excited to talk about things they like and have discussed lots from their favourite musicians to what they think is the best brand of drink (the age old argument of Coke or Pepsi.)

Year 10s began the term with an introduction to the popular illustrator Quentin Blake. So far they have collaborated on a research page, practiced their own self portraits in the artists style and have begun creating portraits of members of staff at the academy. Moving forward through the term, we will focus on the artist Jason Mercier and his "trash portraits". Students will design their own collaged background of everything they enjoy most and combine it with a full self portrait in Blake's style as their conclusion to this project.

Our year 11s have begun their Component 2, GCSE exam in art and have been focusing on building their portfolios and developing their individual style in preparation for their exam after Easter. The most popular exam titles this year have been "Landmarks", "Rough and Smooth" and "Flora and Fauna". I am unable to attach images of our students' work but they have produced some wonderful responses. Keep your eyes peeled for their creations!



How AI is Changing Education and Keeping Us Safe

Paolo Iannattone

Artificial Intelligence (AI) might sound like something out of a sci-fi movie, but it's becoming a big part of everyday life, including in schools. Here's how AI is transforming learning and helping to protect young people, along with some challenges we all need to think about.

Making School Smarter AI makes learning more personal. Imagine having a study buddy that knows exactly what you find tricky and helps you improve. AI tools can create quizzes, explain lessons in new ways, and even give you feedback instantly. This keeps learning fun and helps teachers spend less time on admin and more time teaching.

It also makes schools more accessible. From text-to-speech tools for visually impaired students to clever programs that adapt to how you learn, AI helps everyone succeed, no matter their needs. In creative subjects, it's pretty mind-blowing – students are using AI tools to make art, music, and even videos, without needing fancy equipment.

Keeping Us Safe Online AI can also help protect us. It's good at spotting harmful online content and alerting adults about risky behaviour before it becomes a bigger problem. It can be like an extra pair of eyes, helping teachers and safeguarding staff keep students safe from harm.

The Downside of AI is that it isn't perfect and it comes with risks. Some people use it to create harmful things like fake images or videos, and that's a real problem. It can also spread false information that looks believable, making it harder to tell what's real or fake. Worse, if the data used to train AI has biases, the results could unfairly stereotype or exclude people.

There's also the danger of relying on AI too much. If it does all the thinking for us, will we still be able to think creatively and critically? It's something we need to think about.

Using AI Responsibly to make sure AI helps more than it harms, we need to use it carefully. Governments should make rules to protect people, and we are developing clear guidelines for how AI is used. For example, AI-generated work could be labeled so it's clear what's human and what isn't. We are also teaching students how AI works, so you can spot fake news and question what you see online.

Most importantly, AI should never replace creative thinking or human connection – it should just help us do what we do better.

