

# Stone Soup Academy News



Issue 21 | July 2025 Half Term 6

## We are still OUTSTANDING June 2025

Kerrie Henton

It was a strange morning on Monday, the 9th of June. It was our daughter's 24th birthday so we had spent the morning celebrating. As I was travelling to the train station to work, I said to my husband, what if Ofsted calls today, his response was that's not going to happen but I couldn't shake that feeling.

In our usual staff briefing on Monday morning, I mentioned to staff about being prepared for Ofsted and that they could call at any moment on any day, little did I know that only two hours later this would become our reality...

Ofsted arrived in the form of two professional ladies on Tuesday the 10th of June. They stayed for two days and visited all parts of the Academy. They met with teachers, leaders and trustees and they spoke at length to our young people about their experience of being educated at Stone Soup Academy. They observed behaviour in lessons and other times around school. they looked at student, staff and parent feedback and looked at policies and procedures.

I am delighted to confirm that after investigating all areas of our academy across both sites they

determined that 'Stone Soup Academy continues to provide an exceptional quality of education and care for pupils who are outside mainstream education'. They went on to say that the 'school's provision for pupil's wider personal development is impressive' that 'all pupils typically achieve aspirational qualifications' and that 'the school has ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious'.

They commented that 'leadership at all levels including trustees is exceptionally strong and that the school has further deepened and strengthened its provision.' They concluded by saying that 'pupils continue to benefit from an outstanding provision in all areas.'

As you may imagine this was the best that we could achieve and with no areas to improve we were advised by the inspectors that 'you clearly know what you are doing, so continue to get on with it' and that is exactly what we intend to do by looking for new and innovative ways to create unimagined futures for your young people knowing that we are still outstanding.



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## Stone Soup Academy Values

Becky Ashmore

At Stone Soup Academy, values aren't just talked about, they're actively lived and celebrated across the school. This year, the academy took on the challenge of defining its core values, working closely with both staff and students. We chose five principles that truly reflect our community: **Kindness, Positivity, Respect, Celebration, and Collaboration.**

What followed was a five-week journey that brought each value to life. Every week focused on one core value and the weeks were filled with off site visits, creative projects, challenges, and reflective activities. From kindness bingo to sunshine moments, form celebrations, and secret missions, the school was transformed into a space where these values could be seen in action.

Together, these weeks showed the impact that a school can have that not only defines its values, but lives them.





## Stone Soup Academy at the National Engage in Their Future Conference

Younes Henini

On Monday 2nd June 2025, we proudly represented Stone Soup Academy at the National Engage in Their Future Conference, a key event dedicated to showcasing innovative approaches. Our delivery was well received and the session was titled "Outstanding Practices in Alternative Provision," and highlighted practical, evidence-informed strategies developed at Stone Soup to successfully re-engage students at risk of exclusion.

We outlined three fundamental pillars that underpin the academy's success:

**Firstly**, we described how the academy personalises each student's learning journey by combining core GCSE subjects such as Maths and English with creative disciplines and vocational pathways. This flexible approach ensures learning is meaningful, accessible, and tailored to individual interests and aspirations.

**Secondly**, we explored how emotional and behavioural support is fully integrated into daily academy life. Interventions include one-to-one mentoring, group work, sensory circuits for

students with ADHD, all designed to support mental regulation and foster personal growth.

**Thirdly**, we highlighted the academy's commitment to continuous evaluation and reflective practice. I explained that staff routinely analyse classroom dynamics and monitor the progress of students with SEND, ensuring timely intervention and sustained progress.

The session was met with enthusiastic feedback from delegates. We sent a clear message, that academic and behavioural development must go hand-in-hand, resonated powerfully with attendees.

In closing, we reflected on the academy's mission of "Creating Unimagined Futures", emphasising its continued focus on personalised learning, holistic wellbeing support, and an uncompromising culture of improvement. The presentation set a clear benchmark for excellence in alternative provision and provided replicable strategies for schools across the country striving to improve outcomes for their most vulnerable learners.

## Stone Soup Academy Students Build Bright Futures in Business

Amy Dennett

Our Business students are doing really well, both in their lessons and in learning how the real world of business works. Right now, students are learning all about branding, how businesses create their own identity and use it to stand out. They're using real-life examples to understand why branding is so important, and many students are showing great progress in their coursework.

As the term has progressed, students explored other exciting topics like finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship. These lessons will include hands-on projects and activities that make learning fun and practical. We are really pleased with how students are picking up these skills and using them in smart and creative ways.

But it's not just about the classroom. Business students are also working on important life skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and thinking creatively. They're taking part in group activities and working with local businesses to learn what it's like to be part of the business world. There's also a strong focus on social enterprise, learning how businesses can help people and make a positive difference. At the end of the term, students had the chance to show what they've learned during a special Business and Enterprise Afternoon. Students joined in with a range of activities from sports coaching, CV writing to creating photography and art that is worthy of sales.

## Preparation for Adulthood

Jordan Senior

### Nottingham Trent University visit - Raising aspirations

As part of our ongoing programme to support students in exploring higher education opportunities, we visited Nottingham Trent University (NTU). The visit aimed to raise aspirations, provide a firsthand insight into university life, and dispel common myths about university and student finance. NTU staff welcomed us warmly and began with a guided tour of the campus. Students were able to view various facilities, including lecture theatres, student accommodation, social spaces, and the library. The tour gave a realistic glimpse into what day-to-day life might look like for a university student.

### Staff members delivered engaging presentations about:

- **Courses Available:** A wide range of subjects across different faculties, including arts, sciences, business, law, and technology.
  - **Student Life:** Information about societies, support services, campus events, and the diverse student community at NTU.
  - **University Life and Transition:** Guidance on what to expect when transitioning from school to university.
- One of the key parts of the visit was a mythbusting session about higher education. Staff tackled common misconceptions, including:
- **Student Debt:** They explained how student loans work, clarified repayment terms, and emphasised that university debt is not like commercial debt.
  - **Entry Requirements:** A discussion around the flexibility of entry routes and the support available for students from a wide range of backgrounds.
  - **“University Isn’t for Me” Mindset:** Staff encouraged students to explore options and believe in their potential regardless of background or circumstances.



## Nottingham College Transition Talk for Year 11 Students

Our Year 11 students had the opportunity to attend an informative and inspiring transition talk delivered by Nottingham College right here at our school. The session gave students a detailed overview of the many pathways available after GCSEs, including A-Levels, vocational courses and apprenticeships. The college representatives explained the different options in a clear and engaging way, helping students to understand what each route involves and how to choose the one that best fits their interests and ambitions.

The talk also provided practical advice on how to apply, what entry requirements to expect, and what life at college is really like. Students had the chance to ask questions to get a clearer picture of what college would be like. We're very grateful to Nottingham College for taking the time to visit and support our Year 11s as they plan their futures.

## Serif Affinity Work Experience Day

A group of our students recently took part in an exciting and inspiring work experience day with Serif, the creative software company behind the award-winning Affinity suite of design tools. Held at Serif's headquarters, the day gave students a behind the scenes look at the world of digital design and software development. From graphic design and UX/UI to marketing and product development, students were introduced to the many careers available in the creative tech industry. Students met professionals from different departments, took part in hands-on workshops creating a bag with a poster of their film on it, and asked questions about what it's like to work in a fast paced, innovative company. The Serif team also shared their own career journeys and offered advice on how to get into the creative industries. The experience was incredibly valuable, giving students a glimpse into the real world working environment.

## SSA Sport

Duncan Bennett

We've had a fantastic year in sport! We have participated in so many events and fixtures across the course of the year. We have been involved in The Think Big programme, Forest Futures, AP Football Leagues and the East Midlands League coming runner up in both football leagues.

We also held our first Inter Forms competition during the launch of the SSA Values. We have had our AP Olympics, Summer Games and Staff vs Student football match to finish the academic year. What a year and what a performance from all our students! Well done everyone!





## Music

Paolo Iannattone

Our Music students are finishing the year on a real high. Across all year groups, they've shown fantastic progress, not just in their technical skills, but in their creativity, confidence, and independence. More and more students are now recording their music on their own, using the tools we've practised in class, and showing a real sense of pride in what they're creating. It's been a joy to see them grow into young musicians who believe in what they're doing.

In Year 9, students have been learning how music is structured by looking closely at binary and verse-chorus forms. Through fun quizzes and group presentations, they've been exploring different musical styles and building their knowledge in a way that feels engaging and practical. It's been lovely to watch them support one another and grow in confidence as they prepare for more advanced work next year.

Year 10 students have continued to explore genres and production techniques using Logic Pro. Whether they've just completed Component 1 or are now working on Component 2, their focus, independence, and creativity have truly stood out. We're incredibly proud of how far they've come and the way they're using their voice through music.

A real highlight this half term was Media and Music Day, when students visited a professional recording studio. Experiencing a real session helped them understand how music is shaped behind the scenes, from setting up microphones to editing takes, this gave them a real sense of what it's like to work in the industry.



## 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!

## Stone Soup Students Show that their Stories Matter

Lovelle Pennant

At Stone Soup Academy, our ethos is “Creating Unimagined Futures” and this term, our students have truly embodied that vision through their writing.

We’re proud to announce that three of our students: Asia, Cartia, and Logan have been selected for publication in the prestigious Young Writers anthology Grim Tales – Once Upon A Time. Their winning stories reimagined dark fairy tales in under 100 words, demonstrating outstanding creativity, voice, and structure. These students now join the ranks of young published authors, which is a powerful reminder that talent knows no bounds, especially here at Stone Soup.

In addition to this national success, our students have also been involved in a collaborative writing project with LeftLion as part of Collaboration Week. This challenge invited students to write articles on the theme: “What is life like at an Alternative Provision?” The results were bold, insightful, and deeply personal. Their writing not only challenged

public misconceptions but also gave voice to the lived experiences of young people who have often felt unheard. We were blown away by the honesty and depth shown, and several entries are now under consideration for publication in a future edition of the LeftLion newspaper.

These writing projects go beyond the page. They empower our students to believe in their potential, express their truth, and shape their futures with confidence. Through opportunities like these, we continue to show our learners that their voices matter – and that with creativity and belief, anything is possible.



## PSHE at Stone Soup Academy: Supporting Futures Through Real-World Learning

Lovelle Pennant

This term, our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic) curriculum continues to empower students with the tools they need to navigate life with confidence, awareness, and purpose. Our lessons are structured to reflect the real-world challenges and choices our students face, using high-quality materials from the PSHE Association.

In Year 9, the focus has been on healthy lifestyle choices. Students have explored topics like nutrition, exercise, and physical health—alongside practical first aid skills. These sessions are designed to support not just academic understanding, but lifelong wellbeing.

In Year 10, students delved into the theme of influence. Lessons unpacked how gang involvement begins, the risks of drugs, alcohol, and vaping, and the impact of media on emotional health. These

discussions were rooted in the reality of the world many of our students are growing up in and offered strategies to build resilience and make informed decisions.

Year 11 students, as they prepare for greater independence, have been reflecting on identity and belonging. From celebrating diversity to understanding the importance of community, students explored how to find connection in a rapidly changing world.

Our PSHE curriculum goes beyond the classroom. It’s about building character, promoting safety, and fostering ambition. Through these lessons, students are not only learning—they are growing into the kind, thoughtful, and confident individuals they’re destined to become.

## Attendance Rising and Students Thriving

Siobhan Stevenitt

Half Term 5 at Stone Soup Academy has been full of positive progress, especially when it comes to attendance and student engagement. Staff have continued to work closely with students and families, and it's clear that those efforts are paying off.

This half term has seen not only an improvement in attendance across the board, but also the continued success of the academy's approach to linking attendance with real-world, meaningful rewards.

### Food, Culture and Motivation

One of the key highlights this term has been our ongoing focus on rewarding good attendance with cultural experiences. Students have had the opportunity to explore different cuisines and cultures through visits to a variety of international restaurants including Greek, Thai, Mexican, and American.

These trips aren't just a treat, they're a chance for students to build cultural awareness, confidence, and social skills, all while celebrating their commitment to school.

### Attendance: On the Up

There's been a clear and consistent improvement in attendance:

- Most students are now attending 25–40% more than when they first joined
- Our Year 9 group has doubled in size since the start of the academic year
- Year 10 numbers continue to grow, showing that families trust and value what the academy offers
- Stronger relationships with parents and carers have played a big role in this success, as has the academy's personalised approach to student support.

### Recognising and Rewarding Progress

This half term, students who've shown strong or improved attendance have been rewarded in a variety of ways:

- Weekly lunch passes for top attenders
- Group rewards like Five Guys lunches and trips to Winter Wonderland
- Major attendance incentives, including a fully-funded trip to London and a residential trip abroad
- Participation in the Dojo point system, where students earn and spend points on fun rewards

These rewards help keep motivation high and give students clear, positive goals to aim for.

### Working Together from Day One

The academy's proactive approach to attendance continues to make a big impact. Right from the start, families are supported with:

- Welcome packs delivered to their homes
- Early conversations if concerns arise
- A commitment to working with families, not just reacting to problems
- When additional support is needed, the academy connects families to trusted services such as:
  - Be You (mental health support for young people)
  - Notts Help Yourself (a hub of local services)
  - Food banks, counselling, and more

Every student with attendance challenges has a tailored plan to help them move forward at their own pace.

### Looking Ahead

As always, the team continues to track data closely, spot patterns early, and act fast. Whether it's celebrating improvement or stepping in with support, the focus remains on ensuring no student is left behind.

This term has been a clear reflection of what's possible when students are supported, motivated, and given something to work towards.



## College Courses

Fred Slaney

It has been a successful and eventful year for the Hair and Beauty department. The academy is proud to report a 100% pass rate, with all students achieving a Level 1 qualification. As a result, the academy maintains a 100% overall success rate.

The Mechanics course has been running for just one year, and we are proud to report a 100% pass rate at Level 1. Given that this course is exclusively offered to Year 10 students, this achievement is especially impressive and reflects the hard work and dedication of both students and staff.

The Multi Skills course, which is a mix of the trades has seen exceptional success this academic year, running across both Year 10 and Year 11. We are proud to report a 100% pass rate for students in both year groups, a reflection of the hard work, consistency, and commitment shown by both the students and teaching staff throughout the programme.

For our Year 11 students, the achievements go even further. Not only have all students successfully passed their course, but an impressive 71% have chosen to continue pursuing Multi Skills at the next level. These students have already secured provisional offers at well-respected institutions, including Highfields College and Basford College. This high level of continuation highlights the growing interest in vocational and practical learning, and it's incredibly rewarding to see so many students inspired to build on their foundations in this field.

This year's cohort has demonstrated maturity, ambition, and a clear enthusiasm for hands-on learning, and we are confident that they will continue to excel as they move forward in their educational journeys. The academy is proud of their accomplishments and looks forward to seeing how they develop their skills and careers in the years to come.



## Personal Development

Katy Smith

### Personal Development and Cultural Capital Opportunities

Term 4 and 5 saw a huge array of Personal Development and Cultural Capital opportunities for our students. During term 4, these included; Forest Futures, Pink Kangaroo, UKMT, Experian Finance lessons and Reverse and Open Doors Careers events, English trip to Nottingham Castle Trip and multiple rewards trips – Zapp Thai, Rudy's Pizza and, pivotally, 8 of our young people attended EuroDisney in Paris as part of our top students for attendance, academics and behaviour reward trip. During term 5, these included; rewards trips to Rudy's pizza and Yamas, students competing in the AP football tournament final, a non-core cross curricular project with year 9s and a visit to a care home.

The school also took part in its first school values launch, spanning over 5 weeks, with a huge amount of personal development activities planned. Values activities included a visit to care home, Equation assembly, celebration of consistency across faculties, cupcakes and party hats in forms, gratitude postcards, staff wellbeing day, positivity-tea, kindness bingo and random acts of kindness.

Our second celebration evening, for the first time, featured an array of pastoral stalls in the games room, to encourage further parental and student engagement with outside agencies. NHS, CGL and our own SSA: Bridge to

Employment and the Stone Soup Studio. 17 different information leaflets collected by parents at the event and future plans for support resources to go into the welcome packs given out by our parent liaison officer. We also took part in a pyjama day for Red Nose Day, raising £56 for Comic Relief, and staff dressed up for World Book Day; all contributing to our student's citizenship and British Values education.

### Curriculum

The PSHE focus for Term 4 was 'Health and Wellbeing' with topics such as diet and exercise, gangs and early indicators for concern, belonging, community and diversity, vaping, influences on lifestyle decisions, testicular health, breast cancer awareness, drugs and alcohol and basic first aid training. Topics in term 5 followed a theme of 'Relationships', with sexual health, sexual choices, fertility and routes to parenthood, the role of intimacy, sexting, contraception pregnancy and pregnancy choices and tackling violence against women and girls. All students were thoroughly engaged in discussing these topics and particularly enjoyed participating in the more practical sessions relating to first aid and contraception.

### Looking Ahead

We are now starting to look ahead towards next year. Throughout term 6, students will take part in Media & Music Afternoon, the AP Olympics, Suits Day, Summer Games, Art & Photography afternoon, Wear Red to Save a Life, Drayton Manor, staff vs students football match, Enterprise & Business afternoon,





double dojos week, a reward trip to spring lakes and laser quest, Personal Development afternoon, the Stand Up to Knife Crime event and a transition assembly. So you can see, it promises to be a very busy but rewarding and enriching end to the year.

## Stone Soup Sixth Form

Plans for our sixth form are also coming along fantastically. All 9 out of 10 students have accepted their offer, with the final student's acceptance slip expected this week. The layout of the area and the furnishings have been decided, the life skills modules have been selected, the curriculum and timetable is currently being drafted and Katy will be meeting with Nottingham college to finalise the college options and day before we book in our student's work experience.

As we are nearing the end of the year, it's been wonderful to look back on all the students have achieved and I can't wait to see what more they are capable of next year.

## Equal Voices, Equal Choices with Equation

Over the last two terms, we have been lucky to team up with Equation, who have been working with

gendered groups to deliver sessions on healthy relationships, what it is like to be a man/woman, boundaries and respect, positive role models and guidance on how to make positive life choices as they get older. Equation has been commissioned by the police and crime commissioner and is recommended as the primary early help choice for vulnerable students. 24 of our young people have taken part in the equation sessions, which culminated during term 6 with a visit to the 'Asking For It' exhibition at the National Justice museum, followed by a creative art project for the girls, and a trip to a music studio, followed by a piece of media being created for the boys. The projects will soon be featured on our website, as part of our Stone Soup Studio.





## A Year to Savour: Celebrating Our Budding Chefs!

Dominique Maragh

This term, we proudly celebrated our Year 11 students as they completed their NCFE Food and Cookery course. From their very first chopped onion to their final plated masterpiece, each student has shown remarkable growth, dedication, and creativity. Their coursework was a true reflection of passion and skill - with highlights including a themed global cuisine day, technical challenges like "Mystery Ingredient Bake Offs," and even a "Restaurant Takeover" simulation where students served a three-course meal to staff!

Meanwhile, our Year 10 food enthusiasts are beginning to come into their own. Their confidence in the kitchen is growing week by week from

conquering knife skills to experimenting with fusion flavours. Many are already buzzing with ideas for their final dishes next year, and it's clear this cohort is fired up and ready to cook up a storm.

Adding even more spice to the curriculum is our exciting new partnership with Park Plaza in Nottingham as part of the Hospitality Connect project. This collaboration offers students real-life industry insight, mentorship from hotel chefs and managers, and practical workshops in a professional hospitality setting. It's a golden opportunity to bridge classroom learning with future careers in food and hospitality and the students are hungry for more!

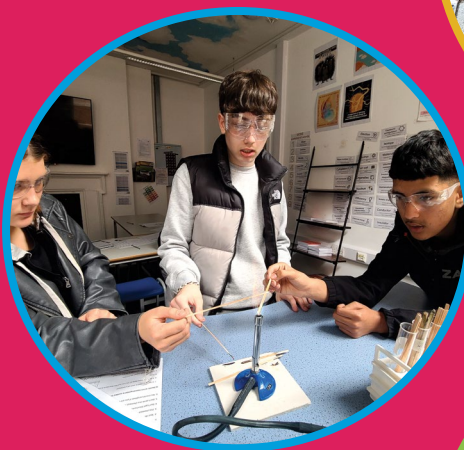
## Science

Hannah Smallwood

We have had another successful term in science at Stone Soup Academy. Our year 11s have studied hard and have successfully sat all 6 of their GCSE Science exams. We are so proud of all of them for making it this far and all the hard work they have put into getting here.

Our year 10 science classes are making great progress on the GCSE topics and have sat their first science mock exam this term. We have completed a topic all about chemical bonding and another about diseases. Our year 10s have been using the gym to understand forces, calculating the work done during each lift.

The year 9s have had fun learning about chemical changes and chemical reactions. They particularly enjoyed carrying out flame tests to investigate the different coloured flames produced by different metals. The students have also carried out experiments to make copper sulphate crystals and investigate colours of light and how they mix together.



## An Excellent Year in English!

Taylor Gilmour

fantastic news and highlights from the English department. Our students have shown real determination, creativity, and growth – and we couldn't be prouder of what they've achieved.

This year, an incredible 94% of our Year 11 students have achieved their Level 1 Functional Skills qualification in English. This is a huge accomplishment and shows how committed they've been to improving their reading, writing, and communication skills. Even more encouraging is that 16 students have been working towards their Level 2 qualification, showing great ambition and progress.

We were thrilled to take part in the Young Writers national competition again this year – our second entry of the academic year. We're proud to say that three of our students have been selected to have

their work published in an upcoming anthology! Their creativity and hard work really paid off, and we can't wait to see their writing in print.

Our Year 9 students have started studying George Orwell's 'Animal Farm', an important part of preparing for GCSE English. To help bring the novel to life, they visited a local farm to experience what farm life is really like. This hands-on experience helped them better understand the novel's themes of power, control, and society – and it made learning more memorable and fun!

We're so pleased with the effort our students are putting into their English work and how they've taken on new challenges with enthusiasm. We'll continue doing everything we can to support their learning and development – both in the classroom and beyond.

## Wear Red, Save a Life: Promoting Bleed Control Awareness

Zoe Cooke

Each year on 4th July, we mark the anniversary of the tragic loss of Byron, who was just 22 years old when he died as a result of an unprovoked knife attack. In memory of Byron, the Wear Red, Save a life campaign was created by his mother to raise awareness of knife crime and promote the distribution of lifesaving bleed control kits across Nottingham.

Since its launch, schools, organisations and companies across the city including Stone Soup Academy have shown their support by taking part in the campaign. On this day, staff and students are encouraged to wear red and, if they wish, make a donation towards funding bleed

control kits that are made available in public spaces.

Stone Soup Academy supported the campaign even before I became a member of staff. I was so inspired and moved by the school's commitment to raising awareness and supporting the community also with their Stand up to knife crime event that I later joined the team as a full-time Personal Coach.

We are proud to continue supporting this important cause, and we thank all staff and students who took part in this year's campaign. By wearing red, we remember Byron and stand together to help save lives.



## SEND for Success!

### SEND Team

The SEND team has had another amazing term working with students and staff to deliver the highest standards of SEND practice. From new student one page profiles to delivering the specific detailed SEND plans for student exams.

Using SEND strategies and effective tools and the most up to date technology we thrive to support students creating an unimagined future for each individual at Stone Soup Academy.

With a new addition of Amy joining the team, as SEND Assistant.

SEND now has two members of staff across each site, to support students and staff.

### SEND Exam News

#### Supporting Student Wellbeing: Introduction of Personalised Anxiety Sensory Packs

This year, we proudly launched our personalised Anxiety Sensory Packs as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting student wellbeing, regulation, and inclusion. These packs have been thoughtfully developed based on individual sensory profiles, allowing us to tailor support to meet each student's unique needs in moments of anxiety, overstimulation, or panic.

Each kit includes carefully selected items designed to help students ground themselves, regulate their emotions, and return to learning. Some of the tools featured may include:

**Bubbles** – Used to promote slow, mindful breathing and help students regulate their breath during a panicked state.

**Acupuncture Rings** – Small, discrete grounding tools ideal for use in lessons, providing tactile feedback to support focus and calm.

**Picky Pads** – Tactile textures that offer a sensory distraction during emotional distress, helping students to de-escalate in moments of frustration.

**Sour Sweets** – Engaging the tactile taste sense, these help interrupt overwhelming thought patterns and support students in moving out of panic.

**Velcro Dots** – Perfect for students who benefit from rougher textures, offering a way to self-regulate subtly and independently.

**Grounding Stones** – Silicone ridged stones provide a

physical anchor for students who need sensory input to feel calm and present.

**Magnetic Slider Fidgets** – Support fidgeting in a focused way, particularly helpful for students who need to move their hands to remain attentive.

**Pipe Cleaners** – Soft and flexible, these can be used as sensory tools or creative outlets, giving students a calming and productive way to self-regulate.

**Each pack is personalised** – built around what a student finds calming or supportive – and used both proactively and in crisis moments. Importantly, they are not seen as distractions, but as tools that help students manage their emotional state and successfully remain in or return to learning spaces.

Notably, during this year's exam series, the packs proved incredibly effective. Students who may have otherwise left the room due to anxiety were often able to remain or re-enter more confidently, with reduced distress and greater success. This has been a powerful reminder of how small, personalised tools can have a profound impact on our learners' ability to cope, regulate, and thrive.

By responding to individual needs in a practical and compassionate way, these sensory packs represent a meaningful step forward in creating an environment where all students can feel safe, understood, and supported

### Celebrating Eid al-Fitr using mindfulness

After our students had completed the holy month of Ramadan they were excited to tell the staff all about their celebrations with one student marking the end of the holy month by drawing intricate patterns on her hands. These patterns symbolise a new chapter, gratitude, joy and rebirth and they were also keen to practice their skills on some of our staff members during a mindfulness session.

### Wellbeing and Community – My Green Box

The SEND team has been supporting students in developing positive mental health strategies and learning how to manage overwhelming emotions. One of the tools we've introduced is a coping mechanism called "My Green Box."

This box is designed to be used during particularly difficult moments. It serves as a safety and grounding tool to help students manage distress and reduce the urge to self-harm.



What makes the box meaningful isn't just the container itself, but what it holds – and what it represents. Inside are carefully selected calming and distracting items: soothing scents, paper, pens, pencils, glue, small toys, a simple game – anything that can help redirect focus and provide comfort during intense emotional moments.

The Green Box is a reminder that there are healthier ways to cope, and most importantly, that the student is not alone.

## Community – Geography and green space

### Stone Soup Garden

Our gardening project has continued to thrive this term, with a yield of potatoes and numerous herbs. Students are using the garden as a calming space to connect with nature. Tending to the garden – planting, watering, and maintaining the area – provides a purposeful break for those who may need time to de-stress. Promoting emotional regulation, reducing anxiety, and encouraging a sense of responsibility and achievement.

### Outdoor – Green Space

The SEND team has worked with students to allow them to spend more time in natural spaces. These include the Arboretum and along the River Trent has proven deeply beneficial to students mental health. Outdoor sessions have given students the opportunity to explore, reflect, and regulate emotions while engaging with geography and environmental learning. These moments of calm provide powerful support for emotional resilience and connection.

## Interventions

Now that sensory circuits are well-established at Stone Soup, it has become an important part of students' routine. These sessions provide a structured outlet to release energy, regulate their emotions, and prepare both mentally and physically for the school day. By supporting focus and reducing anxiety, sensory circuits play a key role in helping students transition into lessons feeling calm, settled, and ready to learn.

### Anti-stress Intervention with Michelle Bramhall

Our intervention sessions provide a calm and supportive environment where students can take a break, talk things through if needed, and use iPads equipped with de-stress and mindfulness apps. These tools help students manage their emotions and help them refocus.

## Literacy Over The Year

At Stone Soup Academy, we are committed to supporting every student on their journey to becoming a confident, functional reader. Each half term, we deliver targeted literacy interventions – such as Literacy Gold, Touch Typing, and Accelerated Reader – designed to boost reading ages and develop key literacy skills. Students are selected for these based on reading data from the Accelerated Reader platform or through referrals made from classroom teachers. Interventions run in 8-week cycles, with reading ages reassessed each term to ensure the right students are receiving the support that is needed.



## Photography Summer Term

Emily McCann

What an amazing year we have had in Photography, with students across all years showing incredible creativity, resilience, and artistic growth.

Photography is a powerful outlet where many of our young people are discovering their voice, building confidence, and truly flourishing. It's been an absolute joy to see their ideas take shape and come to life through the lens.

In Year 9, students have embarked on their first independent project, My World, a personal and powerful exploration of identity. This project invites students to capture what makes them who they are, whether that's their hobbies, family life, personal identity or cultural background. It's been a fantastic way to inspire creative thinking and build early confidence behind the camera. Importantly, it also offers a real taste of what GCSE Photography is all about, laying strong foundations for those considering the subject next year.

Year 10 students are using this final half term to consolidate their progress, refine their coursework, and prepare for next year's GCSE exam unit. Over the course of the year, their confidence has blossomed and it's been exciting to see them take increasing pride in their work. Weekly off site shoots have made the most of the summer sunshine, giving students a chance to experiment with natural light, composition, and visual storytelling in real world environments. These practical sessions have been a real highlight, offering invaluable hands on experience, building confidence and furthering technical skills.

A recent highlight was Art and Photography Day, where students took a trip to the Arboretum in Nottingham city centre. Students took part in a photography scavenger hunt, working in teams to respond to a range of visual challenges set against the stunning backdrop of the park. From capturing symmetry and leading lines to experimenting with shadows and reflections, the students made excellent use of the natural scenery. Their enthusiasm, teamwork, and creative problem-solving were fantastic to see, and the images produced were full of imagination and style.

Meanwhile, Year 11 students have officially completed their Photography course, and what a journey it's been! Despite facing a variety of challenges, they've created thoughtful, high quality work that truly reflects their growth as artists and individuals. Their creativity, maturity and dedication throughout the exam period has been nothing short of amazing, and I am incredibly proud of everything they've achieved.

Looking ahead, the future of Photography is bright. It remains a vital creative outlet for so many of our students; a space where they can reflect, express themselves and tell their stories in meaningful, visual





ways. With continued support and enthusiasm, I'm excited to build on this momentum next year and continue growing the subject, offering even more opportunities for our young people to shine.



## What a Good Year for the Roses!

Darrell Drummond

It is fair to say that it has been a very busy year for all things mathematical here at Stone Soup!

October was Black History Month and this was when our very first Thomas Fuller Challenge was held in school. Thomas was an enslaved American man in the 1700s who was known as 'the human calculator' and boy could he work out maths problems quickly! In honour of his memory, we held a competition that was won by Angel K. and Priyom!

Next up was February and the Intermediate Maths Challenge organised by the UKMT. Six of our students took part with Kaden and Jake being awarded Gold Certificates and an invitation to the next round known as the Pink Kangaroo! Asia-Renee, Riley W, Jace and Angel K. were the other students taking part.

March saw another Pi-Day and our now customary dingbat competition. This year's winners were Kayman, Riley, Adam, Lillie, Laceygrace, Chloe and Cameron who are all in Micha, Dom and Taylor's Y9 form.

Once again, 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 .... (big deep breath) .....

Amaya, Angel, Asia-Renee, Ava, Brandon, Brooklyn, Carey, Cerys, Cian, Cienna, Darin, Declan, Ethan, George, Harley, Ibrahiem, Jace, Jake, Jody, Kaden, Khotso, Korie, Maisie, Megan, Mya, Paris, Riley H, Riley W, Shaner, Taylor A, Taylor C, Thor, and Wahaab.

**Wow! That's 33 students! Massive kudos to them all!!**

Finally, these students were successful in their Level 2 qualifications ....

Amaya, Angel, Asia-Renee, Ava, Brandon, Carey, Cian, Declan, Ethan, George, Harley, Jace, Jake, Jody, Kaden, Korie, Megan, Paris, Riley W, Taylor C, and Wahaab.

**That is 21 students in total and another record breaking year!!**

We've also had plenty of our Y10 students doing well in their Level 1 qualifications and setting the scene for another great year next year. They are . .

Aaron, Arthur, Billie-Mai, Charlie, Chloe M., Kian, Kye, Lillie Mai, Logan P., Maisie, Mason, Millie-Mae, Olly, Poppy, Raphael, Romeo, Skye and Tia.

**All that is left now is the release of those grades in the summer and then everybody really will be smelling the roses!!**





## From Day One to Suits Day: Celebrating Our Soupers of 2025 in Style

Oli Sillito

This tradition has been going strong at Stone Soup since the very beginning in 2013. Each year, we try to make it bigger and better as we celebrate our Year 11s and their journey. Their leaving is always bittersweet – we’re going to miss them so much, but we’re also so excited to see what they go on to do next. Every year, we want our students to leave knowing just how proud we are of them, and that we’ll always be here if they need us. The turnout from students, families, and staff was so special – it really shows what this community means to us all. I was also proud to show off my rapping abilities! We also created our fifth yearbook, which is fast becoming a beloved tradition of its own. An amazing, emotional, and joyful event that is close to all our hearts.

This year we expanded our awards to recognise even more of the amazing qualities our students show. Congratulations to all our winners!

### Respect – Paris

Paris always treats others with dignity and listens with genuine care and understanding.

### Kindness – Ibz

Ibz goes out of their way to support others with empathy, never expecting anything in return.

### Collaboration – Asia & Cian

Asia and Cian bring people together and show true teamwork in everything they do.

### Positivity – Thor

Thor brings positive energy to every space, lifting up everyone around him.



### Celebration – Angel

Angel has shown incredible personal growth, kindness, and strength, making a unique and lasting impact.

### Innovation & Impact – Khotso

Khotso’s creative ideas have led to real, positive changes within our school community.

### Think Big – Riley W

Riley dreams big, leads with purpose, and inspires others to reach higher.

### Enterprise Award – Jake

Jake has shown entrepreneurial flair and the drive to lead with passion and purpose.

### Outstanding Creativity – Ava

Ava stands out through her imaginative and expressive creative work.

### Most Improved – Taylor C

Taylor has made outstanding progress and continues to grow every day.





## Never Giving Up Award – Cerys

Cerys has shown resilience and strength through every challenge faced.

## Educational Legend – Angel

Angel consistently gives their all to learning and sets a brilliant example to others.

## Overcoming Adversity – Amaya

Amaya has shown immense courage and perseverance through tough times.

## Outstanding Student – Brandon

Brandon excels in every way – as a learner, role model, and community member.

## Environmental Sustainability – Carey

Carey leads the way in making our school greener and inspiring others to do the same.

## Bring on Suits Day 2026!



# The Trio of Trips

Oli Sillito

To mark our recent Ofsted Outstanding achievement as a school, we organised three exciting trips in one day – a celebration of what we've achieved together. This success belongs to all of us: students, staff, and the wider school community.

One group of students headed to Spring Lakes for an action-packed day of water sports, while

another group battled it out at Laser Quest. A third group enjoyed a delicious meal at Rudy's Pizza – quickly becoming a firm favourite with everyone at the academy and art and food activities were organised for any young person who wanted to remain onsite.

# Drayton Manor

Oli Sillito

This year, we took 46 students to Drayton Manor for a fantastic day out packed with fun, laughter, and rollercoasters!

For some of our young people it was the first time that they had been taken on a school trip so for us and them it was very special.

We love giving our students the opportunity to take part in trips like this – a chance to relax, have fun with their peers and staff, and celebrate all they've achieved this year. It was the perfect way to mark the end of term and start getting excited for what's to come next year!





## Stand up to Knife Crime 2025 Stand Up to Youth Violence

Oli Sillito

**What an incredible night.** Thank you to everyone who joined us for an inspiring and powerful evening of music, film, and spoken word as we came together to raise awareness and challenge perceptions around knife crime in our community.

The event was a true celebration of talent – from powerful performances by rappers, songwriters, and spoken word artists to heartfelt messages from guest speakers and the passionate voices of young people. The energy in the room was electric, and the message was clear: this was more than an event – it was a movement.

This evening wasn't just about raising awareness. It was about shining a light on opportunity, empowerment, and action. Through the courage of shared stories and the power of creative expression, we saw how change begins when we amplify the voices that need to be heard most.

Together, we showed that a different future is possible – one where ambition replaces fear, and creativity becomes a pathway to hope.

**We can't wait to do it all again next year.**

## A Creative Afternoon

Annie Gadsby

This term, we celebrated a fantastic Art and Photography afternoon filled with creativity, colour, and inspiration. Students had the chance to enjoy a trip to see the Material Worlds exhibition featured in the Highfields gallery, where they explored incredible fabric-based artwork, embroidery and fashion pieces followed by a fun-filled run around the local park.

Back at school, students took part in a range of creative activities. They had the choice between photo weaving, loom bracelet creating, shadow art watercolour painting, or heading out to the arboretum for a photography challenge.

The arboretum was the perfect place to take some stunning photos, with students capturing light, shadow, textures and hidden details in various teams. Whether behind a camera or weaving together a form of art, every student brought their own creative flair—and the results were amazing.

**Everyone had a brilliant time and, as always, our students were complete souperstars! We can't wait to see how these creative sparks continue to grow.**





## Celebrating Achievement, Creativity, and Enrichment

Khia Lewis-Todd

As we draw to the close of another highly successful academic year, the Media Department is pleased to report significant progress, creativity, and engagement from students across all year groups. This term has provided a particularly valuable period for reflection and productivity, as students conclude major units of work and prepare for important transitions – particularly our outgoing Year 11 cohort.

### **Educational Enrichment: Visit to The National Justice Museum**

This term, students from Year 10, alongside selected pupils from Year 9, had the valuable opportunity to visit The National Justice Museum. During their visit, students engaged in the Choices and Consequences exhibition, which provided important education on the dangers and implications of knife crime.

Following this, students successfully completed the nationally recognised Stop the Bleed training, delivered by professional medics from the Queens Medical Centre Trauma Unit. This practical training equipped students with potentially life-saving skills in emergency first aid and underscored the importance of personal responsibility and informed decision-making.

### **Celebrating Creativity: Media and Music Day**

Congratulations are extended to all students who participated in our recent Media and Music Day. This enrichment experience provided pupils with a variety of opportunities to engage creatively with professional contexts. Some students spent the day at a recording studio, others conducted field interviews within the local community, and another group undertook the production of music videos. This initiative allowed students to develop their practical and creative skills in authentic environments, further enhancing their learning.

### **Year 11: Completion and Celebration – Class of 2025**

Our Year 11 students have now formally concluded their studies in Creative Media Production. This final term has been focused on the completion of all outstanding coursework, as well as the resitting of external assessments where necessary. All requisite work has been successfully submitted.

The department wishes to commend the resilience, diligence, and commitment that students have demonstrated during this challenging final phase of their academic journey. We extend our sincere best wishes to all as they progress onto their next stages in education, training, or employment. We look forward to formally recognising and celebrating their achievements upon the publication of results.

### **Year 10: Cultural Awareness Through Creative Media**

Our Year 10 students, who will form the next Year 11 cohort, have worked diligently this term to complete Component 1: Exploring Media Products. This unit has encouraged students to develop an understanding of how media reflects and is inspired by diverse cultures worldwide. Through critical engagement with a range of international media products, students have enhanced both their analytical and creative capabilities.

As part of their assessed practical work, students produced moving image and audio pieces inspired by cultural influences. The standard of work produced has been both imaginative and technically proficient, evidencing students' ability to translate theoretical concepts into creative, original media outputs.

### **Year 9: Building Technical Proficiency Through iMovie**

Our Year 9 cohort has this term been introduced to practical media production techniques, with a particular emphasis on iMovie and foundational

media production skills. Through structured workshops and project-based learning, students produced mini-advertisements, developing core skills in video editing, narrative construction, and persuasive communication techniques.

These activities have provided students with valuable hands-on experience using industry-standard software, laying a strong foundation as they begin to consider future study options within media at Key Stage 4.

## Looking Ahead: Preparing for the Future

As we enter the final weeks of this academic year, preparations are already underway for transition activities and the development of resources for September. Our commitment remains firmly rooted in providing a dynamic, inclusive, and forward-thinking curriculum that cultivates creativity, critical thinking, and media literacy across all year groups.

We extend our thanks and congratulations to all students for their dedication, hard work, and creativity throughout this academic year. We look forward to continuing to build upon this success in the year ahead.

## Year 9 Update: Great Progress and Exciting Times Ahead

Michelle Rogers

Year 9 students have made fantastic progress this term in attendance, behaviour, and enrichment. Thanks to support from staff, families, and personal coaches, many students are reaching new milestones and showing real improvement.

**Attendance** has been a big focus, and the results are showing. Students are making the effort to come in more regularly, and the numbers are looking great.

**Behaviour** has also seen great improvements across the year group. Students are making better choices, and the support in place is helping them stay on track:

**Enrichment** activities have added fun and variety to the school week. These sessions help students build skills, confidence, and friendships outside the classroom. Activities have included:

- Offsite sports sessions
- Art and design projects
- Games room competitions
- Ready Steady Cook challenges
- Visits to Stonebridge Farm, the Arboretum, and Highfield Park



## Year 10 Efforts, Engagement and Growth

Alesha Rogers

We have seen significant progress and engagement from our year 10 students, both academically and pastorally. We have offered a wide range of enrichment activities that have been designed to support personal development whilst embedding our school values.

Our students have successfully completed another round of mock exam even better than last time, showing readiness to take the transition to year 11. Alongside this a number of our students have completed their Functional Skills Level 1 and 2. We have also incorporated external sessions from Equation and CGL to help better their understanding of relationships and wellbeing which worked hand in hand with our Know More and Choices Workshops.

### Attendance

We are continuing to work closely with our attendance team to ensure ongoing support for students identified as low attendances. Our overall attendance is high and is way above the national average for Alternative Provisions. To continue to encourage students to have positive attendance we have continued to use incentives such as form rewards, inter-form competitions and our weekly

lunch pass. For those that achieve the highest attendance they have a chance to attend our top 20 student meals.

### Enrichment and Behaviour

Enrichment has remained a key focus. We had the Forest Futures Programme where our year 10 students have engaged in football coaching, first aid workshops and positive mindsets. Our year 10's also got to participate in the Music and Media Day where they visited a professional studio and then worked together to create podcasts with members of the public about their opinion of Alternative Provisions. 6 of our year 10s attended a football tournament where we came second and they demonstrated amazing sportsmanship. Some of our students have been offered Art therapy 1:1 sessions and group sessions. This has been working amazing for our students who have been working on emotional wellbeing and self expression.





## Year 11s

Molly Champion

As Head of Year 11, it brings me great pride to reflect on what has been an incredibly successful and emotional Half Term 6. Our Year 11 students have completed their GCSE examinations with resilience and maturity. Their focus and commitment throughout the exam period has been exemplary, and we are confident their efforts will be rewarded in August.

Following the final exam and our t-shirt signing day, students had the opportunity to say their goodbyes to staff who have supported them throughout their secondary journey at Stone Soup. These moments were filled with genuine gratitude, celebration, and reflection on how far they've come and what's to come next.

We ended the term with our much-anticipated Suits Day at the Broadway Cinema – a joyful and stylish occasion where students arrived dressed to impress, ready to celebrate their hard work and achievements. The atmosphere was one of celebration, pride, and unity, marking a fitting close to five years of shared memories, challenges, and growth.

On behalf of all staff, I would like to congratulate Year 11 for their outstanding attitude this half term and throughout their time at the school. We wish them every success for the future and look forward to celebrating their results with them soon.

