

First Annual Impact Summit: Sharing Outstanding Practice in Alternative Provision

Younes Henini

On Monday 6th July, Stone Soup Academy proudly hosted its first annual Impact Summit: Sharing Outstanding Practice in Alternative Provision—a landmark event celebrating innovation, collaboration, and excellence across the Alternative Provision (AP) sector.

The summit welcomed delegates from schools, trusts, local authorities, charities, businesses, and partner organisations, all united by a shared ambition: to improve outcomes for children and young people through collaboration and the sharing of best practice.

The event was built around three key aims: to share outstanding practice, change the narrative around Alternative Provision, and strengthen collaboration between education and wider stakeholders. Throughout the day, delegates explored how Alternative Provision is far more than a place of last resort. It is a sector built on innovation, inclusion, expertise, and transformation, where personalised approaches enable some of the most vulnerable young people to thrive.

A key message throughout the summit was that lasting change happens when schools, communities, businesses, charities, and public services work together. By sharing knowledge, expertise, and experience, we can collectively create better opportunities and brighter futures for children and young people.

Inspiring Keynote Speakers

Professor Veronica Pickering OBE MBS HAC, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Lord Mayor of Nottingham

Liz Barrett OBE DL, Principal, ATTFE College

Warren Carratt, CEO, Nexus MAT

Shaheen Myers, Founder, Balance:ed

Chris Gillespie, Nottingham HOPE Academy

Sharon Kennedy, Engage and Prosper

Nikki Purcell, Education Advisory Service Consultant

Norris Stewart, Nuturecare Ltd

Zoe Cooke, Stone Soup Academy

Their inspiring presentations challenged perceptions, shared practical insights, and demonstrated the power of partnership in improving the lives of young people.



Sharing Outstanding Practice

The afternoon programme gave delegates the opportunity to choose from a range of interactive workshops led by experienced practitioners from across the education sector. Designed to provide practical strategies and evidence-informed approaches, the workshops covered topics including Alternative Provision, SEND, attendance, literacy, behaviour, curriculum design, and professional development.

Workshops included:

- *Evidencing the Invisible: Measuring the Impact of SEND Provision* – Felicia Jibson, Rebecca Hale & Channon Cross
- *Getting the Order Right* – Sharon Kennedy
- *Talking to Young People About Harmful Behaviours* – Aysha Sainsbury
- *Beyond Readiness: Evidencing What Really Changes for Learners in Alternative Provision* – Halui (Hayley) Angus FCCT
- *Improving Attendance with AVI: Using Robots to Help Students* – Jude Clark
- *Interactive: Life in Alternative Provision* – delivered by Stone Soup Academy student Cody, providing delegates with a powerful insight into the lived experience of Alternative Provision
- *Setting Up a SEND Base* – Laura Slinn
- *Making Every Minute Count: Designing High-Impact SEND & AP CPD* – Jolene Carter
- *They Are More Than Just Numbers: Increasing Numeracy Levels* – Darrell Drummond
- *Disciplinary Literacy in Alternative Provision* – Taylor Gilmour
- *Cognitive Load and Communication Strategies* – Georgia Gilbert

• *Demand Avoidance: When is it PDA?* – Tom Gilbody

• *Brains, Behaviour and Belonging* – Shoana Qureshi-Khan

These sessions encouraged delegates to exchange ideas, explore innovative practice, and reflect on approaches that can be adapted within their own settings. Every workshop reinforced the summit's central message: by sharing expertise and working collaboratively, we can improve outcomes for all children and young people.

One of the most powerful moments of the day came from hearing directly from Stone Soup Academy students. Their courage, resilience, and honesty reminded everyone why this work matters. Their stories perfectly demonstrated the transformational impact that Alternative Provision can have when young people are placed at the heart of everything we do.

The event would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, organising committee, exhibitors, sponsors, delegates, and students.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to every keynote speaker, workshop leader, exhibitor, sponsor, delegate, member of staff, volunteer, and student who contributed



to making the inaugural Impact Summit such an inspiring success.

A special thank you also goes to Maria, whose exceptional organisation, dedication, and countless hours of work behind the scenes made the event possible. Her commitment ensured the day ran seamlessly from start to finish.

The Impact Summit is only the beginning. We are excited to build on the conversations, partnerships, and ideas that emerged throughout the day as we continue to challenge perceptions, share outstanding practice, and strengthen collaboration across the sector.

Together, we can continue creating unimagined futures for every child and young person.

We look forward to welcoming delegates back for the Impact Summit 2027!



Multi-Skills Update

Josh Cassidy

As another school year comes to an end, I'd like to say how proud I am of all of our students and everything they have achieved.

A huge congratulations goes to our Hair and Beauty students, who all successfully passed their course. Their commitment, hard work, and willingness to learn have been fantastic to see, and they should be incredibly proud of themselves.

I'd also like to recognise our Year 10 and Year 11 students who attended the Multi-Skills college course. They represented the academy brilliantly, embraced every opportunity, and have made excellent progress throughout the year.

It's also been exciting to see students choosing their college options for next year as they begin thinking about their future. I look forward to seeing them continue to grow in confidence, develop new skills, and achieve even more.

Well done to all of our students, and I hope everyone has a happy and well-deserved summer break.



From Classroom to Career

Jordan Senior

Computacenter Insight Morning Visit

Recently, a group of students took part in an Insight Morning visit to Computacenter, gaining valuable experience of the IT industry, cyber security, and large-scale technology operations.

Students had an introduction to Computacenter and the wide range of services it provides to support organisations with their IT infrastructure. Students learned how the company helps businesses and public sector organisations manage everything from hardware and software to cloud systems, networks, and cyber security solutions. A key highlight of the visit was the Cyber Security TikTok Workshop, where students explored important online safety topics such as hacking, online fraud, impersonation, cyberbullying, and password security. Working in small groups, students planned short, creative 60-second TikTok-style videos using storyboards. This activity encouraged them to think critically about how to communicate cyber safety messages effectively to a Generation Z audience.

Students were also given a guided tour, where they saw first-hand the scale of Computacenter's operations. Overall, the visit provided a highly engaging and informative experience. Students gained a clearer understanding of careers in IT and cyber security, while also developing teamwork, communication, and digital creativity skills. The trip highlighted the importance of staying safe online and demonstrated how technology companies play a vital role in supporting modern organisations.

Educational Visit to Nottingham CityCare Partnership

Students recently took part in an educational visit to Nottingham CityCare Partnership. The visit provided an excellent opportunity to explore a wide range of careers within healthcare and gain a deeper understanding of how community health services operate.

Throughout the day, students engaged in a series of interactive sessions designed to showcase different roles across the healthcare sector. Staff from the organisation delivered informative talks and activities covering key areas including administration, clinical services, and specialist medical careers.

Students learned about the important role of administration teams in supporting the smooth running of healthcare services, as well as the wide variety of health professionals who work directly with patients in the community. The sessions also highlighted the breadth of clinical services available, demonstrating how care is delivered across different settings to meet patient needs.

In addition, students explored potential career pathways in medical careers, gaining insight into the training and qualifications required to enter the profession. The visit also included information on dental services, showing how oral health care is delivered and maintained within the community. A particular focus was placed on Nursing, where students learned about the vital role nurses play in supporting the community.

Overall, the visit to Nottingham CityCare Partnership was highly informative and engaging. It helped students develop a clearer understanding of the wide range of opportunities available within the healthcare sector and the importance of teamwork across different roles. The experience encouraged students to think about future career pathways in healthcare while also highlighting the essential services that support the wellbeing of the local community.

Nottingham College – Foundation Learning Visit

Students recently took part in an educational visit to Nottingham College, where they explored

the college's Foundation Learning provision and gained valuable insight into post-16 education opportunities.

The visit gave students a chance to experience a college environment and learn more about the support available for learners developing their academic, personal, and employability skills. Staff at Nottingham College delivered an informal session explaining how Foundation Learning programmes are designed to help students build confidence, independence, and essential skills needed for future study or employment.

Students were introduced to a range of pathways within Foundation Learning, including opportunities to develop skills in communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. The session also highlighted how the programmes are tailored to individual needs, ensuring that each learner receives appropriate support to help them progress at their own pace. A key focus of the visit was understanding the progression routes available after completing Foundation Learning, including further study at college, apprenticeships, and entry into supported employment. Students were encouraged to think about their own future goals and how different pathways could help them achieve success.

The experience at Nottingham College was both engaging and informative. It helped students develop a clearer understanding of the opportunities available after school and the importance of continued learning and personal development.

Careers Fair for AP and Special – Unity

Students recently took part in the Careers Fair for AP and Special at Unity, an engaging and inclusive event designed to inspire learners and raise awareness of a wide range of future career pathways.

The event brought together a variety of employers, training providers, and support organisations,

all offering valuable information about different routes into education, employment, and training. Students had the opportunity to speak directly with professionals, ask questions, and explore what different careers involve on a day-to-day basis. Throughout the fair, students engaged with interactive stalls and discussions covering areas such as health and social care, construction, retail, hospitality, public services, and further education.

Many providers also shared information about apprenticeships, supported internships, and college courses, helping students to understand the different pathways available after school.

A key focus of the event was building confidence and encouraging students to think positively about their future goals. Staff and exhibitors provided guidance on employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and independence, highlighting how these skills are important across all career sectors.

The Careers Fair for AP and Special at Unity was a highly supportive and informative experience. It gave students the chance to explore opportunities at their own pace in a welcoming environment, while also helping them to consider their strengths and interests when thinking about future careers.



Suits Day 2026

Oli Sillito

Suits Day 2026 certainly lived up to the hype! Once again, our Year 11 students swapped hoodies for suits, trainers for shiny shoes (well... most of them!), and enjoyed a day they won't forget.

After weeks of outfit planning, last-minute tie tutorials and plenty of "Does this look alright?" conversations, students headed to Broadway for the full VIP treatment. Walking the red carpet, posing for photos and taking over the biggest screen in the building made everyone feel like a celebrity for the day.

The ceremony celebrated everything our students have achieved during their time at Stone Soup. Families, carers and referring schools joined us to cheer students on as they collected awards and celebrated the progress they have made, creating plenty of proud moments (and a few happy tears!).

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a specially produced film that looked back on the Year 11 journey. From unforgettable trips and classroom moments to the Year 11 T-shirt signing and everything in between, the video captured

just how far our students have come. There were plenty of laughs too, with a collection of funny edits, outtakes and classic Stone Soup moments that had students, staff and parents laughing together - although a few staff members may now regret ever standing in front of a camera!

As always, it was the little details that made the day so special. From the invitations sent home to the final walk across the stage, everything was designed to make our Year 11s feel valued and celebrated.

Suits Day isn't just about dressing smart (although everyone scrubbed up pretty well!); it's about recognising the resilience, determination and growth of every student. It was the perfect way to celebrate their journey at Stone Soup and send them off in style.

Roll on Suits Day 2027... we've got a lot to live up to!



Our busiest time for PD yet!

Katy Smith

At Stone Soup, we strongly believe in celebrating diversity and advocating for equal rights. As such, this year, we just had to get involved in Pride with the whole staff body donning rainbow laces or pin badges, in solidarity with members of the LGBTQIA+ community. This year's theme was innovation in the fields of science and technology and student activities included pride colouring sheets of key influencers from the LGBTQIA+ community, learning some STEM facts and trying to crack a maths code. Alongside this, we continued to act in line with our values and behaviour code of conduct, ensuring we create calm, nurturing environments, use respectful language, challenge discrimination if it arises and build trusted relationships with our students and families. As we know these relationships are the ones that encourage our students to be themselves and celebrate all that they are.

We have also linked closely with the C Card team this term and 6 staff were trained over two Fridays, one of which made for an interesting wellbeing afternoon! Eight of our students were also chosen to give feedback to the council team, regarding the content and choice of language on their new C Card website, which will be launched soon. Their contributions were insightful and they spotted things that the adult writers simply wouldn't have identified without them. For their time, they were rewarded with a £10 voucher.

Curriculum

The PSHE focus for term 5 was all about 'Relationships', with students engaging in challenging discussions around contraception, first aid, sexual health, and tackling violence against women and girls. Year 9 were pleased to get to watch Adolescence and then unpick some of the interview script to look for key indicators or subtle changes in behaviour



that led to the outcome.

Term 6 focussed on 'Living in the Wider World' with topics around KS4 options, managing online reputation, creating an online persona, protected characteristics and community and belonging.

Our year 9s have now chosen their KS4 options and our year 10s started mapping a career plan, ahead of moving into year 11.

Jordan has also continued with a wealth of opportunities to aid our students in their preparation for adulthood. Highlights of these included work experience at HMRC, a visit to the Computer Centre, a workshop with Think Big, where some students got to hold a real football award cup. Others presented their ideas on a project that could help tackle a current issue in Nottingham City to business leaders, as part of the Ingenuity Project. They presented so calmly and clearly and we were so proud of them.

Personal Development and Cultural Capital Opportunities

Term 5 and 6 is always the busiest time of year in relation to personal development opportunities as, in order to break up the length of the term, we plan all our featured afternoons. These include; PD afternoon, Art and Photography afternoon, Business and Enterprise afternoon, Music and Media afternoon, staff v student football and Summer Games. All of these see our students choosing two enrichment activities each, across periods 4 and 5, either on site or off site. Activities can be anything that helps enrich that students personal cultural capital and/or exposes them to an opportunity they wouldn't normally get. Examples included; a visit to the New Art Exchange, a photography scavenger hunt, recording in a professional recording studio, creating and selling goods that they have made - cakes or art/craft items - and competing against their peers in a variety of sporting options.



One particular highlight of these opportunities was the Police Youth Outreach takeover day. The Youth Outreach team visited the school with a carousel of four activities which the whole school took part in. These included a choices and consequences card game, with the message being that your start in life does not dictate your future, a VR headset experience that provides a mock up of an experience involving knife crime, a hook a duck game emphasising how a person could be sucked in to debt bondage and gang culture and a first aid session delivered by St John's on how people can respond to a real life knife wound or incident of violence on the streets.

Looking Ahead

As we finish up the end of the year, we will be reviewing our PSHE curriculum, ensuring it is up to date with all national focuses and contextual safeguarding issues. AI is becoming a particular focus, with its benefits and dangers being

highlights. There is also a greater focus on financial literacy, updates to the RSHE statutory content and online safety.

We also ran out of time this year and so our Harry Potter studio trip will be rolled on to next year. I, for one, cannot wait to see either their Halloween or Christmas set up and know the students will find it simply magical.

Lots of exciting things ahead but, for now, it's been a wonderful year, but we're all ready for a well earned rest. See you on the flip side!



Media Makes Some Noise This Summer!

Khia Lewis-Todd

What a fantastic way to finish the school year! This term has been packed with creativity, collaboration and plenty of opportunities for our students to step outside the classroom and experience the media industry first-hand.

One of the biggest highlights has been bringing Media and Music together for an exciting visit to a local recording studio. Students had the chance to explore a real working studio, get hands-on with professional equipment and discover how sound production and media work together behind the scenes. From recording techniques to understanding the production process, it was an inspiring experience that gave students a real taste of the creative industries.

Back in the classroom, our new Year 9 Media students have hit the ground running. They've been getting to grips with the foundations of media production by exploring different camera angles, shot types and the ways these techniques help tell powerful stories. It's been brilliant to see their confidence grow as they experimented behind the

camera and developed their creative ideas.

Meanwhile, our soon-to-be Year 11 students have been preparing for their final year. We've been building on the skills they've developed throughout the course, revisiting key techniques and ensuring they're ready to tackle the exciting challenges that await them in September. Their enthusiasm, resilience and creativity have been fantastic to see, and we're looking forward to watching them continue to flourish.

As we wrap up another successful summer term, we're celebrating not only the projects our students have created but also the many new skills they've unlocked along the way. From mastering camera techniques to recording in a professional studio, every experience has helped them grow as creative, confident young people.

We can't wait to see what next year brings – but for now, we'd like to wish all of our students a safe, relaxing and well-deserved summer break. See you in September for another exciting year of Media!

Celebrating a Year of Music at Stone Soup Academy

Paolo Iannattone

This year has been an exciting and important year for Music at SSA. Students have continued to develop their confidence, creativity and practical music skills through composition, remixing, production and music technology. A major change this year has been the move from Pearson/BTEC to RSL Creative Music Industry qualifications. This new pathway focuses on non-performance music, allowing students to achieve through composing, sequencing, remixing, lyric writing and music production, rather than traditional performance alone. This has been a positive change for our learners, making the course more accessible, practical and closely linked to the way music is created in the modern music industry. By the end of the 2025/2026 academic year, SSA will be issuing 8 RSL Level 2 Certificates and 10 RSL Level 2 Awards, a fantastic achievement that reflects the hard work, commitment and creativity shown by our students.

Year 9: Building Confidence Through Music

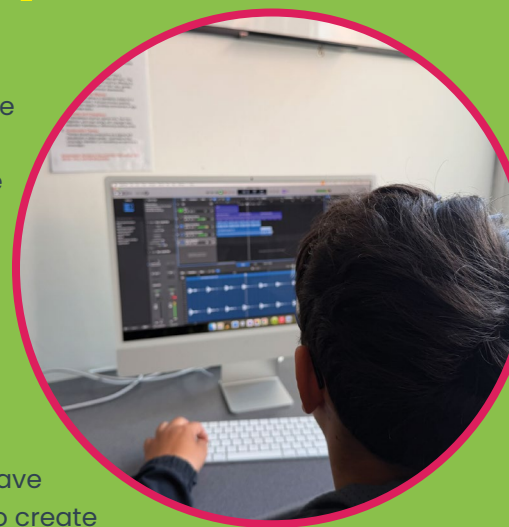
Year 9 students have been developing their understanding of how music is created and organised. They have explored different musical structures, including verse-chorus form, binary form, ternary form and rondo form. Students have also looked at different musical styles and used quizzes, class discussions and Google Slides presentations to build their knowledge in an engaging way. Alongside this, students have started to develop basic music technology skills using Logic Pro. They have created drum patterns, explored software instruments, used loops and begun arranging short musical ideas. These activities are helping students build the confidence and independence they need for future music production work.

Year 10: Starting the RSL Creative Music Industry Pathway

Year 10 students have been working within the new RSL Creative Music Industry qualification. This course gives students the opportunity to work like producers, composers and remixers. Students have been learning how to create original music using Logic Pro, developing skills in MIDI sequencing, audio editing, effects, automation and mixing. They have also begun exploring remixing by taking existing musical material and changing it into a new version while still keeping parts of the original song recognizable. Through this work, students are learning how to create original tracks, build drum patterns, melodies, basslines and arrangements, use effects such as EQ, reverb, delay and compression, edit audio and MIDI, explore remix styles, export final versions of their work and reflect on their creative decisions. This approach has allowed students to learn in a practical and creative way, helping those who may not see themselves as performers to succeed through music technology.

Year 11: Completing RSL Awards and Certificates

Year 11 students have made strong progress this year and are now completing their RSL Creative Music Industry qualifications. The move to RSL has allowed students to focus on practical creative work, including composition, sequencing, remixing and production. This has suited many of our learners well, as it gives them the chance to demonstrate their musical ability through technology and creativity. This year, SSA will be issuing 8 Level 2 Certificates and 10 Level 2 Awards. Students completing these qualifications have developed valuable skills, including composing original music, creating remixes in a chosen style, using Logic Pro to arrange and produce music, editing MIDI notes, velocity and

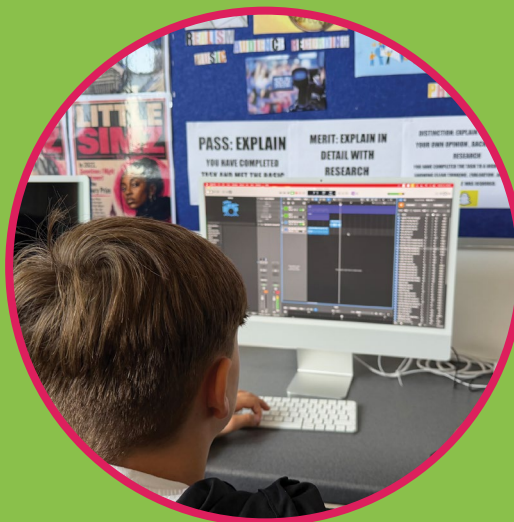


audio, using effects and automation, creating final mixdowns, and keeping evidence of their progress through screenshots, production logs and reflections. These final projects have allowed students to show independence, resilience, creativity and technical progress. Many students have grown in confidence and have developed a better understanding of how music is produced in professional settings.

A Positive Year for Music at SSA

The 2025/2026 academic year has been a successful year of change and development for Music. The move from Pearson/BTEC to RSL has provided a more practical and accessible qualification route for our students. The focus on non-performance music has allowed more learners to experience success by creating music, remixing tracks, developing production skills and building confidence using industry-standard software. Music continues to give students a space to be creative, solve problems, express themselves

and develop skills that can support them in future education, training, employment and creative pathways. We are proud of what our students have achieved this year and look forward to seeing them continue to grow as musicians, producers, remixers and creative practitioners.



Our Students Shine in English

Taylor Gilmour-Young

As another academic year draws to a close, it's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the many successes of our students in the English Department. It has been a year filled with hard work, perseverance, and creativity, and we are incredibly proud of everything our students have accomplished.

Our Year 11 cohort has achieved some exceptional results. An impressive 94% of students successfully gained their Level 1 Functional Skills qualification in English, reflecting the dedication they have shown to strengthening their literacy and communication skills. In addition, 22 students have progressed to studying for their Level 2 qualification, demonstrating a real desire to challenge themselves and continue their learning. Completing this fantastic set of achievements, every Year 11 student earned at least a Pass in their GCSE Speaking and Listening assessment – a testament to their confidence, resilience, and commitment throughout the year.

Creativity has also flourished beyond the classroom. We were delighted to enter the Young Writers national competition once again, and we're thrilled that 19 of our students have had their work selected for publication. Becoming a published author is a remarkable achievement, and we hope this recognition inspires our students to continue writing and expressing themselves with confidence.

These successes are the result of consistent effort, a willingness to embrace new challenges, and a positive attitude towards learning. It has been a pleasure to watch our students grow in both ability and confidence, and we look forward to building on these achievements in the coming year.

Congratulations to all of our students for everything they have accomplished this year. We wish everyone a happy, relaxing, and well-deserved summer break.

Our Values In Action

Becky Ashmore

Our work around Stone Soup's five core values continues to go from strength to strength. The first half of the academic year saw us focus on positivity and celebration, and we have since completed our kindness and respect themes. This half term, our focus has turned to collaboration.

Kindness

During our kindness theme, students were rewarded with double Dojos whenever they demonstrated acts of kindness, encouraging everyone to notice and celebrate the positive impact that even small gestures can have.

One of the highlights of the term was our Kindness Bingo. Every student received a bingo card filled with acts of kindness to complete, with staff signing off each activity they witnessed. Students who completed their cards received a small prize, and it was wonderful to see so many thoughtful acts taking place throughout the school.



The star of the show was when our students and staff embraced our Secret Kindness Missions. Students were each given an envelope containing the name of a member of staff and challenged to carry out so many kind acts that, if the staff member guessed who their secret helper was, the student won a prize. Staff took part too, receiving the names of colleagues and students to surprise with random acts of kindness. Before long, coffees, handwritten notes and thoughtful gifts were appearing all around the school, creating a real buzz of positivity.

Each form group also created 'Appreciation Station' books, where staff and students shared kind words and messages of appreciation about one another. The pages quickly filled with compliments, encouragement and gratitude, helping to strengthen the sense of community across the

school. Kindness also extended beyond our school gates, with staff and students showing kindness to the community by volunteering their time to litter pick in the local area.

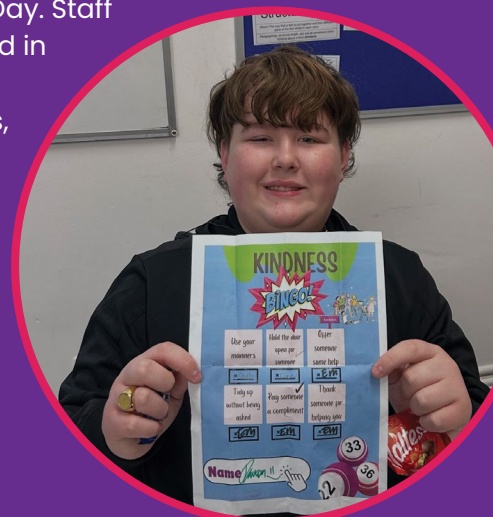
Respect

Our respect theme encouraged students to think about how they show consideration for others every day, with double Dojos awarded for demonstrating respectful behaviour.

A group of students visited a local residential care home, where they spent time chatting with the elderly residents over a cup of tea, taking part in craft activities and building meaningful connections across generations.

Year 9 students also visited the New Art Exchange to explore an exhibition featuring archive photography, film footage, music, clothing and interviews celebrating the positive impact of Caribbean culture on Nottingham and the wider UK. The visit gave students the opportunity to reflect on the importance of diversity, identity and cultural heritage, helping to deepen their understanding of the many contributions that different communities have made to our local area and beyond.

We celebrated the diversity within our school through our Culture Day. Staff and students featured in a video sharing their cultural backgrounds, many chose to wear clothing representing their heritage and cooking lessons explored dishes from around the world. Staff also enjoyed a lunch featuring



Chinese and Jamaican cuisine, while the school was decorated with flags representing cultures from across the globe. It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the rich diversity that makes our school community so special.

To recognise respectful behaviour throughout the term, staff entered students into our Respect Raffle whenever they demonstrated our value of respect. At the end of the half term, one lucky winner was drawn to receive a lunch pass.

Collaboration

Half Term 6 has seen the launch of our collaboration theme, with students once again earning double Dojos for working effectively with others.

So far, students have enjoyed Summer Games across both sites and an Art and Photography Day. We also proudly took part in Wear Red, Save a Life, working alongside the Daniel Baird Foundation to raise awareness and funds for life-saving bleed kits. There is still plenty to look forward to before the end of term, including our Music and Media Day, Staff vs Students Football Match, Enterprise Day and a range of exciting trips.

Living Our Values

Throughout all of these activities, our aim has remained the same, to ensure that our values are not simply words displayed on a wall, but something that is lived and experienced every day by everyone in our school community. This was reflected at our recent Suits Day, where Year 11 students who had consistently demonstrated one of our five values throughout their time at Stone Soup were recognised with special awards.

As we look ahead to the final events of the year and continue our focus on collaboration, we remain committed to ensuring that our values shape everything we do. By embedding positivity, celebration, kindness, respect and collaboration into daily school life, we are helping our young people develop not only academically, but also as confident, compassionate and responsible individuals. We are incredibly proud of the way our students and staff have embraced these values throughout the year and look forward to seeing them continue to flourish as they carry these qualities into the future.



Coffee, Sun and Outdoor Learning

SEND Team

Coffee Morning

On 20th May, Stone Soup hosted a Coffee Morning, inviting parents to talk with the SEND and Attendance Team.

As part of our commitment to building strong relationships with families and creating an inclusive school community, the event provided a relaxed space where parents and carers had the opportunity to meet the team, share experiences, and learn more about the support available for children with additional needs.



By bringing families and communities together, we strengthen the partnership between home and school, ensuring that everyone works towards the same goal of helping students achieve their full potential. These informal gatherings also give families the opportunity to connect with one another, share advice, and build a supportive network within our school.

At our school, we believe that when families, staff, and the wider community work together, children benefit both academically and emotionally. Events like our Coffee Morning help to foster open communication, mutual understanding, and a shared commitment to ensuring that every child feels valued, included, and supported to succeed.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to such an enjoyable morning. We look forward to welcoming even more families to future events as we continue to strengthen our school community together.

Sensory Summer Sun

"I Like It Warm... But Not This Warm!"

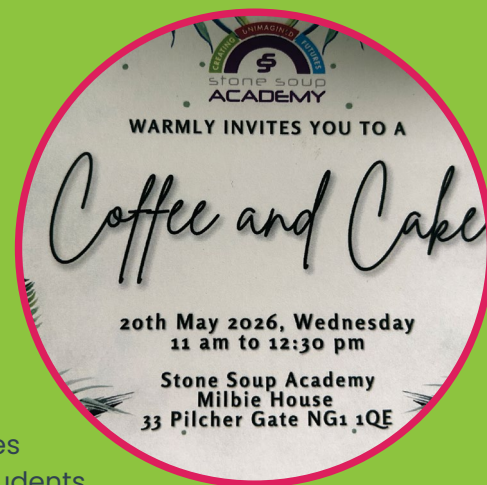
As comedian Peter Kay famously joked, "I like it

warm, but not this warm!" While the quote raises a smile, the exceptionally high temperatures experienced during June and July presented genuine challenges for many of our students.

For children with Special Educational Needs, extreme heat can have a significant impact. Many experience difficulties with interoception – the brain's ability to recognise internal body signals such as feeling hot or thirsty. As temperatures rise, some students find it harder to regulate their body temperature, manage sensory sensitivities, and maintain concentration throughout the school day. This can lead to increased anxiety, emotional dysregulation, or sensory overload.

To ensure students remained safe, comfortable, and able to continue learning, Stone Soup Academy introduced a range of supportive measures across both school sites. These included installing additional high-powered fans in classrooms and learning spaces, providing students with ice creams to help them cool down, and offering reduced timetables where the heat was having a significant impact on individual pupils.

These thoughtful adaptations enabled students to continue accessing their education in an environment that recognised and responded to their individual needs. By putting students' wellbeing first, Stone Soup Academy demonstrated its ongoing commitment



to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment – even during the hottest days of the year.

Outdoor Learning CPD

As part of the outdoor learning grant awarded to Stone Soup Academy, members of our SEND team, Fred and Amy, attended the Learning through Landscapes CPD on 13 July.



The training explored how outdoor environments can be used to enrich learning, promote wellbeing, and support the individual needs of children and young people. Throughout the day, there were a range of practical workshops, including creating meaningful

outdoor learning opportunities with limited space and resources, exploring the natural environment, and developing activities to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

A particular focus of the training was how outdoor spaces can be used to support sensory regulation. The workshop demonstrated practical, nature-based sensory circuits and strategies that help children feel calm, alert, and ready to learn.

The knowledge and ideas gained from the CPD will now be used to further develop outdoor learning opportunities across Stone Soup Academy, ensuring our students benefit from engaging, inclusive experiences that promote wellbeing and creativity.



Year 9 Successes Worth Celebrating

Molly Campion

It has been a fantastic term for our Year 9 students. A huge well done goes to all students who recently completed their mock examinations. Many students demonstrated excellent preparation, resilience, and determination. These mocks have shown just what our Year 9 students are capable of achieving. I encourage all pupils to reflect on their successes and use the feedback they have received to continue building towards even greater achievements as we transition into year 10.

Beyond the classroom, it has been wonderful to see so many students embracing the wide range of enrichment opportunities on offer. Whether through sports, arts, workshops or educational visits, our students continue to develop new skills, discover new interests, and make the most of every opportunity available to them. Their enthusiasm and willingness to get involved are a real credit to our year group. Honourable mention to Cody M who recently spoke at the SSA conference, legend!

I would also like to recognise the excellent attendance shown by so many Year 9 students.

Regular attendance is one of the biggest contributors to success, and it has been fantastic to see so many students consistently attending school, arriving ready to learn, and demonstrating a positive attitude every day. Massive shout out to Leo, Courtney, Preston and Renae who are all being taken for a reward trip for either having the highest attendance or the most improved attendance.

Thank you to our students, families, and staff for your continued support. I am incredibly proud of everything Year 9 has achieved so far, and I look forward to seeing what the rest of the year brings. Keep up the fantastic work!



Attendance: Everybody's Responsibility

Helen Lovell

At SSA, we know that good attendance is the foundation for success, and we are proud of the whole-school approach we take to ensure every student feels supported, valued and ready to learn. Attendance really is everybody's responsibility.

Led by our Principal, Younes, and our dedicated Attendance Team – Helen, Attendance Manager, and Rachel, Attendance Administrator – an enormous amount of work happens behind the scenes every single day to help students overcome barriers and achieve their best.

No two days are ever the same. The team makes daily phone calls to families, shares live attendance updates with our referring schools, carries out Safe and Well checks for our most vulnerable students, and completes home visits when needed. They work closely with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) through Multi-agency and Team around the Child meetings, building strong relationships with families by offering advice, signposting services and creating personalised support plans.

For students experiencing attendance difficulties or anxiety, support is tailored to individual needs. Our Engagement Team provides additional interventions, while our SEND Team and teachers offer in-class support and catch-up sessions to help students feel confident, included and successful. Practical barriers are also addressed, with transport solutions including taxis and bus passes arranged wherever possible.

Creating a positive start to the day is just as important. Every student has access to a free breakfast before 9.15am, with breakfast also available at first break and a choice of hot and cold meals at lunchtime, ensuring no student starts the day hungry.

We firmly believe that attendance deserves to be celebrated. Throughout the year, students have enjoyed weekly 100% attendance celebrations, end-of-term reward trips, postcards home recognising their achievements, Dojo points for punctuality and our popular Student of the Day awards. These celebrations help build a culture where commitment, resilience and effort are recognised and valued.

Our attendance work continues to grow beyond SSA. We are proud to work in partnership with 25 referring schools, with our reach expanding into communities including Mansfield, Long Eaton and Selston. By working together with schools, families and external agencies, we are helping more young people overcome challenges, re-engage with education and realise their full potential.

As another successful year comes to a close, we would like to thank our students, families, staff and partner schools for their continued support and commitment. Together, we have shown that when we work as one team, attendance becomes more than simply being in school – it becomes about belonging, building confidence and creating brighter futures for every young person.



Stand Up to Knife Crime 2026

Oli Sillito

Our fifth Stand Up to Knife Crime event at Metronome was another powerful and inspiring evening, bringing together young people, families and the wider community to promote positive choices and celebrate local talent.

One of the most significant moments of the evening was the presentation of the first-ever Byron Griffin Courage to Change Award. Community members nominated and voted for a young person who had shown real determination in turning their life around and making positive choices. The award holds special significance as it honours the memory of our much-loved colleague, Zoe Cooke, whose son Byron tragically lost his life to knife crime. It was a moving moment that reminded everyone why this event is so important.

The evening featured outstanding performances from Nottingham artists Lyvia and Jah Digga, who not only entertained the audience but also demonstrated what can be achieved through talent, resilience and hard work. Adding to the celebrations, one of our own students kept the atmosphere alive by DJing throughout the event, confidently showcasing their skills in front of a packed audience.

Now in its fifth year at Metronome, Stand Up to Knife Crime continues to grow in both scale and impact. Every year the event evolves, giving more young people opportunities to perform, share their stories and inspire others. It remains one of the highlights of the Stone Soup calendar and a powerful reminder that positive choices, strong role models and supportive communities can make a real difference.

Wear Red Save a Life

Zoe Cooke

After losing my 22-year-old son, Byron, to knife crime in 2021, I became aware of the importance of publicly accessible bleeding control packs. These packs are a vital step beyond a standard first aid kit, containing specialist equipment designed to help control catastrophic bleeding in those critical minutes before emergency services arrive.

Knife crime continues to have a devastating impact across the UK, leaving families and communities shattered. Every life lost is someone's child, sibling, friend or loved one. While we cannot undo these tragedies, we can do more to give victims the best possible chance of survival.

Had a publicly accessible bleeding control pack been available when Byron was injured, he may still be with us today. Although knife crime brought this issue to our attention, catastrophic bleeding can happen in many situations, including road traffic collisions, workplace accidents, sporting injuries and other serious incidents.

We believe that bleeding control packs should be as readily available as defibrillators in major shopping centres, pubs and clubs, transport stations, schools and other public places. Having immediate access

to the right equipment can significantly reduce blood loss and help keep someone alive until paramedics arrive. For the relatively small cost of providing a kit, a life could be saved, sparing another family the lifelong heartbreak of losing someone they love.

Determined to make a difference in Byron's memory, I launched the Wear Red Day campaign to raise funds for bleeding control packs. Schools, businesses and organisations are invited to wear red and donate £1 towards purchasing these life-saving kits.

Before I joined Stone Soup Academy, they were one of the first schools to support the campaign. I am now proud to work at the school, and they continue to stand with us each year by taking part in Wear Red Day. Their ongoing support not only honours the memory of those whose lives have been taken by knife crime but also helps raise funds to place more bleeding control packs where they may one day save a life.

Through Byron's legacy, we hope to prevent other families from experiencing the same unimaginable loss and to ensure that, when every second counts, the right equipment is there to give someone the chance to survive.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) Programme Update

Stone Soup Academy was officially granted its Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) licence on 6 November 2025, marking an important milestone in expanding the personal development opportunities available to our students.

Following the successful approval of our licence, we applied for and secured a grant to purchase the essential equipment required for the expedition section of the Bronze Award. This funding has enabled us to ensure that students will have access to the appropriate equipment needed to participate safely and successfully.

We currently have 16 students enrolled on the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The students have shown excellent commitment and dedication throughout the programme and have successfully completed the three required sections of the award: Volunteering, Physical, and Skills. Throughout these sections, students have developed valuable life skills, demonstrated perseverance, and taken responsibility for their own personal growth. They have embraced new challenges and shown increasing confidence in setting and achieving individual goals.

In April 2026, we successfully applied for an additional grant to fund the use of an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) to deliver the expedition section of the award. Securing this funding has ensured that students will receive high-quality support and guidance throughout their expedition experience.

The expedition is scheduled to take place during September/October 2026, once the Approved Activity Provider has been formally appointed. This final section will allow students to put into practice the teamwork, resilience, navigation, and problem-solving skills they have developed throughout the programme.

Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has already had a positive impact on many of our students. Staff have observed increased levels of confidence, improved communication skills, and a greater willingness to take on new responsibilities both within the academy and in the wider community. The programme has encouraged

students to step outside of their comfort zones, work collaboratively with their peers, and demonstrate resilience when faced with challenges. These are all transferable skills that will support them in their future education, employment, and personal lives.

The forthcoming expedition represents the culmination of many months of preparation and commitment. Students are extremely enthusiastic and are eagerly looking forward to completing this final element of the Bronze Award. The experience will provide an opportunity for them to demonstrate independence, leadership, and teamwork in a real-world environment while creating lasting memories and celebrating their achievements together.

Looking ahead, Stone Soup Academy is committed to embedding the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as a key part of its enrichment provision. We aim to continue growing the programme by offering future cohorts the opportunity to participate and by exploring progression routes onto the Silver Award. We are grateful for the external funding that has made this possible and look forward to celebrating the success of our first Bronze Award cohort later this year



Mathematical Momentum: Functional Skills Triumphs and Cross-Curricular Discovery Programme Update

Darrell Drummond

Students across Years 9, 10, 11, and 12 have demonstrated exceptional progress in mathematics this term, combining determination, creativity, and resilience to achieve outstanding results in Functional Skills qualifications, GCSE preparation, and national competitions. Their achievements reflect the academy's commitment to inclusive, high-quality teaching and the development of confident, independent learners.

Year 11 Functional Skills Success

Year 11 students have shown outstanding perseverance in their Functional Skills assessments, with 39 students achieving Level 1 passes and 31 achieving Level 2 passes.

Level 1 Passes

Aaron • Aleasha • Arthur • Billie-Mai • Charlie • Chloe M. • Dalton • Elyas • Jack • Jensen • Justin • Kai • Kenzie • Khloe • Khyrell • Kian • Kieley • Kye • Kyrell • Leo • Lewis • Lillie-Mai • Logan A. • Logan P. • Lucus • Lyla • Maisie • Mason • Mia • Millie-Mae • Oliver • Romeo • Ryan • Scarlet • Sienna • Skye • Taybah • Tia • Wade

Level 2 Passes

Aaron • Arthur • Billie-Mai • Charlie • Chloe • Dalton • Elyas • Jensen • Kai • Kenzie • Khloe • Khyrell • Kian • Kieley • Kye • Logan A. • Logan P. • Maisie • Mason • Millie-Mae • Oliver • Romeo • Ryan • Scarlet • Skye • Tia • Wade

GCSE Completion

All GCSE Maths exams have now been completed, marking a significant milestone for the cohort as they conclude two years of sustained effort, targeted intervention, and personalised support.

This year's GCSE preparation was strengthened by Nathan's comprehensive revision resources, including topic-specific practice packs, personalised question banks, and targeted intervention materials designed to close gaps and build confidence. Students also benefited from breakfast revision sessions on the mornings of each exam, providing calm, structured support, last-minute guidance, and a positive start to the

day. These combined efforts ensured every student felt equipped, supported, and ready to perform at their best.

Year 10 Functional Skills Success

Year 10 students have made an excellent start on their road towards mathematical excellence, demonstrating growing confidence, resilience, and a clear commitment to mastering the skills that will carry them into Level 2 and beyond.

Year 10 students have made an excellent start, with 25 students achieving Functional Skills Level 1 passes and 4 students achieving a Level 2 pass.

This list has been fully corrected, alphabetised, and red-ink students removed.

Year 10 Level 1 Passes

Ayaan • Ayda • Archie • Ashleigh • Bella • Cameron • Chanel-Amy • Chloe C. • CJ • Faith • Holly • Jahnaya • Jaylan • Kaymen • Laceygrace • Lashay • Macy • Marleigh • Mason • Oliver • Riley C. • Taije • Theo • Tyler R. • Umar

Year 10 Level 2 Passes

Holly • Macie-Jo • Riley C. • Tyler R.

Year 12 Functional Skills Achievement

Year 12 students have continued to build strong foundations in mathematics, with the majority achieving Level 2 qualifications.

Year 12 Level 2 Passes

Cerys • Ibraheim • Maisie W-M • Thor • Tray

Year 9 Honourable Mentions

Several of our Y9 students have got off to an amazing start by sitting their Functional Skills Level 1 exams this term and here they are. What an amazing achievement – well done to you all!

Adam • Cody • Fallon • Renae

UKMT Pink Kangaroo Success

This term, a group of high-performing mathematicians achieved outstanding success in the UKMT Pink Kangaroo, one of the most

challenging national problem-solving competitions available to secondary students.

All five Stone Soup Academy entrants achieved Certificates of Qualification, placing them among the strongest young mathematicians nationally.

Pink Kangaroo Qualifiers

Holly • Jensen • Marleigh • Riley C. • Tyler R.

Cross-Curricular Learning at Highfields

Mathematics extended beyond the classroom through cross-curricular visits to Highfields, where students explored real-life applications of shape, measurement, biodiversity and environmental change. The trip was jointly led by Nathan (Maths) and Hannah (Science), giving students a rich, hands-on learning experience that connected mathematical reasoning with scientific investigation. Their collaborative approach helped students see how numeracy and scientific enquiry work together in real-world contexts.

Acknowledging Staff Support

A huge thank-you goes to Nathan and Priyam, whose enthusiasm, expertise, and innovative teaching continue to inspire students across all year groups. Their leadership has helped embed a culture of mathematical curiosity and achievement throughout the academy.

We also want to recognise the exceptional contribution of our SEND Teaching Assistants, Fred and Lettie, whose targeted interventions, personalised learning strategies, and calm, trauma-informed support have been instrumental in helping students regulate, re-engage, and make sustained progress in maths. Their work ensures that every learner – regardless of starting point – receives the tailored guidance they need to succeed.

Looking Forward

With GCSE exams now completed, the Maths Department is focused on sustaining momentum through continued numeracy interventions, cross-curricular projects, and the ongoing use of Maths Workout and MyMaths. Students are well placed to build on their success and embrace the next stage of their mathematical journey.



Summer of Science

Hannah Smallwood

Science has been full of activity this term, with students across all year groups getting stuck into exciting lessons, investigations and challenges.

Our Year 11 students have worked incredibly hard in preparation for their Biology, Chemistry and Physics GCSE exams. They approached revision with determination and resilience, building their confidence across a wide range of topics. When the exams arrived, they rose to the challenge, completing all six exams with perseverance and making the school proud.

Years 10 and 9 have also had a busy and successful term.

Both year groups had the opportunity to sit a science mock exam this half term, giving them valuable experience and helping them prepare for future assessments.

Year 10 have enjoyed an action-packed term in

Chemistry, exploring acids and alkalis and learning how to make a pure, dry salt. In

Biology, students took their learning beyond the classroom with a trip to Highfields Park, where they investigated different habitats and compared biodiversity across various areas of the park.

Year 9 students have been discovering the fascinating world of plants in Biology. They explored the structure of flowering plants and leaves, as well as identifying the different types of trees that can be found around Nottingham city centre. It has been great to see students developing their scientific knowledge while connecting their learning to the world around them.

It has been a fantastic term in Science, and we look forward to even more exciting discoveries and achievements next year!



The Importance of Art in Education

Annie Gadsby-Lane

Art plays a vital role in education, giving students the opportunity to express themselves, think creatively, and build confidence. Beyond developing artistic skills, creative subjects encourage problem-solving, communication, and resilience – qualities that are valuable in every area of learning and life.

This term, the Creative Department has placed a strong emphasis on freedom of expression and independent projects. Rather than following a single set outcome, students have been encouraged to explore their own ideas, interests, and creative styles. This approach has allowed everyone to take ownership of their work and produce projects that are both meaningful and personal.

Independent projects have also given students the chance to develop existing talents while experimenting with new techniques and materials. Whether refining a favourite skill or trying something completely different, students have been able to work at their own pace,

challenge themselves, and discover new creative passions.

By celebrating individuality and encouraging creative exploration, the Creative Department has created an environment where students feel inspired to take risks, develop their abilities, and enjoy the process of making art. It has been wonderful to see the variety, originality, and enthusiasm reflected in the work produced this term, demonstrating just how important art is in helping students grow both creatively and personally.



Saying Goodbye and Looking Ahead

Alesha Rogers

It's hard to believe another year has come to an end. I want to say a huge congratulations to our Year 11 students, who worked incredibly hard throughout their exams. Their resilience, determination, and positive attitude have been fantastic to see, and I couldn't be prouder of everything they have achieved.

Leavers' Day was a real highlight, with the emotional shirt signing reminding us of the friendships, memories, and journeys our students have shared. Suits Day was another brilliant celebration, and it was fantastic to see everyone looking so smart as they collected their awards. A special thank you to Oli for helping make the day such a success.

Whilst it's always sad to say goodbye to our Year 11s, we're excited to welcome our new Year 8 cohort. A warm welcome also goes to the four new students joining us, who have already settled in so well and are a real credit to themselves.

We wish our Year 11 students every success for the future and can't wait to see what the next academic year brings.



Year 10 – See You in Year 11!

Michelle Rogers

What a year it has been! We are incredibly proud of how much our Year 10 students have grown, both in and out of the classroom. It's been fantastic to see so many students build confidence, improve their attendance, make positive behaviour choices, and engage more with their learning.

This progress has only been possible because of the strong teamwork between our students, families, Personal Coaches, teaching staff, and the Senior Leadership Team. Thank you to everyone who has supported our young people throughout the year.

As we look ahead to Year 11, the focus will be on building on these positive foundations. Good attendance, a positive attitude, and making the most of every lesson will be key as students begin their final year and prepare for the next stage of their journey.

To all of our Year 10 students, enjoy a well-deserved summer break, have fun, stay safe, and come back in September ready to make your final year at SSA your best one yet. We can't wait to welcome you back as our new Year 11s.

A Summer to Remember

Duncan Bennett

As another fantastic year of sport comes to an end, there is so much to celebrate at Stone Soup Academy.

Our Annual Summer Games once again proved to be one of the highlights of the school calendar. Students threw themselves into every challenge with enthusiasm, determination and incredible team spirit. Whether competing for points, supporting their teammates or simply giving their very best, the day showcased everything that makes sport at SSA so special. The atmosphere was filled with encouragement, laughter and healthy competition from start to finish.

A particular favourite was the staff vs student football matches, which never fail to entertain! With plenty of goals, great saves and a few questionable tackles, both students and staff gave everything on the pitch. The friendly rivalry created an electric atmosphere, with spectators cheering on every moment. It was a brilliant reminder of the strong relationships across our school community and showed that sport is about bringing people together as much as it is about competition.

We also want to recognise our incredible Year 11 students as they prepare to leave Stone Soup Academy. They have worked exceptionally hard throughout the year, showing resilience, commitment and determination in both their practical and classroom based Sport lessons. We are incredibly proud of the progress they have made and are looking forward to celebrating what we hope will be another excellent set of examination and vocational results. We wish every one of them the very best for the future and know they will go on to achieve great things.

A huge thank you goes to all of the staff who have supported sporting events throughout the year and to every student who has represented the academy with pride, respect and determination. We can't wait to see what next year brings for sport at SSA!



Business and Enterprise

Amy Dennett

Year 10 Business and Enterprise students have had a fantastic and productive term, making excellent progress with their coursework.

As part of their first coursework component, students researched a business of their choice in great detail. They explored how their chosen business operates, investigated its strengths and challenges, and developed a deeper understanding of what makes a successful enterprise. The quality of research and analysis produced has been impressive, demonstrating students' growing business knowledge and independent learning skills.

The class has now moved on to the second component of the coursework, where creativity and entrepreneurial thinking take centre stage. Students are developing their own business ideas with the exciting challenge of creating a

business that can be started with a budget of £50 or less.

They are considering their target market, marketing strategies, pricing, costs, and how to make their business both practical and profitable.

This term also saw the return of our exciting Business and Enterprise

Afternoon, where students took part in a variety of engaging, hands-on activities designed to develop key enterprise and employability skills. Activities included business-themed games, making and selling beaded animals in exchange for Dojos, taking part in a Ready, Steady, Cook challenge, and practising interview techniques through mock job interviews. The afternoon was a fantastic opportunity for students to build confidence, develop teamwork and communication skills, and experience different aspects of the world of business in a fun and interactive way.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, creativity, and determination shown by our students this term and look forward to seeing their business ideas continue to develop over the coming months.



Students Serve Up Success at the Impact Summit

Dominique Maragh

Visitors to this year's Impact Summit were treated to far more than inspiring discussions, thanks to the incredible efforts of Stone Soup Academy's Food and Hospitality students.

As part of the Ready Steady Enterprise Day, students planned, prepared and professionally served a selection of fresh food and refreshments for delegates from across the education sector. The event gave students the opportunity to showcase not only their practical cookery skills, but also their teamwork, organisation, communication and customer service.

Leading up to the event, students embraced the challenge of developing exciting flavour combinations, experimenting with ingredients and learning how different tastes, textures and aromas work together.

From sweet and savoury pairings to fresh seasonal ingredients, learners explored how creativity and careful planning can transform simple dishes into memorable experiences.

The hospitality team worked with professionalism throughout the day, ensuring guests received a warm welcome while maintaining high standards of food safety and presentation. Every student played an important role, gaining valuable

experience in a real working environment that mirrors careers within the hospitality and catering industry.

The Impact Summit celebrates innovation and excellence in Alternative Provision, bringing together educators, partners and community organisations to share outstanding practice. Students were proud to contribute to such a prestigious event, demonstrating that vocational learning can build confidence, independence and employability skills alongside technical knowledge.

Food and Hospitality Lead Dominique Maragh said:

"Watching our students grow in confidence throughout the planning, preparation and service was a real highlight. Ready Steady Enterprise Day gave them the opportunity to think creatively, work as a team and experience the expectations of a professional hospitality environment. They should all be incredibly proud of what they achieved."

The success of the day highlights Stone Soup Academy's commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences that prepare young people for future education, employment and successful careers.



A Fantastic Visit to Spring Lakes

Duncan Bennett

Students recently enjoyed a fantastic trip to Spring Lakes, where they took part in a range of exciting outdoor activities. The visit provided a great opportunity to develop teamwork, communication and confidence while enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

Everyone represented Stone Soup Academy brilliantly, showing resilience, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour throughout the day. It was a memorable experience that created lots of smiles and lasting memories for everyone involved.

