



Colin Barnes, Brian Walker, Sara Swales and pupils Alexa, 11 and Harry, 14

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## **Spennymoor special school launches library-on-wheels with Go North East bus donation**

A Go North East bus has been transformed into an inspirational learning environment, to encourage students with special educational needs from County Durham to read for fun and improve their literacy skills.

Now a dedicated library space for 260 pupils at The Oaks Secondary School in Spennymoor, the 'Go Read Bus' was unveiled at special event on Friday 18 January.

After arranging the single deck bus donation last year, Colin Barnes, Engineering Director at the region's biggest bus operator, marked the launch with an official ribbon cutting. He was joined by 17 of the school's best young readers, who enjoyed meeting well-known Darlington-based children's author and illustrator, Liz Million.

Upcoming writer, Lisette Auton, from Darlington also attended the celebration alongside local fundraisers Alicia Cowie, Miss England 2018 and on behalf of Asda, Community Champion Donna Allison, who together have raised over £2,000 for the project.

The quirky concept originated from the school's English teacher, Sara Swales who wanted to update the current library facilities by creating an engaging area for students to focus on reading for leisure. She said: "I realised that if we wanted to really take literacy seriously and help our students, our tiny, bland library wasn't going to cut it. The idea for the bus snowballed from there and it's turned out better than I'd hoped."

Externally-wrapped in colourful book graphics, the inside of the bus has been invitingly-designed in the style of a café. Fitted with bookshelves and seats, students can relax while reading and take part in literacy workshops.

Sara added: "Thanks to this generous donation from Go North East and fundraising activities by many local businesses including Asda and Alicia, our students are excited about reading. The bus promises to take their imaginations wherever they want without even leaving school grounds, which wouldn't have been possible without this support."

Colin Barnes concluded: "Going on the bus can be a real adventure for young people in itself but this transformation has really gone the extra mile. It was a pleasure to help this creative project come to life and seeing how enthusiastic the children are about reading on the bus is incredibly rewarding."

For more information about Go North East, visit [www.gonortheast.co.uk](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk).

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[Go North East website](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk)