

Writing skills lead to arts award for teenager

SOPHIE Stratford, a year ten pupil at Teesside High School, Eaglescliffe, was one of the winners in the annual Vibe Awards event which celebrates the achievements of young people in the Darlington area.

Sophie, 15, of Middleton St George, won in the category for outstanding achievement in the arts.

The awards ceremony took place at Darlington Civic Theatre on Wednesday of last week.

Since the summer of 2007, she has been a regular contrib-



Sophie Stratford: outstanding achievement

utor to the *D&S Times*' sister paper *The Northern Echo*, writing features and music reviews.

She has interviewed some of the big names on the music scene, including the Stereophonics and the Ting Tings, plus many local bands and support acts, visiting venues in Newcastle, Birmingham and London.

"Last year, I reported on London Fashion weekend, and also wrote a review of a holiday in Thailand," she said.

Sophie is a regular on PR company lists and receives CDs and albums to review.

"I'm always completely honest in my reviews, but fortunately I enjoy most of the things I listen to," she said.

Her next assignment is a trip to Newcastle to meet one of Britain's best-loved bands, Keane.

Writing for a newspaper has awakened a keen desire to take things further. "I'm planning to do a degree in journalism and PR," she said.

"One day I'd love to be the editor of a major newspaper, or work in PR or in radio or TV."

Sophie is also an accomplished drummer and has performed with the school's jazz band.