



**HERMITAGE
ACADEMY**

WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2021

Dear parents, carers and friends, welcome to our Christmas newsletter...

'What is Christmas? It is the tenderness of the past, courage for the present, and hope for the future.' - Agnes M. Pharo

This has been a term full of hope for the future. Our youngsters are a real source of joy as they show boundless energy to learn, share friendships and get involved in everything from sporting to reading events. As a community we have experienced terrible sadness for the loss of lives and also great joy in remembering the precious times that we had with loved ones. Our students always show real compassion for others and are growing quickly into resilient and caring young people, which is a privilege to witness.

The support we continue to get from parents/carers and the local community has been a great source of strength. Thank you.

There has been LOTS going on and this newsletter gives a snapshot of this. From exciting STEM Club activities to a trust wide debating competition and even a visit from Durham

University, there has never been a spare minute! We hope you enjoy reading all about your children's achievements - we are very proud of them all.

We hope you have a restful and joyous time over the festive period. As always, please stay safe and we will welcome our students back on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

With warmest and best wishes for 2022.

Darren Stewart
Head of School

Dr Janice Gorlach
Executive Headteacher



The return of Youth Theatre

After a two-year hiatus, Hermitage Academy Theatre Company are delighted to announce that they are back in the studio!

This term, they have been rehearsing for their production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival. The cast will perform at Northern Stage, Newcastle in March and we are all VERY excited!

The festival is a nationwide project which provides opportunities for students to explore some of the best-known plays of William Shakespeare, enjoy a workshop with industry professionals and perform their own Shakespeare play in a real, professional theatre.

We have missed our school productions very much and we are thrilled that so many new performers will experience this fantastic opportunity.

Keep an eye on our social media pages for updates on our progress in rehearsal and see the students who are involved.

12 days of Christmas

This term saw our students get into the festive spirit thanks to a whole range of fun festive activities and initiatives....

Students showed kindness to their community by sending cards to residents of Willowburn Hospice as well as donating to our local foodbank and getting in touch with residents of local care homes.

Many of our extra-curricular clubs had a Christmassy spin and plenty of students got involved with our quizzes, performances and movie nights.

We even saw some very helpful elves around our corridors!



IMPORTANT DATES for your diary

17 DEC Break up for Christmas

05 JAN Back to school

17 FEB Break up for half term

28 FEB Back to school

Christmas crafting

During our 12 days of Christmas extravaganza, our keen crafters got stuck into some festive projects.

It was lovely to see crafters of all ages come together - they've really missed it over the last 18 months.

This Christmas, we are celebrating being together, making new friends and getting creative. We have made Christmas tree decorations, cards and an old-fashioned peg angel.

WE'RE SOCIAL!

Did you know that our school regularly posts on social media sites, Facebook and Twitter?

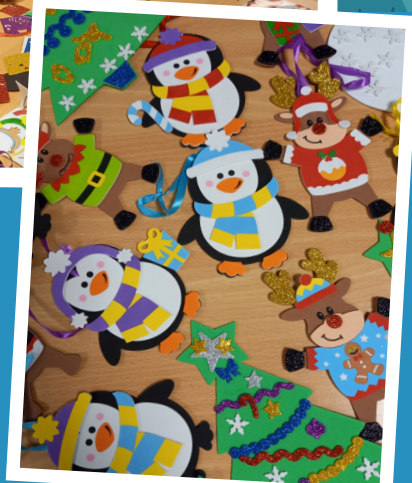
Our social media pages are a great way to connect to our online Hermitage Academy community. You can find photos, videos and important updates on our pages and see what your little ones are up to in the classroom. If you don't follow our pages already, please give us a like or a follow to stay in the loop!



@hermitage_acad



@hermitageacad





Students have the 'time of their lives'

This term, dance club is back in full swing - literally!

Our weekly Tuesday club made a return this academic year, much to the delight of our magnificent movers!

Mrs Robson has been teaching dancers from Year 7 all the way up to Year 12 choreography from the hit film and musical, *Dirty Dancing*.

Our dancers have learnt how to salsa and how to safely recreate some of the iconic lifts.

In the past few weeks, members of the club have begun to get into the Christmas spirit by choreographing sequences and combinations in a lyrical style to the beautiful music from the McDonald's Christmas advertising campaign – Mabel's version of the Cyndi Lauper classic, *Time After Time*.

Bravo to all involved - it's a 10 from us!



Flying the flag for Hermitage Academy



This term, a group of our students had the opportunity to wave flags to a packed Stadium of Light!

The hardworking group of Year 7 and 8 students were offered the opportunity after achieving an attendance record of 96% upwards.

The group attended the Sunderland v Oxford match at the beginning of the month to bear flags before the match kicked off.

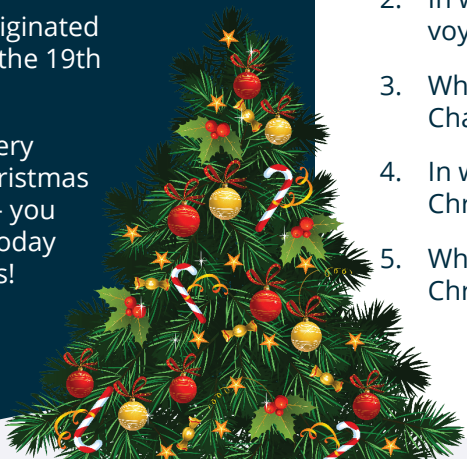
Students loved the day and were thrilled to be able to meet some of the players and even get their autographs!

Before their big moment, students took part in some pre-match activities. They all did a fantastic job and we were pleased to see their huge smiles!

DID YOU KNOW?

Christmass trees originated in Germany during the 19th century.

In the past, it was very popular to hang Christmas trees upside down - you may even see this today sometimes in hotels!



Christmas literary quiz

1. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, what do the Dursleys give Harry for Christmas?
2. In what classic novel does the protagonist set sail for a sea voyage on a cold Christmas day?
3. Which character declares "Merry Christmas, one and all!" in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*?
4. In which children's classic is it 'always winter but never Christmas'?
5. What year was Clement C Moore's poem 'The Night Before Christmas' first published?

ANSWERS: 1. A 50-pence piece, 2. *Moby Dick*, 3. Tiny Tim, 4. CS Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and The*

Wardrobe, 5. 1823

We love STEM

We've had a busy first term in the science department...

In STEM club, students have been conducting practicals to solve the mystery of the murder of Mr Sayer's long lost 'great great great great uncle'. Soon the club are moving on to designing and making rockets.

The sixth form STEM club have been learning about liquid crystals, which is an undergraduate university level topic. They are moving on to look at polymers next and are hoping to arrange a visit to Akzonobel, a Dutch multinational company, which creates paints and performance coatings for both industry and consumers worldwide.

The Eco Council have been out in force, working on installing more recycling bins throughout the school. This will be used in conjunction with a recycling challenge that students will take part in. There will be rewards for those that complete the challenge (more exciting details to follow). They have also been working on strategies to tackle the litter situation seen around some areas of the school. In addition, the Eco Council have submitted applications to receive free trees for planting to help increase biodiversity within the school grounds. These will be delivered in the new year.

Chris Banks and Thomas Tsang in Year 12 have been involved in creating and implementing an assembly to their year group on the importance of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) subjects and possible career paths involving these subjects, well done boys.

After all of that hard work we think everyone involved deserves a rest and a mince pie or two!

Merry Christmas from the science department.

DID YOU KNOW...

Carolling is based on the tradition of wassailing.

Have you ever wondered why people go door to door singing carols? The tradition is based on the English custom of wassailing, which was a tradition to toast to someone's good health and fortune. St. Francis of Assisi took this tradition and converted it to the modern form of carolling.



Festive tasty treats

Students have been enjoying Christmas themed food technology lessons in recent weeks.

Year 9 perfected their British mince pies after learning about Christmas foods around the world!

Cracking maths work

It's been busy in the maths department this year...

Students from all year groups have been entering monthly maths competitions this term from Halloween to Christmas themes.

Not only that, but every Thursday, a mixture of students have been taking part in Cipher Club, training in advance for a national competition entitled The Lighthouse Conspiracy. Students have been extremely enthusiastic, working well together as a team with their code breaking skills coming on leaps and bounds!

This term also saw six Year 9 students take part in the first of a series of gifted and talented events at The Royal Grammar School in Newcastle. They had a fun day solving Fermi estimation problems such as: How many TVs are there in the UK? and How many times does your heart beat in a lifetime? All students were a credit to the school and enjoyed the fact that, for once, Google didn't have the answer!

JOKE CORNER

Who tells the best Christmas jokes?

Reindeer. They sleigh every one.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY OUTREACH VISIT

Year 10 design and technology students were fortunate enough to enjoy a visit from the Durham University Electric Motorsport Team (DUEM) who shared their design and development work on an electric motorsport car called 'Ortus'.

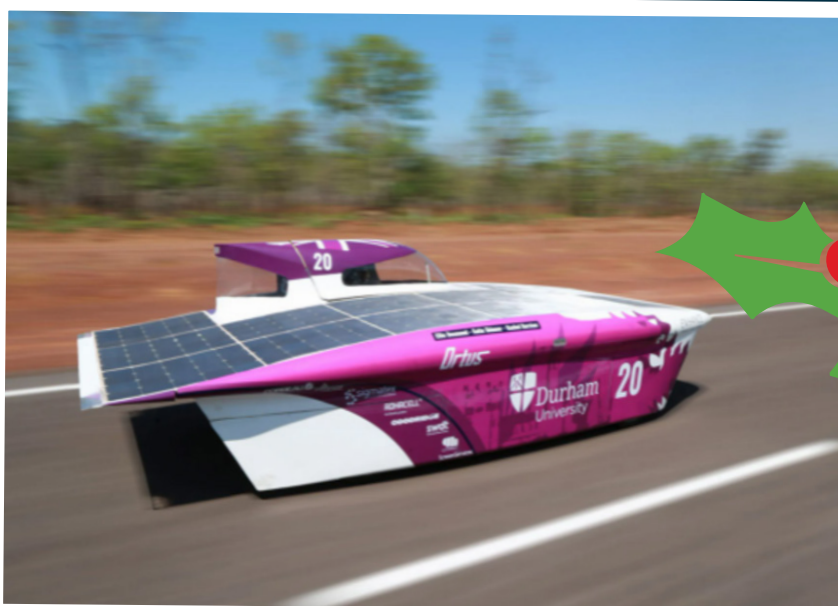
DUEM is a student run and student led team from the faculty of engineering at Durham University who design and build solar cars, which they race in international events against other world-leading solar teams.

Established in 2002, they have always pushed the boundaries of technological innovation.

Since their inception, they have developed five generations of solar car; racing in 2008 across North America and in 2011, 2015, 2017 and 2019 in the Bridgestone World Solar Challenge across the Australian Outback.

Their solar cars are designed and built in partnership with the Department of Engineering, making use of research and practical experience across the range of engineering disciplines. Every aspect of the solar car is built upon thousands of hours of in-depth research, followed by rigorous testing, analysis, and experimentation before finally culminating in a cutting-edge design.

Students enjoyed the visit and were inspired by what they learned - who knows, perhaps we have the next team DUEM member right here at Hermitage Academy!



Hermitage remembers...

On Remembrance day, we observed a 2 minute silence and held an assembly where students considered who we remember and why it is important to remember.

Students studied examples of how other countries mark remembrance day and considered what can we do to ensure that it continues for at least another 100 years.

The big debate!

This term saw six secondary schools from within the North East Learning Trust come together for a debate day, hosted at The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee.

Students came head to head to discuss some hot topics, including 'should we still have the monarchy?' and 'is social media a force for good in the world?'.

In the lead up to the day, Mrs Morton, Adanna, Jess and Marcus worked extremely hard, meeting weekly in preparation. The group honed their oracy and public speaking skills, ready to argue their views about free speech.



Sixth form applications are still OPEN

Did you know that we are still taking sixth form applications from Year 11 students?

Pop over to our website to check out course information, read our prospectus and fill out our online application form.

Be quick - applications close soon on Friday 17 December!



Enterprise Club

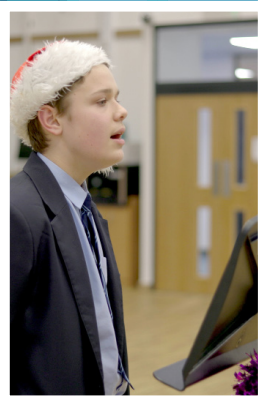
Have you ever thought that you could be the next Richard Branson, apprentice or appear on Dragons' Den?

If you answered yes to any of these then we think joining the Enterprise Club is for you!

The Enterprise Club is a chance to explore and develop your business and enterprise skills. It could be that you are looking to develop ways of raising funds or to help support local charities. Either way, developing your skills in a business environment will always be useful in the future and could uncover an interest that you never knew you had.

Find out more from Miss Marshall.

Christmas concert pics...



English news

'I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.'

This term in English we have been very busy indeed, doing lots of exciting activities!

Mrs Morrison has been meeting with students every Wednesday as part of Hermitage's Reading and Writing Masterclass – this is a first of its kind programme and part of the National Teen Book Club, an opportunity for students to share a reading experience virtually, hear from award-winning authors and skill up and become published authors!

Our Year 10s have been getting into the Christmas spirit, studying Dickens' powerful text, *A Christmas Carol*, becoming immersed in Victorian London and Dickens' messages of compassion and goodwill.

Our Year 7s have also had a brilliant start to their first term with us, exploring the Literary Canon and this term they have been learning the art of rhetoric, studying some of the greatest speeches in history, to inspire them to create their own.

We wish all our students a very Merry Christmas from us all!

Languages update

It has been an extremely busy start to the term in languages with students learning about a wide range of topics in both French and Spanish!

These range from describing yourself and your family to wider global and social issues such as poverty and homelessness in Francophone and Spanish-speaking countries.

Last half term, students took part in a games club with Mrs Briggs and Miss Sawyer playing traditional games in French. This half term, students have had the opportunity to attend a club with Mrs Denegri focusing on Hispanic culture including Christmas in her home country of Peru.



**North East
SCITT**

Did you know that our school is a partner of North East SCITT - an organisation that trains new teachers in schools across the north east - including in ours!

Whether you're a new graduate, in your final year of university or considering a change of career (it's never too late you know!), North East SCITT's high-quality school-based initial teacher training courses can provide you with the best start to a new career in teaching. They are based in the North East Learning Trust's lead school, The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee, but training happens in schools all across the region.

The quality of training they offer is rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted for both their primary and secondary courses. Along with this they have a proven track record of amazing

results and high employment rates. The programme gives you the opportunity to learn to teach 'on-the-job'. Unlike traditional university courses, you are in the classroom from the outset, interacting with pupils and teachers and learning first hand the knowledge and skills you'll need to become an outstanding teacher.

You will practise in a broad range of schools, gaining experience in different areas including special educational needs and disabilities, behaviour management, English as an additional language, phonics, and maths mastery (for primary only).

You will also be allocated a subject mentor from a team of specialists with vast experience who will introduce you to school life and help you to learn how to teach your subject.

At the end of the 10 month course you'll be a qualified teacher with a PGCE from Durham University.

So if you're thinking of teaching - there is no better place than through our school partners North East SCITT - please get in touch - we know they would love to speak to you!

Subjects available:

**Primary
Computing**

**Design and
technology**

Drama

English

History

Geography

Maths

Music

**Physical
education**

**Religious
education**

Biology

Chemistry

Physics

**Modern
foreign
languages**



Try a teacher training taster day...

If you're thinking about training to teach, you can come and spend the morning at The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee or Browney Academy in Durham to get a taste of what teacher training is like. Find out more and book your place at:

www.northeastscitt.co.uk/taster

Apply now for Sept 2022

New year, new career?

Become a teacher in 2022!

**Outstanding teacher training in
schools across the North East**



Bursaries of up to £24k available to train in some subjects

Find out more at: www.northeastscitt.co.uk