



**HERMITAGE  
ACADEMY**

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

**JULY 2021**



## WELCOME to our summer newsletter

**As we come to the end of this academic year, I am sure a lot of you will have mixed emotions. It has, once again, been a rollercoaster of a year!**

Despite the pandemic our students have continued to work hard, demonstrate extraordinary levels of resilience and make us all proud.

As parents/carers, I can only imagine how proud you must be of your children – they make us proud every day.

The many values that have been demonstrated from all of our school community throughout the year, including in the virtual world, have been: grit and determination; courage in coping with changes; care and compassion towards all members of our school community and appreciation and tolerance for each other – all of which strengthen each individual's character and their

ability to make the most of their time at Hermitage Academy.

Despite the challenges we have faced this term, we want to share and celebrate all the good news and reflections from this term - which was hard to fit into just one newsletter!

As we look to the summer break with hope and the excitement of a new academic year, all that is left to say is thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Have a restful and safe summer break.

With every good wish,

*D Stewart*

**Darren Stewart**, Head of School

*J Gorlach*

**Dr Janice Gorlach**, Executive Headteacher

## Hello soon to be Year 7s!

**It's almost time for the move to 'big school' - we are so excited to meet you all!**

We are so sorry that we have been unable to invite you into school this year. Until September, keep your eyes peeled on the transition page of our school website [here](#), where we have plenty of videos from our staff as well as important information on uniform.

We cannot wait to get to know you all and for you to get to know us and our wonderful school.

Don't be nervous: everyone is lovely and you will be right at home from day one!

See you all soon!

# Hello!

# Luke's competition success!

We are thrilled to announce that one of our talented Year 10 business students, Luke, is the Key Stage 4 winner of the prestigious *Be the Future* competition 2021.

Luke completed the challenge during remote learning and staff were blown away by his amazing idea.

*Be the Future* is held in partnership with the Peter Jones Foundation - the competition challenges students to address a social or environmental issue.

Luke's fantastic sustainable go-karting idea wowed the judges, with one judge saying: "Luke created a novel and innovative idea to create a business centred around sustainable go-karting. Thinking carefully about his enterprise idea he offered sustainable solutions that would differentiate his product in a crowded market. An excellent practical solution to making go-karting much more sustainable and environmentally friendly."

The business department are absolutely thrilled that Luke has been so successful. He excelled in this challenge and we see a bright future in business for him!

When Luke found out he was the only winner in the Key Stage 4 category, he couldn't

believe it: "When I found out I won I was very pleased. I didn't expect to win but when I found out it felt like a moment that I would never forget."

My idea for the competition was a sustainable go-karting business using renewable energy sources and recycling clothes to make the race suits so none of it would go to waste."

As well as winning the title for Key Stage 4, Luke has won a place on a webinar hosted by Mary Otumahana on behalf of the Peter Jones Foundation which takes place in July. We are so proud of our budding businessman!



## IMPORTANT DATES *for your diary*

THURS 02 SEP - Back to school

THURS 21 OCT - Break up for half term

MON 01 NOV - Back to school

FRI 26 NOV - INSET day, school closed

Please keep checking our website and social media channels for the latest updates.

## Goodbye Year 11!

This term we said goodbye to our Year 11 students.

We know your last two years of school life have been out of the ordinary, but we would like to say just how proud we are of your resilience and ability to adapt.

You have all come such a long way in your five years here at the Academy from tiny Year 7s to mature Year 11s.

You have been an unforgettable year group and everybody here at Hermitage Academy wishes you all the best in your next steps - whatever they may be!

Goodbye class of 2021...



# Music department news...

Using the midi-keyboards in the designated computer room and the 'Ignite' programme, our Key Stage 3 pupils have shown real enthusiasm for composing original pieces and arranging music this term.

Year 7 have been 'mixing' their own minimal music, Year 8 have created 'in-sync' video game music to match video clips, and Year 9 have been inventive in producing their own cover versions of popular songs through the decades.

Composing has been a real focus this term and the results have shown great creativity in our pupils.

Oliver Filor says he loves music lessons because he can use

the midi keyboards alongside the computer to create music. He has even been creating and mixing a lot of his own music using his own software at home and sharing it with his form group in music lessons. Well done Oliver!

Casey said: "The best thing in music is when you can show the class what you have learned during the lesson." Aisha: "I love my lessons because making up your own music is impressive. I never thought I could do it before now".

## Silver for Brandon!

Congratulations to Year 9's Brandon who won second place in the 13+ category in the "Create your Own Mythical Beast" competition from the Federation of Children's Books Group. The judges thought his entry was "quite a different approach and a rather unique beast"; we are very proud of him, this is a huge achievement.

Kaci (Year 9), Julia and Sophie (Year 7) created their very own mythical beasts too - fantastic work everyone!



## A year of great sport!

We have so many sporting achievements to celebrate this year!

Caitlin Atkinson was awarded the Spectacular Sports person award in our region during the pandemic where she has been creative with her training as she continues to amaze with her Ice skating.

Ethan Smith in Year 8 achieved his 1st Dan Black Belt in taekwondo.

We wish Alex Farley all the success this summer as he competes in the National Jiu

Jitsu competition this month.

One of our **Institute of Sport** success stories was Sarah Heeley, who while studying sport at Hermitage Academy, was accepted on a scholarship to Sterling University to continue studying sport. We were also able to support Sarah by achieving a personal sponsorship from a netball retailer. We wish Sarah all the best of luck next term at Sterling.

## We're social!

Follow our social media accounts to stay up to date with all of the latest news from around the Academy!



@hermitage\_acad



@hermitageacad



# 'My year group have made me proud this year because..'

We asked each year group team why they were proud. Here's what they all had to say...

## Year 7

This year has been like no other. I look back to those early days in September,

and I remember feeling apprehension about how our new year 7s would deal with the upcoming year after such a difficult and disrupted year 6. Would they cope with the demands of 'big school?', would they manage the increase in work load? but most importantly how would they find the change in structure of the daily routine. However, I should not have worried. The students in year 7 have shown levels of resilience beyond their years. In fact, I think we all could learn a lot from them and how they deal with any obstacle posed. From day one I knew this year group had a sparkle about them, a distinct ability to raise to any challenge and a desire to want to succeed – and for that I commend each and every one of them.

Early on, some students had to adapt to

online learning, a situation that was still alien to us all. But these students took this in their stride and produced some outstanding work – in fact they were some of the most vocal and confident in sharing work and discussing topics, with many even pressing the unmute button! The half who remained in school, completely stepped up as well. They showed us all how to be model Hermitage students by simply doing their best every day. Modelling exemplary behaviour, high levels of politeness and kindness towards each other. In particular, I think they especially enjoyed the shorter line in the lunch queue.

As the year has progressed, they have continued to build on this strong start. Personalities shone through, but the most important quality of this year group is their aspiration. These students want to achieve. As a whole they celebrate when they do well, but they also appreciate the individual positives of others. The year group have

excelled in terms of Laurea stamps with them achieving a staggering amount certificates. Lapel pins are proudly worn, and every Monday the students eagerly wait with anticipation to see who will be that week's Monday Marvel – something every student is not only capable of being, but every students WANTS to be.

In my many years as of a head of year, this past year has been one the most exciting and rewarding and that is down to these students. They are a credit to our school, to each other, but also to each and every person at home. They really have done us all proud. Well done to each and every one of you – I truly mean when I say you are one of the best.

So to summarise, this year have me proud because there are simply marvellous.

*Mrs Hardy*

## Year 8

My year group have made me proud this year for many reasons.

Probably the most impressive, was the way in which every student came back to a visibly altered school, to very different routines and to different ways of teaching; accepting everything that was asked of them. Ultimately, their resilience and adaptability ensured that the transition into Year 8 was as normal as could be under the circumstances.

There have also been some real highlights where students have gone above and beyond our usual expectations. A large number of the Year 8 students were involved in our second Hermitage Christmas video; these are great memories to look back on for students, staff and parents. Furthermore, some of our Year 8 students featured in the Music Department's Christmas celebration and it is lovely to see how many talented musicians we have in the year group! Many of our students were also featured in Trust videos and competitions during lockdown and we had some well-deserved winners!

In the spring term, I was asked to nominate students for Durham County's Young People's Award. There were a number of categories such as sport, creativity and volunteering. Not surprisingly, I had many students who could be considered and was able to nominate a talented group of students who have displayed a commitment and dedication above what is usually expected. Out of all the schools in County Durham, two of our students won their categories. I was so proud, that I not only had so many students to nominate but it was lovely to see, Philippa and Sophie achieve such a well-earned award. The Year Team have also nominated over 30 students to be Great Eights this year and two of our students, Jed and Ethan, were featured on the school website because of their successes outside of school.

Now that restrictions are easing, some of the normal routines can recommence. One of the first of these, was and inter schools County Book Quiz Award. I was delighted that five of our students were able to take part

and as a reward for their contribution they had lunch with Mr. Stewart, our Headteacher. It has also been lovely to see students engage in after school activities such as Drama and Homework Club with many attending extra-curricular sports and the recommencement of boys' and girls' football training. Alongside this, our two student council representatives, Huw and Demi-Leigh have done us proud this year liaising with staff and sixth form students to make important and well thought out contributions.

Finally, I have been immensely proud at how the whole year group have maturely and carefully selected options for their studies next year. They started this process online during a national lockdown and adapted so well to this additional challenge. I look forward to being part of each student's success next year and beyond.

Well done Year 8 - I look forward to welcoming you all back as Year 9 in September!

*Mrs Jamieson*

## Year 9

My year group have made me proud this year

because despite the ups and downs of the pandemic, the students have come out of this positive, pleasant and raring to start their GCSEs!

Coming back from lockdown and adapting from online back to face-to-face learning has not been easy but the year group have really flourished being back in the classroom and have embraced and adapted to the changes we have had to put in to everyday school life. Every single member of Year 9 chose their option subjects remotely, asking sensible questions and listening to advice given from staff

and older students to make thoughtful choices and decisions while meeting their deadline on time.

Speaking to the year group they have really grown up (some, literally in height!) and are ready to begin their Key Stage 4 learning for September. I am really pleased to see them mature, as Year 9 students take real pride pride in their education and have shown their teachers how committed and dedicated they are to their studies.

As a year group, we have celebrated a lot! Giving out multiple Laurea certificates, subject lapel pins and taking photos of Wednesday Winners every week have all been highlights-

they make me so proud to be their head of year!

Lastly, some members of the year group have found last year very difficult and I am so proud of the students who have sought help and advice from their peers and teachers. It is not easy to ask for help, but it is okay not to be okay, and we are lucky to have a great pastoral team at Hermitage Academy to give anyone who needs it, a little help and support. Well done Year 9!

*Miss Hall*

## Year 10

Firstly, I would like to say thank you.

As your head of year, I have been immensely proud of every one of you. In a year that has challenged all of us in so many ways, I have been incredibly impressed with your adaptability. In September we returned to the classroom eager to start your GCSE's.

However, this adaptability was tested after Christmas as we moved to online learning. Your resilience to this change ensured that learning did not stop, and you continued to produce some fantastic work from home. Many of you have also taken on opportunities to develop yourselves

through participating in virtual work experiences, or through taking part in national competitions. I have been so proud of how you have developed throughout this year and your return to the classroom was welcomed by all. Who knew that a simple face to face conversation was something that we would all miss?

This year has been difficult for many of you and the legacy of COVID will live on. As a year group we have continued to ask for help and support when we need it. We have all been through these challenging times together, and I am immensely proud of how we continue to support each other. We have also developed a wide range of

life skills throughout the year, you all became experts on TEAMS and I am hopeful that I never have to read 'Sir, your mics not on' ever again.

I look forward to the challenges that next year will bring, as you start the year knowing that this is your last year on a journey that began in 2017. A lot has changed within the school however, as always, myself and all your teachers will be there to continue to support and guide you to ensure you become the best person you can be.

*Mr Widdowson*

## Year 11

Year 11 have handled the recent

disruption with amazing levels of maturity, community spirit and a steely determination to succeed. Returning to school at the end of Year 10 was a real challenge, but they helped forge a path and other year groups were able to follow in their footsteps. New

routines quickly formed new habits that have since become second nature to them, and allowed them to remain safe whilst continuing with their learning.

As the educational climate changed, their positive attitude and excellent work ethic was noticeable, particularly in preparation for assessments. This became key to their overall success.

Year 11 as a year group continued to be excellent role models for others in the school. Their kindness and compassion showed to each other was wonderful to see.

There have been many challenges, highs and lows along the way. For some, adjusting to live lessons and extra computer screen time was difficult. However, engagement across



the year group was excellent and the students benefitted from their hard work when they returned to school.

I am incredibly proud to be their head of year. They have continued to flourish throughout. Like so many staff, it is with great excitement and anticipation that I look forward to seeing them all on results day in August. For many, their journey

and time at Hermitage Academy is drawing to an end and they are off to new places to continue their learning. For others, the next step to Hermitage Sixth Form is an exciting one and I know Mr Rowles and Miss Whittaker are gaining some wonderful young adults. I look forward to being able to watch your progress over the next two years and believe that with the

strength of character that you have shown during your time with us, you can cope with whatever life throws at you.

Well done Year 11, enjoy the summer and good luck next year.

*Mr Gibbins*

## Year 12

I am proud of Year 12 because

of the fantastic resilience they have shown. As a year group they showed resilience in their transition from GCSE to A-Level, despite not having the opportunity to sit their GCSE Exams.

As young adults, Year 12 have continued to adapt and be pragmatic when changing between periods of online learning and the changing situation when physically attending Sixth Form. Despite this period of

uncertainty, I am proud that Year 12 as a year group have developed positive working relationships with staff showing the polite, courteous nature of the students within the Sixth Form. As a year group, they have attempted new challenges and pushed themselves outside of their comfort zones to gain new skills and experiences. I am proud of the new found confidence that the Year 12 students have shown. This has been demonstrated by students applying for Student Leadership roles, as well as playing a significant role in contributing to student voice. The

year group have been proactive and they constantly seek opportunities to develop themselves both academically and socially. The independent nature of the students has also shone through academically where students have approached the management of free periods and independent study with maturity and commitment. Keep up the good work Year 12, I look forward to seeing you develop into fantastic Year 13 students!

*Mr Rowles*

## Year 13

In these exceptionally difficult

circumstances, I am incredibly proud of our Year 13 students. They have demonstrated fortitude, resilience and integrity throughout these unprecedented times and leave us as exceptional young adults, ready to take on admirable challenges and achieve great things.

As a year group their attendance and

engagement with online learning during the lockdown period was outstanding, their ability to adapt and learn in a different way at such a crucial time in their education was commendable. The students spent their final half term with us completing all of the work asked, dedicating hours to their preparation and revision to ensure success. I could not love my job as Head of Sixth Form more and it is thanks to working everyday with

students like these. I have no doubt that they will all make a substantial contribution to society in the future. They are an absolute credit to the school, their families and of course themselves. Congratulations Year 13-Class of 2021. I wish you all the luck in the world for the future!

*Miss Whittaker*

