



**HERMITAGE
ACADEMY**

WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2019

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Welcome to the first edition of our brand new school newsletter!

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be Head of School and Executive Headteacher here at Hermitage Academy. Since September there have been many positive changes with our top priority being to ensure students' experience of learning and school life improves quickly - this is the core of what we do.

As you know, we have joined the North East Learning Trust, which opens up a range of new opportunities including sharing of ideas and expertise. Due to this, we have already seen massive improvements happening at the Academy and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. The pace of change and improvement will continue as we want every child to receive the very best educational experience possible.

We firmly believe that a positive and supportive home and school partnership is essential

to maximise the life chances of young people, and while the academic success of our students is of paramount importance, we also endeavour to develop and nurture students' personal, social, emotional and cultural skills to encourage them to contribute positively to society.

This term we have welcomed our new Year 7 and 12 students to the school, while our Year 11 and 13s have begun the 'home stretch' as they prepare for their exams in the summer. Students have enjoyed a mix of exciting trips including our sixth formers who travelled all the way to New York. Other students have benefited from educational visits to Nissan, the theatre and Iceland... no, not the shop! The list goes on... It has certainly been a busy term!

Have a restful, safe and happy festive break.

Darren Stewart
Head of School
Dr Janice Gorchal
Executive Headteacher



New website launched!

We have launched our brand new website with plenty of new and exciting features!

The new site has an improved news section to showcase the exciting achievements of our students and any updates from the Academy.

There is also a new look calendar, useful information for parents and students and improved subject areas.

Be sure to take a look at:
www.hermitageacademy.co.uk

Drama and dance awards

It's been busy in the drama and dance departments recently...

Ben Fairley in Year 11 was awarded the NODA Rising Star Award 2019 for his performance as Lewis in Our House with the Youth Connections Theatre Company.

Dan Burlison in Year 7 was awarded the NODA Best Performance Award for his role as Artful Dodger in Oliver.

Ben Fairley, Helen Chong and Holly Alexander all auditioned successfully for British Youth Music Theatre UK this summer and took part in workshops and productions throughout the UK. Ben played the lead role in Peter Pan at the Theatre Royal, Margate in August 2019. Helen was in Alice in Wonderland, a devised piece at the Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield in August 2019. Holly was invited to work with leading industry professionals in London in August 2019.

The music and drama departments are already in rehearsal for the next school production of Hairspray, due to be staged in July 2020.

We also have dedicated group of Key Stage 4 students attending extra dance classes to support their work in RSL Level 2 Creative and Performance Arts. These classes offer classical technique to students who may not be able to attend local dance schools. The students are planning future public performances next year.

Bring It On!

15 Year 8 students were recently invited to the STEM event 'Bring It On' at the Beacon of Light in Sunderland.

Bring It On aims to inspire, educate and motivate young people to explore engineering as their future career by showcasing just how exciting it can be! The students took part in workshops involving civil engineering, environmental sciences and forensics; they even got to operate a JCB!

We were able to make lots of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) contacts at the event and are hoping to increase our involvement with the STEM team so that more students can benefit from these fantastic opportunities in the future. What a fantastic experience!

Dates for your diary!

20 Dec Break up for Christmas

06 Jan Return to school

09 Jan Year 11 parents' evening

16 Jan Year 8 parents' evening

23 Jan Year 9 parents' evening

06 Feb Year 8/9 options evening

14 Feb Break up for half term

24 Feb Return to school

To keep up to date with all news and events please visit:

www.hermitageacademy.co.uk



After school clubs

After school activities are now well established in our library...

Homework Club 2.50pm – 3.50pm Monday to Thursday is very popular, with Learning Assistants on hand to help with students' needs. We have 21 computers available, the latest research websites and many, many books.

Chess and games club takes place on Mondays at 2.50pm – 3.50pm. Chess is a proven way to help with problem-solving and improves memory.

Wednesday 2.50pm – 3.50pm is Craft Club where we have been making knitted and felt poppies. Craft is a great way to meet new friends from other year groups and learn different skills too.

Book Club on a Thursday gives students the opportunity to read in a relaxed and quiet space. We are also involved in the North East Book Awards (NEBA) so watch this space!



Sixth formers visit NYC

While the rest of us have been splodging about in the rain, a group of lucky students have been living it up in New York City!

Trip lead, Miss Whitaker tells us about the jam packed first day:

"We took the bus all the way down to the financial district where we explored famous streets such as Wall Street and Broad Street. Following this we boarded a ferry and took in the sites of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the incredible Manhattan skyline. We then had a rather sobering tour of the 9/11 museum which students found quite emotional.

"That evening we crossed the Brooklyn Bridge to experience the magical site of the Manhattan skyline lit up in all it's wonder. It was then back to Midtown via the subway so we could explore the famous Macy's department store which was extra special as it was decorated for Christmas.

We ended the night with a visit to the 86th floor of the Empire State Building to see Manhattan in it's all it glory!"

The rest of the week included trips to the Rockefeller Centre, Madison Square Garden, MOMA, Central Park and many more. Students also experienced a Broadway show or an NBA basketball game at Maddison Square Garden, where they watched the New York Knicks.

Miss Whitaker and Mrs Gamble would like to thank all of the students for their impeccable behaviour and good humour!



Regional sports leader award winners

Hermitage Academy was recently nominated for the National School Leadership Academy of the Year 2019 due to over 200 students undertaking sports leader courses in Years 10, 12 and 13.

We have an excellent pass rate with almost all our students gaining coveted qualifications as sports leaders.

During the courses, students gain organisational, confidence building and teamwork skills and much more.

Although we were pipped to the post for a national award

we were delighted to win the award for our region which is great recognition for all the hard work our PE department puts into the delivery of the award.

Well done to our PE staff and all our young sports leaders.

Watch this space as we hope to go one step better next year and win the national award!

Christmas fun facts!

Mince Pies

Although now mostly vegetarian, in Victorian times, mince pies were made with beef and spices.

Tangerines

The tradition of putting tangerines in stockings comes from 12th-century French nuns who left socks full of fruit, nuts and tangerines at the houses of the poor.

Wassailing

Carols began as an old English custom called wassailing, toasting neighbours to a long life.

Stockings

Hanging stockings out comes from the Dutch custom of leaving shoes packed with food for St Nicholas' donkeys. He would leave small gifts in return.

Christmas Trees

Nearly 60 million Christmas trees are grown each year in Europe.

Noel

The word Noel derives from the French expression "les bonnes nouvelles" or "the good news".

Shotton Hall



School Centred Initial Teacher Training

Teacher training opportunities

Did you know that Hermitage Academy helps to train the next generation of new teachers and we're looking for new recruits to start in September 2020?

Through our sponsor, The North East Learning Trust, we are a partner of Shotton Hall SCITT, the Trust's very own outstanding teacher training provider.

Trainees start their training at The Academy at Shotton Hall in Peterlee, then undertake placements in schools right across the North East, including here at Hermitage Academy.

Applications are now open for primary and secondary courses starting in September 2020 with bursaries of up to £26k available for certain subjects.

To find out about entry requirements and the opportunities available, as well as hearing from people who have taken the leap and changed career visit: www.shottonhallscitt.co.uk



NELT rocks the Sage!

Students from all nine schools in the North East Learning Trust joined together to perform at the Sage in Gateshead on Monday 16 December for a Christmas concert spectacular.

Trust schools come together twice yearly to showcase their incredible talent to parents, staff and students. This is the second time the concert has been held at world-class venue the Sage in Gateshead - a great treat for performers! Check our website and social media accounts for photos of the concert.



Are you on the nice list this Christmas?

It's very easy to get *wrapped up* in presents, parties and pantos at Christmas time and we can all be guilty of it. But, for some people, Christmas is tough and it may help if they receive a little dose of unexpected kindness.

Here are some ways you can be kind this Christmas. We guarantee you will be on the nice list after this...

1. Donate clothes and food to foodbanks
2. Smile and thank everyone who serves you
3. Hide a happy note for someone to find
4. Offer to help someone
5. Lend a friend your favourite book/movie
6. Pick up litter and put it in the bin
7. Talk to someone who is sitting alone
8. Let someone in front of you in a line
9. Send a nice text to five different people
10. Practice self-kindness and spend 30 minutes doing something you love.

JOKE CORNER

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

A mince spy!