



HERMITAGE
ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER DEC 2023

WINTER

A message from our headteacher...

As the sound of Christmas music rings out around the our school, it's audibly evident that the '12 Days of Christmas' activities have been earnest. From 'Festive door' competitions, to Foodbank donations, choir singing and Church visits, our young people have had a taste of the magic that Christmas brings to us all at this time of year.

I do hope that your holidays are magical too. The students (and staff!) have worked incredibly hard this term and are well-deserving of this upcoming break. Above all, it's an occasion to cherish time with family, friends and loved ones - something we all could do with a little more of!

We look forward to welcoming our students back on Wednesday 3rd January after a restful break.

Best wishes for 2024

L Maughan

Lindsay Maughan
Head of School

In this issue...



12 Days of Christmas

Santa Claus is coming to town and we've been celebrating during the lead up to the big day!



Fantastic fundraising

Once again, our kind and charitable students have been fundraising for charities close to their hearts.



Mindfulness garden

This term we welcomed important visitors into school to explore our wonderful Mindfulness Garden.



House group launch

This term we launched four house groups: Ambition, Evolution, Synergy and Integrity.

Children in Need 2023

We had a busy week fundraising for Children in Need this term, raising over £300. Students and staff enjoyed a cake sale, tuck shop and a tiring 'Bearpee' Challenge - a big thank you for everyone who got involved and donated!



House system launch

This term saw the launch of our brand new house system. In September we proudly unveiled our four house groups: Ambition, Evolution, Integrity, and Synergy.

In September we were very excited to hold our house group sorting ceremony, complete with our very own Harry Potter inspired sorting hat, Hermitage style!

Since then, our house groups have been battling it out to be at the top of the points leader board - it's always very close at the end of the week! Keep your eye on our Facebook page to find the weekly total of house points.

At the end of each half term so far, the top point scoring house has been treated to a prize for their efforts. We saw Team Integrity take the win for the October half term and enjoy a session on an inflatable assault course. To end this term, Team Ambition got to enjoy a cosy cinema day, complete with classic cinema treats.

This tradition will continue next term and beyond - who will be the next winning house?



Did you know?

In Columbia, Little Candles' Day, or Día de las Velitas, marks the start of the Christmas season across the country. Locals across the nation place candles and paper lanterns on show in their windows, balconies and front yards. Over the years, the tradition has evolved and now entire towns and cities are lit up around this time of year.

In Germany, every year on the evening of the 5th December, German children leave a boot or a shoe outside their bedroom door. When they wake up, if they've been good, they'll find their shoe filled with sweets! If not, they'll open their door to find a branch...



From our school to theirs

Twelve of our classrooms had a shiny new makeover this term, complete with new carpets, tables and chairs. However, this meant we had lots of old equipment that needed a new lease of life, 180 tables and 360 chairs to be exact!

Rather than throw everything in a skip, we got in contact with Phil and Susan Taylor from charity Gambia Aid. Gambia Aid specialise in shipping surplus school furniture to schools in Gambia and, along with Cleveland Rotary, raise funds to complete charity work.

In the pictures below you can see the equipment from our school in its new home in Gambia, ready to be enjoyed by the students there.



Did you know?

The tradition of putting a silver coin in the Christmas pudding dates back as far as the 1300s! A silver coin is added into the Christmas pudding mixture and whoever finds the coin in their share of the pudding will have good luck for the next year!



Mindfulness garden

In September, we welcomed the Chair of Durham County Council, Joan Nicholson, alongside Independent councillors Paul Sexton and Bill Moist, and former councillor Alan Bainbridge, to our school to explore our remarkable Mindful Garden. This serene oasis, made possible through grants from councillors Paul Sexton and Alan Bainbridge in 2021, has become a source of pride and tranquillity for our school community.

Joan Nicholson, a passionate horticulturist, showed particular interest in the herb garden and flower beds, observing how our students interacted with these natural elements as they employed grounding techniques to heighten their senses and foster mindfulness.

The Mindful Garden serves many purposes, including providing a serene setting for one-to-one counselling sessions, facilitating mindfulness practices like meditation and mindful walking, offering a safe haven for self-regulation, and serving as a peaceful space for students to enjoy during break and lunch times. Students have played an active role in planting and nurturing the garden, and they have used it as the backdrop for charity events and staff gatherings.

We hope to secure further funding to expand and enhance this area which is so popular with everyone in school. We extend our gratitude to our special guests for taking a keen interest in this little corner of greenery that has flourished within our school grounds.



Christmas careers

Let's take a look at two careers that really come into their own during the festive period.

Ski instructor

It's certainly a white Christmas when you work in the mountains during the winter months. Working abroad is a fantastic way to broaden knowledge of different cultures, languages and make friends. You'll need a BASI (British Association of Ski Instructors) Level 2 or 3 to get started as an instructor.

Events Manager

The festive period is the busiest time for Events Planners. The role can earn you up to £45,000 per year and as a whole, you'll need an undergrad degree in events management or any other planning subject. An Events Planner has a varied role, ensuring events run smoothly, whether they are on a small scale or huge scale.

Caring in the community

We are very proud of Katie in Year 11 who won the Young Achiever of the Year award for her involvement in the Sacriston Youth Project this term.

Katie has been a Youth Charity Worker since she was 13 and has completed multiple courses like first aid, safeguarding, health and safety and fire safety.



DATES

FOR YOUR DIARY

15 DEC – Break up for Christmas

03 JAN – Back to school

16 FEB – Break up for half term

26 FEB – Back to school

28 MAR – Break up for Easter



Sporting stars

Year 7 football stars in the making, Alfie and Kobe, were selected to attend trials for the district football team this term and smashed it, earning places on the squad!

The team is made up of the best players from around the county, and the boys are thrilled that they have been given such an amazing opportunity to play alongside them. Well done boys, we are so proud of you!



A very musical trip

A group of our GCSE and A level music students enjoyed a visit to Middlesbrough Town Hall to watch an amazing orchestra of professional musicians perform some of the set pieces that our students study this term.

The group were treated to works by Bach, Vivaldi, Purcell, Mozart, Haydn and Poulanc as well as interesting and informative commentary alongside each piece from a classical musical enthusiast to support their knowledge and wider listening.



The 12 Days of Christmas

We've been feeling festive at Hermitage Academy! In the lead up to Christmas we've had lots of fun and taken part in a range of fundraising and community opportunities.

Our Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students had trips to see a festive pantomime while Years 11, 12 and 13 went bowling to top off a great year.

Our Christmas concert at St Mary & Cuthbert's church went off without a hitch as students showcased their wonderful talent and got everyone in the Christmas mood.

Back in school, students designed festive doors, took part in festive fitness challenges, performed dramas at lunch time and took part in quizzes. A big thanks must go to our catering team who cooked a range of tasty treats throughout December and made an absolutely delicious Christmas dinner complete with all the trimmings!



Rewards galore!

Keep an eye out on our social media channels for updates on our Monday Marvels, Wednesday Winners and Great Eights. Find us on Facebook @HermitageAcademy.

Macmillan coffee morning

This term our student leaders have been busy fundraising once again for charities close to their hearts!

In September they hosted a very successful Macmillan bake sale and raised £173.05 for the great cause. Thank you to everyone who played a part in the sale from organising and baking to donating and volunteering!



Future Lionesses



This term, budding footballers, Philippa and Eve enjoyed a special day with the Lionesses as part of the FA Women's England Talent Pathway Future Lionesses Goalkeeper Day!

The duo had an amazing day making the most of the amazing opportunity to watch the Lionesses train and take part in a Q&A with the Lioness goalkeepers. They really showed off their talent whilst playing alongside other talented players. Best of luck to our Future Lionesses going forward!



Sixth form head to Scotland!

Earlier this month Year 12 and 13 psychology and biology students went north of the border, visiting Edinburgh Zoo and Scotland's iconic capital city. Students attended the Royal Zoological Society's lecture on animal studies and conducted pilot studies of their own, focusing on primate behaviour. This was a fantastic opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge of research methods and animal studies.

Later in the day, students visited the city itself. The weather was cold but clear which secured brilliant views of famous landmarks such as the Scott Monument and Edinburgh Castle. Students even squeezed in a visit to the Christmas markets and Princess Street Gardens before heading home. Edinburgh we will be back!



The Hermitage Enrichment Challenge

Following consultation with our Student representatives, we have refreshed our popular Laurea Enrichment Challenge to make it current for 2023-2024.

Our newly titled 'Hermitage Enrichment Challenge' contains 12 challenges, which cover a broad range of areas. We hope that by completing and achieving these challenges, our students can demonstrate that they are an active and well-rounded citizen, with deep integrity, who respects others and contribute positively to the school community and wider society.

Over the remainder of the year, the aim is for students to complete as many areas of the challenge as they can. Once your child thinks that they have completed a challenge, they should ask their Form Tutor, or relevant teacher, to check and sign their booklet.



PE success

Our Year 7 and Year 8 athletes did a great job competing in the Schools Sport Partnership Indoor Athletics Competition at Maiden Castle this term. The students had a fun and successful day, resulting in them reaching the finals in February!

But the success didn't stop there... Our Year 8 netball team won both of their games yesterday against DCSF and Durham High School. They scored an impressive 34 goals across both games!

