



The Hermitage Herald

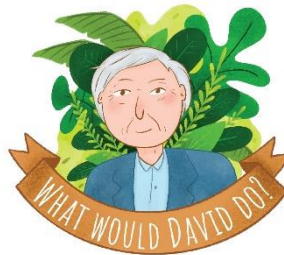
June 2026

Hello!

Welcome to June's edition of Hermitage Herald – As we move into the final term of the academic year, things here have not slowed down! There's been so much going on in school, as usual! Here's this month's round-up of all the fabulous things happening - enjoy!

What would David do? Hermitage students respond in 'Environment Week'

This month marked the 100th birthday of Sir David Attenborough. In conjunction with 'Environment Week' students learnt about the dangers of plastics in our oceans, a topic very close to Sir David Attenborough's heart.



As part of our assembly programme, student leaders presented assemblies to years 7, 8, 9 and 10, outlining our overuse of single-use plastics and the harmful effects these can have on wildlife and habitats.



The student leaders urged all students to take part in our first 'Bring a Bottle Day' where the challenge is for every student to use a reusable bottle in school. Form 10H3 succeeded, with every student in the form rising to the challenge!

Sir David's incredible work has also inspired the **North East Learning Trust** eco campaign, What Would David Do? An ongoing project where students can propose projects within school, conduct their own research or complement their environmental interests outside of school.



Students can:

- Start an eco initiative in school or be part of one
- Share eco ideas or projects
- Come up with innovative ideas to reuse and recycle
-anything else that helps save energy and the planet

If your actions to help save the planet would make Sir David proud, why not enter our WWDD competition? Find out more here: <https://loom.ly/sarRnhQ>



Duke of Edinburgh Award update – Buckingham Palace Gold Award Celebration

We are delighted to share that Mrs Ford-Hutchinson, our Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Manager, recently had the honour of attending the prestigious Gold Award celebrations held in the gardens of Buckingham Palace. The event, marking the 70th anniversary of the DofE Gold Award, brought together participants and alumni from across the country in a truly memorable setting.

A particular highlight of the day was the opportunity to reconnect with former Hermitage students who have successfully completed their Gold Award. It was fantastic to catch up with Jacob B, Dan O and Huw G, who reflected positively on their DofE journeys and the impact that the award has had on their lives. Also invited to attend were past Hermitage students Henry F, Charlie K, Hannah W, Ella J and Sophie W, an impressive group of young people, who have shown incredible commitment through volunteering, improving their physical fitness, perfecting a skill and of course, surviving 3 expeditions!

The celebration itself was both inspiring and uplifting. Guests enjoyed powerful speeches from Prince Edward, a long-standing supporter of the DofE, and Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes. Both speakers highlighted the transformative power of the award, something echoed by several Gold Award recipients, who spoke about how their experiences had shaped their futures. They shared how DofE has helped them to develop vital life skills, including communication, teamwork and leadership, enabling them to move forward on positive pathways towards success.



The occasion also had a wonderfully relaxed and celebratory atmosphere. Guests were treated to tea and cake while enjoying performances from brass bands and celebrity guest speakers, all set against the stunning backdrop of Buckingham Palace gardens. Despite it being the hottest day of the year, spirits remained high and the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance.

Mrs Ford-Hutchinson described the experience as “a fantastic celebration of the achievements and resilience of young people, and we are incredibly proud to see so many past Hermitage students, recognised on such a distinguished stage”. Congratulations to all involved, and we look forward to celebrating many more DofE successes in the future!

What's been happening in School?

For the past few months, eight students from Year 8 have taken part in the 'Future Business Magnates' programme. Students had to create a product or service to 'show off' their local area. They created 'Hermitage Trails' which is a series of walks around the Chester-le-Street area, catering for different groups of people in the community. The resources they created used existing walks and trails, but they created bespoke information so all kinds of people could enjoy what our lovely town and surrounding areas has to offer. There were walks and trails suitable for families, runners, people interested in local history and wildlife.



The students pitched their business ideas to people at Beamish museum and were an absolute credit to themselves and the school.

Attendance is something we see as very important here at Hermitage Academy. Research is clear in stating that attendance is one of the most powerful predictors of attainment, progression and later-life outcomes. We do take it seriously and we reward those students with excellent attendance, showing students that being present in school has so many benefits. This term form 8A1 (Mrs Robson's form) were treated to a breakfast for being the form group with the best attendance in the whole school. Mrs Robson said it was a "lovely way to start the week!"



Tilly and Theo truly reached for the stars with their recent space-themed homework project, delivering an effort that was out of this world!



Miss Craggs' Baking club is proving to be very popular! In their first week of baking, a mixture of year 7 and 8 students made delicious Smartie cookies using a range of skills including weighing, measuring, baking and dividing. Week 2 involved banana and choc-chip muffins! And week 3 had an amazing turn-out of students, who made jam, lemon curd, toffee or chocolate cookies! The smells from the kitchen were unbelievable!



What's been happening in School?

Creative Writing Club have worked exceptionally hard and it's all been worth it!

The students have had their literary marvels published by Young Writers; they were all thrilled to sign Mrs Hodgson-Whittle's copy with their author signatures.

Students were challenged to write a Stranger Saga of 100 words and submitted it to be published.

Well done to Praim, Wyatt, Harrison, Alyssa, Henrietta, Emily, Lola, Charley-Grace and Taylor!

This is an amazing achievement and we can't wait to see what they come up with next.



Students in Year 9 were given the opportunity to try out for our debate team, representing Hermitage Academy later in the year at our annual Trust debate competition. The English department were incredibly impressed at the number of students who applied, and Mr Oakes-Priestley and Mrs Webster said that the field of applications was exceptional, making it very hard to make a decision. Congratulations to Harriet, Ellie, Isla, Thomas and Kate, who will represent our school in the competition next month.



A-Level scientists visited St. Mary's Lighthouse at Whitley Bay to complete field work as part of their course. They carried out a shore profile to identify different tidal

zones, investigated how position on the seashore affects the morphology of a particular species and looked into the adaptations of organisms on the seashore and the specific adaptations of those living in rock pools.



Collecting as many positive house points in school is now a way of life for students. Through their hard work both in and out of class, these points not only add up for students' personal profiles, but also they go towards a cumulative score for their respective houses. Every term, the house with the most points wins a reward. At the end of last half term, students from Ambition won a chance to attend a 'silent disco' and great fun was had by all!



What's happening in our Hub and in the Community?

We have a strong pastoral offer here at Hermitage Academy, and as well as support for students within school, we can also offer information, guidance and support for families too.

Mental Health Support for Children, Young People and Families

Emotional health and wellbeing is about how you are feeling. Sometimes you feel good and other times you have emotions that don't feel so good.

It's really important that when we are going through life's ups and downs that we find ways to make ourselves feel better.

There are 5 ways to wellbeing that can help.

If you feel that a child you care about is unable to cope and you are worried about their immediate safety please call 999.

If you need immediate support contact 111 (option 2).

Five ways to Wellbeing:

Keep active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •dance to your favourite song •go for a walk outside •do some gardening or tidy your room •make up your own game
Take notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •look at what you can see out of the window •paint, draw or take photograph of something you have seen today •listen to the sounds of nature like the wind and rain •play I spy
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •talk to your friends and family •eat a meal with your family •say hello to someone •visit or call a friend or member of your family
Keep learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •learn a new word each day •visit a new place •try out a musical instrument •learn to cook a new recipe
Give	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •smile and say thank you •give someone you love a hug •send your old toys to a charity shop •help around the house - wash the dishes or do some dusting

Other ways to look after the emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families



•Family Hubs have lots of information, groups and activities that can help with your wellbeing. Visit [Help for families - your virtual Best Start Family Hub](#) or follow [Family Hubs on Facebook](#)

•The NHS app [NHS: Every Mind Matters](#) has lots of information and tips that can help support your emotional wellbeing

•The Growing Healthy App has lots of information to support children and young people aged 6 to 25 years with their emotional wellbeing

What's on in the community?

Where?

Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) drop-in

For parents/carers of families with special educational needs and/or disabilities, drop in to ask SENDIASS for impartial information or advice

[Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\) drop-in sessions](#)

Monday from 1.00pm to 3.00pm on:

6 July 2026

3 August 2026

7 September 2026

What's on in the community?	Where?
<p>Educational Psychology drop-in</p> <p>Talk to the Educational Psychology team about any concerns you may have about your child such as learning, communication and language, social and emotional-wellbeing, practical skills or being independent.</p> <p>Educational Psychology drop-in sessions for parents and carers</p>	<p>Monday from 9.30am to 11.30am on:</p> <p>15 June 2026 17 August 2026</p>
<p>Sleep Workshop</p> <p>Sleep strategies and support for parents and carers of children aged 18 months to 19 years including children with SEND/additional needs.</p> <p>Book a place on a Best Start Family Hub event</p>	<p>Monday from 10.00am to 12noon on:</p> <p>15 June 2026</p>
<p>CAMHS Drop-in</p> <p>For parents and carers of children aged 5-19 years old. Come along and speak to a CAMHS worker about your child's needs. These sessions may be useful if your child is struggling with low confidence and self-esteem, low mood or worrying and anxious feelings.</p>	<p>Wednesday from 12.30pm to 2.30pm on:</p> <p>8 July 2026 9 September 2026</p>
<p>12 - 18 Workshop - Coping with Teenagers' Emotions - 2 hour session</p> <p>Learn how to cope with difficult situations and how teenagers can become emotional. Meet other parents and carers and discuss how you can help your teenager to control their emotions.</p> <p>Booking required - Contact Best Start Family Hub Chester-le-Street.</p>	<p>Thursday from 10.00am to 12 noon on:</p> <p>11 June 2026</p>
<p>12 - 18 Workshop - Reducing Family Conflict - 2 hour session</p> <p>Meet other parents and carers to talk about being a parent and managing family conflict. Understand why teenagers are argumentative or aggressive and learn strategies to help you cope.</p> <p>Booking required - Contact Best Start Family Hub Chester-le-Street.</p>	<p>Thursday from 10.00am to 12 noon on:</p> <p>18 June 2026</p>
<p>2 - 18 Workshop - Getting Teenagers to Co-operate - 2 hour session</p> <p>Meet other parents and carers and share some ideas and experiences about managing difficult behaviour and think about goals for change.</p> <p>Booking required - Contact Best Start Family Hub Chester-le-Street.</p>	<p>Thursday from 10.00am to 12 noon on:</p> <p>25 June 2026</p>
<p>12 - 18 Workshop - Building Teenagers' Survival Skills - 2 hour session</p> <p>Meet other parents and carers to discuss some of the reasons teenagers take part in risky activities and how we can help them to enjoy themselves without putting their health and wellbeing at risk.</p> <p>Booking required - Contact Best Start Family Hub Chester-le-Street.</p>	<p>Thursday from 10.00am to 12 noon on:</p> <p>2 July 2026</p>

Year 11 and 13 – Exam Countdown

The month of June sees our Year 11 and 13 students in the throes of exam season, powering through their final challenges of the academic year.

It also means that Year 10 are about to embark on their first set of GCSE mock exams, giving them the experience of sitting formal examinations in preparation for next year.

Year 10 students have been given their exam timetables and have been given plenty of advice and guidance on navigating their way through these vital assessments.

Students in Year 11 still with exams, and our current Year 10 can access Student Pod and ReviseWise - both are excellent resources to aid with revision and organization for all year groups.

There are resources on the POD pages and also on our website, for key stages 3, 4 and 5.

For any Year 10 or 11 students who are still undecided about their future place of study, there is still time to apply to our amazing Sixth form!

Year 11 students will be able to apply right up to and on GCSE results day, which is Thursday 20th August, 2026. A-Level results will be released on Thursday 13th August 2026.

Just use the QR code here and apply today, to be part of this vibrant and close-knit community!

Year 12 – Planning for the Future

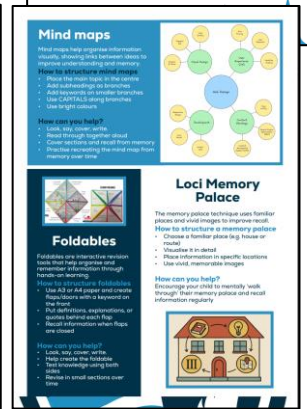
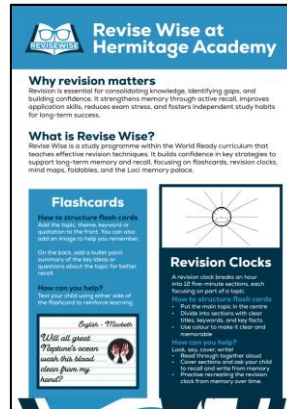
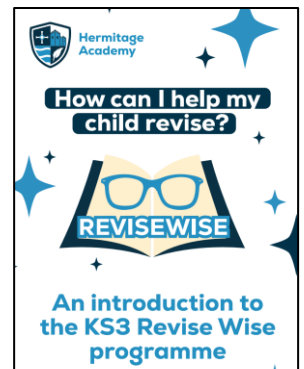
Our Year 12 students have been working hard as they begin preparing for their next steps beyond Sixth Form. We are pleased to report that all students have now registered with UCAS, an important milestone in the university application process. Recently, students also attended the UCAS Convention, where they had the opportunity to explore a wide range of university courses and apprenticeship pathways. This event provided valuable insight and guidance to support them in making informed decisions about their futures.

Year 13 – Exam Success and Celebrations Ahead

We are incredibly proud of our Year 13 students for their commitment and resilience throughout the examination period. Their positive attitude and dedication have been outstanding. We are looking forward to celebrating their achievements at the Year 13 Leavers' Celebration, which will take place on 22nd June. This will be a special occasion to mark the end of their Sixth Form journey.

Sixth Form Transition 2026

Students who have applied to join our Sixth Form will shortly receive an invitation to attend our Transition Day on Wednesday 1st July. This day will give prospective students the opportunity to experience Sixth Form life, meet staff and fellow students, and prepare for a successful start in September.







Sporting Round-up

Athletics

A huge well done to all of our students who attended the Durham Central Schools' Athletic Association Area Athletics this week! The students showed outstanding determination, effort and sportsmanship throughout the day, and we are incredibly proud of their achievements.

Our students produced an outstanding set of results:

-  Year 9 Girls – 1st Place
-  Year 9 Boys – 2nd Place
-  Year 10 Girls – 2nd Place
-  Year 10 Boys – 4th Place

Congratulations to everyone involved!

Lots of Hermitage success at the recent North East County Athletics Championships earlier this month.

Students across Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 took part in the event outside of school

- Year 9 student Ellie H picked up a gold in the 80m hurdles
- Ellie's brother James also competed and picked up a silver in both the 200m hurdles and long jump
- Year 9 Isla FH collected a bronze in the javelin and came 6th in the 800m race
- Year 9 student Izzy H picked up bronze in the 300m and came in 4th in the 800m.
- Olivia M achieved a PB in the long jump and did well in her 300m race
- Year 8 student Tom SP picked up bronze in the high jump and gained a PB in the 1500m
- Year 8 student Willow S picked up a PB in both the 200m and the long jump
- Year 10 Leonie A picked up a season's best in the 100m

Absolutely amazing achievements all round!

Cricket

Summer term means cricket season, and last term saw us field two hard ball cricket teams. Our U13 team romped home with a victory over Framwellgate Moor, with Tommy D scoring his first ever 50! Unfortunately our U14 team were narrowly beaten by Redhouse School but our students played great cricket and county team member Ted M scored a fantastic 50!



Sporting Round-up

Bouldering

Well done to Amber G from Year 8, who picked up a silver medal in her U16 female bouldering competition. It's amazing to know we have so many students taking part in so many diverse and different sports!



Horse Riding

Anya CM in Year 7 recently competed at the regional championships for her riding school. She came 1st in her class and has qualified to attend the national championships at Hartpury in Gloucestershire in July! What a fantastic achievement!



Rowing

Our rowers have been busy as regatta season kicks in. It is great that we have a beautiful river on our doorstep, and it is wonderful that so many of our students have taken up this sport, with great success too:

Harry D in Year 8 won a whopping 4 1st place medals at the recent Durham City regatta

Year 10 students Elliot F and Sam H also picked up a medal at the same event.

Year 8 students Emily M, Mila S, Alice M, Mia H and Erin M also scooped up the medals in their J13 races. They gained medals in the recent Tees regatta earlier in the month. The girls are going from strength to strength and are scooping up the medals wherever they race!

The recent Wansbeck regatta in Northumberland saw our J13 girls win again for Chester-le-Street ARC, and Year 8 Harry and Year 11 John representing their club, Lambton RC.

Well done to all athletes!





Hermitage Good News!



Lots of good news this month! Please do share with us any exciting news, things you have been involved in, or anything that you are proud of – we'd love to hear about it!

- Herald regular, Adam F received a prestigious 'Commanding Officers' commendation award from Sea Cadets. Well done Adam – keep being brilliant!
- Year 7 Courtney R has been in touch to share her drawings with us again this month. She is super-proud of her efforts, as are we!
- Year 7 Rory M wanted us all to know of the new addition to his family – a 9-week-old hamster called Doug.
- Olivia C in Year 8 wanted to share with us her swimming achievements. She recently attended a swimming gala and came away with first and second place in her races! What a superstar!
- George D in Year 7 got in touch to say that he and fellow student Rohan C represented their club Burnmoor while playing for the Durham Pathway Super 4s cricket team. They got off to a great start by winning their first game, but unfortunately the second match was rained off.
- Lily H in Year 7 got in touch to say, "I competed in the UK's biggest national netball tournament, sponsored by Leeds Rhinos Netball, featuring an incredible 150 teams and more than 1,500 players from across the country. After an intense weekend of competition, I was proudly awarded Player of the Tournament — an achievement I'm incredibly proud of." And so are we Lily – well done!



Mary Poppins

Tickets are selling fast for Mary Poppins on the 8th and 9th July – contact the school office to get yours!

Well done to all – and remember to send us all your good news – anything at all you are proud of – via the 'Good News' button on EASI.

Activities Day and Hermitage Festival

The summer term is moving quickly, and we look forward to our end of term celebrations and activities. On the penultimate day of the summer term, we stop usual timetabled lessons and instead have a full day of alternative activities. Some of these will be based in school, whilst others will be off site at different venues within the region and beyond. For more details on the trips offered this year, head over to Student Pod.

The following day, on the last day of term, we hold our annual sports day and Colour Run for all students (and staff!). It really is a great end to the year and let's hope the weather stays warm for it! The deadline for reply slips (for all children) and ParentPay payments (students going out of school on trips) is Monday 15th June.



Positive Points and Praise

Totals
22,225 Actions
853 Students

Top Categories
6,699 Attendance Award - 30.14%
2,685 Perseverance - 12.08%

In total over the month of May, students in years 7-13 collected a whopping 22,225 points in total, with the attendance award being where the most points were awarded.

At school we love recognising students' hard work and positive attitudes. Alongside awarding house points, we also celebrate achievements with special postcards, for

sounding like an expert, going above and beyond, completing excellent homework, and much more. We take time in assembly to showcase the fantastic things our students are doing.

We encourage you to share in these celebrations at home too.

These students have collected the most positive points across May.

Year	Top Points
7	Tilly S
8	Holly G
9	Emma K
10	Elliot F
11	Khloe B
12	Lauren M
13	Kelsie G

Dates for your Diary - June 2026

June	What's on?
5 th	Year 8 vaccinations (HPV) Year 12 UCAS convention
15 th	Year 6 Information evening
17 th	Year 7 Parents' Evening Year 11 Leavers' Assembly
18 th	Year 6 Friendship Day
22 nd	Year 13 Leavers' Assembly
23 rd and 24 th	Year 6 Transition Days
29 th	Year 10 New College Durham visit (pm)
30 th	Year 10 Sixth Form Taster day

If you have anything to share about your child, or anything that may be happening in the community that you think we would like to hear about and could feature in our newsletter, please do get in touch.

Also, please let us know what you think of our newsletter! We'd love to hear from you!



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enquiries@hermitageacademy.co.uk

House Points Update

Our house points system means that every student and member of staff in school can contribute to a central cause. We celebrate this every week in assemblies. As you can see from the cumulative points across the year, the students take this seriously!

House Points				
		Half-Term	Term	Year
1.		765	8,748	57,105
2.		731	8,507	56,257
3.		681	8,157	53,017
4.		618	8,640	53,700

Assemblies - June 2026

This term we are looking at 'Values': individual values; school values; community values and British values.

Please do ask your child about their assemblies - there is always a wealth of information that children take away and supportive discussions at home will further their understanding and awareness of these important topics.

Every week parents will receive a link for you to access further information or support in line with the topics presented in assemblies.

It's called 'Carrying on the Conversation' and we hope it will strengthen the links

between home and school on the important topics for young people today.



Week beginning:	Assembly focus
1 st June	Student Leaders assembly takeover - Bring a Bottle (Environment week)
8 th June	Water safety
15 th June	Student Leaders
22 nd June	The Power in your Pocket

Other ways to Keep in touch