



The Hermitage Herald

October 2025

Hello!

Welcome to October's edition of the Hermitage Herald – here to keep you up to date with everything that's been happening in our school. It has been, as always, a busy first half term here at Hermitage Academy. Here are the highlights!

Hermitage Students Brave the Elements in Iceland!

Over half term, our Year 10 and 11 Geography students embarked on an unforgettable adventure to Iceland, exploring one of the most geologically fascinating places on Earth. The trip gave students the chance to see first-hand the incredible landscapes and processes they've studied in class—tectonic plate boundaries, volcanic features, glaciers, waterfalls and more. It was also an opportunity to understand how geography, geology and human culture are interconnected, with real-world examples of renewable energy and climate change.

Day 1:

After an early start and a flight from Glasgow to Keflavik, we wasted no time diving into Iceland's wonders. On the way to our hotel in Selfoss, we visited the 'Bridge Between Two Continents', standing where the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates meet, and explored the Gunnuhver geothermal mud pools. By evening, the Norse gods treated us to a magical blanket of snow—the deepest October snowfall Reykjavik has ever recorded!

Day 2:

The snow didn't slow us down! We began at the Lava Centre, learning about nearby active volcanoes, including Eyjafjallajökull, famous for its 2010 eruption. Next, we visited Reynisfjara's striking black sand beach and basalt columns before heading to Solheimajökull glacier. Equipped with helmets and crampons, students trekked across the ice, discovering crevasses, blue ice, and volcanic ash while learning about climate change impacts. The day ended at Seljalandsfoss waterfall, where we even walked behind the cascading water.

Day 3:

Our final full day focused on sustainability. At Hellisheidi geothermal power plant, students saw how Iceland harnesses natural hot springs for green energy. Then came relaxation at the Secret Lagoon, Iceland's oldest swimming pool, followed by visits to the Strokkur geyser, Gullfoss waterfall, and Thingvellir National Park. Just when we thought the trip couldn't get better, the Northern Lights danced across the sky—a truly magical finale. A huge thank you to Mr Ward and Mrs Ford-Hutchinson for organising this incredible experience. Our students returned with unforgettable memories and a deeper understanding of the world around them.



Duke of Edinburgh Success: Silver and Bronze Awards

Silver Award Achievements

Our Silver Duke of Edinburgh participants have shown incredible resilience and teamwork, successfully completing both their training and qualifying expeditions. Training took place in the rugged landscapes of Swaledale, where students faced relentless wind and rain. Despite the challenging conditions, they remained positive and determined, supporting one another and adapting brilliantly to the environment.

The qualifying expedition, delayed by Storm Amy, was rearranged and took place along the historic Hadrian's Wall. The first two days brought improved weather, but the final day tested their endurance with renewed wind and rain. Even under pressure, students demonstrated expert campcraft and navigated confidently.

Their assessor described them as 'one of the best groups seen all year' - a testament to their camaraderie, enthusiasm, and sense of fun. Congratulations to all for embodying the true spirit of the DofE Award!

Bronze Award Expedition in Kielder Forest

Congratulations to our Year 11 students who successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition in the stunning Kielder Forest. Over two days and one night, participants carried all their own equipment, navigated using maps, and cooked their own meals—showing impressive independence and teamwork.

The route through Kielder's rugged terrain tested stamina and planning skills, but every team rose to the challenge with maturity and enthusiasm. While accommodation was in dormitories rather than tents, the experience was no less demanding, with long days of walking followed by shared meal preparation and reflection.

This expedition is a key part of the Bronze Award, which also includes volunteering, physical activity, and learning a new skill. Many students have now completed the full award—a fantastic achievement that reflects their commitment and personal growth.

We are incredibly proud of everyone involved and look forward to welcoming our next cohort of Year 9 and 10 students soon!



Charlie's 10 miles for 10 years Challenge

You may remember from September's edition, we featured Charlie from Year 9, who has raised thousands of pounds for charity.

On September 30th, it was ten years since Charlie's life-changing car accident—a milestone that is always difficult to reflect on. In true Charlie style, he turned this anniversary into something positive by taking on a 10 mile run, raising awareness and vital funds for Changing Faces, a charity that has supported Charlie and his family over the years.

The route was as meaningful as the challenge itself. He started at Durham Cathedral, where he was supported by the local Fire service. Charlie then made his way towards home, stopping at Chester-Le-Street Town FC, his beloved local football club. From there, he continued back, stopping at Hermitage Academy on the route, to be met by a crowd of friends, staff and other well-wishers.

The local news were following his progress along the way, and it doesn't stop there – Charlie is to attend a special awards evening in London next week, and he is to meet our MP, Luke Akehurst in November.

Charlie and his parents want to thank everyone who has supported Charlie's fundraising efforts over the years. Charlie really is a true inspiration: he is an active member of our school community, throwing himself into all aspects of positive school life, but also finds time to help others outside of school.



Spooky scenes at Hermitage Academy!

We do love all things spooky here at Hermitage Academy, and this year has been no exception. In the last week of the half-term, we invited our key stage 3 students to our Halloween disco and great fun was had by all! Here are some of the spooky outfits seen on the evening:



Youth Practitioner Pumpkins

Well done to all our creative Year 7 students in the Youth Practitioner group! Your pumpkin decorating skills were absolutely spook-tacular! It was amazing to see your imagination come to life — from funny faces to frightful designs, each pumpkin told its own story. In creating these pumpkin designs, the students showed teamwork, creativity, and loads of enthusiasm.



Charity corner

We're very pleased to share that our recent charity fundraisers were a massive success, with £475 raised for 'Point North' and £462 for 'Breast Cancer Now'. Thank you to everyone who donated and supported our efforts this half term. It's amazing to see such generosity and kindness!



Sixth Form Round-up

This half term our budding sixth form chemists enjoyed making aspirin in one of their science practical lessons. They did a fantastic job.



- In addition, this half term our students have been diving into practical experiments in Biology.
- Our psychology students have been exploring neurological disorders.
- As the eldest students in school, our sixth formers have been acting as role models and working with students from our main school.



Thinking about your next steps after school? Come and explore what your future could look like at Hermitage Sixth Form! Join us for our Sixth Form open evening on **Wednesday 12th November, from 5:00-6:30pm.**

On the evening you can:

- ✓ Meet our friendly staff
- ✓ Explore our wide range of course options
- ✓ Discover our broad extra-curriculum programme
- ✓ Tour our building
- ✓ Ask any questions you have

We hope to see you there!

You can apply for our sixth form online here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx...>



Homework Heroes!

At Hermitage Academy, we believe homework plays a vital role in supporting our students' learning journey. It's not just about reinforcing classroom knowledge—it's about stretching and challenging students, encouraging independent thinking, and nurturing a love of learning. Each month, we celebrate the most impressive homework submissions from across the school. These pieces showcase creativity, effort, and a genuine passion for learning. We're incredibly proud of the dedication our students show beyond the classroom—and we look forward to sharing more outstanding examples in future newsletters! This month, we saw some excellent homework from Science, a Hobbit House from English and a beautifully presented poster from RE – well done all and keep the great homework coming in!

Homework Hub (for all year groups) is held in IT1 every Tuesday and Wednesday lunchtime, and Thursday and Friday after school (3pm-4pm). The Heads of Achievement will be on-hand to help you organise and complete homework – perfect if you find completing homework at home tricky.



Hermitage Academy

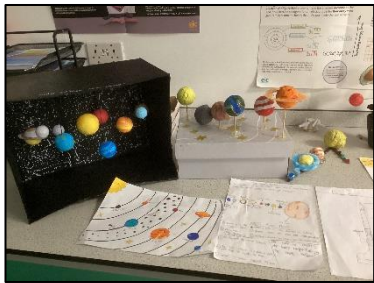
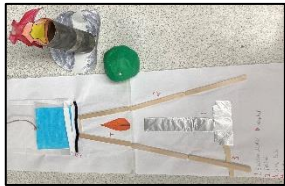
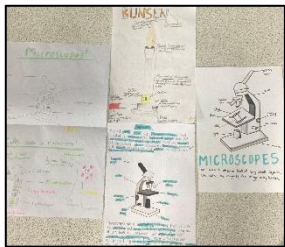
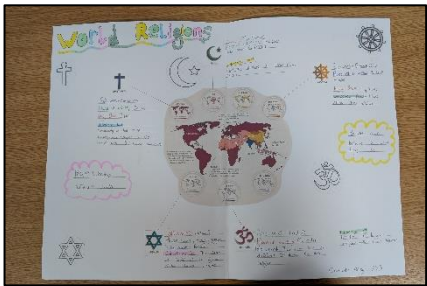
Homework Hub

Head of Achievement homework support in IT1 (Computer room)

Lunchtime: Tuesday - 12.15 -1pm and Wednesday - 12.15 -1pm

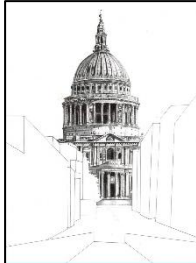
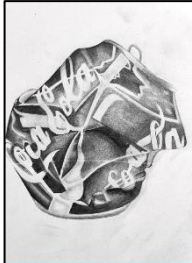
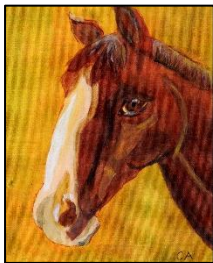
After school: Thursday and Friday 3-4pm (Weeks 1 & 2)





Artists of the Month

This month we say congratulations to (from left to right):
Year 7 – Charlotte
Year 8 – Emilia
Year 9 – Elia
Year 10 – Charlotte
Year 11 – Adi
And well done to Willow in Year 10, whose photography impressed us this month!



Sports Stars of the Month

The PE department also recognize great effort and talent, and every week on our social media channel they celebrate those who have shone in their PE lessons. Well done to:

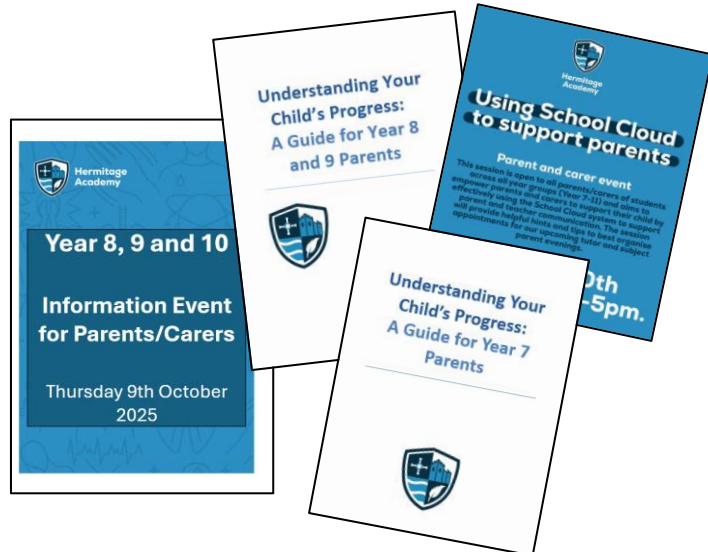


Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Sophie G Victoria S Daniel W Savannah M	Harry D Lexi W Daniel M	Sophie W Eve I Sophie L Isla F-H Oliver F	Jack K Alfie W	Adam L Eden A

Parent Information Events

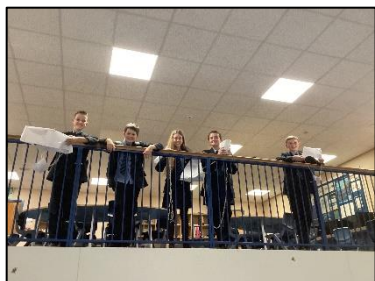
Thank you to those parents who attended our 'Parent Information' sessions this half term. We held sessions for the new Year 7 parents, where there was an opportunity to meet the tutors and to find out more information about what we do here. We also held refresher evenings for the parents of Years 8, 9 and 10, as well as inviting Year 11 parents to hear what life will be like for their children as they head into this very important academic year.

If you were unable to attend, a copy of the take-away information booklet is available on our school website. Alternatively, please contact your Head of Achievement via enquiries@hermitageacademy.co.uk and they will be happy to answer any questions.



STEM Club Challenge

Mr. Penny runs our STEM club (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and it is very popular with our Year 7 and 8 students. The team were given the challenge of designing and creating parachutes. This was a 3-week project where the students could only use paper, string and tape and showed great creativity and variation in design.



Mock Exam season approaches!

As we approach the Christmas break, our Year 11 and Year 13 students will soon sit their first round of mock exams. These assessments are an important step in preparing for the summer exams.

To support students, we have been working hard during curriculum time and offering bespoke intervention sessions after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These sessions focus on coursework and core subjects to give every student the best chance to succeed.

The exam window runs from **Monday 14th November** to **24th November for Year 13** and **25th November for Year 11**.



Reading at Hermitage

At Hermitage Academy we are always celebrating reading as it is a skill that spans every subject in school. It really is a case, when it comes to reading, of practice makes perfect!

Congratulations to Cole, Ryan and Joshua for earning the most reading points this half term. Keep up the great work!

Well done to Alexis, Indy and Taylor for their amazing 'Horror story in a sentence' submissions. We were astounded by their creativity! Keep your eyes peeled for the next competition in the new half term...

We also held our Book Swap at the end of the half term – it's great to see the students join in, swap and chat about what they've been reading!



Parents can play a vital role during this period by:

- ★ Creating a calm, quiet space for revision
- ★ Encouraging healthy eating and good sleep routines
- ★ Reminding students to use **Student POD** and **Revisewise**, which provide everything they need for effective revision.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our students achieve their best!

Student Sporting Achievements – October Highlights

We're incredibly proud to celebrate the individual sporting successes of our students this month, both in and out of school. Here are just a few of the fantastic achievements from our talented young athletes:

Cadets:

Karl (Year 8)

Karl is a dedicated Cadet, who earned a Sea Cadet Rowing Level 2 award.

Adam (Year 9)

Adam is also a keen cadet and rower, who earned his Sea Cadet Rowing Level 3 award for rowing on a tidal river.



Judo

Evie (Year 8)

Evie has recently passed her level 3 in Judo – well done!



Calling all Sponsors...

We are looking to team up with local businesses in our community to sponsor new team strips! With over 90 annual sports fixtures and teams that are already signed up for both the English Schools and Durham County competitions, we're excited about the opportunity to partner with you to help our students look and perform their best. Your logo will feature on our team uniforms, which also gives your business great visibility while supporting our sports teams. If you're interested in being part of the next chapter of our sporting journey, please contact enquires@hermitageacademy.co.uk - we'd love to hear from you!

Football

Zack, Charlie and Kobe (Year 9)

Well done to these three inspirational young men, who, through their hard work, dedication and of course excellent football skills, have made it onto the Chester-le-Street, Washington and Derwentside District Under 14 football team.

Nico (Year 7)

Nico was recently selected to represent Chester-le-Street, Washington and Derwentside District Under 12 Boys in football. He took part in competitive trials over several weeks and made his debut in a league game against Newcastle Boys on the 10th October helping his side to a 6-2 win where he was captain. He has since played against Redcar & Cleveland where the CLSWD District team won 3-6 away from home.

Rugby

Will and Adam (Year 11)

Adam and Will played their first competitive game for the Newcastle Red Bulls Academy. Fantastic effort and commitment to play at the highest level in rugby.

We're so proud of all our students who continue to challenge themselves and represent Hermitage Academy with pride. If your child has an achievement you'd like to share in a future newsletter, please do let us know!



School Sports Round-up - October

October has been a fantastic month for sport at Hermitage Academy, with students showing great commitment, teamwork, and enthusiasm both in school and beyond. Here's a look at some of the highlights:

Football

- A brilliant result for our U14 girls football team, who recently won 2-0 against Oxclose in their first County Cup match!
- Well done to our Year 8 football team, who won their game against Belmont 2-0. This was their first win of the season and a great team effort! Special mentions to George and Lucas, on their team debut and to Finn, who scored both goals!
- Congratulations to the Year 11 football team, who secured a 3-0 win over Monkwearmouth to progress to round 3 of the National Schools Competition! Everyone played with incredible teamwork and determination throughout the game. Man of the Match goes to Harry, for his relentless work rate and an absolute rocket of a goal from 30 yards out!
- Congratulations to our Year 10 football team, who won a hard-fought game against Manor Academy. The game ended 1-1 at full time, leaving the team to hold their nerve and win 6-5 on penalties! Special mentions to Eve and Ted. Eve gave an outstanding performance in goal, keeping us in the game with some brilliant saves. Ted rose to the challenge of marking the opposition's best player for the entire game!
- Congratulations to our Year 7 girls' football team, who have been unstoppable! They picked up two big wins, beating Tanfield 3-0 and Park View 4-2. They also beat rivals Shotton Hall 6-0 in the County Cup, with 4 brilliant goals from Mollie!

Netball

Well done to the Year 9 netball team, who have made a fantastic start to the league with an outstanding 26-0 win! A special mention to Isla, who won Player of the Match.

Rugby

Well done to our Year 8 rugby team, who had a fantastic night at Consett Rugby Club. Everyone showed outstanding grit, determination, and teamwork throughout! A special mention to captain Harry, who led the team well and scored some excellent tries!



Flag Football

Flag football – a fast-growing, non-contact version of American football – is gaining popularity and will feature in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Hermitage Academy is proud to be part of this exciting movement!

Our Under 13 flag football team spent the day at Kingston Park Stadium, as part of the recent 'Flag Football Champions' event. The team put on a fantastic display of confidence, teamwork and resilience that did our school proud. Well done to the team and thank you to the Minnesota Vikings, for being such amazing hosts!



Share Your Child's Achievements with the Hermitage Good News button!

The 'Good News' button on EASI is a simple way for you to share your child's achievements outside of school—whether it's sporting success, creative accomplishments or anything else they're proud of. We love celebrating the wonderful things our students do beyond the classroom, and your child could be featured in the next edition of *The Herald*! This month, we've heard some fantastic updates:

★ **Lydia (Year 9)** wanted to let us know that she did well in her recent English assessment, and she is really proud of herself!

★ **Katie (Year 7)** has been nominated for three prestigious awards:

- **IDTA Theatre Awards** for achieving 93 marks in Grade 4 Ballet.
- **IDTA Junior Theatre Awards** for achieving 92 marks in Grade 2 Modern.
- **IDTA Musical Theatre Awards** for achieving 93 marks in the Musical Theatre Silver Solo exam.

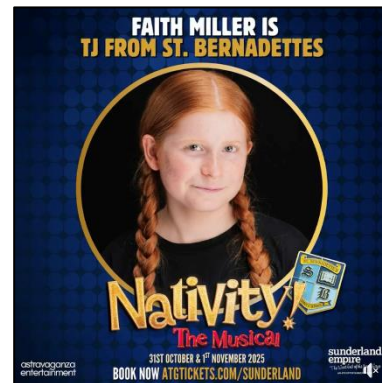
In addition, Katie won a **TDCI Championship title** for Junior Song and Dance (age 10–13), earning a place in the highly regarded **Champion of Champions** event taking place in January.

★ **Tommy (Year 8)** wanted to let us know that he has been awarded the U13 coaches' award for his hard work and determination in cricket.

★ **Faith (Year 7)** got in touch to share her achievements – she has been selected to appear in *Nativity* at Sunderland Empire on 31st October & 1st November. She is playing TJ / Angel Gabriel (the child who flies in from the top of the cathedral in the film). She will be flying onto the stage to sing *Good News*!

★ **Henrietta (Year 7)** called in to say that she is loving life, has made lots of new friends from different schools and different places, and she really likes our school (so do we!).

★ And finally, **Cody (Year 7)** wanted to let us know that he is enjoying his music lessons and is really good at playing the keyboard!



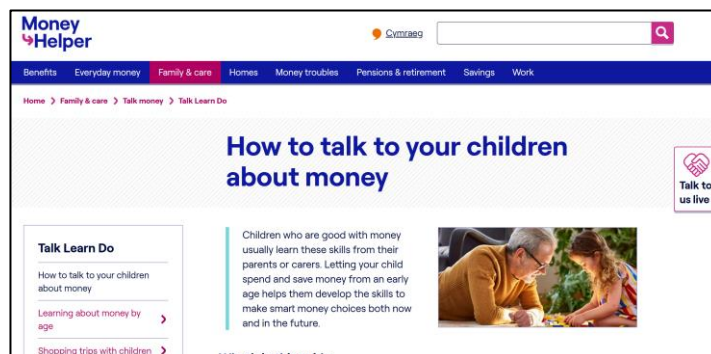
Talking about Money Matters

At Hermitage Academy, we believe education goes beyond the classroom. Alongside academic learning, we aim to equip students with practical skills that will help them thrive in life. One of these essential skills is understanding money and finance.

Money is something we all use every day, yet conversations about it can sometimes feel difficult. Developing confidence in managing money is a life skill that benefits students long after they leave school. That's why we encourage open, positive discussions about finances at home.

We've found a fantastic resource designed to help parents start these conversations.

It offers practical tips and ideas to make talking about money with your children easier and more enjoyable, helping to build healthy attitudes towards spending and saving. Take a look and start the conversation today—it's a great way to prepare your child for the future!



<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/family-and-care/talk-money/talk-learn-do/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-money>

What's on in School - November

Date	What's on - October
5 th	Y12 Durham Works workshop
11 th	DofE Information event 4pm-4:45pm
11 th	Remembrance Day
12 th	Sixth Form Open Evening 5pm-6:30pm
24 th	Democracy Week
26 th	Flu Vaccinations – Years 7-11
26 th	Year 9 SEND afternoon 1-3pm
26 th	Y12 Durham Works Workshop
27 th	Careers Fair
28 th	Inset Day (school closed to students)

Celebrating Healthy Competition at Hermitage Academy

At Hermitage Academy, we believe that healthy competition helps students thrive. Throughout the school day, students earn positive house points for their efforts, achievements and contributions—these points all count towards the house totals.

Here are the current house point totals, along with the top points scorers for each year group for the month of October:

Half-Term		
1.		15,433
2.		15,144
3.		14,431
4.		14,156

7	Tilly S
8	Hayden K
9	Thalia W
10	Carley M
11	Aidan J
12	Ava T-B
13	Owen K



Date	Assembly topics - October
WB 3 rd November	Remembrance
WB 10 th	Anti-bullying
WB 17 th	TBC
WB 24 th	ASB and Risk-taking

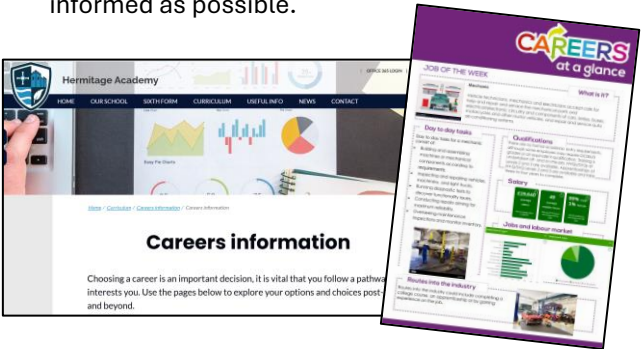
Knowing what’s coming up in our assemblies gives you a wonderful opportunity to continue the conversation at home. We encourage you to talk with your child about the topics we’ll be exploring and share your own thoughts and experiences. These discussions help children hear different perspectives, reflect on ideas, and develop their own informed opinions.

Careers Advice at Hermitage Academy

This half term, our Careers Lead, Mrs. Wake, has been working closely with Year 9 students to help them make informed decisions as they prepare to choose their GCSE options.

Mrs. Wake has taken time to speak individually with every student in Year 9, discussing career aspirations, possible pathways to college and university, and initial thoughts on GCSE subjects. These conversations will support students as they make their final choices in the spring term.

To help parents support their child during this important stage, our school website has a dedicated Careers Information section packed with useful resources. You’ll find this under the Curriculum tab. It includes guidance for both students and parents to make the decision-making process as smooth and informed as possible.



Keep in touch

We would love to hear from you if you have anything to share about your child. We always want to hear about sporting achievements, hobbies and interests that your child has outside of school, or even if you have something you think one of our staff should know, please do get in touch:



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