



The Hermitage Herald

Issue 10: June 2025

Hello!

Welcome to June's edition of Hermitage Herald – As we move towards the end 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!

Farewell to the Class of 2025

We said farewell to our wonderful Year 11 students last week, in a year where we have seen excellent progress and seismic changes in attitude, diligence and hard work from the cohort. The students have been in the throes of their GCSE exams since the end of May, and many members of staff have commented on their maturity and steely determination over the exam period.

After receiving their hoodies, the students attended a heartfelt Leavers' assembly, led by Head of Achievement Mr. Widdowson and Year Manager Mrs. Mason. The assembly was a reflection of their five-year journey, bringing both laughter and tears.

Finally, we gave the Year 11 students a great send-off, as Year 7 students lined the drive forming a guard of honour, applauding them as they left.



Sharp suits and beautiful ballgowns – Hermitage Prom 2025

One of the highlights of the Hermitage calendar is our annual prom, and this year our Year 11 students did not disappoint!

We had a slight change to the usual format, where we invited parents and students to a pre-prom reception in school, and from there a fleet of coaches whisked our students off to a secret location, only revealed as they were on their way.

Once at the location, the beautiful Hardwick Hall Hotel, the fun and laughter continued as we awarded prom king and queen (students), prom prince and princess (staff) best dressed and the prom jester. Afterwards the students danced the night away, in all their finery.

It really was a great end to a wonderful five years in the school, and we look forward to seeing you again at Results Day on Thursday 21st August, and hopefully as Sixth Form students in the coming academic year.

Duke of Edinburgh strikes Gold!

This month we celebrate the roaring success of our Duke of Edinburgh students, starting with our first ever Gold group. The Gold Award, which requires 12-18 months of commitment across volunteering, physical activity, skills development, a residential experience, and an expedition, is known to equip participants with lifelong skills and boost their confidence.

First to cross the line was Dan O. Despite a challenging start to his DofE journey back in 2022, where after months of learning to ski, practice the drums and support his local community band, Dan had to forfeit his Bronze expedition and therefore his award, due to covid. Not one to be deterred though, he quickly jumped into Silver, helping to build bike trails at Hamsterley forest. Throughout his Gold award, Dan has provided invaluable support to the Hermitage library, supporting Mrs Dixon with the reward shop and other duties, as well as being instrumental in the homework support offered to our younger students.

Next to complete was Hannah, who has completed her skill as a Professional Game Academy player at SAFC. Throughout her journey, Hannah's passion for sports has seen her embedded in the local community, helping young children at Mini Athletics club and supporting Junior Parkrun on a weekly basis. She has also practiced the skills of cooking and photography.

Finally this month, Charlie K secured his Gold, having completed a wide variety of challenges throughout the way. As a keen geographer, Charlie led the way with a litter picking group back in 2022, to help support the environment around the grounds of Hermitage school. Since then, he has supported his local community, cultivating vegetables in the allotment for Heaven's kitchen. He has also learned to cook, play snooker, has walked and cycled and has been a priceless support at our Sports Clubs, leading Dodgeball for the younger students and more recently supporting with the transition of a new year 6 students.

Dan, Hannah and Charlie are now waiting to be celebrated at a Gold Award Celebration event, typically held in a Royal location like Buckingham Palace Gardens, where they will receive their Gold Award certificate and badge or brooch.



Duke of Edinburgh bronze awards

In terms of our Bronze Awards, 2025 has been our biggest year yet, with our dedicated students securing their awards ahead of their GCSE exams. From supporting in school with our Reading programme, being part of the Leadership team or being involved in their local communities and clubs, these fantastic students have done it all.

- Alfie H
- Amar M
- Amelia D
- Charlie L
- Darcy S
- Elliot H
- Emily B
- Gracie B
- Harry R
- Jacob M
- Jasmine S
- Jayson M
- Jessica L
- Jessica S
- Lucy G
- Marcus C
- Max S
- Mia P
- Michael H
- Nieve S
- Oliver F
- Olivia B
- Scarlett M
- Silver R
- Thomas H
- Zoe N

With Certificates of Achievement for:

- Sephy M
- Ava TB



Eight of the team are working towards their Silver Awards, with their expeditions due to complete at the start of the new academic year.

The Duke of Edinburgh is an internationally recognised award and is a valuable asset for future applications to universities and employers, showcasing skills such as resilience, teamwork, and communication. Applications for our new Year 10 cohort will open in October 2025.

Please see Mr Ward or Mrs Ford in the Geography department, for more information.



Forest School Successes

Forest School has been a real success for us this year with our Year 7 and 8 students, and the good news is that we will be continuing next year!

Our lovely Forest School Leader Caroline has helped many of our students to become healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

Forest school encourages play, exploration and supported risk-taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Caroline has shown our students how to light and put out fires safely, cook food such as pancakes, bacon sandwiches and toasted marshmallows and get arty and crafty with wood from our Mindful Garden.

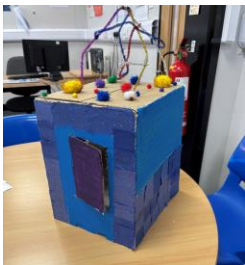


Homework Heroes – Victorian Britain English Homework

Our Year 7 English students were tasked with creating their own Victorian invention, after previous homework asking them to research the Industrial Revolution, which would support them in their reading of ‘Oliver Twist’.



Sam M and Willow S stepped up to not only design their invention, but to actually create a model of their ideas. Willow created a time machine (always useful) and Sam designed a doggy treadmill, to ease the pain and suffering of the men and children in the workhouse!

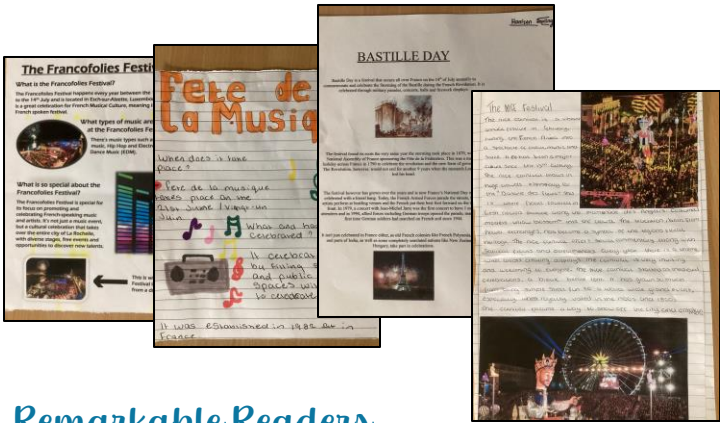


Homework Heroes – French Flipped Learning

Year 9 French students handed in their fabulous homework projects, and the brave ones presented their findings to the whole class:

- Faye W presented her findings on the Pretzel Festival in Luxembourg in French and English
- Harrison J gave an informative speech on France's Bastille Day celebrations
- Joseph A talked us through an annual MotoSports festival in Le Mans, France
- Max gave us fascinating details on France's annual music Festival
- Elsa P presented information on France's Mardis Gras festival

Je vous en remercie, c'était un projet très bien exécuté ! (Thank you for a very well executed project!).



Remarkable Readers

- Well done to Sus-Ann, Benjamin and Emilia who earned the most house points for reading over May and June
- Praim, Wyatt and Feame, from our Creative Writing Club, wrote a short story based on Grimm's Fairy Tales and all of them are going to be published!
- Willow S is the first person to complete our Library Loyalty Card and win a prize! Don't forget to pick up your loyalty card from the library - you get one stamp for each book you read.



Performing Arts Round-up

We are always happy to shout out about how amazing our students are – we have a school full of them! This month, we celebrate our performers – some who are working tirelessly in school to make our productions so fantastic, and some behind the scenes at home, just doing brilliant things in Drama, Music and Dance!

The Glasshouse Extravaganza is an annual North East Learning Trust tradition, where all schools in our Trust come together to celebrate the arts and to perform together. This year our talented students wowed a sell-out crowd. Our young performers took to the iconic Glasshouse stage as part of this year's show – 'Jukebox: A night of decade defining hits'. Hermitage Academy took the crowd to the 2010s by performing their renditions of 'Roar' by Katy Perry and 'Pompeii' by Bastille, accompanied by a beautiful yet powerful dance solo from Joe F. Hermitage Academy soloists also took part in fantastic whole-trust performances and band pieces throughout the evening. It was truly amazing to see all of our students' hard work paid off. A huge congratulations to everyone who took part!

A reminder that our school production 'Aladdin' takes to the stage next week. The performance will take place at Biddick Academy on Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th July – tickets are selling fast.

To help us fund this show and shows in the future, we will be holding a raffle during the performance next week. We are looking for donations. If you can help, please drop them off at school's main reception by Monday 7th July.



In other news, the following Hermitage Academy students have been flying the flag for the performing arts, with fantastic achievements this month:

- Alice N and Amelia R in Year 8 recently performed with their dance school at Disneyland, Paris. They performed in a pre-parade show and a theatre dance show. They were given this amazing opportunity through their dance school BUZZ, in Birtley.
- Hayden K in Year 7 achieved a merit in his recent Grade 4 piano practical exam. This is a fantastic achievement
- Ellie H, one of our Year 8 students, passed her Grade 5 violin exam this month. At this high level, music students are assessed on not only their practical abilities but also their knowledge of musical theory. What an amazing achievement to pass with merit. Well done!
- Joe F in Year 10, who featured in our Glasshouse performance as a solo dancer, has been accepted into the Russo Ballet School in Barcelona, to study in their summer intensive programme. The scholarship will include advanced technique classes on different subjects and a final theatre performance with guest principal dancers. An absolutely amazing opportunity Joe and we wish you the best of luck over the summer!

Handball Finalists

We are incredibly proud of our U15s Handball team who represented Hermitage Academy at the England Handball National Finals at Nottingham University this month!

To compete on a national stage is a huge achievement and a reflection of the hard work, dedication, and teamwork shown by every single player in this team.

It was an unforgettable experience, and we're so proud of how our students conducted themselves both on and off the court.



Sporting round-up - June

As usual, lots of sporting achievements to be proud of, both in school and out of school – here is our monthly round-up:

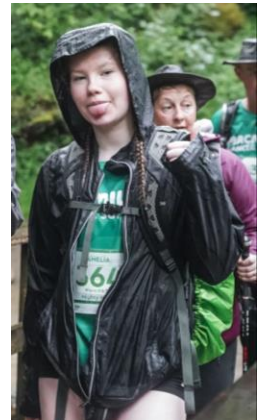
- A huge well done to our excellent students who were superb leaders at a Primary Cricket Festival. Students were enthusiastic, encouraging, and amazing role models to the primary students! They led Cricket drills to several different primary schools in our local area. Students were highly complimented by many Primary School teachers for their outstanding guidance, passion, and communication skills towards the students they were coaching
- Before half term this wonderful group of students went to Sedgefield Cricket Club, they were a credit to the school and won two games!
- Another dominant display from our Year 9/10 rugby team as they extended their unbeaten run with a 25-0 victory over St. Bede's! A special shout-out to Jack K who scored a try on his debut – an excellent way to make an impact!
- Our Year 7 and 8 cricket team recently played against Durham Johnston, coming away with a 31 run victory! All students involved were excellent and a special shout out to Harry M and Ted M who scored the first and second 50 in Hermitage Academy history!
- Congratulations to our Year 7 rugby team who secured a fantastic win over local rivals Park View. A brilliant team performance from start to finish, showing determination, teamwork, and real pride in representing our school. A special shoutout to Alex P, who was named Players' Player after scoring 5 tries.
- Congratulations to our amazing athletes that competed at the Durham Athletics Competition this month. Schools in our local area came together for a superb day of sports. Hermitage performed brilliantly, bagging 7 gold, 7 silver and 11 bronze medals.

Year 8 girls relay team	1	Thomas SP High jump	2
George S 100m	1	Daniel M 300m	2
Finn L 200m	1	Finn L Long Jump	2
Faye E 800m	1	Evie T Shot put	2
Izzy H 300m	1	Olivia M 200m	2
Ellie H hurdles	1	Faye C 1500m	2
		Isla FH 800m	2
Year 7 boys relay	3	Sus-Ann B 200m	3
Year 8 boys relay	3	Alice M 100m	3
Daniel T Javelin	3	Izzy H High Jump	3
George S Shot	3	Jess T 100m	3
Thomas SP 1500m	3	Isla FH Long Jump	3

Sports Round-up (continued...)

As well as events within school, here is our monthly round up of our amazing students who are excelling in sports outside of school:

- Year 10 students Mason and Olly, who play for Chester-le-Street, Washington and Derwentside District Football team, were part of the cup-winning team this month. After a tough game it ended 1-1, but the CLSWD team came out victorious after a penalty shoot out.
- Our resident tumbler Finn SP travelled to Telford to take part in the Finals of the English Tumbling Championship in the over 13s male category. Despite having a broken finger, he has returned to the Hermitage with a gold medal and as English Champion in his category. Having qualified earlier in the year to represent the North of England, he travels to Birmingham in July to compete in the GB Finals.
- We congratulate Elliott F, who struck Gold at the Scottish National rowing championships in Strathclyde this month. This makes Elliot Scottish National rowing champion! Elliot raced a part of a double, and also as part of a crew of four, picking up the gold for both. This is an outstanding achievement for Elliott and the rest of his crew, where determination, hard work and resilience are essential qualities for making the podium.
- More rowing news, as Year 7 student Mila, competed in the Nithsdale rowing regatta the same weekend as Elliott's Strathclyde regatta. Mila picked up first place for her single and double rowing races in the Junior age 13 category.
- Well done to our fantastic Year 10 student Amelia C who took part and completed the Macmillan Mighty Hike Ullswater Marathon. Amelia battled on through thunderstorms and torrential rain. Amelia, and the team of 4 she participated with, raised just short of £2000 for the cancer charity.
- Year 7 student Faye E and Year 8 student Isla FH ran in the famous 'Blaydon Race' always held on the 9th June. The girls completed the race in great positions, faster than many of the older students in their category.



Groundbreaking news! Earthquakes hit Hermitage!

In our Inter-house Earthquake Challenge, students had to come together to plan, design and build earthquake-resistant structures, using only marshmallows and lollipop sticks. The students worked in teams, building their skills of working together and problem-solving, as well as hone their knowledge of how structures and earthquakes work. The buildings were then shaken until there was one winner. Synergy won the overall competition, but Ambition were also awarded points for the tallest structure.



Food club - cooking on gas!

A new Key Stage 3 extra-curricular club has been causing quite a stir this month.

Students from Years 7, 8 and 9 have been enjoying an after-school cookery club, where they are given the opportunity to create tasty dishes to take home.

It was wonderful to see the teamwork, learning and mentoring from older students in the group. Students began by making Smartie cookies and are moving onto a range of other baked goods to hone their skills and develop their knowledge of food science and baking. This is Year 7's first time in the kitchen since starting at the Academy in September, and they impressed us with their quick learning and organisation; this puts them in a great place for starting Food Technology as part of the Year 8 curriculum.

In last week's club, Year 7, 8 and 9 students made delicious chilled cheesecakes - the perfect indulgent treat for warm weather! Students used the hob this week and demonstrated fabulous creativity in their cheesecake designs which ranged from Oreo cookie, Biscoff and Crunchie, to fresh strawberries and caramel swirls! Students have impressed us so much these past few weeks with their kindness, teamwork and cooking progress. They all received a student recipe book to take home and nurture their growing talent and interest.



Miss Craggs commented, "Such a superb group of students, making this club a delightful end to the school day for participants and staff!"

If you are interested in joining in from September, please see Miss Craggs to register your interest.



A warm welcome to our new Year 7 students and parents!

June is an exciting time of year, especially when we welcome our new Year 7 students into school to gain a taste of life at Hermitage Academy. We had a two-day transition event for our newest students, where they were able to: experience a day in the life of a Hermitage student; make new friends; meet staff and attend lessons, but more importantly, sample the delights of the food on offer in our dining hall! Of course, the legendary 'chicken wrap' was snapped up!



We also offered 'Friendship Days' to some students who are coming to Hermitage without other Primary school peers, and this was an opportunity to make some new friends before September. This has been a lovely part of our transition programme, as we are aware that the move up to the big school can sometimes be a lonely one.

Furthermore, we welcomed the parents of our new Year 7 cohort into school. We held an information evening, where staff involved in transition presented key information and parents were able to meet tutors, the Year Manager Mrs. Stabler and the Head of Achievement Mrs. Burn.

In addition, there was an opportunity to try on and order uniform from Emblematic, our uniform partner, in readiness for the exciting times ahead in September. There were student leaders and buddies on hand at the evening, who had been working closely with the Year 6 students on their transition days, so there were friendly faces on the evening too, and Miss Wright and Miss Powell were there to showcase their enrichment offer in school, promoting the excellent extra-curricular options available.

Positive Points - June

These students have collected the most positive points in June – Well done and keep up the great work!



7	Willow S
8	Eve I
9	Emily F
10	Mylie B
11	Payton C
12	Olivia B
13	Max J



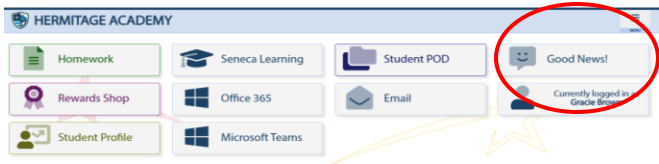
Upcoming Assemblies – July 2025

Week beginning:	Assembly focus
WB 30 th June	Individual Liberties
WB 7 th July	Tolerance
WB 14 th July	Celebration assemblies

nEW! The Hermitage Good News Button!

We have a new addition to our student dashboard!

The Good News icon is available whenever your child logs onto Easi. Please use this to let us know about anything great happening with your child. It could be good news about sporting achievements, or anything wonderful that your child is doing outside of school. Do let us know – your child could feature in our next edition of the Herald!



Dates for your Diary - July 2025

July	What's on?
1st	Glasshouse Summer concert Work Experience week for Year 12 Year 10 Careers day
2nd	Year 10 work experience (Wed-Fri) Celebrating religion and diversity day (Year 9) Sixth form taster day Year 7 rugby trip (pm)
3rd	Additional transition day – Year 6
4 th	Trust Debate competition Girls active festival trip
7 th	Additional transition day – Year 6
9 th and 10 th	Aladdin performance (at Biddick School)
14 th and 15 th	Aladdin performance to Year 5 Primary students
15 th	Awards evening
16 th	Northumbria University trip House winners celebration
17th	Activities Day
18th	Hermitage Festival – Sports Day and Colour Run Last day of school

Hermitage Festival – Colour Run

Our Hermitage Academy ‘Colour Run’ returns for 2025! Entry is £2.50 (through ParentPay) and this includes a t-shirt for all participating students to wear whilst running.

As in previous years, students will also be invited to compete in Sports Day, participating in some fun competition with friends and in their houses.



Other ways to keep in touch...

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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