



The Hermitage Herald

January 2026

Happy New Year!

Welcome to January's edition of Hermitage Herald – designed to keep you up to date with everything that's been happening in our school over the past month – enjoy!

The Twelve Days of Christmas

The Autumn term is always the longest, and possibly one of the busiest terms in the academic year. When December comes, we embrace the spirit of Christmas and enjoy a variety of festivities. This year was no exception, with even more activities and events than last year.

- Hot chocolate was on the breaktime snack menu, and the whole school enjoyed their Christmas lunch on the 17th December, with a choice of a traditional Christmas dinner, or a festive sandwich for those who preferred a lighter lunch. Crackers were pulled and hats were worn – it was a lovely end to the term!
- We had a festive themed 'Ready Steady Cook' – an inter-house baking competition!
- Our famous 'Design a Christmas Door' – a fiercely competitive day of making a Christmas themed door to brighten up the school on this darkest of months. Well done to Miss Wray and 11A3 with their winning creation!.
- Year 7 enjoyed a local walk on the last day of term, from school to St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Church, to attend a special service. The hour-long service told of the Christmas story, with some carols and activities mixed in.
- The pet competition was a firm favourite with staff and students



The Christmas Carol Concert 2025

As a school, we are proud of our strong links with our local community, and at Christmas these links are as important as ever.

We are delighted to work with our local church, St Mary and Cuthbert's, and the church is the beautiful backdrop, every December for our Christmas Carol concert.

The concert is a chance for parents, the public and students past and present, to celebrate the talent that our school has to offer, from a range of modern and traditional songs from the Voices choir and soloists, flautists, guitarists and pianists, to our very talented strings ensemble, featuring an appearance from Primary school students who we also work very closely with.

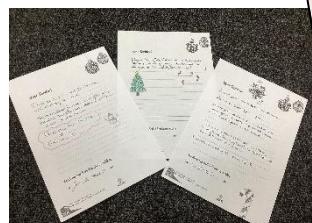
The evening was a celebration of music, song and exceptional talent.



Community links

We encourage links with our community across the entire school year, but at Christmas especially, we pause to think about others and how we can help.

- As part of our '12 Days of Christmas' celebrations, pupils wrote letters to residents of our local care home. It is one of the highlights of our Christmas activities and the students enjoyed sharing kind messages and good wishes.
- Our Voices singing group had a fabulous afternoon singing for the West House Care Home residents.
- The Sixth Form continued their tireless charity work, and after a bake sale in school, there was enough raised to provide an afternoon tea at the local care home and also to buy toys and gifts to donate to the Cash for Kids charity.
- We also delivered food donations to our local foodbank. Our donations supplied 40 meals for people in need this Christmas



Celebration assemblies

The end of the Autumn term is one for celebration, not only because we break up for Christmas, but at Hermitage Academy we recognise and celebrate all that is great in our school. Our 'Celebration Assemblies' held at the end of the Autumn and the Summer term, are hosted by our Heads of Achievement and Year Managers, where we take some time to say 'well done' to those students who have gone above and beyond in terms of collecting positive points, doing great things in the classroom and also in their wider study and homework. We are so proud of these wonderful students who amaze us every day!



GCHQ National Language Competition

At the end of November, some of our Year 9 students took part in a GCHQ National Languages Competition competing with more than 2500 teams in the UK. Working in teams of 4, they put their language skills to the test by cracking a series of incredibly tricky codes. It was a closely fought race with teams dedicating up to 25 hours outside of class to solving the puzzles!

A huge **congratulations** to Team Fascinating Horses; Isla, Thomas, Ellie and Kate who secured 10th place in the North East Region! We are so very proud of all of your efforts!



Snow-tastic Celebrations

We brought the snow to Hermitage at the end of term as we held a special snowball fight for students in Key Stage 3. Over 350 fabric snowballs were waiting in the Sports Hall for the students from years 7, 8 and 9 who have exemplary behaviour and homework completion records. Great fun was had by all!



Cinders Pop-up Panto

As part of our 12 Days of Christmas celebrations, the Performing Arts department presented Cinders – where we were told to expect laughter, sparkle, and a sprinkle of fairy dust as this classic tale was given the full panto twist! The performance was on the last day of term and it was pure magic—glass slippers, laughter, and a sprinkle of fairy dust. Well Done to the all the cast.



Next-generation Geographers!

To complete our topic of Geological World, Year 9 merged their engineering and creative skills, to take on the ultimate challenge: design an earthquake-proof building using paper straws—and stick to a strict budget! From innovative structures to clever cost-saving strategies, our students showed excellent teamwork and imaginative skills.



Year 11 is magical too!

Year 11 Scientists have had a busy term revising for and completing mock exams. It is all hard work, but this great photo shows that hard work reaps great rewards too! Here the students were completing their positive ion tests. Too good not to share! A reminder that our Year 11 Parents' Evening takes place on January 14th.

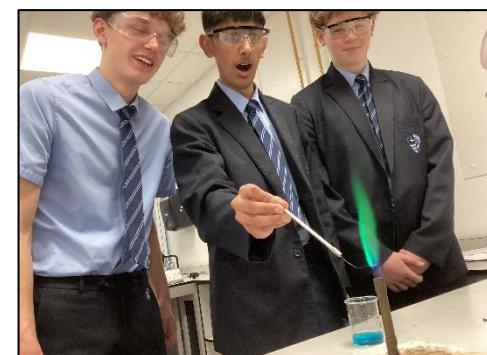
Culture Vultures

Every term in years 7-9, we offer the opportunity for students to engage in enrichment projects beyond the curriculum, providing tasks and activities to broaden their knowledge of the wider world. Here are some pictures of the incredible work completed this term:



Reading Champions!

A massive well done to Cole, Thula and Jacob! These three have accrued the most Reading EASI points out of the whole school for this half term, which is an amazing achievement.



Hermitage Sixth Form Highlights – A Busy December!

December was packed with exciting opportunities for our Sixth Form students. Here's a look at what they've been up to:

Science at the Life Centre

Our budding scientists visited the Life Centre in Newcastle to take part in a fascinating genetic sampling experiment. They explored whether members of the group carried the gene for detecting a bitter taste—an engaging way to bring genetics to life!



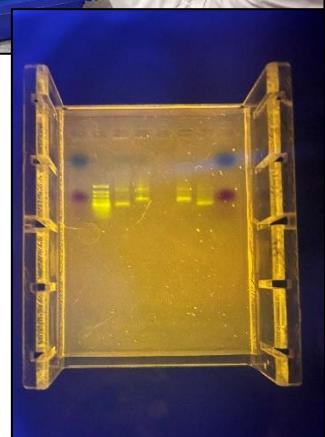
Festive Fun in York

Students enjoyed a fantastic Christmas trip to York! The day began with an immersive visit to the York Dungeons, uncovering the city's dark and thrilling history. Afterwards, they explored the famous Christmas Markets, sampling festive treats and browsing unique stalls—a perfect way to celebrate the season together.



Physics Lecture at Durham University

Year 12 and 13 physics students attended Durham University's annual Christmas lecture, which focused on the Radio Universe. Using an array of telescopes, they investigated how supermassive black holes impact the universe. The students represented Hermitage Academy brilliantly!



Cambridge Access Session

We were delighted to welcome Richard Petty from Trinity College, Cambridge. Richard delivered an insightful session to Year 12 students, offering valuable advice on applying to competitive universities like Oxford and Cambridge. This was a fantastic opportunity to learn about the support and pathways available for ambitious students.



There's still time to apply to our amazing Sixth Form!

Calling all Year 11 students! There's still time to apply to our fantastic Sixth Form, for a September 2026 start...just use the QR code here and apply today, to be part of this vibrant and close-knit community!

Hermitage Academy Sixth Form Application Form September 2026



Hermitage Sports Round-up - December

- Year 7 and 8 rugby players enjoyed a day out at Kingston Park this month to partake in the Rugby festival. Well done to the Year 8 team, who went unbeaten throughout the festival – what an incredible achievement! Well done also to Year 7, who showed fantastic effort and determination, with the vast majority experiencing competitive rugby for the very first time. You were brilliant and represented Hermitage Academy with pride!
- Our U16 footballers faced EMS tonight in the English Schools Competition. The result didn't fall our way, but that doesn't take anything away from how proud we are of this group. For some of the boys, this will be their final game representing Hermitage, and they showed exactly what our school is about- resilience, character and togetherness from the first whistle to the last.
- Congratulations to our year 9 Futsal team, who played two games, winning one and drawing the other. They have progressed to the next round of the competition. During their matches they showed great togetherness, grit, and determination in a very competitive evening of Futsal.
- Huge well done to our year 8 girls futsal team who have progressed through to the next round of the tournament. Shout out to Lexi W who made some excellent saves. However, they recently competed in a very competitive semi-final , they didn't qualify for the next stage, but they showed great determination , resilience, and teamwork.
- Congratulations to our Year 7 and Year 8 sports-hall athletics teams; the Year 8 boys came in first place and the Year 7 girls came out in 3rd place overall! Every student who took part represented Hermitage Academy with pride, determination and brilliant team spirit!

Here are December's successes from the PE Department, both on and off the field!



Eve's Incredible Achievement!

We are thrilled to share that Eve has officially signed for the U14 Women's Sunderland Academy! This outstanding accomplishment reflects her hard work, dedication, and remarkable talent. Everyone at Hermitage Academy is immensely proud and excited to follow her journey. This is just the beginning of something amazing.

Introducing our new Football kit – thanks to Thrive2Drive!

We're excited to unveil our brand-new football kit, proudly sponsored by Thrive2Drive. Their generous support allows our students to step onto the pitch with confidence and pride, representing Hermitage Academy in style.

This partnership is a fantastic example of how local businesses can make a real difference in education and sport.



By investing in our team, Thrive2Drive is helping us create unforgettable moments both on and off the field. Thank you, Thrive2Drive, for your commitment to our students and community!

Learn more about Thrive2Drive here: <https://www.facebook.com/thrive2drivenortheast/>

NEW! Online Safety Hub

The North East Learning Trust has launched a dedicated Online Safety Hub – a one-stop place for advice and guidance to help keep children safe online. It's designed to make it easier for parents and carers to find useful tips and information all in one convenient location. Each month, the Herald will highlight different sections of the hub, giving you practical support to help you and your child stay informed and safe online. Keep an eye out for our updates!

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Online Safety Hub. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'Staff', 'Parent', and 'English'. Below that is a search bar. The main content area has a heading 'Gaming' and a sub-section 'Gaming FAQs' with a list of bullet points. To the left, there's a sidebar with links to 'Reviews', 'Parental controls', 'Help', 'Social media', 'Screen time', 'Gaming', 'Bullying', and 'More'. At the bottom of the page, there's a note about average reading time (7 min) and last modified date (February 10, 2025), along with a 'Share' button.

<https://nelt.onlinesafetyhub.uk/>

Positive Points

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



We LOVE celebrating students and their points – ask your child about our weekly celebrations in assembly!

Year	Top Points
7	Tilly S
8	Pearl PH
9	Jack K
10	Alyssa H
11	Noah B
12	Lauren M
13	Owen K



House news

We really do encourage healthy competition here at Hermitage Academy; collecting positive house points across the school day contributes towards the house points totals.

December's winning house was Integrity, with a 923 point lead over Synergy in second place. As we move into a new calendar year there is everything to play for...

House Points		
	Half-Term	Term
1. INTEGRITY	13,242	28,722
2. SYNERGY	12,655	27,799
3. AMBITION	12,199	26,629
4. INNOVATION	12,194	26,350

Assemblies – January 2026

The theme this term is 'My Life Online'. Please do ask your child about their assemblies – there is always a wealth of information that children take away and supportive discussion at home will further their understanding and awareness of these important topics.

Week:	Topic
5 th January	Resolutions
12 th January	AI and Deepfakes
19 th January	Scamming
26 th January	Fake News and Misinformation

December's Good News



Welcome to our regular spot where we round-up the good news happening in and out of school. This feature relies on our parents and students getting in touch with all the wonderful things going on. Please use the 'Good News' button on your child's EASI account to share with us.

Here's the lowdown on who's been in touch this month:

- Year 7 Nancy got in touch to say she is playing the part of Skipper (Doc) in Snow White at the Roxy Theatre in Leadgate. "I have been at rehearsals every night after school and I am in shows nearly every day in the lead up to Christmas!"
- Alexis in Year 8 wanted to share that she took part in a talent competition where she played the hit 'All of Me' by John Legend.
- Year 9 students Mason, Harry and Joseph took on some volunteering as part of their DoE award.



Student Spotlight - Willow

We want to give a special mention to Year 8 student Willow, who has had an incredible term at Hermitage Academy.

On INSET Day, Willow volunteered at the Re-f-use Café in Chester-le-Street, spending the morning learning about the fantastic work they do and working alongside staff and volunteers. She shared her experience through our Culture Vultures project (see page 4), but that's just one of the many things she's accomplished this year!

Willow has embraced new challenges by starting Cross Country running and Sports Hall athletics, taking part in sprints and throws—pushing herself out of her comfort zone. She continues to be an active Scout and was recently made Pack Leader, recognised for being organised, helpful, and supportive of others.

She also played an important role in our Remembrance service and community events, where she drummed throughout the march. On top of all this, Willow consistently keeps up with her schoolwork and homework, regularly earning the title of Homework Hero for going above and beyond with extra challenges.

Well done, Willow—you are a fantastic role model for your peers!



Dates for the Diary - January 2026

January	What's on?
7 th	Newcastle University talk
14 th	Year 11 Parents' Evening
15th	Year 8 Business Magnate Challenge
21 st	Year 12 and 13 Parents' Evening
27th	Holocaust Memorial Day

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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