



The Hermitage Herald

February 2026

Hello!

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

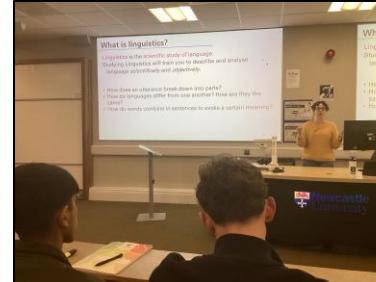
English Experience Day

On Monday 19th January, a group of Year 11 students took part in Newcastle University's English Experience Day. They learned about what it looks like to study English Language and English Literature at degree level and all the exciting opportunities Newcastle University has to offer.

Spending a morning focusing on Literature, they discovered 'How to Read a Poem' and the importance of personal response in poetry. They then had an opportunity to speak to current English students and ask them questions about life at university. The afternoon was spent focusing on Language and Linguistics, learning all about how the language we use can be investigated and all the different ways language can impact our day-to-day lives. They had a fantastic time and were an absolute credit to the school!

Watch out, Lord Sugar!

Our Year 8 students attended the 'Future Business Magnates' workshop recently and explored how a business operates. The students took part in challenging group activities, displaying excellent teamwork and creative thinking to solve problems. Well done to everyone who took part and thank you to the Future Business Leaders team for hosting such a brilliant event!



Farewell to Mrs McMullen

In January, we said a warm and heartfelt farewell to Mrs McMullen as she begins her well-earned retirement. Mrs McMullen has been a valued member of Hermitage Academy since 2001 and has served within the Local Authority since 1990, supporting a number of schools while continuing her teaching here.

Throughout her time with us, she has been at the heart of our Music and Performing Arts provision. Thousands of students have passed through her much-loved Voices group—an extra-curricular club she led every single year of her service, with the only exception being during the pandemic. To celebrate her incredible contribution, our students surprised her with a final performance, a touching tribute that reflected just how much she has meant to our school community.



Cestria visits Hermitage

We were thrilled to be joined by the Year 5 pupils from Cestria Primary School last month! The class joined us for a science lesson and were excited to take part in our crime scene investigation workshop. Mr Lloyd, who organised the visit, said that the pupils were a credit to their school and we were so impressed by their knowledge and enthusiasm.



Celebrating Student Success!

A huge well done to our first 'Cause for Applause' winners of 2026! It was fantastic to see so many students recognised for their achievements so early in the new term. Keep up the brilliant work, everyone!

It has also been another great week at our Celebration Station, where students have earned bronze badges and golden tickets in recognition of their outstanding revision efforts. We are incredibly proud of their enthusiasm and commitment.

You can share your good news every Friday lunchtime in the main foyer!



Extra curricular activities

Our extra curricular timetable has had a little shake up. There are a range of activities available from futsal, handball and indoor cricket, to jigsaw club, Star Wars club and our very popular crochet club!

We have clubs to suit all interests - come and try something new!

You can check out our updated timetable here:

<https://loom.ly/4vnzd9k>

If there is something you'd like to do that isn't featured, please speak to Miss Wright and put an idea forward!



Year 11 at the Life Centre

At the end of last term, a group of our Year 11 students enjoyed an exciting trip to the Centre for Life where they took part in a practical gel electrophoresis experiment.



This is a practical activity that helps them understand how scientists separate different molecules—such as pieces of DNA or proteins.

In simple terms, the gel acts a bit like a sieve. When an electric current is passed through it, the molecules move and separate according to their size. This is a technique widely used in real laboratories to analyse genetic material.

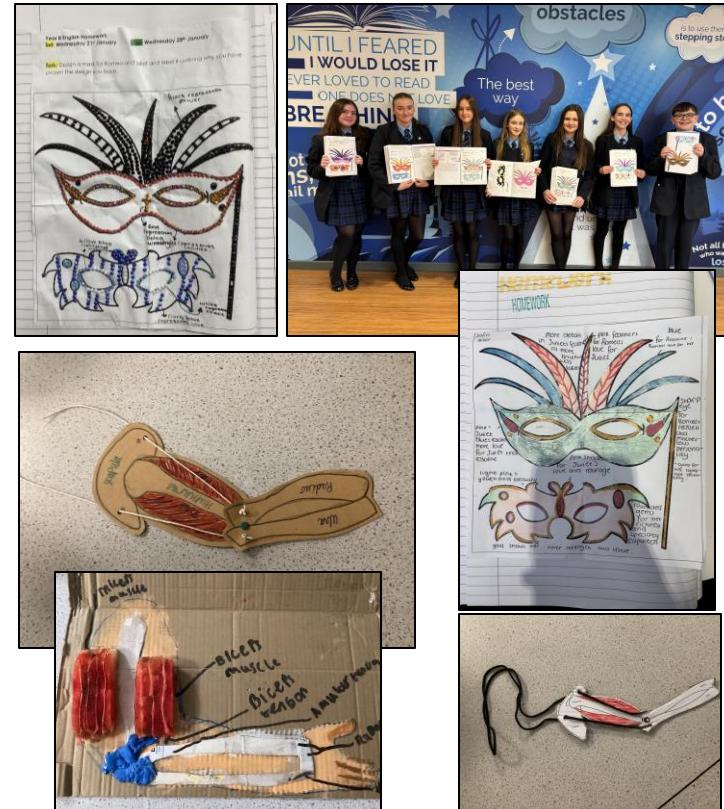
After their session in the lab, they topped off the day with some fun on the ice-skating rink.



Homework Round-up

Students have been busy this month learning through creativity for some of their homework tasks:

- Students in Year 8 have been exploring key themes in their unit of work on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Their homework task was to design a mask for the ball – a key scene in the play, where Romeo sees Juliet and falls in love at first sight! Students really stepped up to this task, and special mention goes to Ruby R who went above and beyond to include gemstones! Mrs. Davidson sent postcards to those designs that were particularly impressive!
- Also in Year 8, Scientists Sam M, Izzy H and Willow S produced fantastic models of the arm...a real hands-on way to learn about the human body!

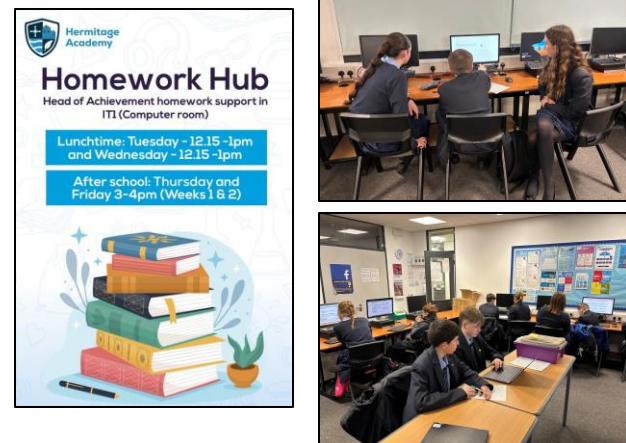


Homework Hub

Need help with your homework? Our Homework Hub is here for you!

Led by our Heads of Achievement and supported by our amazing Duke of Edinburgh students, the Hub offers a great mix of independent learning facilities as well as friendly, encouraging guidance from older students, to help you to learn and achieve.

Remember, for each visit you receive a House Point and a stamp on your Loyalty Card. In exchange for a completed card, you will receive 10 house points and a Queue Jump pass for the week!



Reading and Maths Intervention

For students who benefit from a little extra support in Literacy and Numeracy, we run dedicated sessions designed to help them make progress. During form time, our reading sessions pair students with 'buddies' from the upper school. These older students read with them, talk with them, and encourage them—helping to strengthen literacy skills through conversation, guidance, and positive role-modelling. This programme not only boosts confidence and attainment but also builds meaningful connections between year groups.



Unifrog

Students in Years 7-10 have been busy researching their future careers using Unifrog. This platform helps students with the whole progression process – from exploring their interests, to recording the great things they have done, to finding education and training opportunities, to drafting their applications. Parents can also get involved – it's a great opportunity to talk to your child about their hopes and dreams for the future.

For more information, please click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7S3wWFKm-o>

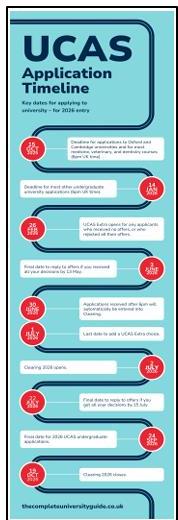
unifrog

Hermitage Sixth Form Round-up

As always, January was a busy month for our Sixth Form students. Here's a look at what they've been up to:

UCAS Applications

All students who want to attend university next year have completed their application on UCAS. Many students have received multiple offers and have been invited to interviews. Each student will have a meeting with Mrs Marshall to support them with their firm and insurance option choices.



Remember – information on university courses, apprenticeship programmes and job vacancies can be found in the Sixth Form newsletter.

Storytime Memories for our English Language Students

Students in English Language revisited their childhood by exploring some early fiction. As part of the course, students learned how children acquire language and a crucial component to the process is reading! Everyone enjoyed being transported back to their favourite bedtime stories and we learned a lot about the development of language too!



First Aid Training in Enrichment

Our students took part in a hands-on first aid session delivered by St John Ambulance. During the workshop, they learned a range of essential life-saving skills, including how to respond safely and effectively in emergency situations. The session was highly engaging and helped students build confidence in key areas such as assessing risks, performing CPR, and providing basic treatment until professional help arrives. We are incredibly proud of how enthusiastically our students took part, and we are grateful to St John Ambulance for providing such valuable training.



Revision sessions for Year 13 Students

As the exam season approaches, there will be dedicated revision sessions for Year 13 students. The timetable will be updated as the term goes on. Students are encouraged to attend these revision sessions when they have independent study sessions. This is a valuable opportunity for students to help support their revision.

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!



Enrichment - February

This half term in enrichment Year 12

- Cooking on a budget
- Debating
- Enrichment project
- Virtual work experience

Hermitage Sports Round-up - January

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

- Year 7 students Charlotte and Ellie have recently been selected to compete in the Durham County Cricket Super 4's competition. It is a County development competition in which they will compete against the best U13 cricketers across the county. They have done very well to achieve this!
- Our Year 7 & 8 netball teams have played their first game of 2026! They showed fantastic teamwork and resilience throughout. Congratulations to our players of the match: Lily H and Sus-Ann B!



- Congratulations to our Y8 basketball team who were crowned area champions. Fantastic effort and team work throughout. Special mention to our captain Jamie N who led brilliantly and sank some outstanding 3 pointers!
- Well done to our Year 9 and 10 netball teams! A brilliant, hard-fought game against DCSF, with our team taking the win! Player of the match shout out to Isla FH and Ellie R for their outstanding performances.
- Year 11 Sports Studies students have been out and about this month supplementing their practical portfolio, with a visit to the climbing wall.
- Shout out to Year 9 students Keegan G and Matthew GB who have helped the PE staff with setting up equipment before the school day. A huge thank you and well done!



Ellie Runs in the Wins!

Year 9 athlete, Ellie H has recently taken part in the Northern Athletics Championships, held at the end of January, where she competed with athletes from across the whole of Northern England. It is a prestigious event, and Ellie won the under 15 girls' hurdles with a new PB of 9.12 seconds. That is an amazing achievement! Well done!

Information from our Attendance Team

Did you know that if you can pick your son or daughter up after 1pm, this reduces the impact on their attendance? We understand that sometimes medical appointments are difficult to change, however, making these even 30 minutes later ensures that your child stays in school during the afternoon register and will therefore have less impact on their overall attendance. Where possible, we would always encourage you to bring your child back into school after their appointment.



With regards to students presenting as unwell during the school day. If your child is ill, their Year Manager will ring and let you know how they are feeling and also give you some background information. It is your decision as a parent whether they continue to stay in school with support or whether they should be collected. We monitor students closely when they are unwell and will keep you updated should their symptoms become worse. We would ask that you discourage your child from contacting you directly, as this contravenes our mobile phone policy and will slow down the normal school systems for parental contact.

We thank you in advance for keeping us informed about your child's attendance

NELT Online Safety Hub

In last month's edition we wrote to tell you about the launch of our 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.

As a NELT parent, you have free access to our hub, as well as Qustodio, an app that allows you to supervise your child's engagement online.

To access our online safety hub, click here:

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

To heads straight to the Qustodio section of the hub, click here:

<https://nelt.onlinesafetyhub.uk/parent/articles/getting-started-with-qustodio>



Year 9 Parents' Evening – Wednesday 4th February

Year 9 Parents' Evening will be on Wednesday 5th February. Virtual appointments run from 15:30 to 16:50 and face-to-face appointments run from 17:00 to 18:00. All appointments can be booked via the School Cloud link which has been sent out to parents/carers.

Watch this space for further information on the Year 9 Options evening, helping your child to navigate their way through the choices on offer for GCSE study. Further details will be in the March edition of the Hermitage Herald.





January'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:

- Tyler C in Year 9 got in touch to show us a picture he'd drawn. We think it's brilliant!
- Skyla K in Year 8 sent us some fabulous pictures of her in panto season, performing in Snow White at the Roxy Theatre in Leadgate. Skyla was one of the seven 'Mini Miners' and she performed over 11 shows, including Christmas Eve! That's amazing Skyla – we are so proud of you!
- Adam F in Year 9, one of our uniformed services students, has progressed to the hospital Sea Cadets Drill Team, and they have a district competition in mid-February. Good luck Adam!
- Emma A in Year 7 has been busy rallying interest and has managed to create a girls' rugby team, who will compete in a tournament at Kingston Park later this term. She created a poster to promote the sport to her peers. We are so proud of your efforts!

Positive Points

These students have collected the most positive points in January – Well done all!



Year	Top Points
7	Darcy A
8	Sam M
9	Kate W
10	Alyssa H
11	Macey M
12	Savannah G
13	Owen K

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



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
2 nd February	Internet Safety Week
9 th February	Mental Health Week
16 th February	Careers Week

Dates for the Diary - January 2026

February	What's on?
4 th	Year 9 Parents' Evening
9 th	National Apprenticeship week
12 th	Parent Support Session – TBC
13 th	Book Swap – English Department

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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