



The Hermitage Herald

July 2026



Hello!

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 2026

June saw us say goodbye to our fantastic Year 11 students as they completed their five-year journey with us. It has been a remarkable year for the cohort, marked by outstanding progress and significant growth in attitude, determination and commitment to their studies.

Since the start of the GCSE examination period at the end of May, students have impressed staff with their maturity, resilience and unwavering focus. Their positive approach and hard work throughout this challenging time have been a real credit to themselves and their families.

Celebrations began with the presentation of their Year 11 hoodies, followed by a heartfelt Leavers' Assembly led by Head of Achievement, Mr. Widdowson, and Year Manager, Mrs. Mason. Looking back on five years of memories, achievements and friendships, the occasion was filled with both laughter and emotion.

To mark the end of their time with us, Year 7 and 8 students lined the school drive to create a guard of honour, applauding our Year 11 students as they left for the final time. It was a fitting tribute to a year group that has made a lasting contribution to our school community.

We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved and the resilient, confident young people they have become. We wish every member of the Class of 2026 the very best for the future and look forward to celebrating their GCSE results later this summer.



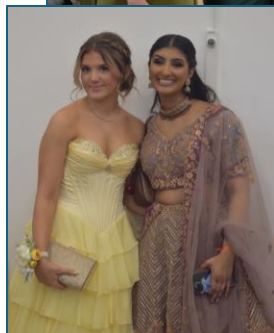
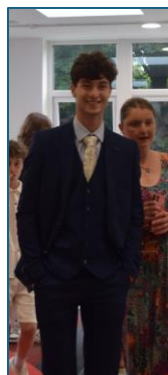
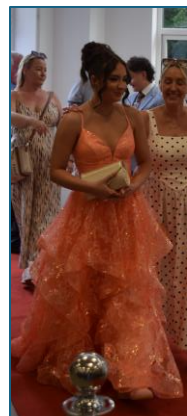
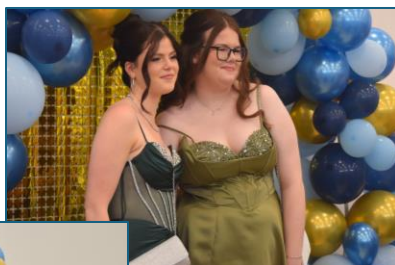
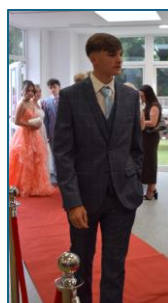
Sharp suits and beautiful ballgowns – Hermitage Prom 2026

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

We invited parents and students to a pre-prom reception in school, and from there coaches whisked our students off to a secret location, only revealed as they were on their way.

Once at the location, the beautiful Derwent Manor hotel, the fun and laughter continued as we awarded prom king and queen, prom prince and princess, 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 20th August, and hopefully as Sixth Form students in the coming academic year.



We're all with you, Theo...

Prom King and Queen this year was awarded to Theo R and Colby H. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Theo was unable to attend prom, Queen Colby left the prom early before the 'Royal court'. Both king and queen were crowned the following day.

Theo's friends have also completed a 5k muddy run, raising money to support life-saving cancer research. So far, the boys have raised over £10,000, which is an incredible achievement.

The link below takes you to the Race for Life donation page:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/bhfc-829c3>

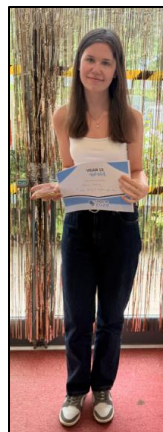


What's been happening in School?

This month we also said 'See you soon' to our wonderful Year 13 students.

Many tears were shed by staff and students! Thank you to staff and parents for being part of their seven-year journey at Hermitage. Watch this space for their destinations following Results day on Thursday 13th August.

For Year 11 students, there is still time to apply to our lovely Sixth Form. Staff will be available on Thursday 20th August (Year 11 Results day) to support.



Year 10 and 12 Work Experience

Our Year 10 and Year 12 students recently completed a highly successful work experience programme, gaining valuable insight into the world of work and representing the school with maturity, professionalism and enthusiasm. Students secured placements across a wide range of industries, including construction, engineering, healthcare, education, business, retail, hospitality and the creative sector. These experiences helped them develop key workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving and time management, while also exploring potential future career pathways.

We received excellent feedback from employers, who praised our students for their reliability, positive attitudes and willingness to learn. Many commented on how quickly students adapted to workplace environments and contributed to their teams.

We are incredibly proud of the way our students conducted themselves throughout their placements and thank the many employers who generously supported the programme. Their partnership helps inspire and prepare our young people for successful futures.

Well done to all of our Year 10 and Year 12 students on this fantastic achievement.

Sixth Form Taster day

Year 10 students recently had the exciting opportunity to experience life in the Sixth Form during a special taster day designed to give them a glimpse into the next stage of their educational journey.

Throughout the day, students attended a range of Sixth Form lessons, explored new subjects and experienced the increased independence and academic challenge that comes with post-16 study. They engaged enthusiastically in activities across a variety of disciplines and demonstrated excellent maturity, curiosity and commitment to learning.

Staff were highly impressed by the attitude and engagement shown by the students, who embraced every opportunity to ask questions, contribute to discussions and challenge themselves in unfamiliar subjects.

The taster day provided a valuable insight into Sixth Form life, helping students to make informed decisions about their future studies. Many students commented on how much they had learned during the experience and left feeling inspired about the opportunities available to them in the years ahead.

The event was a great success and highlighted the ambition, potential and positive attitude of the current Year 10 cohort as they begin to consider their next steps.

What's been happening in School?

Watch out, Sir Alan Sugar!

Last month, we told you about a group of Year 8 students who had taken part in the 'Future Business Magnates' programme. Students had to create a product or service to promote 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 within 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 have to offer.

This month, the students attended the Future Business Magnates Award Ceremony, where they competed against 13 schools from across the Durham area.

Not only did they win the award for Best Pitch, recognising both their impressive stall at Beamish and their professional business presentation to investors, but they were also crowned the overall WINNERS for 2026. The judges were truly blown away by their creativity, teamwork, and professionalism.

As a result of their success, each student received:

- £50 worth of shopping vouchers
- A limited-edition pin badge
- A business entrepreneur book

A fantastic achievement — we are extremely proud of them all!

Debate Team Win in Inter-Trust Competition

Further success to continue our winning streak...

Last week, five Year 9 students travelled to Bedlington Academy to compete in the annual NELT debate competition. The students had a range of hot topics to debate and their combination of maturity, diligence and great organization from the outset, resulted in the award for best overall team of the competition! A thoroughly well-deserved win and even more impressive considering they were up against lots of older students from other

schools. Miss Simblet and Mrs. Hodgson-Whittle are both so proud of these amazing students, who are an absolute credit to Year 9 and the school.

Well done to:

Thomas D, Isla FH, Ellie H, Harriet M and Kate W!



What's been happening in School?

Transition and Friendship Days and Information Evening



As part of our transition programme, we were delighted to welcome our new Year 6 students for some time with us this month.

Over two exciting days, they experienced a variety of subjects, met their form tutors, and began building new friendships ahead of September.



The second day featured an Art and PE carousel which, despite the soaring temperatures, was enjoyed enthusiastically by all. Students also had the opportunity to sample our fantastic school meals, and judging by the overwhelmingly positive feedback, they were a huge success!



We have some students who are coming from primary schools by themselves, and we know how hard it can be arriving to a new school without knowing anyone. We had a series of 'Friendship days' planned for these students, where a range of activities were on offer to allow these students to make friends in advance of the transition days.



We also welcomed parents into school, for an informative evening based around what to expect next year in Secondary school. Parents were given all the important information, along with a sneak-peek at tutors and also an opportunity to try on and order uniform.

The transition programme continues over the rest of the term, with Forest School visits, a range of engaging Year 5 workshops, and the exciting opportunity for Year 5 pupils to attend a matinee performance of our eagerly anticipated production of *Mary Poppins*.

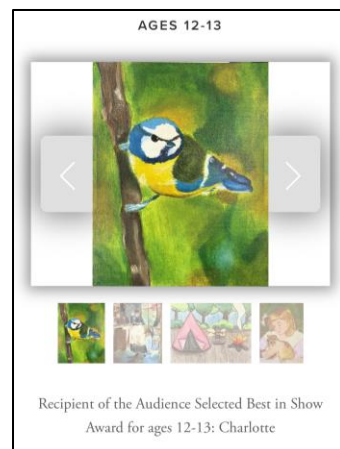
It promises to be a wonderful and memorable end to the term for our primary school students, and we look forward to welcoming all new students in September!

What's been happening in School?

A Work of Art

Here is a lovely piece of artwork, created by Year 7 student Charlotte. This month saw Charlotte submit a painting for the end of year exhibition at her art class. This beautiful piece won in her age group!

The Art Department wanted to share this as an exceptional painting – well done Charlotte!



The Beamish Elves

Technology students from Year 7, 8 and 9 have been working on a project to design and make an elf house for Beamish Museum as part of their Christmas festivities. Students used CAD/CAM and a range of workshop tools and finishing techniques to create a miniature Co-Op fit for even the most discerning of elves! Well done to those involved!



A representative from Beamish Museum, on behalf of the elves, is coming into school for the Elf House handover and is bringing a goodie bag for the students.

Well done to Mosi M, Lara R, Logan H, Jacob B, Alexander C, Penny B, Bethany C, Alexis N and Lillie W!

Thank a Teacher Day – June 17th 2026

On June 17th we celebrated National 'Thank a Teacher' day, where students past and present around the country took time to send messages to those teachers who have inspired them. At Hermitage, we encouraged our students to do the same, and teachers also sent messages to colleagues - there was a lot of love, appreciation and positivity floating around our school! We don't have to wait for a national day though - our thank you cards are available all year round.



Mary Poppins – July 8th and 9th 2026

The final few remaining tickets for our fabulous production Mary Poppins Jr are selling fast! Be sure to secure your seats for a 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' performance! Tickets available through ParentPay or by contacting our school office.

It really is one not to miss!



Duke of Edinburgh Award update –

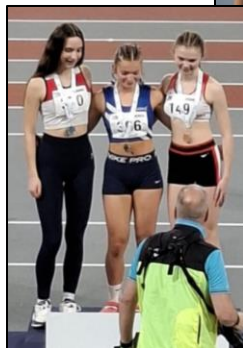
Ellie H

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is all about commitment, resilience and personal growth and this term, Ellie has demonstrated all three in exceptional fashion through her volunteering, physical and skills sections, showing dedication and maturity as she balances them alongside her studies.

For her volunteering section, Ellie has made an outstanding contribution to the school community through her work at Homework Hub. Not only has she supported younger students with their homework, offering guidance and encouragement, but she has also gone above and beyond by taking on additional responsibilities. Ellie has supported with administrative tasks, including completing registers and organising missed lesson work across all year groups, providing invaluable assistance to her Head of Achievement. Her initiative and willingness to help wherever needed have made a real difference.

Ellie's skills section focused on her musical development, where she has shown exceptional dedication to her craft. She has continued to perform with Durham County Strings, while also preparing for her Grade 6 examination, mastering six challenging pieces. Achieving this standard at such a young age is a remarkable accomplishment and sets an outstanding example to other students.

For her physical section, Ellie set herself the ambitious goal of improving her 80m hurdles time and qualifying for two national competitions. Through unwavering determination and relentless hard work, she has achieved this in spectacular fashion. During indoor season, she competed at English Nationals and came away with a silver! More recently Ellie secured a 1st place finish at the Northern Intercounties, where she proudly represented Durham. This success has earned her a well-deserved place in the English Schools' National Finals in July – an incredible achievement that reflects her perseverance and competitive spirit.



Izzy H

Izzy has successfully completed the Physical, Skills and Volunteering sections of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, demonstrating dedication, leadership and a commitment to personal development.

For the Physical section, Izzy completed six months of athletics training and achieved significant success, earning selection for the Durham ESAA Cross Country Team, the North East Inter-Counties Team and the Durham ESAA Athletics Team.

As part of the Skills section, Izzy spent three months supporting the U13 County Netball Team by umpiring training sessions, developing confidence, leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the game.

For the Volunteering section, Izzy dedicated three months to coaching younger athletes, helping them build confidence ahead of the track season. This involved assisting with the planning and delivery of training sessions, as well as providing encouragement and support at competitions.

Izzy's achievements reflect the values at the heart of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme, and the school is incredibly proud of the commitment, resilience and leadership shown throughout this journey. Congratulations to Izzy on this outstanding accomplishment.

Sporting Round-up

Gold Award for Hermitage!

You may remember, last year we were pleased to announce that we achieved the Bronze School Games mark for our commitment and services in PE to our school and community. Well this year, we are incredibly proud to announce that Hermitage Academy has been awarded the Gold School Games Mark for the 2025/26 academic year!

This prestigious award recognises our commitment to providing high-quality PE, school sport and competitive opportunities for all students, and what a year it has been!



A year of outstanding sporting achievement:

- Area, County, English Schools football & futsal
- Newcastle Vikings flag football
- Rugby Union & Rugby League / Newcastle Red Bulls Foundation
- Area netball
- Area basketball champions
- Handball national finalists
- Cricket (including Primary Leadership, indoor & County Cricket)
- Cross Country, Sports Hall Athletics & Area Athletics
- Rounders
- Rock Climbing
- Skiing
- Army Skills & Opportunities for All

...and participation in over 150 fixtures this year alone!

This success is a testament to the dedication, teamwork and resilience of our students,

alongside the commitment of staff, volunteers and wider community who make these opportunities possible. We are extremely proud of every student who has represented the school, taken part, led activities or supported others in sport this year!

Cricket

We had 16 of our fine Year 9 students helping at out at a Primary Cricket Festival, for Years 3 and 4 at Chester-le-Street Cricket Club this month. Over the course of the day our students had delivered coaching sessions to 225 pupils from seven

different primary schools. Our Primary colleagues were extremely positive about the attitude, confidence and leadership skills of the students. Well done to all involved!



Handball

Not every day you make it to a National School Final! We are incredibly proud of our U13 Handball team, who represented Hermitage at the England Schools Handball National Finals hosted at Nottingham University. Across four highly competitive fixtures, the team won two matches, drawing one and losing one against some of the strongest schools in the country. Well done to Oliver C, Finn L, Alex P, Jamie N, Harry D, Dan M and Seb F!



Sporting Round-up

Rounders

Congratulations to our Year 7 rounders team who recently won the Durham schools tournament! The girls won all 6 of their matches, scoring an impressive 158 points!

Congratulations also to our Year 8 team who finished third place in a recent tournament.

Athletics

Huge well done to our Year 7 and 8 students who participated at our Area Athletics Competition . They showed superb resilience in very hot conditions - they represented school wonderfully!

Shout out to our Year 7 boys who finished 3rd overall and special mention to the following students who are area champions:

Year 7	Year 8
James H – 200m & Discus	• Phoebe A - 1500m • George S - 100m • Alexander U - 300m

Ice Hockey

Year 7 student Lilia B and her ice hockey team won the under 16 girls national championships playoffs and are now national Champions! They are the Whitley Bay Junior Beacons and they won the u16 north league unbeaten for the 2nd season in a row, marking the 3rd year in a row they have won the league (the first time they won it they weren't unbeaten). They played a semi-final against Chelmsford who beat them in last year's final game, winning 4-2. Then they played in the final against Guilford, winning 3-0.



Dance and Musical Theatre

Year 7 student Katie M competed in the IDTA Spring Dance Festival in May and placed first with her ballet, tap, modern and song solo sections and with her song and dance duet. She placed second with her lyrical solo and third with her modern duet. Katie was really pleased to receive six trophies in the presentation for highest marked intermediate modern, tap, song and ballet solos of the festival, highest aggregate intermediate mark of the festival and ballet solo with the most musicality of the entire festival.

This weekend Katie has been to Blackpool for the IDTA Musical Theatre Award finals. She was nominated by an examiner after her silver solo MT singing exam and, after a successful semi final video audition, she was invited to perform in the finals as one of eight candidates from all exams taken around the world. It was such a wonderful experience for Katie. She was the youngest one in her section and received some really positive feedback.



Sporting Round-up

Athletics

Congratulations to Year 9 student Ellie H, who won the 80m hurdles at the Durham County Championships and achieved the qualifying standard for the English Schools Championships. Ellie also went on to win the event at the Northern Schools Inter Counties Championships in Hexham, competing against older athletes.

Other notable performances from Hermitage students included Isla (2nd, 1500m), Izzy (2nd, 800m), Jack (2nd, 300m) and Olivia (3rd, long jump).

A fantastic achievement for all involved, and we wish Ellie and also Izzy H (both Year 9) the very best as they compete at the English Schools Championships.



Football

- Congratulations to Freya R in Year 7, playing for the Year 8 district football team. She did really well in the trials to secure her place and was chosen initially as vice-captain, but ended up being named captain of the team for the last few games, which is a great achievement for a Year 7 girl playing at year 8 level. Absolutely outstanding Freya – well done!
- Year 8 students Oliver C and Finley L attended the national ACES competition in Nottingham on Saturday 30th of May, where they faced the best of the best in the country at grassroots football and they managed to make it all the way to the final before being beat by a very good Essex team. Both played an unbelievable game; Oliver in goal saved a penalty in the quarter and semi-final shoot out and Finn scored some crucial goals. They represented themselves and their club, Newcastle City Juniors with pride. It's a huge achievement for them to say they are national finalists! A phenomenal achievement boys – well done!



- Year 10 Lily P flew to Barcelona with her Wallsend team for the weekend and they won the Group B Final. She sprained her ankle in the first game but rested and then managed to play the last 3 games, scoring two in the Final. Well done Lily!

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:

Recent regattas included the prestigious Scottish championships, held at Strathclyde Country park in Scotland. Rowers Elliot F (Year 10) and Harry D (Year 8) competed, with Elliot picking up a bronze medal in the J15 1x, and a gold medal in the J15 2x races. Harry placed 6th out of 27 competitors, after racing a year up in the J14 x1 category.

We also saw our rowers take part in the Durham regatta, named the 'Henley of the North' – a huge event in the rowing calendar. Year 8 students Mila S, Mia H, Emily M, Alice M and Erin M raced in a quad and Year 10 student Sam H picked up medals (in the form of silver tankards) racing in a quad over the two-day event. Year 8 Harry raced up a year and picked up 4 tankards!

Next stop: The British Championships in Nottingham, in July, where Elliot, Sam, Harry and our Year 8 girls are all travelling down to compete. Best of luck to all!



The Hermitage House Cup has Arrived!

If you thought this year's World Cup would be the most exciting football competition of the summer, think again!

The Hermitage House Cup is underway and has already become one of the most talked-about events in school.

Each House is represented by two teams:

- A Year 7 and 8 team made up of 8 players
- A Year 9 and 10 team made up of 8 players; 4 players from each year group

Every team is supported by a Year 10 coach and a teacher manager, all determined to lead their House to victory. Keeping everything fair and competitive are our referees, Mr Johnson and Mr Lister—whose decisions are final!

For students not taking part on the pitch, there is still an important role to play. We encourage everyone to get behind their House, support their teams, and help create a fantastic atmosphere.

Who will lift the Hermitage House Cup and earn House glory? Watch this space!





Hermitage Good News!



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!

Year 7

- Jack B wanted to show us his drawing of Michael Jackson – we think it's brilliant!
- Max P recently competed in a swimming gala and came away with quite a lot of medals! That is amazing! Well done!
- Aubrey P and Sophie I got in touch to say their girls' football team, Wrekenton YFC won the cup at a recent tournament – well done girls and the rest of the team!
- Ellis P also got in touch to say that he bagged Parents' Player and Managers' Player of the season at his football presentation! Outstanding!
- Max G just wanted to let us know he shot a 99 in golf recently at Chester-le-Street golf club! Super impressive!
- Kasey-Brooke H wrote to tell us that she has finished writing a book in her own time, called 'Darling, will you make me a Cupcake?' and she has sent it off for approval to be published as an official book! Good luck and let us know how it goes!
- Courtney R has sent in another of her amazing drawings – you're a regular in our 'Good News' and we look forward to seeing more drawings next academic year!



Year 8

- Hayden K is very proud to announce that he has passed his Grade 5 piano practical exam. Hayden achieved a merit award. That is absolutely amazing! Congratulations!
- Ruby H got in touch to say, "Over half term, me and my Mam looked after some caterpillars and watched them turn into butterflies! We then released them into the wild so they can live happily in nature."

Year 9

- Jack S has recently qualified for the Darts regional finals. Jack also is a six-time winner of 'JDC Vaults' which only the best darts youth players in the region play for. Jack is hoping to develop to the national finals
- Well done to Jasmine R who has been promoted to Lance Corporal in her army cadet corps. You will remember that Jasmine was our flag-bearer at our Remembrance parade back in November, so this is a huge achievement! Well done!



Positive Points and Praise

Totals
21,044
Actions
680
Students

Totals
211,302
Actions
700
Students

In total over the month of June, students in Years 7-13 collected a whopping 21,044 points in total, with the 'Above and Beyond' award being where the most points were awarded.

Across the year, from September to July, an incredible 211,302 points were awarded to 700 students, all well-deserved!

At school we love recognising students' hard work and positive attitudes.

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 June:

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

From all of us here at Hermitage Academy, we wish you a safe and happy summer break. We look forward to seeing you on September 2nd!

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!

Well done to Integrity house, who over the course of the year have collected a whopping 62, 015 points! Quite an achievement!

House Points				
		Half-Term	Term	Year
1.		5,675	13,658	62,015
2.		5,505	13,281	61,031
3.		5,350	12,826	57,686
4.		5,051	13,073	58,133

Dates for your Diary – Summer 2026

	What's on?
July 16 th	Activities Day
July 17 th	Sports Day/Hermitage Festival Last day of term
August 13 th	Year 13 Results Day
August 20 th	Year 11 Results Day
September 1 st	Inset Day – School closed to students
September 2 nd	First day of term for all students
September 9 th	Year 5 and 6 Open Evening
September 15 th	Year 7 Information Evening/Meet the Tutor
September 23 rd	Year 7 and 11 Photographs
September 29 th	Ripon Workhouse trip (Year 8)
September 30 th	Sixth Form Induction Trip



SAVE THE DATE!
Open Evening
Wed 9th Sept

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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