



The Hermitage Herald

March 2026



Hello!

Welcome to March's edition of The Hermitage Herald – where we look back at what's happened over the month. February is the shortest month, but there's always lots going on here in our wonderful school - enjoy!

Extra-curricular Activities at Hermitage Academy

Our extra-curricular timetable is going from strength to strength, with a little something for everyone here at Hermitage Academy!

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 - here are just a few of the excellent clubs on offer during lunchtime and after school:

Skiing

Two groups headed to the Silksworth Sports Complex & Ski Slope for an exciting ski trip. This group runs in preparation for the school ski trip at Easter.



Star Wars Club

At Star Wars club we relax and enjoy the cinematic masterpieces of the greatest Science Fiction saga ever written. We're currently on 'Revenge of the Sith' and the students discuss the film then decide what to watch next. This is a great place for fans to meet and discuss theories and lightsabre duels!

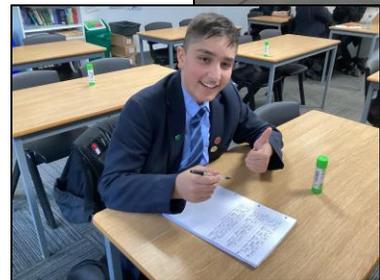


Girls' Indoor Cricket

There has been girls' indoor cricket club this half term where students have had the opportunity to practise their batting, bowling and fielding skills with specific drills and competitive games.

Creative Writing Club:

At creative writing club, the sky is the limit. We look at a range of writing prompts (this term was mythological creatures) and the students always come up with some great ideas. Join to embrace your creativity with chances to be published as a young writer.



Hermitage Quarterly

And brand new this term is the student-led Hermitage Quarterly, where we write reviews of films, books, games and other interesting things. Look out for the first edition coming soon!

WANTED: Storytellers, Reviewers, Photographers & Designers!

Want to make your mark on Hermitage Academy?
Join our NEW school newspaper, 'The Hermitage Quarterly'!

We are looking for writers, reviewers, photographers and designers to create a newspaper, written for students by students!

Why should you join us?

- Build skills and gain experience for college and UCAS applications
- Get published!
- Meet new people
- Share the news and the school culture
- Get people talking!

No experience? No problem! We'll train you!
Whether you want to be a journalist, a writer, or just share your perspective on school life, we need your talent.

Come and see: Mr Oakes-Priestley in En3
First Meeting: Friday 20th February at breaktime, in En3

ReviseWise and Student POD

Years 11 and 13 return after the half term break to their Spring mocks. This is a really important set of exams that will highlight strengths and also areas for development – this is the last opportunity, before the Summer exams, for students to be in the exam environment and experience how official examinations feel. We hope that students have used the break to revise and refresh. A reminder that Student Pod has a wealth of resources and material to support students.

Year group pages have been updated to provide guidance and tips on how to prepare and revise. Visit the website and click on 'POD' in the top right-hand corner of the page.



Sixth Form Round-up

Congratulations to the new lunch time staff. The students in Year 12 will start working in the lunch hall very soon. Well done! You were amazing in your interviews.

Durham Police will be coming into school to deliver a session about driver safety and the importance of staying safe on the road. Many of our students have now passed their driving tests and we think all students would benefit from this.

Revision sessions for Year 13 students are in full swing. The timetable, available on the Sixth form newsletter, will be updated as the term goes on. Students are encouraged to attend these revision sessions when they have independent study sessions.

Congratulations to Edward who recently completed his Silver Duke of Edinburgh award.

Jack and Lauren submitted their entries to the Institute of Economic Affairs over last half term. They had to write a 5000-word essay about the economic climate of the UK and design their own budget. This was completed in their own time outside of their usual business lessons. We hope they win the £1000 prize!

Information about university summer schools, degree apprenticeships and a wealth of careers guidance can be found on the Sixth Form newsletter.



Hermitage Academy Sixth Form
Application Form September 2026



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!

This term in Enrichment:

- Cooking on a budget
- Debating
- Enrichment project
- Virtual work experience
- Driver safety awareness workshop

Sporting Round-up - February

Congratulations to our Year 10 girls' football team who won the Durham Area Tournament!



Congratulations to our Year 8 athletics team who won a silver medal in the School Games Sports Hall Athletics Finals.



Well done to our Under 15 girls' handball team who played incredibly in the inter-schools competition!



Well done to our Under 15 boys' handball team, who represented our school brilliantly at the recent area handball competition.



Well done to our Year 7 futsal team, who represented our school superbly in the district competition.



Well done to our Year 10 futsal team, who competed in a regional tournament.

Well done to our Under 13 handball team, who played their first ever fixture this month!

A group of our students from Years 7-10 were chosen to represent our school in Durham Cricket Foundation's Under 15 indoor cricket competition recently. It was great to see students from different year groups working together and celebrating their successes as a team throughout the day.

Our Year 7 rugby team had a fantastic day at the School Girls' Rugby Festival at Kingston Park last term.

The team were a credit to our school, winning most of their games and showing amazing sportsmanship, determination, and teamwork throughout.



Well done to our Year 7 netball team, who competed in the Durham City and District Schools tournament. The team had a brilliant afternoon, showing great teamwork and determination against strong competition from 10 other teams!

Congratulations to our Under 13 handball team, who have been crowned Area Champions this week! The team showed outstanding determination and teamwork throughout the competition to secure some huge wins and progress to the County Finals. Thank you to the Durham handball team for officiating and supporting the event!



Sporting Round-up - February

Congratulations to Year 8 student Phoebe who performed amazingly at the Northumberland and Durham County Swimming Finals! Phoebe showed determination, competitive spirit and incredible technique resulting in her securing a silver medal in the 200m backstroke and a bronze in the freestyle. What a great achievement!

Well done to Year 9 Izzy, who was part of the North East team at 2026 UK Inter-counties Cross Country Championship in Nottinghamshire. This is the third year Izzy has represented the North East, in the under 13 category twice and now stepping up to the under 15 category. She has done really well to get there, showing some great resilience at Northern Cross Country in Pontefract. She has also secured her place in the English Schools National Championships.

Congratulations also to Year 9 student Isla, who represented Durham in the Inter-Countries Cross Country Championships. Isla delivered an outstanding performance and did herself proud against a very tough course.

Well done to Year 10 student Eliot, who was part of a crew that won the J15 4X+ at Tyne Head. Elliot's boat was 12th fastest from 86 crews of all age groups. What an achievement!



Congratulations to Ellie, who competed in the 60 metre hurdles in the Under 15 category at the National Championships over the weekend. Ellie performed phenomenally at the event, finishing 2nd in England and 3rd in the UK overall! This is an incredible achievement and a true testament to Ellie's dedication, hard work and talent!



Katie in Year 8 recently attended the International Dance Theatre Awards. She was nominated by the examiner for her contemporary modern jazz grade 2 exam for achieving over 92 marks. Katie went to Coventry for a special workshop with 79 other nominees (from over 7000 exams taken worldwide!) and got the second commendation! She was incredible, especially as some of the children were much older. They had to learn quite a quick and difficult routine in a very short space of time and perform for two assessors. Katie made the final 20 and then was presented with the second commendation. Absolutely incredible! She is off to Telford in two weeks to compete in the grade 4 ballet theatre awards (which is massive as that class is up to age 16 so Katie is one of the youngest to be nominated).



Year 9 Options Evening

This is an important time of year for our Year 9 students as they begin the process of choosing their GCSE pathways. To support both students and parents, we have planned a series of events designed to provide all the information needed to make informed decisions.

Options Week will take place from 23rd–27th March. Throughout the week, students will hear from each subject during a special assembly takeover, where teachers will outline what their courses involve and what students can expect at GCSE level.

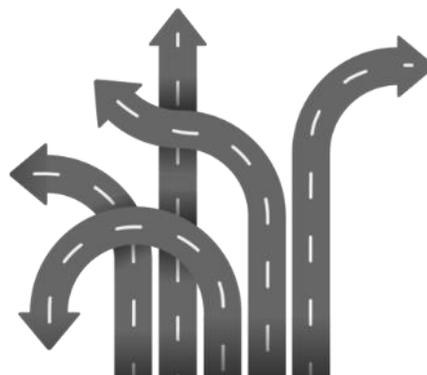
On Wednesday 25th March, we are pleased to invite parents into school for our Options Evening. The event will begin with a short presentation explaining the options process, followed by the opportunity to visit subject areas, ask questions, and gather more detailed information. This will be a valuable chance for parents to support their child in making the choices that best suit their interests and future aspirations.

After the Options Evening, students will complete an online form to submit their preferred subjects. Confirmation of final GCSE choices will be shared with families in the summer term.



HERMITAGE
ACADEMY

THE ROAD AHEAD



Wednesday 25th March
4pm – 6pm

The choices your child makes about their GCSE courses determines what life will be like at school for them over the next two years. In preparation for Options week, please talk to your child about what their interests are, and also if they have any idea about future careers. The table below outlines some things to consider:

Do:	Don't:
Choose subjects you enjoy or find fascinating to stay motivated, and allow you to explore topics you want to know more about	Choose a subject just because your friends have picked it or that you like a teacher – there is no guarantee that these factors will stay the same
Select subjects you are good at to maximize your potential for high marks and great grades.	Choose a subject because you like a current teacher – this may change as you move through the two years of GCSE study
Pick subjects required for specific careers or that provide necessary skills for Sixth Form, college, or university. If you have something in mind for the future, talk to us about it and we can help steer you in the right direction.	Choose a subject because you think it will be easy – all subjects at GCSE have a level of challenge and difficulty to them.
Consider if you prefer coursework-based subjects (e.g., Art, Design Technology) or exam-based subjects.	Ignore a subject because it is new and you haven't studied it before. Talk to the teachers – you never know, it just might become your favourite subject!

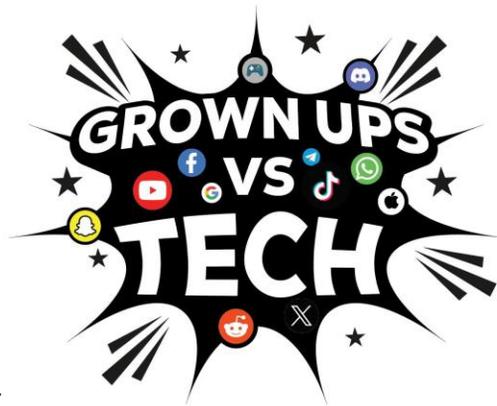
Grown-ups vs Tech

Calling all grown-ups - are you ready to take on tech to keep your children safe?

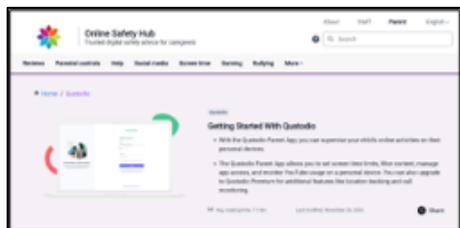
In line with Safer Internet Day, which was on 12th February 2026 the North East Learning Trust launched a challenge to encourage parents and carers to take on tech and keep their children safer online. The challenges are set every Saturday, starting February 14th and running through until March 21st giving grown-ups the opportunity to learn more about their child's online world and take a practical step to keep them out of harm's way.

This will include things like how to set up parental controls, getting privacy settings right, and how to restrict access to harmful apps.

Here is a summary of the challenges already set:



Week	Challenge	Details
1	To create a Family Tech Agreement.	Sitting together as a family allows everyone to talk about how technology is used in your house and agree on what can and can't be accessed and at what times, as well as expectations around behaviour online and what to do when things don't feel quite right.
2	To set up parental settings on your phone.	Having parental settings enabled on your and your child's phone means you can take steps to protect your child from seeing inappropriate and harmful content. You can also manage screen time and approve or block the download of certain apps.
3	To set up parental controls and filtering on your home Wi-Fi.	Having parental controls set up means you can not only filter content, but also set time limits for gameplay, which can be helpful for getting your children off the Xbox and into bed! Here are some simple instructions for setting up parental controls with the most popular Wi-Fi providers:



You can access this information via our Online Hub:
<https://nelt.onlinesafetyhub.uk/>

If you have accepted these challenges, we'd love to hear from you! Please do let us know your experience of accessing the Hub and also the weekly challenges – it's always good to know how our services work for you.

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.





Hermitage Good News!

Well done to Year 9 student Adam, who is a regular feature in our Good News section! Adam is a sea cadet,

and made first place in the unnamed squad category - District Drill and Piping Competition and a 1st and 2nd place in the Individual Piping category, leading to winning the overall trophy for Tyne South District. He has another competition coming up next month – another Area Drill and Piping Competition at HMS Caledonia next month. An amazing effort Adam – well done!

Well done to all of our students who received their bronze badges at this half term's final Celebration Station. Keep up the great work everyone!

Well done to Year 13 student Oliver who has passed his driving test first time!



Valentine's Day activities and Pancake Day

Our students have been celebrating the sweetest days of the term with some delicious and fluffy pancakes. Our talented kitchen staff whipped up some fabulous pancakes to enjoy as part of our breaktime menu, and this term, the house competition was a pancake flipping competition. Students were given two minutes to flip a pancake as many times as they could. Congratulation to Ambition for winning with almost 1000 pancake flips and receiving 500 positive points!

This year to celebrate Valentine's Day we had a cake sale to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. Many students brought a wide range of cakes with a special shout out to Year 8 student Frankie for bringing 3 tins worth of homemade cookies and cakes. In total we made £170 for this worthy cause!



North East SCITT – Teacher Training



If you're exploring a career in teaching, join us for a taster session to see if teaching is for you...

Friday 13th March, 9.30am - 1.30pm, at The Academy at Shotton Hall, Peterlee

On the day you will:

- Observe lessons
- Chat with students and current teachers
- Discover our outstanding course
- Learn about financial support of up to £31,000
- Enjoy a delicious school dinner on us!

Take the first step towards a rewarding career!

Book now: <https://loom.ly/AFOfOXM>

Positive Points and Praise

These students have collected the most positive points across February.

At school we love recognising students' hard work and positive attitudes. Alongside awarding house points, we also celebrate achievements with special postcards, for

Year	Top Points
7	Darcy A
8	Hayden K
9	Isla FH
10	Alyssa H
11	Macey M
12	Lauren M
13	Kelsie G

sounding like an expert, going above and beyond, completing excellent homework, and much more. 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—there are surely plenty of fridges across Chester-le-Street proudly displaying our postcards!



Dates for your Diary - March 2025

March	What's on?
2nd-6th	Reading Rocks Literature Festival/Book Fair
2nd-10th	Year 11 Mock exams
4th	Author visit (Years 7-9)
5th	World Book Day
6th-15th	Science and Engineering week
6th	Year 9 vaccinations
9th-13th	National Careers week
11th	Nissan trip
18th	Hispanic Day
19th	Blood Brothers theatre visit (Year 8)
20th	Year 12 Oxford/Cambridge trip
25th	Year 9 Options evening
26th	Purple day (Sixth form)
26th	Parent Information session (4pm-5pm)
30th-31st	Year 11 GCSE Art/Photography exams

Assemblies – March 2026

The theme this term is 'Cultural Capital'. 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.

Starting this month, every week parents will receive a link for you to access further information or support in line with the topics presented in assemblies.

It's called 'Carrying on the Conversation' and we hope it will strengthen the links between home and school on the important topics for young people today.



Week beginning:	Assembly focus
2nd March	Reading Rocks
9th March	Science week
16th March	Maths week
23rd March	Year 9 Options week Commonwealth Games (Y7, Y8, Y10)
30th March	Autism Awareness

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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 enquiries@heritageacademy.co.uk