



Hermitage Academy
2023 Prospectus



Welcome to **HERMITAGE ACADEMY**

Choosing the right school is an important decision and we are delighted that you are considering Hermitage Academy for the next step in your child's education.

We are extremely proud to be leading the Academy in an exciting phase of its development. As many of you may already know, the school is sponsored by the North East Learning Trust and working together has enabled us to make many rapid improvements over the last few years, all geared toward providing an excellent experience for our students.

Our fantastic staff are committed to our journey towards excellence and dedicated to delivering the best possible education for all students. We understand that every

child is unique, with their own talents and skills, and together we celebrate and nurture this.

We hope the following pages will give you a useful insight into our school, but the simple parting message is that we are deeply ambitious for the children of this community, and we want each of them to leave us having developed the knowledge, skills and characteristics that will set them up for bright, happy and successful futures.

J Gorlach *D Stewart*

Dr Janice Gorlach
Executive Headteacher

Darren Stewart
Head of School

*"We are deeply ambitious
FOR THE CHILDREN OF
THIS COMMUNITY"*

A young boy with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue school uniform with a tie, is sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook with a grey pen. He is looking down at his work. In the background, other students are blurred, suggesting a classroom setting.

"We collaborate as a team within school and with Trust colleagues to constantly improve the experiences of our students *with a new focus and drive.*"

Our Hermitage Academy **EXPERIENCE**

Everything we do at Hermitage Academy is tailored to making students feel happy about coming into school, enjoying learning, making good friends and feeling safe.

Our curriculum is designed to challenge and stretch students through stimulating and exciting lessons that are personalised to children's needs.

The current climate presents its own challenges however we are determined that no student is disadvantaged in their learning. We have invested in IT infrastructure to ensure that the transition between in-school and home learning is seamless.


Our dedicated staff have developed many resources so that students can continue with their studies at home, if needed.

Each student has access to our entire curriculum via Student POD - an online resource that your child can access anywhere and at any time. Using Microsoft Teams, we are able to set and mark assignments as well as conduct video lessons in real time. Digital exercise books, assessment feedback and online tutorials are also used to enhance students' learning experience.

For those students with unique learning needs, our skilled staff work hard to make sure students achieve their potential - just the same as every student in school.

We support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through curriculum enrichment days where we host external speakers in school and embark on a range of exciting and stimulating visits and trips both close to home and much further afield.

As students progress through school, they enjoy varied and wide ranging experiences thanks to our wealth of connections with workplaces and schools, both here and abroad including local football clubs, businesses and charity groups.



"I AM ENJOYING SEEING HERMITAGE ACADEMY CARVE OUT
A NEW IDENTITY; I LOVE THE NEW UNIFORM AND FEEL
VERY PROUD WHEN I SEE STUDENTS LOOKING
so smart in our local community."

Our vision **& VALUES**

Our vision is simple and shared by all schools in the North East Learning Trust – that every child experiences excellence every day.

This fundamental goal stands as the cornerstone of every decision we make and is an aspiration that staff at Hermitage Academy are dedicated to delivering, with support from the North East Learning Trust.

Our vision is supported by a set of values that set the tone for learning. These start with the important job of encouraging students to aim high and make the most of their talents.

Moving on we aim to provide students with an education that enables each of them to achieve their full potential and learn with confidence in a safe and supportive environment.

We also aim to create a kind, happy and disciplined culture and to nurture in our students a deep love of learning and a strong work ethic. Alongside this, we endeavour to nurture students' sense of social responsibility and their spiritual and personal development.

Our students are taught to respect both themselves and others, and to understand and value our community that is comprised of so many different individuals. Each student is unique and important and we seek to foster integrity, resilience, creativity, good manners and sensitivity to the needs of others in each of them.

Pastoral SUPPORT & SEND

We aim to ensure each child reaches their potential by making their safety and happiness our priority. It is an integral part of the life of the school, underpinning the academic work of the school as we work tirelessly to remove any barriers to learning. If we know about something – we will deal with it.

Our dedicated pastoral team work extensively with other staff, parents and external agencies to provide exceptional personal support and ensure that students flourish and leave us as well-rounded individuals.

Tutors and Heads of Year see their students every day and throughout their school years where the focus is on individual support, with every student well known and cared for.

Form tutors are students' first point of contact. As a team they deliver our 'Personal Development Curriculum/Programme' where all students learn the necessary

knowledge and skills to cope with the ever changing, modern world with confidence and resilience.


Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

We are extremely proud of the inclusivity that permeates our school. We understand that every child is unique and that they have their own special talents and skills. Together we celebrate and nurture this.

During their time at Hermitage Academy, some students will have special needs which may relate to learning, health or emotional factors.

Our committed SEND team does their very best to respond to these needs, through in-class targeted support and a range of bespoke interventions. The team ensures that every student with special educational needs and/or disabilities makes the best progress possible, both academically and pastorally.

We listen to our students and work hard to build good working partnerships with parents and carers. This way we are able to operate a flexible system of support that breaks down barriers and gives every child the opportunity to succeed.



Hermitage Academy has bounced back
STRONGER THAN BEFORE, UNDER EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT
IMPROVEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO HIGH
STANDARDS NOT SEEN BEFORE."

Our approach to **HOME LEARNING**

The global pandemic brought about the need for a home learning infrastructure across the country.

Fortunately at Hermitage Academy we were already well placed to make sure our students could keep working as soon as home learning was announced.

Throughout the pandemic we have refined and improved our approach and increased our resources in order to keep our educational offer as excellent as possible.

We have invested a great deal in the ICT infrastructure of the school, meaning we can give students access to 'live' lessons (through Microsoft Teams) and resources when the need arises. Where possible, live lessons followed a similar pattern to students' usual classroom lessons.

We ensured that all students have had access to the IT devices they needed to engage with remote learning, and our dedicated

staff have developed many new resources and adapted the curriculum so that students could continue with their studies.

We hope we will never need to return to partial or full home learning again, but if we do, we are well prepared and absolutely committed to enabling our students to achieve excellence – even if that is from a device at home!

What parents said about home learning...

"I just want to highlight how impressed I am with the school offer and the learning which my child is fully engaged in Monday to Friday – it's lovely to witness."

"If you can let my child's science teacher know that I particularly love listening in on her lessons. She is infectious and makes me want to join in the lesson."

"It's as though my son is actually at school, at home. The teachers sound so articulate and enthusiastic, and the level of teaching makes me jealous I'm not being taught too. You're doing a brilliant job, thank you."

"Just a quick email to say many thanks to each and everyone of your staff for the hard work and commitment of the last few months. We appreciate remote learning isn't easy to provide. Home schooling was a new adventure for us all. We are proud of our son for working hard and settling into what quickly became the norm – learning through a screen. However, this was only possible because of all your continued efforts and hard work."

Our approach to **HOMEWORK**



At Hermitage Academy we strongly believe in the importance of homework. Homework forms a vital part of the learning cycle, allowing students to remind themselves of key points and to practise important skills. We never set homework 'just for the sake of it' and realise the need for downtime, family time and relaxation. Therefore we make sure that every piece of homework counts.

If students complete their homework, we firmly believe it will help them be even more successful. Excellent homework

leads to excellent learning!

How much homework will students get?

Students should expect to complete around 30 minutes of homework each evening as a Year 7 student, rising to an hour as students move up through the main school and sixth form.

It helps to be organised!

To help students manage their time, and to ensure that they can still relax and engage in extra-curricular activities like sports, drama and music, students will

be given a timetable at the start of the year telling them which subject's homework they should expect to complete each night.

No time at home? No problem...

We provide homework support, and we will give students access to the school library so that they can complete their homework at lunchtimes or straight after school. We also make sure that there's always time to ask for help if students get stuck on a piece of work before handing it in.



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EDUCATION THAT ENABLES EACH OF THEM TO

achieve their full potential..."

Moving up from **PRIMARY**

Starting a new school is a truly exciting time so we do our utmost to support children (and their parents!) to ensure that their transition from primary school is as smooth as possible.

It is so important that when your child joins us they are prepared and ready for new challenges. We want your child to arrive in September feeling excited about this new chapter of their lives. We understand that starting a new school can feel quite daunting so we do everything we can to ensure children feel as confident as possible about their next steps and settle in quickly to new routines.

Towards the end of the summer term, there is a transition evening which takes place at the same time as the transition days. Parents/carers and children are most welcome to visit the school, meet staff and current students, tour the building and see our

fantastic facilities, try on, buy and order uniform, as well as ask any questions you might have. Senior members of staff, the Year 7 pastoral team and our special educational needs coordinator are always on hand during this evening.

All Year 6 pupils are invited to attend the transition days during the summer term. This is an important time when many worries are laid to rest. The children spend a few days in their new school, take part in timetabled lessons, meet teachers and most definitely meet new friends and have fun.

They also have the chance to explore the school as a big worry is always getting lost!

Getting *involved*

Key to keeping students motivated is kindling a special interest beyond the curriculum that will absorb them throughout their time here; that's why we creatively plan life-enhancing enrichment opportunities including:



Hermitage voices



Keyboard works



Guitar lessons



Hairspray rehearsals



Drum practice



Lego club



Chess and games club



Craft and knitting



Book club



Astroturf activities



Netball



Football



Basketball



Badminton



Rugby



Fitness



Trampoline club



Photography

Student Council

We are extremely proud of the student council at Hermitage Academy where representatives from each year group share the views of all students on important school matters.

Each year, students are given the opportunity to apply to be on our council and we are consistently overwhelmed with the quality of the applicants and their well-thought, excellent

ideas. Not only do our students represent the school, but some of our students have also been representatives on the Durham Youth Council which enables our school voice to be used in a wider context. We value our students and ensuring each student's voice is heard is of real importance to us. We value all of their contributions.

"TEACHING STAFF SHOWCASE
a great passion for teaching
AND ARE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN ALLOWING US TO
REACH OUR GOALS."

British *values*

Schools are now expected to focus on, and be able to show, how we work with students to effectively embed fundamental British values into learning. The four key areas children will explore are:

1. Democracy

At Hermitage Academy, we promote the core values of a democratic society. Through our entire school ethos, PSHE programme and individual subject curriculums, students are encouraged to share their voice in shaping our school community. Students explore historical examples of different styles of government, and they are encouraged and provided with the opportunity to partake in and run mock elections.

Students also have the opportunity to apply for the roles

of head/leading students and be active members of our Student Council, supporting the school with decision making, most recently the selection of the new school uniform.

2. Rule of law

Students are fully immersed in the understanding of rules, and the importance of such for everyday life. Through regular reinforcement across the curriculum, coupled with a strong pastoral team, students are aware of consequences and rewards. Within our PSHE programme, students are provided with the

opportunity to explore the justice system, for example, via active role play in a mock trial. Furthermore, students explore human rights and how laws are made linking to politics and current affairs.

3. Individual liberty

Our school ethos and community is built on strongly supporting our students so that they celebrate difference and their individual, unique, accolades and skills. We invest a great deal of time in creating a positive culture in our school, so that children are in a safe environment. If we know about it, we deal with it.

Achievements and efforts are highly celebrated with rewards, such as certificates, postcards and reward (Laurea) stamps – all are regularly celebrated through our varied and diverse assembly programme.

We offer a wide-range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which students have the freedom to choose from, based on their talents and interests. Finally, our curriculum allows all learners the opportunity and support to become independent enquirers and inquisitive young people.

4. Mutual respect and tolerance

Mutual respect is at the core of our school community. Fundamentally, students learn to treat each other and staff with great respect. Our students are tolerant and respectful.

Kindness is of the utmost importance and referred to on a daily basis allowing students to feel comfortable and confident in their own skills / abilities. This is evident when walking around the school and in the classrooms. Visitors to the school often comment on how polite

and well-mannered our students are, as well as complimenting their conduct at open evenings, parents' evenings or during extra-curricular activities. Students are encouraged to discover topics such as conspiracy and fake news, understanding peer pressure and where to access support alongside discussion on discrimination.

Our school is a happy and safe place and our students are our greatest ambassadors.



Supported by the **North East Learning Trust**

In September 2019 Hermitage Academy joined the North East Learning Trust, a highly successful multi-academy education trust with 11 schools across the North East.

The Trust's founding school, The Academy at Shotton Hall, has achieved great success for their children by securing some of the best outcomes in the country year-on-year and achieving two consecutive outstanding judgements from Ofsted.

Shotton Hall is also a National Teaching School, training the next generation of teachers and ensuring the highest standards of teaching are instilled from the outset. This means Trust schools can access a steady stream of consistently high quality staff.

In 2019 Trust sponsored school, Teesdale School and Sixth Form in Barnard Castle, was awarded a Grade 1 'outstanding' judgment from Ofsted in all areas just three years

after joining the Trust with a Grade 3 'requires improvement' rating. The Ofsted report specifically highlights the hugely positive impact that being part of the Trust has had on the school and how the intervention has led to its rapid turnaround.

Joining the Trust has given Hermitage Academy access to outstanding leaders who are involved in the regional and national development of education. The Trust CEO sits on the Regional Head Teacher Board and the CEO and Deputy CEOs are all National Leaders of Education. We also have access to a wide network of specialist teachers and other experienced professionals to support us on our road to outstanding.



HERMITAGE ACADEMY

Hermitage Academy

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**North East
Learning Trust**