



**Hermitage Academy**  
2023 Prospectus





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



# *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. 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**     **Darren Stewart**  
**Executive Headteacher**     **Head of School**



"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 broad and ambitious for all students. It is designed to challenge students' thinking through stimulating and exciting lessons that are adapted to meet all children's needs. We are determined that no student is disadvantaged in their learning. 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 our school.

We have high standards and expectations. The quality of teaching across the school is

strong and staff are highly skilled practitioners. Alongside this, we have a vibrant extra-curricular offer that students can get involved in. Essential to our school culture is praise and recognition. Students can be awarded praise points for various positive achievements and contributions to learning and school life. Students could also receive praise postcards or a phone call home congratulating them on their effort and hard work.

We support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through our curriculum

and, in particular, our PSHE and careers sessions. 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 other 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.

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/carers and external agencies to provide exceptional personal support and ensure that students flourish and leave us as wellrounded individuals.

Heads of year and form tutors see their students every day and the focus is on providing individual support, with every student well known and cared for.

Form tutors are students' first point of contact. As a team, they deliver our PSHE curriculum. This well planned and comprehensive curriculum is 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, for example one strategy might be through in-class targeted support, and another might be including

students in a range of bespoke support sessions. 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.

Ultimately, we want to create an environment where all children feel welcome, and students are fully integrated into the life of the school.

*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 **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The knowledge and skills we want students to have are mostly taught in our classrooms. However, to complement this and to enrich and develop students' personal and social skills we offer a comprehensive and innovative range of extra-curricular activities.

Students can get involved in a wide range of sporting activities, either for the pure joy of playing or in friendly competitions. Our sports provision is excellent, and we have various sporting activities and events outside

of the normal school day.

There is a wide selection of activities and clubs, many of which are led by our dedicated teaching staff either at lunchtime or after school, we encourage all students to get involved in a club so that it develops students' personal interests as well as enjoy the full community life of the school.

Students can get involved in an imaginative programme of educational visits, for example a trek to Borneo, Duke of Edinburgh

awards scheme, Krakow in Poland and the Belgium Battlefields.

As a school we have a growing reputation for the excellence of our public performances. Our performing arts productions combine the very best of our musical, drama and dance talents. Notably, students have recently performed at the Northern Stage for the Shakespeare School's Festival. Our wonderful students performed A Midsummer Night's Dream.



**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**

## 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 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!

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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*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 ask any questions

they might have. Senior members of staff, the pastoral team and our special educational needs coordinator are always on hand during our open events.

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!



# Sixth *Form*

**We aim to instil the highest of aspirations in all of our students. With this in mind, while providing impartial careers advice and guidance, we also share with students the opportunity they have to join our thriving sixth form community.**

At Hermitage Sixth Form we believe in potential. Our team of supportive staff will help all students succeed through a blend of academic focus and exciting extra-curricular opportunities.

Students will be challenged whilst being encouraged to be the best they can be and we will help all students that apply to us make the right choices about their studies and future career aspirations.

We have a dedicated team with a strong commitment and pride in providing high-quality teaching and learning, supported by first-class care and guidance for students.

We have an excellent track record of students gaining first choice university places as well as supporting students moving into higher-level apprenticeships and employment.

## 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 praise points – 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**

**Hermitage Academy is sponsored by the North East Learning Trust (NELT), a successful family of 12 schools across the North East.**

NELT has a proven track record of school improvement with all schools under their wing having sustained or improved their Ofsted gradings at their first inspection following sponsorship.

NELT is widely regarded providing some of the best education in the county, and indeed the country, with children making significant progress from their starting points, achieving impressive exam results, and going on to access a range of well-respected further and higher education opportunities including courses at some of the UK's most elite universities.

The Trust is also heavily involved with teacher development. It boasts its very own teacher training arm, North East SCITT, that trains the next generation of teachers and ensures the highest standards of teaching are instilled from the outset. It is a National Teaching School Hub,

one of 87 centres of excellence across England that provide high quality training and development to teachers throughout their careers. Not only that, but the Trust's founding school, The Academy at Shotton Hall, is a National Research School, one of just 23 in England, that up-skill teachers using cutting-edge research.

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, Lesley Powell CBE, is a member of many regional and national education boards and advisory groups. The CEO and Deputy CEOs are National Leaders of Education and the Trust also employs a wide network of specialist teachers and other experienced professionals to support schools on their paths to becoming outstanding.





# HERMITAGE ACADEMY

## **Hermitage Academy**

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**North East  
Learning Trust**