

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 10**Staffing update**

Earlier this week, I shared an update with you on the temporary changes to our pastoral leadership structure. As you may be aware, Mr Rutherford-Orrock (Head of Key Stage 2) is currently absent, and Miss Bell (Deputy Head of Key Stage 2) has been covering the role. From Wednesday 12th November, the below arrangements will be in place:

- Mr Scott will become the Head of Year 6 and Year 7
- Miss Bell will become the Head of Year 5
- Miss Lamont will become the Head of Year 8

Miss Bell and Miss Lamont will continue to deputise for Year 6 and Year 7 respectively. Miss Karn (Assistant Headteacher) continues to lead the whole team with overall responsibility for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pastoral care.

The new arrangement will be reviewed at the end of term, and I will update you about the spring term in due course. Please continue to contact admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk or to call the school office with any questions/pastoral concerns - you will then be put in contact with the relevant staff member. We are confident that this new arrangement will provide stability and a very strong pastoral support team for our pupils, parents and staff.

Mrs Smith is leaving her role as Learning Support Assistant at HMS. Mrs Smith has been a fantastic member of our pupil support team, and I know she'll be such a miss in school. We all wish her every success for the future. I am delighted to say that Mr Morgan has been busy recruiting new staff this week and updates will follow including any amendments to 'Key Worker' allocation.

The HMS Way Awards

Each week, teachers nominate pupils for awards to celebrate those who have demonstrated our school values and to recognise the brilliant achievements of our pupils. The awards celebrate children who have shown great respect, who have engaged well in all aspects of school life and who have shown high aspiration during lessons and around school. Well done – we are very proud of you!



Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
George F	Sequoia D-G	Liam J-G	James T
Iona E	Alfie S	Lucy E	Archie G
Annie B	Callum T	Edward S	Sam L
Olympia H	Scott B	Isla T	Josie A
Demi R	Isla M	Fern R	Ben N

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**



Children in Need Day

Wow - what a great community effort from everyone at HMS today! Each form class worked hard to prepare their own stall for our 'Big Children in Need Fair' and it was a HUGE success! School has been buzzing with excitement as we all worked together to raise funds for such a wide range of important charities. Well done everyone - we have been so impressed with your efforts!

Special thanks to Miss Lamont and Miss Bell for their superb organisation and to our amazing form teachers for their support! We'll share the final fundraising total in due course. Donations can still be made via MCAS over the weekend - thank you for your support.



Ashley Thorpe: Year 7 author event

We were delighted to welcome Ashley Thorpe to school on Wednesday afternoon. Ashley's brilliant new book is 'Spirit Warriors', which takes us on a nail-biting journey to Jamaica where folklore and fantasy meet. Ashley reminded us how powerful storytelling is in shaping our world, how we connect with it and each other. He described how he draws on heritage, culture, mythology, imagination, travels, and everything he has read and seen to inspire his stories.



Thank you, Ashley, for encouraging us to keep reading and to try different genres. Thank you also to Year 7 who were a fantastic, engaged and enthusiastic audience who asked so many insightful questions during the Q&A. Several copies of 'Spirit Warriors' have been added to the KS3 section of HMS Library and are available for borrowing! Finally, a huge vote of thanks to everyone at Hexham Book Festival for making Ashley's visit possible.



Remembrance Day

It was an honour to join Hexham's Remembrance Service on Sunday. Our Head Pupils represented the school brilliantly, and were very proud to lay a remembrance wreath on behalf of everyone at Hexham Middle School. Thank you very much to Emily, Ben, Rosie and Sam. It is always a very poignant event in Hexham, and it is a privilege to be part of it each year. Our two schools will share a silence on Tuesday led by Mr Atkins. We will remember.

Mrs Hinchcliffe and her very creative crochet/knitting club members have been busy making poppies to raise funds for the Royal British Legion. Last week, they raised a fantastic £143 from their sales, and their stall was a sell out! We are all very proud of Francesca, Jessie, Leela, Beau, Penelope, Olympia, Alexis and Alec! Thank you for being amazing!



House Point Totals

Each week, we celebrate our P Point (positive point) total across the school. We include the 'Top 4' pupils in each year group, as well as the overall house totals for AIn, Coquet, Wansbeck and Tweed.

House Totals		Top 4 'P Points' in each year							
		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
AIn	22,745	1	Beau C	1	Bertie L	1	Charlie P	1	Florence B
Coquet	23,443	2	Alethea C	2	Charlie A	2	Adam H	2	Lizzie L
Tweed	22,703	3	Lillie S	3	Kaylin F	3	Jessica C	3	Ben S
Wansbeck	22,805	4	Maddie A	4	Evelyn C	4	Finlay F	4	Eben S

Attendance – top 3!

Attendance this week was **95% - a significant dip compared to recent weeks.** We really value that our pupils and parents have a positive attitude towards school attendance – pupils should be in school every day, ready to learn and to make the most of their school opportunities. We encourage pupils to be resilient to ensure that they don't miss out on great learning each day – especially as we enter the colder months – resilience is essential! Please continue to support us by encouraging your child into school every day.

1 st form class – 98%	2 nd form class – 97.5%	3 rd form class – 97%
5-JNI, 7-PGA	7-SMC	5-RAL, 5-YTA

Sports News

Rugby League

Mr Scott took a group of KS3 boys to a rugby league development event this week and it was a fantastic afternoon! The session was an opportunity to develop skills and rugby league knowledge. Pupils worked in groups with other schools and it was great to see them interacting with new peers. The session included skill drills, contact skills and games in mixed school teams. Well done everyone!



Personal Development

Positive Masculinity Workshops

This term, we are undertaking a pilot project with Ben Oliver from 'Worth Educating' around positive masculinity and misogyny. A group of pupils have been chosen to help us evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops.

The theme of positivity masculinity and misogyny will also be addressed in other ways as part of school assemblies, PSHE lessons and form time personal development activities which will ensure that all pupils encounter this theme in age-appropriate ways. If you'd like to discuss this further, please contact Mr Freeman-Myers (Assistant Headteacher and PSHE leader).

Holmes Lectures 2026 (Ages 10-14 years) – Newcastle University

The 2026 Holmes Lectures at Newcastle University are for children aged 10-14 and focus on the immune system. The lectures are on January 21 and January 28, 2026, both taking place from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM in the Curtis Auditorium at the Herschel Building [Newcastle University](#). Pre-booking is required (follow the booking links below).

Lecture 1 – Date: 21 January 2026

Lecture 2 – Date: 28 January 2026

‘Our immune system: the army inside our body’

‘Guardians of health: how oral hygiene supports our immune system’

[Booking link](#)

[Booking link](#)

Club News

Gardening Club

This week, our Gardening Club were in action again with the help of Keda from Hexham Youth Initiative. We have been making new planters for the 'The Secret Garden'. It has been a team effort, and we have also been planting some small spider plants that were donated by Mr Freeman-Myers' neighbours - these are going to go in classrooms in school. We planted some broad beans and re-potted some small shrub plants and fuchsias. We would like to thank Keda for your support of our Gardening Club. The Green Fingers are growing from strength-to-strength in confidence, developing new skills and knowledge.



Maths Update

🎸 This week's TT Rockstars! 🎸

We were delighted to restart our Times Table Rockstars competition last week. A huge congratulations to our winners below, who achieved the prize for the most accurate recall. What a fantastic effort! This week, our focus shifts to *average speed*. We encourage all children to practise at home for 5–10 minutes each week. Times tables are the building blocks of

mathematics, and developing quick recall really helps to support progress and confidence across the subject. We hope to see lots of pupils joining in and enjoying the challenge. Well done once again to last week's winners, and good luck to everyone taking part this week!

Olympia H - Parker F - Halle B - Sophie M - Jackson T - Finn M - Freddie S - Alice R - Phaedra-Sun H - Bertie L

Pupil Competition

HMS Christmas Card Competition

It's time to launch this year's [Christmas Card Competition](#). Last year's entries were phenomenal, and we can't wait to see the creative entries this festive season. Packs of winning designs will be available to order in the build-up to Christmas. Details to follow. Templates are available at the school library, front office and with form tutors. The deadline for entries is Wednesday 19th November. Good luck everyone! Information has been shared in school and is attached to today's newsletter.

Online Safety Update

For Parents - Cyberbullying Advice

Children being bullied online, particularly in games and via messaging apps, remains one of the top concerns of many parents and their children. Internet Matters have a range of guides and articles to support parents and carers which I have listed below:

- Talking to children and conversation tips for ages 6-10, 11-13, 14-17 and vulnerable children - [HERE](#)
- What is cyberbullying and what are the signs - [HERE](#)
- Helpful ways to prevent cyberbullying - [HERE](#)
- How to deal with cyberbullying - [HERE](#)
- Parents experiences of cyberbullying - [HERE](#)
- Useful resource - [HERE](#)

(by Alan Mackenzie, Online Safety Specialist)

News from the Community

Healthier Together - website and mobile app for parents and carers

Northumberland Education promotes the [Healthier Together website](#) and mobile app which are designed to help parents, carers, and professionals (including schools) make informed decisions about children's health. The website and app can play a significant role in supporting schools and improving school attendance in the following ways:

- Provide based NHS advice to help families and schools manage children's health effectively



- Helps parents and carers decide when children are fit for school with our should my child go to school or nursery today page
- Offers guidance for managing long-term conditions (e.g. asthma, eczema)

The app for iPhone is [here](#). The app for Android is [here](#).

Youth Cabinet & Youth Parliament Elections 2025



Our students have the opportunity to nominate themselves for the NCC Youth Elections: would you like to have your voice heard on issues that matter to young people? If you're in Years 7–13, this is your chance to represent your peers!

Find out more about [Youth Cabinet \(NCC Website\)](#)

Find out more about [Youth Parliament \(NCC Website\)](#)

The deadline to sign up is the 23rd December. Scan the QR code in the flyer to nominate yourself. You will also find the flyer [here](#) on our website.

Free School Meals

If you feel that your child may be eligible for free school meals, please read the criteria and make an application as soon as you can. Find out more on the [Northumberland County Council website](#). To apply, please [complete this form](#) via Northumberland County Council.

Upcoming Dates

Date	Event	Who
Monday 17 November	U11 Girls County Cup 1st round vs Gosforth Central	Year 6 (selection)
Wednesday 19 November	NHS Height and Weight Checks	Year 6
Wednesday 19 November	Healthy Masculinity Workshops	Year 8 (group)
Thursday 20 and Wednesday 26 November	Year 7 Parents' Evenings – bookings now open on MCAS	Year 7
Thursday 20 November	Young Green Briton Challenge – Design Sprint	Year 7
Thursday 20 November	Be You: Managing Worry and Anxiety Workshops	Year 6
Friday 21 November	Hexham Christmas Lights Switch-On, Sele Bandstand	All welcome
Friday 28 November	Non-Uniform Day for pop-up shop donations	All year groups

Please note that school will close at 1.30pm on Friday 19th December for the Christmas break.



Dare I say it... but the festive season is fast-approaching, and I know lots of you will be wanting to update your diaries. Here are some initial dates – more to follow in our full festive calendar soon.

Date	Festive Event	Who
Friday 21 November	Hexham Christmas Lights Switch-On, Sele Bandstand	All welcome
Monday 8 December	HMS PTA Festive Forest Evening, 5.30pm	All welcome
Tuesday 9 and Thursday 11 December	HMS PTA Christmas Pop-Up Shops	All year groups
Wednesday 10 December	HMS Christmas Lunch	All year groups
Friday 12 December	Year 7 Christmas Trip	Year 7
Monday 15 December	HMS Carol Service, Hexham Abbey, 7.00pm	All welcome
Tuesday 16 December	Year 5 Pantomime Trip	Year 5
Tuesday 16 December	Year 8 Centre for Life Trip incl. ice-skating	Year 8
Wednesday 17 December	HMS Carols in the Community	Community visits
Wednesday 17 December	Year 6 Pantomime Trip	Year 6
Thursday 18 December	Christmas Celebration Assemblies	All year groups
Friday 19 December	Christingle Services	All year groups

Have a lovely weekend!

Mr Watters

Head of School

Pupil Support and Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Ms Karn

Deputy Safeguarding Leaders: Mr Scott, Mr Rutherford-Orrock, Miss Lamont and Miss Bell

Heads of Key Stage: Mr Scott and Mr Rutherford-Orrock

SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo: Mr Morgan and Mrs Ballantyne

Academic Support Coordinator: Mrs Toor

Pupil Support Workers: Mrs Dodds and Mrs Richards

Please remember that we are here to support you and your child at any time. You can contact us via the main office (phone) or by email (admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk).