

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 14**Staffing update**

As we reach the end of term, I wanted to update you on a number of staffing changes. Mrs Hutton (Academic Mentor) will be leaving her role to start an exciting new chapter away from teaching. Over the years, Mrs Hutton has provided fantastic support to so many of our pupils through a wide range of interventions, our KS3 literacy groups and in her role as a Key Worker. Mrs Hutton will be hugely missed by all of us, and we wish her every success as she takes the step into her new career. We all extend our thanks to Mrs Hutton for being such an important part of the HMS team - your positive impact on so many of our pupils has been hugely valued.

Mrs Ballantyne (Assistant SENDCo) will be moving on to an exciting new role at the end of term. Mrs Ballantyne has been central to our SEND provision since joining the team and has worked tirelessly to provide the very best support to our pupils and families. We are all so grateful for the positive impact Mrs Ballantyne has had since moving to HMS and we wish her every success as she starts her new role with the local authority. On behalf of the whole team, we thank Mrs Ballantyne for all of her great work and wish her good luck. Miss Leah Poxton has been appointed to the role of Assistant SENDCo and will be joining the team later in January.

In our Learning Support Team, Miss Maskell has joined us as Learning Support Assistant on a permanent basis and we are very pleased to have her on the team. We are also looking forward to welcoming Miss Armstrong to the Learning Support Team in January too. An update on our Key Worker allocation will be shared in due course - this will reflect the staffing changes within the team.

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
Pippa L Alfie J Noah S Daniel B Hamish B-S	Mason D Heidi B Aliza S James C Thea G	Elsa B-P Eric J Romi F Henry W Meghan J	Oskar P Phoebe B Mia R Harold H Dominique H

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

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 Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck and Tweed.

House Totals		Top 4 'P Points' in each year							
		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	32,503	1	Rebecca N	1	Daniella H	1	Martha G	1	Edward S
Coquet	32,738	2	Olympia H	2	Georgia M	2	Jessica T	2	Benjamin T
Tweed	31,555	3	Lillie S	3	Gracie R	3	Finlay F	3	James T
Wansbeck	31,807	4	Lydia S	4	Effie W	4	Sadie B	4	Tilly c

Christmas Events

HMS Christmas Carol Concert

You are warmly invited to the [HMS Christmas Carol Concert](#) which takes place at Hexham Abbey on Monday 15th December at 7pm. It features over a hundred students including a large number of HMS as well as a significant number of QEHS students.

Santa Dash

It was our Santa Dash yesterday and what a fantastic time everyone had! Special thanks to Mr Cameron for planning such a fun and inclusive event for our whole school to enjoy. After Santa set off on the course, the pupils followed behind and took part in their fun run. With the festive tunes playing around the school, it was great to see such positive engagement from every year group. Everyone enjoyed the added bonus elements including the snowball zone and the festive photo booth! It was fantastic to see our Sports Leaders from both QE and HMS in action and Mr Cameron enjoyed sharing the recent success of the Cross Country Teams to inspire our future runners. A joyful atmosphere all round - well done everyone! Santa Dash will return in 2026!



PTFA Festive Forest Evening



What a joyful night we had for our [Festive Forest Evening](#). The Christmas music was playing, the hot chocolate was flowing and the atmosphere was lovely! It was great to see so many of you enjoying the festive crafts, live music, festive drinks and snacks and visiting our forest school to enjoy the s'mores around the fire. Thank you very much for supporting the event - we hope you enjoyed yourselves! Special thanks to Amy and Karen (PTFA Co-Chairs) for their hours of planning and coordination at this busy time of year. Huge thanks to all our PTFA members



and volunteers for supporting the event in the build-up and on the night. Special thanks to all of the HMS staff who stayed late to run the stalls and to help out - your support is always massively valued.



Christmas lunch

Thank you so much to Mrs Satow and her amazing team for the most delicious Christmas lunch today! It's a huge job to prepare and serve Christmas lunch across our two schools and the hard work is really appreciated. It was such a great atmosphere and it was fantastic to see everyone enjoying their festive lunch together - smiles all round! Visit our [website](#) for more pictures.

PTFA Pop-up shop

Wow – it was a very busy [festive pop-up shop](#) today and we have now SOLD OUT! All of the gifts have gone and the shop will therefore not be open on Thursday as planned. Huge thank you to Karen, Amy, Dawn and Gemma for running today's event and to the Year 8 'elves' for all of their help. Thank you for sending in so many brilliant gift donations – it has been another very popular event! We hope you all enjoy your gifts! Thank you.



PTFA Christmas Lottery Prize draw

The Big Christmas Draw has now been made and we can announce this month's winners. Congratulations, Lucie and Jack – the PTFA will arrange for your winnings to be paid. Another easy way to support the PTFA is to join the HMS PTFA Lottery for a chance to win cash prizes each month. To sign up, please click [here](#). For more information please email: hmsprizedraw@gmail.com

Sports News

Netball

Last Thursday evening, our Year 7 and 8 netball teams played their first netball matches of this year at Cramlington Learning Village, against Cramlington, Bede Academy and Ovingham Middle School. The girls were an absolute credit to the school, displaying respect, exceptional engagement and determination throughout the evening. See [here](#) for the match reports.

Basketball

Congratulations to Year 8's Archie D, Cody R, Matty M, Oskar P and Ted W who took part in the basketball tournament at Emmanuel College last night. They were against Dame Allan's, St Cuthbert's and Emmanuel, who all had well established teams. Our team were all quite new to basketball and we were a player down so couldn't make any substitutions. Although they lost their games they played really well and scored against the other teams in their matches. They looked like an experienced team on the court which was great to see!

Football

On Wednesday, the U11 boys team played in another Central Venue League night of action. In their first game, HMS defeated St Joe's 2-0, courtesy of goals from Ethan W and James H. Next, they played Corbridge who fielded a very strong team. Despite this, the boys won 2-0 again, thanks to a brace from Ethan W, and assists from Louie G. In their third game, the boys played Ovingham, where they won a resounding 6-0 win, thanks to goals from James H and Rowan D, and braces from Freddie S and Alfie H. Finally, the boys played Ponteland Primary which was an extremely difficult test. Rowan D broke the deadlock with a 1-0 win. Shoutout to Tommy D, for keeping clean sheets in all four games! Well done to all boys who played. Mr Nichol was thrilled with the resilience, creativity and teamwork displayed!



Important Reminder – Tech Decks (and other toys)

Tech decks and other toys are not allowed in classrooms. These are not regulation/concentration tools – they are a distraction to learning. Any tech decks (or similar objects) in lessons will be confiscated and an S3 reflection will be issued. It is essential that learning is not distracted by toys. Approved regulation tools for pupils with agreed plans are allowed.

Clubs Update

No after-school clubs next week

Please note: **after-school clubs are not on next week**. Due to trips and other festive events next week, the vast majority of lunchtime clubs will also not be running. Where clubs are running during the final week of term, information will be shared with pupils during Monday's assembly.

KS3 Netball Club

We would like to recruit more players for this club. If you want to come along and try out in a session, register interest on MCAS. We would really like to see you there. It would be great to get a larger group to secure future netball fixtures. If pupils have any questions please see Ms Hopper in the PE Department.

Attendance – top 3!

Attendance has been slightly lower than we aim for this week at 94% - we know there have been lots of pupils feeling unwell and we hope everyone manages to rest and recover this weekend before the holiday. 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. Thank you for your support.

1 st form class – 100%	2 nd form class – 99%	3 rd form class – 98.5%
5-MDO	7-PGA	5-EKI

Music Opportunities

Learn an instrument

Would you like to learn an instrument or sing as part of your New Year's Resolutions?

We currently have space to learn in the following disciplines: Brass (trumpet, cornet, trombone, tenor horn, euphonium), Woodwind (flute, clarinet, saxophone), Accordion, Harp, Piano, Singing, Guitar, Bass, Guitar. Please look in the Music Tuition section [here](#) for more information.



News from the Community

Hexham Family Hub

The latest What's On at Hexham Family Hub guide for January – February 2026 is [here](#) on our website.

The Pennine Cup Chess Tournament

The school has been contacted by Mick Riding of Gosforth Chess Club who is seeking interest from anyone who would like to represent Northumberland in the Pennine Cup on Sunday 22 March in Liverpool. The event is essentially the Northern Counties team competition for under 18s in chess. If your child is interested or simply wants to find out more, please contact Mick at mickriding@hotmail.co.uk using PENNINE in the subject content.

Online Safety Update

For Parents – Updated Android Controls

From the beginning of December 2025 Google is releasing new and updated parental controls for Android devices. These include:

- Set the amount of screen time that can be spent on a device each day to help establish healthy habits.
- Set downtime schedules to automatically lock the device at night to ensure restful sleep without distraction.
- Control app usage by limiting time spent on specific apps, or blocking apps entirely.
- Add more time by granting extra minutes when a time limit is reached, or to extend a scheduled break.



You can find further details about these updates on the Google blog [HERE](#) and Internet Matters have a handy Android guide for parents which you can find [HERE](#). (By Alan Mackenzie, online safety specialist)

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.

Festive Calendar

Date	Festive Event	Who
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	Head of School Awards Festive Breakfast	Winning pupils
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
Friday 19 December	Final day of term – time in form classes! Pupils can wear Christmas jumpers and accessories!	All year groups
Friday 19 December	School closes at 1.30pm	All year groups

Looking ahead...

Date	Event	Who
Monday 5 January	School re-opens for all pupils at 8.40am	All year groups
Thursday 8 January	Year 5 Parents' Evening (1)	Year 5
Monday 12 January	Be You: Resilience Workshops	Year 8
Wednesday 14 January	Year 5 Parents' Evening (2)	Year 5
Monday 19 January	Anti-Bullying Workshops	Year 5
Monday 26 January	First Aid Week – training session for all pupils	All year groups

Have a lovely weekend! One week to go until the Christmas break...

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: Miss Bell (Y5), Mr Scott (Y6 and Y7), Miss Lamont (Y8)

SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo: Mr Morgan and Mrs Ballantyne

Academic Support Coordinator: Mrs Toor

Pupil Support Workers: Ms Thompson and Mrs Richards

Attendance Officer: Mrs Parradine

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).