

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 18**Welcome to the team!**

Look who had his first visit to HMS yesterday.... welcome to the team, Rocky! Rocky has been working hard at his therapy dog training classes and had a great first day getting used to being in school and meeting lots of children. I think you can see how much he was enjoying himself!

**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	39,998	1	Izzy O	1	Bertie L	1	Lauren D	1	Emily W
Coquet	40,342	2	Noa P	2	Sally B	2	Ben R	2	Etta L
Tweed	39,067	3	Oliver O	3	Isabella N	3	Jessica H	3	Betty F
Wansbeck	39,207	4	Hugo E	4	Sophia M	4	Charlie C	4	Harry B

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.



Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Nola P	Marnie D	Charlie C	Harry B
Alethea C	Maggie M	Ava R	Rory N
Izzy O	Sally B	Isabella S	Hunter W
Isaac P	Isaac N-C	Dillon D	Sofia O
Maddie M	Julia F	Adina C	Elsie-May P

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

Spotlight on maths

This week, our curriculum spotlight shines on the fantastic learning happening in maths. Year 5 have been exploring fractions, focusing on identifying equivalent fractions and converting between improper and mixed fractions. It was a pleasure to visit their lessons and see such enthusiasm and determination. Year 6 paused their work on decimals, percentages, and fractions to complete their maths and English assessments, and we are incredibly proud of their hard work and resilience, not just this week, but throughout the year.



Year 7 have been applying the four operations in a range of new contexts, including area and perimeter problems, financial statements, and standard form. Year 8 have been strengthening their algebra skills by solving equations, expanding brackets, and factorising. It has been wonderful to see confidence grow and to observe the excellent learning taking place in classrooms. Keep up the great work, everyone!

Spotlight on spelling

In Years 5 and 6, spelling is now taught using a new approach which focuses on understanding spelling patterns, rules and word origins rather than memorising lists of words. Lessons explore how words are constructed, including prefixes, suffixes, root words and common spelling conventions. This helps pupils make connections and apply their knowledge to unfamiliar words.



Grammarsaurus

Spelling is practised regularly through short, focused activities that encourage discussion, investigation and application. Children are supported to spot patterns, explain their thinking and use spelling strategies when writing across different subjects. This approach helps pupils become more confident and independent spellers over time.

As spelling is embedded into teaching and learning, we **no longer send home weekly spelling lists**. Instead of short-term memorisation for tests, the focus is on developing long-term understanding so that pupils can spell accurately and confidently in their everyday writing. Parents can support this approach by encouraging reading, talking about interesting or unusual words, and helping children to notice spelling patterns in the books they read.

Personal Development Updates

Wonder Challenge (Year 8)



As part of our careers programme, a group of our brilliant Year 8 pupils are involved in a national competition to design a sustainable school. They have been working hard at lunchtimes and this week presented the first stage task to their employer mentors. The group were really prepared and representatives from MGM Construction and Carney Consultancy were very impressed with the team effort. A great start and we are looking forward to a school development site visit in February.

Royal Academy of Arts Competition (All Year Groups)

We are once again excited to encourage our pupils to enter The Young Artists' Summer Show from the Royal Academy of Arts. Over the past few years, we have been so proud to have artwork from HMS pupils exhibited in London and online... yours could be next! You can find the information you need on the posters around school, in on our website, [here](#), and by speaking to Miss Taylor. The deadline for this year's entries is 2nd March. More information will also be shared in assemblies. We are all very excited to see the creative pieces this year - good luck everyone!



Be You: Managing Exam Stress Workshop (Year 6)

You are invited to a parent/carers workshop led by the Be You Team focused on providing strategies to support your child with managing stress and worry caused by exams. This session will be useful for parents/carers of children in Year 6 as well as parents of students in the high school who may be preparing for exams. The session will take place on Monday 9th March, 4pm-5pm at Hexham Middle School. This event is open to parents/carers from Hexham Middle, Corbridge Middle, St Joseph's Middle and Queen Elizabeth High School. [Please sign-up here.](#)

Attendance – Top 3!

It's been a really positive start to the new term and attendance remained at **96%** this week - well done everyone! 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.

1st form class – 100%	2nd form class – 99%	3rd form class – 98.5%
6-FHA	6-MBE	8-IBO, 5-ZSC

Community reminders

Drop-off and pick-up reminder

When dropping off or picking up your child, we kindly ask for your continued consideration of the local residents in the surrounding area. Thank you for your support.

Tynedale Terrace Closures

We have been contacted by the Location Manager of Filmnation Entertainment regarding filming that is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks on Tynedale Terrace. He has informed us that the road and its pavements will be closed to vehicles and pedestrians for at least some and possibly all of the following:

- Friday, January 23 – 3:00pm to 8:00pm, affecting departure from school
- Monday 2 February – 7:30am to 7:30pm, affecting arrival to and departure from school
- Tuesday 3 February – 1:00pm to 12:00am, affecting departure from school

- Wednesday 4 February – 12:00pm to 10:00pm, affecting departure from school

Live traffic management will be in place, including signage directing people to the alternative route of Alexandra Terrace. Please advise your child of the above as necessary. If you drop/collect your child to/from school by car, please avoid coming to the site at the above times where possible, to avoid undue congestion on Alexandra Terrace.

Data Collection Update

We are writing to kindly ask you to take a moment to check and update your contact details so that our records remain accurate. You may have recently changed your phone number or email address, or perhaps moved house. It's really important that we hold the correct information on our system so we can contact you when needed.

You can update your details easily via the **MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) platform**, using either the **web** or **mobile app**. Simply select **Data Collection** from the menu and review/update your details and/or those of your child.

Keeping your contact information up to date helps us stay in touch with you about your child's education, school events, and in case of an emergency. If you need any help accessing your MCAS account or resetting your login details, please contact the school office and we will be more than happy to help. Thank you for your support.

Girls in STEM (Year 7)

Thank you to Newcastle University for visiting HMS this week to deliver an inspiring careers session to our Year 7 girls. The session allowed pupils to develop their understanding about careers in a wide range of STEM industries and routes into these career pathways. It was great to see our Year 7 pupils thinking about their futures and their potential engagement within this forward-thinking sector.

Sports News

Cross Country (Year 7 and 8)

HMS athletes competed at the County Cross Country Championships on Tuesday this week. Our runners were competing for Tynedale at this event after qualifying before Christmas. On the day, the race conditions were ideal for fast running. This competition sees athletes aiming to qualifying to represent Northumberland in future events. The Year 7 boys were first to run. Arthur C had a storming run to finish an excellent 5th. Dylan W just missed out on qualification finishing 17th. Our final runner was Aiden M who made an impressive debut at this event.



The Year 7 girls raced next. Martha P had a fantastic race to finish an impressive 3rd place. Isabelle C and Jess C supported with excellent performances, 5th and 8th respectively. Claudia M put in a fantastic performance in this event finishing in 21st place - just missing out on County selection. Monty C was our only representative in the Junior races. Despite racing boys in Y9, Monty ran very well to finish a superb 12th place - a superb achievement!

Well done to all of our HMS athletes. It was brilliant to see the hard work and dedication paying off with impressive performances. We wish our athletes well as they go onto represent Northumberland at the Inter County Championship. This event will be held at Sedburgh School in Cumbria.

Aspire Week 2026 (All Year Groups)



As part of National Careers Week (2nd to 6th March 2026), we would love to welcome parents/carers/family members into school to deliver careers talks for our pupils. We'd like to cover a wide range of jobs which will spark the interest of our pupils. It would be great to have representation from those in the public or private sector, those running their own business and parents/carers who volunteer. If you think you'd be up for coming into school to deliver a short presentation/talk to a group of children, please could you complete this short form. [Aspire Week – Fill out form](#) Thank you for your support.

Maths News



Another excellent week of times tables practice. This week's focus was on accuracy, and a big well done to the winners listed below. Working at speed while ensuring answers are correct is an important skill, and it has been great to see such great effort from the children.

Rowan M, Marko M, Parker F, Leo B, Archie M, Finn M, Lucy G, Ted P, Phaedra-Sun H-F, Effie W, Spike N

This week, the focus will be on average speed. Please encourage your child to complete the Garage session on TTRS. The competition closes on Sunday and takes just five minutes to complete. Best of luck to everyone taking part.

Online Safety Update

For Parents - What I Wish My Parents or Carers Knew

The Children's Commissioner has put together a fantastic guide for parents and carers. At around 26 pages it goes into a lot of depth including:

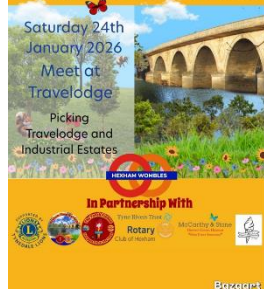
- Screen time.
- When bad things happen.
- Artificial intelligence.
- Conversation starters.
- Actions to take checklist.
- And much more.



Download the [Children's Commissioner - What I wish my parents and carers knew guide](#), at the bottom of the page you will find a PDF download and an activity pack. (by Alan Mackenzie, Online Safety Specialist).

News from the Community

Our next Litter Pick will be



Wombles New Year Litter Pick

The next Hexham litter pick will be Saturday 24th January 2026. Meet at the Travelodge at 11am. Picking Travelodge and Industrial Estates. Pickers, High-Vis, gloves & bags all provided. See you there, at 11am in the car park Chief Womble – Suzanne, Deputy Womble – John

Autism Family Drop In Session

New dates of the Autism Family Drop in session dates are now available. See [here](#) on our website for more information.

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.

School Calendar

Date	Event	Who
Monday 26 January	First Aid Week – training session for all pupils	All year groups
Monday 26 January	Stargazing Evening, Kielder Observatory	Year 5
Tuesday 27 January	World Religions Week: PERS People Workshop	Year 7
Tuesday 27 January	Hockey Championships	KS3 team
Tuesday 27 January	Football – County Cup Quarter Final	Year 6
Wednesday 28 January	Head of School Awards Breakfast	Winning Pupils
Thursday 29 January	Year 8 Parents' Evening (1)	Year 8
Thursday 29 January	Rugby Competition	Year 8
Monday 2 to Friday 6 February	Ski Trip	KS3 (group)
Wednesday 4 February	Year 8 Parents' Evening (2)	Year 8
Wednesday 11 February	PTFA Spring Discos	All year groups

Thursday 12 February	Non-uniform day to support PTFA Mothers and Others Pop-Up Shops (donations appreciated)	All year groups
Friday 13 February	INSET Day (school closed for pupils)	All year groups
Monday 16 – Friday 20 February	February Half-Term Break	All year groups
Monday 23 February	School reopens at 8.40am	All year groups

Have a lovely weekend!

Mr Watters

Pupil Support and Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs Mackenzie

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 Miss Poxton

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).