

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 19

Head of School Awards

This month's Head of School Award theme was **'integrity'** – our character value of focus this half term. I was delighted to see the children being recognised for their wonderful approach to school life. It was great to celebrate the positive contribution each pupil makes to our school community – I am very proud of them all. Pupils in school today joined me for a special breakfast (breakfast sandwiches, pastries and hot chocolate) and received a certificate and P5 award! A huge well done to everyone!



Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Jacob L Lillie S Bobby N Rebecca N Hugo E	Alex G David W Millie C Dylan F Emily C	Dylan W Poppy P Isla Y Isabella S Mason M	Tilly C Gwen C-W Katie G Archie D James T

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	43,402	1	Bertie B	1	Noah M	1	Imogen M	1	Ida H
Coquet	43,752	2	Rebecca N	2	Heidi B	2	Riley B	2	Joanna R
Tweed	42,589	3	Halle B	3	Carter C	3	Nancy M	3	Rory A
Wansbeck	42,638	4	Alethea C	4	Nella A	4	Martha G	4	Betty F

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



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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

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
Oliver N	Harry M	Su H-J	Ted W
Hugo E	Stuart H	Hayden M	Ida H
Lilly W	Lucy G	James B	Cody R
Matteo K	Nella A	Lucy G	Annabel H
Ethan W	Ava G	<i>7SRI to follow</i>	Alex A

Northumberland Area SEND inspection

Northumberland County Council have been notified that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission will undertake an Area-wide SEND inspection over the next few weeks. Officers at the local authority are keen to ensure that a clear, positive and accurate picture of the quality of practice is given to inspectors. To this end, they have asked that the links to their surveys be circulated to parents and carers, and children and young people with SEND. You can find these links [here](#), along with attached supporting letters. The deadline for responses is 9:00am on the 3rd February 2026.

Curriculum Spotlight: Music

Music lessons aim to combine the three main areas of performing, listening and composing and each term lessons are centred around a main topic. Each lesson this year also starts with the 'Listening Piece of the Week' and pieces so far have ranged from Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik to Joan Jett's I Love Rock and Roll! The listening piece and its questions aim to engage the pupils as soon as they come through the door. Each lesson also begins with a practical activity, such as a song, a clapping game or a rhythm activity.

Year 5- In their first term, welcoming them to Music, pupils in year 5 participated in all things musical such as singing as a class, creating short composition ideas on the keyboard, participating in clapping games and more, year 5 pupils are now embarking on a ukulele topic! Very much practical in nature, pupils have learned to play the different open strings while also learning the string's name and number and using correct posture and technique. They are now learning to play different melodies and are starting to practice placing their fingers on different frets, as well as learning to read ukulele TAB which leads to being able to play chords.

Year 6 - The focus for year 6 this term is pitch - reading and playing different pitches, as well as discriminating aurally between different pitches. Embedded throughout this topic is a chance to play different keyboard tunes from reading the pitches on the stave. All pupils are trying to focus on using the correct hand position at the keyboard. As always, there are more complex tasks for the piano players in the classes!

Year 7 - In the topic of 'Rhythm and Pulse' students are immersed in a wide range of rhythms to clap and notate, using simple notation first and then moving to standard notation. Pupils are learning to recognise and use different note values,

not least in their own composition in which they work in groups to create a rhythmic piece. Later they will be recording various notated rhythms using music technology.

Year 8 - In this term's topic of 'Chords and Popular Music' pupils are getting to grips with the chords of C, F, G, Am and realising how many songs have been written using just these four chords! Pupils compose their own chord sequence and are also able to form, learn and play chords on keyboard, ukulele and eventually, the guitar.

Instrumental and Vocal lessons - Many HMS pupils choose to pursue an instrument or voice at HMS and we have a whole range of fantastic instruments, voices and teachers! We have specialist teachers in the following: guitar; piano; drum kit; singing; woodwind (flute/clarinet/saxophone); brass (trumpet/cornet/trombone/tenor horn/euphonium/tuba); accordion; harp, violin. If you wish to look further at this opportunity for your child, please follow this link and look at the Music Tuition section: <https://www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk/index.php/music-curriculum/>



Extra-Curricular - Life is always busy for those students who participate in our fantastic extra-curricular opportunities, and the opportunities are many and varied - some which are unique to HMS and some which are paired with QEHS. Whether students are involved in Orchestra, HMS Singers, String Ensemble, Show Choir, Northumbrian Pipes or the Drum Line, every day is a musical day! For example, orchestra students are currently rehearsing music from Lord of the Rings, HMS Singers are rehearsing a folk song called Miner's Washing as well as the pop ballad True Colours.

Performances - We love to give pupils performance opportunities whether they are part of an ensemble or they perform as a soloist. Being in a performance builds confidence,

resilience and pupils learn communication and presentation skills, not to mention it being very enjoyable! Last year the performances included: Christmas Concert; Christmas Lights Switch-On; Carols in the Community; KS2 Showcase; KS3 Showcase; Talent Show; Summer Concert; Songs from the Shows. Many of our pupils took on leading roles and were part of ensembles and performed at a very high level. Currently the pupils in Show Choir are gearing up for next week's QEHS Winter Concert in which they will perform songs from Chicago and Beauty and the Beast.



Please keep an eye on the school's newsletter and social media accounts for information about upcoming performances.

Some tickets are still available for the Winter Concert: [here](#).

English Creative Project (Years 7 and 8)

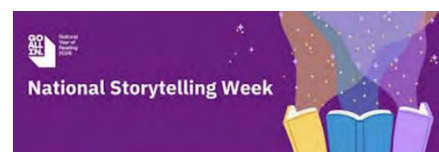


It's time to launch our annual creative project for pupils in Years 7 and 8. This is an exciting opportunity to enhance their Shakespeare studies and English learning through research, creativity and freedom of expression. Pupils can draw, paint, build, use technology, compose, make or sculpt, write, bake, sew, knit or crochet. Task instructions have been shared with pupils in lessons. The deadline is 30th March and there'll be a showcase gallery to follow. We can't wait to see the wonderful projects once again!

HMS Library Event

Celebrating National Storytelling Week (All Year Groups)

At HMS, we promote a culture of reading for pleasure. As a part of this and to celebrate National Storytelling Week, HMS staff have kindly volunteered to read aloud stories, poems or extracts of their choice in HMS Library over lunchtime on Wednesday 4th February. Pupils are invited to sit back, take a few minutes to relax during their busy day and enjoy being read to. Please encourage your child to come along. Mystery readers to be revealed on the day!



Personal Development Updates

World Religion Week Assemblies (All Year Groups)

This week, students have been taking part in their second round of PERS People assemblies - welcoming people of different faiths and belief systems into School to experience what life is like for them. Students in Year 8 heard from Kirtida from the ISKON Hindu Temple; supporting their PERS scheme of work on Hinduism and helping to bring the religion to life. They particularly enjoyed the demonstration of drumming from Kirtida. Years 5 and 6 have been able to start their philosophical journey with Ms Buxton Collins as she explained to them the key philosophical skills of active listening and Socratic questioning. Students were then able to look at different impetus to aid their discussion. Year 7 will have their assembly next week - we hope they're looking forward to it!



First Aid Week (All Year Groups)



This week has been our annual 'First Aid Week'. As a school, we are very proud to offer every pupil an annual training workshop in vital first aid skills. It has been great to welcome Steve from First Aid North East back into school to deliver a week of workshops. The sessions have covered a wide range of vitally important first aid skills and some year groups were also able to learn more about mental health first aid. Huge thanks to the HMS PTFA for their generous support of this opportunity - we value these sessions as part of our Stay Safe and Well Curriculum. Thank you, Steve - we have all taken away very important messages this week.

Clubs Update

NEW KS3 Cookery Club (Years 7 and 8)

Back by popular demand, the KS3 Cookery Club with Ms Kwella will be running again from **Wednesday 25th February until Wednesday 1st April**. This club will run from 3.20 until 4.20pm and gives pupils the opportunity to make a variety of sweet and savoury dishes and learn many important life skills. The club is funded by the school. Bookings will go live on BromCom

on **Saturday 31 January at 10am** and will initially show as full on MCAS - this is due to the operation a reserve list. Allocated pupils will be added to the club list and this will appear on the MCAS app. Parents should check their MCAS app for updates.

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 – 98%	3rd form class – 97.5%
6-FHA	6-RAL	5-YTA

Sports News

U13 boys' hockey

Well done to the Y7 & 8 hockey team who travelled to Yarm on Monday for a high-level competition. Despite playing against many county level players, the boys were great played really well and gave 100% commitment and energy. They managed to finish 6th overall, well done team!



Y8 boys' rugby vs Ponteland



On Thursday, HMS put in a great shift against a physical Ponteland side. The game swung back and forth on many occasions with Pont taking a narrow 20-15 lead at half time. Zach A scored a try on his debut after supporting a great run from Walt M. HMS looked excellent with the ball, moving it out wide on 2 separate occasions for Charlie P and Archie D to score in the corner. In the second half, Ponteland came out firing by scoring 2 more tries through the middle through their powerful runners, despite some fierce tackling from Rory A and Alex A, whilst captain Jacob A worked hard in the rucks and earning penalties for his side. HMS rallied late on with 2 powerful bursts from Daniel B-M but ultimately time got away from them as the final score finished 30-25 to the home team.

Maths News



TTRS Update (Years 5 and 6)

A big well done to all the pupils who took part in last week's TTRS competition! Congratulations to our winners, who achieved the best average speed, a brilliant reflection of their hard work and growing confidence with their times tables.

Bertie B, William A, Izobel O, Monty W, Alethea C, Archie H, Sophie C

Ronnie F, Elliott W, Evelyn C, Brooklyn D, Harry D

This week's challenge has now begun, and the focus is on percentage complete. This is a great opportunity for pupils to build accuracy. The competition remains open until Sunday, so there's plenty of time for anyone who would like to get involved. We can't wait to celebrate more successes next week, good luck to everyone taking part!

Number Day (All Year Groups)



Next Friday, 6th February, we will be celebrating [Number Day](#) with a range of fun activities across the school. Throughout the week, pupils can take part in our annual whole school competition, where they must track down the numbers displayed on staff lanyards for a chance to win, there will be two winners from each year group. We will also be running a Number T Shirt Competition, inviting pupils to design number themed T shirts. On the day itself, classes will enjoy a variety of engaging number based activities to celebrate maths in a fun way. We hope as many pupils as possible will get involved and share in the excitement of Number Day!

Teacher Treasure Hunt

- Your teachers will be wearing a number badge, and you need to find the correct number and staff name to answer the questions on your sheet.
- [The Rules](#)
- You can only use each teacher name once.
- You can only put one teacher for each number.
- The sheet must be completed for Friday the 6th February and returned to Miss Storey at FB11.

Design a number-themed T-shirt

- You can be as creative as you wish, using any numbers, mathematical symbols, or calculations to produce a fun and imaginative design.
- There will be two winners from each year group for every competition.
- Please hand in your T-shirt designs to Miss Storey in FB11 by Friday 6th February.
- Good luck!

Online Safety Update

For Parents - Set Up Safe Guide

Once again, Internet Matters have put together a brilliant new resource for parents and carers. This time it's a Set Up Safe guide which simplifies all the confusing tech/device settings advising that online safety works best when it's shaped around how children actually use their devices, it's all about 'layering'. Download and read the [Internet Matters Layer Up for Online Safety Guide](#). (by Alan Mackenzie, Online Safety Specialist).

News from the Community

Junior Bake Off

Love Productions, the production company behind The Great British Bake Off, The Great British Sewing Bee and The Great Pottery Throw Down, recently opened applications for the 12th series of **Junior Bake off**, a Channel 4 competition series celebrating Britain's young baking talent! We are looking for young budding bakers between **9-15 years old** and

interested bakers can apply online at www.applyforjuniorbakeoff.co.uk. Filming would take place from July 2026, but our **applications close on Sunday 15th March 2026**.

HMS Go Green Uniform Recycling

A reminder that our 'Go Green Uniform Recycling' is available all year round. We have a good stock of items in school and our PTFA do a great job at keeping this organised and replenished. If you need replacement or additional uniform items, please get in touch. You can make requests for items via our online form.



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 2 February	Ski Trip – away until Saturday 7 th February	KS3 (group)
Tuesday 3 February	QE Winter Concert : also starring HMS Singers	All welcome
Tuesday 3 February	BEE Netball	Years 5 and 6 (group)
Wednesday 4 February	Year 8 Parents' Evening (2)	Year 8
Wednesday 4 February	Storytelling Event – HMS Library	All year groups
Thursday 5 February	Ford Castle Residential Parent Info Evening – 5pm	Year 5
Thursday 5 February	Be You Workshop – Sleep Hygiene	Year 7
Thursday 5 February	Table tennis competition vs Corbridge	Selected pupils Years 6, 7 and 8
Friday 6 February	Table tennis competition vs Corbridge	Selected pupils Year 6
Friday 6 February	Netball and basketball fixtures vs Corbridge	Selected pupils Years 7 and 8
Wednesday 11 February	PTFA Spring Discos – sign up here	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).