

Heathlands Newsletter - Autumn Term 2018



Dear Parents,

As you already know I will be retiring as Head Teacher of Heathlands in July 2019. I am therefore enjoying all the Christmas celebrations for the last time and they are just as enjoyable and special as my first Christmas here 25 years ago. I am writing this feeling very full after eating Christmas dinner and can see the children walking down the path so excited having received their presents from Father Christmas in his blue bus.

Best of all I can now share with parents the excellent news that from September 2019 Heathlands will have not one but two Head Teachers. The governors have appointed Mrs Reeves-Costi and Mrs Shields as Co-Heads. They will share Head Teacher responsibilities whilst also continuing to hold some of their current remit. Co-Headship is an exciting and innovative idea and more details of how this will work at Heathlands will follow next year. We are very fortunate to have two such well-qualified and experienced candidates to lead Heathlands into the future and I know they will do an excellent job for all the children.

I hope you all have a relaxed and peaceful holiday and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Deborah Jones-Stevens

Bad Weather—Snow Closure

We have escaped the snow so far but the Spring term is usually when we have most disruption from bad weather. We will try to give early notice by text to parents and taxis if the school is closed. Please make sure the school office have an up to date text number for you.

Remember we can only make an assessment about the weather conditions in the St Albans area. Lots have children have long journeys so parents must decide if travel is safe in your home area.

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Lower and Middle School - Autumn Term

Middle School 2 started the term learning about 'Forces' in Science. They investigated how applying force can change the effects of gravity. They made a special device to see if they could keep water in a cup whilst swinging the cup around and upside down. The students had a good laugh as they tested their devices as some initially failed and the cups went flying, but in the end everyone was successful and had a good time.



Otters class learnt about healthy foods and how to peel, grate and chop salad



vegetables for their 'faces' on crackers. They made an otter, owl, cat, dog and rabbit faces. Can you recognise them all?



Deer class found out about different types of teeth and their functions. They loved finding the different types of teeth inside their own mouth!



Middle School 1, Moles and Squirrels went to an inclusive sports morning event at Saracens rugby ground. They got to work on their fitness with special warm ups before learning how to kick a rugby ball correctly and completing a dance routine for their cool down. They all had a lot of fun and worked well together.

Hedgehog Class spent a lovely morning at the flour mill learning about how grain is turned into flour which is used to make bread! The children were little bakers for a while and made their own small rolls using mill flour!



Squirrels class made their own coloured rice and used it to make Rangoli patterns to support their learning about Diwali and Hinduism.



It was good to see so many families at the Lower school Harvest Festival in October.

Thank you to the middle school pupils who helped organise and run some of the activities.



At the beginning of November Hedgehogs Class had their first Secret Story Teller visit! The story was about Jasper the cat which the children thoroughly enjoyed and drew pictures of! Please let us know (in secret!) if you would like to be a volunteer signing Secret Story Teller to the EYFS class.



Middle School 2 and Middle School 3 travelled to Stoke Bruerne to visit the canal museum and see how a canal lock operates.





A small group of Middle School students from Heathlands School were selected to attend a Sustainable Schools training

day at The Farm School in Kinsbourne Green. The event was hosted by Sustainable St Albans. Students shared examples of work done at their respective schools on the topic of sustainability. It was a really informative day with some excellent hands on activities for the students



Squirrels class had an exciting trip to Center Parcs. They met Father Christmas and his elves, we even taught them to sign 'Merry Christmas'.



Deer and Moles class thoroughly enjoyed a trip to the

British Schools Museum. They took themselves back to the 1800s and became students in the school. Pupils also learnt what life was like for children in the 1800s outside school.



The Heathlands Harmony choir went Carol singing in town and, along with the PTA, raised an amazing £325.05 towards the bus.



We are very proud of Heathlands Harmony choir who, on 11th November, took part in the St Albans Parade and Festival of Remembrance to mark 100 years since the end of the first world war. The choir paraded, laid a poppy wreath on the war memorial on behalf of the school and performed a special version of "We vow to thee our country", written especially by Mrs Brinsden,



MS3 students have been learning about the properties of solids, liquids and gases. Using a cornflour and water mixture, they saw the mixture moving round easily and flowing like a liquid then when you make a ball (because of force applied) the particles are jammed together like a solid.



Hedgehogs Class went on a nature walk and found a long 'snake log'!...the children worked out the best way to carry it back to their class. Lift and carry as a team!



Lower school now have a reading club in the library on Wednesdays.

Much emphasis was made to the children at the beginning of the session that libraries should be quiet places, but laughter was in abundance when children selected some very funny books indeed and shared them with their friends.



Foxes class have made Santa advent calendars. They are very excited and counting down every day by cutting the number off Santa beard.



Congratulations to Deers class who won a competition run by the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) to design Christmas decorations for one of their trees. The children's prize was to spend a day at RHS Wisley

and to decorate their tree.



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Upper School - Autumn Term 2018

Deaf Hope worked with our US1 class in September on hand hygiene. Students learnt how easy it is to pass germs on. Students were shocked at the amount of hidden germs in the classroom!



Our mentoring training aims to support the well-being of pupils, as well as encourage them to help and learn from each other and develop important life skills, such as empathy, commitment to others and team work.

We selected a small group of students to become peer mentors to be a role model for younger students and help them to resolve everyday school issues. Congratulations to those who have been appointed.



In mid-September, KS4 students went for a weekend field trip to Cromer in Norfolk. They completed work to

prepare for their Geography and Science exams. There were also lots of different fun activities such as climbing, archery and making bottle rockets! Saturday was



spent at two different beaches collecting data on long shore drift, pebble size and practising field sketches.



Sunday was spent in a river with waders on, although some still managed to get wet! We measured the width, depth and speed of the river and then tried to



identify the different species of animals living in each section. It was a really good weekend with everyone getting



on well and working together as a team for all the course work and activities. We all really loved the food.

A group of students were invited to participate in a drama workshop at a local



secondary school. They were led by the main school drama teacher and supported by two of the Heathlands staff who both have drama degrees.



GCSE drama students have been creating characters through hot seating and used these characters to tell a story



We have established four focus groups to collect feedback from students so that we can improve things in school for our students. The focus groups are:



Learning culture, Eco, Health & Well-being and Sports.

Senior students are now running a very small equipment shop every Wednesday lunch time to sell school equipment such as pencils, pens, and sharpeners. Running a shop like this will boost students' academic and life skills through entrepreneurial experience.





US9 students have been learning about compounds. They made iron sulphide from iron and sulphur.

Year 9 have created information videos about the importance of getting a good night's sleep. The videos can be seen on the TVs in the reception area of school.



Should school uniform in the UK be banned? This was the topic students debated led by senior students one

lunch time. The next topic will be - is Brexit a good idea? Every two weeks there will be a lunch time debate to help our students to develop their communication skills.

In Science, students in US1 have been learning about respiration. They made a model of lungs using balloons and a plastic bottle.



In November, Miss Monk's reading group went to STAGS to meet one of their favourite teen fiction authors, Holly Smale. They had their

books signed and asked her lots of questions about her famous book series, Geek Girl. The group were inspired and one is considering to follow Smale's path in becoming an author!



US4 students have been learning about solar and lunar eclipses.



Monday 12th of November was Odd Socks day at Heathlands, the first day of Anti - Bullying Week. Later in the week, Upper school had an assembly on the theme of 'Choose Respect'. A student gave a short talk on why respect is so important.



GCSE Science students have been learning about the physics of waves. They did a practical to learn about the two main waves: transverse and longitudinal.



At the start of October some Upper School students went to the science museum in London. There was a deaf presenter who explained in

BSL about engineering. Good demonstrations were shown about what engineers do and got the students all involved in sharing solutions to particular engineering problems. After the show they had time to explore things in their hands-on Wonderlab gallery.



Year 11 visited the Dacorum Schools Careers Fair just before half term and met with a wide range of different employers in the local area. After a nervous



start, the students enjoyed asking questions and collecting free 'stuff'. We were only allowed to stay for one hour (as all the schools in the area were there at some point



during the day) and it was over too soon. A few of us have changed our minds what we would like to do in the future after the visit.



Students in Upper School were given their first Masterclass for their Arts Award Project by Ashley Kendall, it was

brilliant! Ashley taught them his top three rules for acting in front of the camera and watched and advised each group of students on how to improve their character. Lots of techniques to practise before they film their next scene. A massive thank you to Ashley for agreeing to teach us!





The Drama option group have been learning about Theatre of the Oppressed. They created a piece of drama based on the lack of subtitles in cinemas.



One of the peer mentors delivered a presentation on the topic of internet safety to the Middle School students.



In GCSE science, students have been measuring the current and voltage in an electric circuit with a resistor connected.



A group of year 10 students have received their interim certificates in assembly because they have all achieved their ICT qualification. Every student attained an A* - Congratulations! This counts as one of their five GCSEs needed for sixth form entry. They are now going to study for their Media GCSE, which they aim to achieve by the end of year 11.



The Health and Well-being focus group senior students made an interesting display to show the amount of sugar in foods and drinks. The display is to encourage students to think about what they are consuming.



One of the peer mentors gave a presentation in the Middle School assembly about why it is so important for us to exercise and look after ourselves.



In Upper School Assembly, Student Leaders for the Eco Group did a presentation about the danger of plastics in the oceans. They organised a plastic free day in school on Monday 17th December. If you would like to donate £1 they will send it to Plastic Oceans, a charity hoping to clean up all the plastics from our seas.



At the start of December, the School Council organised a hot chocolate sale at break-time to help fund raise for Kadect. They raised a whopping £30 in 15 short minutes! Well done.



In December, US5 did a presentation in both Upper and Lower School Assemblies to remind people to look after the school environment. They have helped buy new mats and boot scrapers so people can remove any mud from their shoes before entering the school. They worked as a team to organise the campaign which is for their Humanities qualification.



Students in US4 have had a go at teaching their peers. They have been preparing their presentations and information sheets on coastal landforms in lessons and for homework.



One group looked at cliffs and wave cut platforms, the second group found out about headlands, bays and coves. The final group explained how caves, arches, stacks and stumps are formed. It was great to see their good teamwork and communication skills in action.

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Heath House - Autumn Term 2018

It has been another really busy term in Heath House for the children and young people. They have been taking part in a wide variety of activities and are still continuing to commit to various clubs. Some new students have also developed an interest and joined some of these clubs.

Independence skills: Throughout this term the children and young people have been working on developing their independence skills. They have been going out walking in the local community regularly. They walk to the shops to buy cookery ingredients for school lessons or to just buy a magazine and a snack.



Park visits: This term the children have been having fun and keeping active by going to the local parks to play as well as using the outdoors exercise equipment.



Cooking: Throughout this term the children have continued to be involved in cooking the evening meals. They have learnt a wide variety of new skills as well as new recipes.



Gardening project: The children have continued to look after and maintain the vegetable patch and we have managed to grow a number of vegetables which we have been using in our evening meals. One such Heath House favourite is the Ragu which has seven different vegetables in it, four of which we grow ourselves.



Guides/Brownies:

The girls have continued to earn badges in Guides and Brownies.



Cinema: This term we have been to the cinema to see *Fantastic Beast: The Crimes of Grindelwald*. The children really enjoyed these visits.



Vets: This term the children have been responsible for taking the rabbits to the vets for their injections.





Climbing: This term some of the students showed an interest to learn how to rock-climb. Lena booked a training centre. The boys had a really enjoyable time and learnt lots of new skills. One of the boys said: "I went to rock climbing with my friend, I learnt to climb different walls, some easy, some more challenging and I got to the top."

Quasar: During one of our pupil meetings the children requested to go to Quasar. All the children really enjoyed themselves and had a positive time. The children were split in to two teams and faced off against each other to see who would win. One child said: "I really enjoy Quasar, with friends we have fun. I tried my best my team blue we won".

Pumpkin farm and meal:

At Halloween the children went to a pumpkin farm, then for a meal and also had a Halloween party. The children had to learn how to carve their own pumpkin. One primary student said: "I went pumpkin farm choose own pumpkin for Halloween party. After we went to the Harvester for a meal it was great."



Halloween party: The children enjoyed their Halloween party, they were able to dress up and we had a competition for the best outfit, as well as best carved pumpkin.



Snorkelling: This term five additional students have joined snorkelling. Some pupils have even moved on to playing underwater hockey and are now scoring regularly. One boy said: "I enjoyed do snorkelling every week I learn how swim under water with fins and snorkel."

Theatre: The children went to see a Christmas Carol they had a great time.

Christmas decorations: The pupils helped to decorate Heath House ready for the family Christmas party. They spent time making decorations but were also given a budget by staff and then went out shopping for decorations. One child said: "We excited see mum and dad for Christmas party. We make lost of decorations been cooking lots we make mince pies, ginger bread men and profiteroles."



Heath House

Christmas party:

The children really enjoyed themselves at this years Christmas party. They ate lots of lovely food and played games in the hall with their families. The children are now looking forward to Centre Parcs next week.



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BSL Centre - Autumn Term 2018

With Christmas only a week away we have been busy with the first exams for some classes and mock exams for others. Our new learners have settled in well and are enjoying their courses. We have a large number of learners again this year, and it's been good to see new faces as well as returning learners.

In the Parents Group, it is lovely to see our regular parents supporting our new parents, offering advice and a supportive environment to share information. They have been working their way through the BSL level 1 curriculum with additional signs for home use and will also be developing their story telling skills.

The BSL Level 3 class have been learning about the Linguistics of BSL and how the language is created. They are enjoying learning about the history of BSL and the different educational methods used within schools for deaf children.

The Level 3 young people's group have impressed us with their learning of Linguistics, they have shown great maturity in learning this and then being able to put into practice.

BSL Level 4 are furthering their linguistic knowledge and learning how to self analyse their BSL production. They have enjoyed some heated debates on BSL as a GCSE and Education for Deaf Children.



BSL Level 1 classes have completed their first exams and are awaiting results. They are all still enthusiastic about learning new signs and being able to have basic conversations.



BSL Level 2 have been developing their vocabulary and learning basic BSL grammar. They enjoy the learning games we play and creating stories for homework.



BSL Level 6 are coming to the end of their course. They have worked hard filming and self-analysing clips to create their portfolios.

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Parents Page - Autumn Term 2018

For those of you who missed our Friends of Heathlands AGM, these are the faces you need to know!

Meet our FoH team.

Neal is carrying on as Chair, Alison has agreed to one more year as Secretary and Lacie has now taken on the job of Treasurer.



Neal



Alison



Lacie

Bus Stop



After raising £3500 at the Summer fete, FoH decided to buy a bus! We hope that it will arrive in January. The bus will be used for a range of activities including a community café, a pop up nail bar, a space for workshops and a place for parents to get support from each other over a cup of tea. The children could also use it for fundraising by selling ice creams and cakes. Please help us to raise money to complete the project at

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/heathlandscommunitybus>



We were lucky enough to come top in the Tesco Bags of Help voting (July/August) and were awarded £4000

towards another trampoline to go in Upper School. This was installed over half term.



Beetle Drive

Thanks to everyone that attended our successful beetle drive. It was great to see families mixing up to play this competitive game. A lot of fun had by all!



Dates for your diary—2019

- * An evening with the stars BSL tour

Thursday 17th January 5-7pm



An opportunity to look through a telescope!

- * International Food and Culture Night

Saturday 30th March 4-6pm

Bring and share food, clothes, dances...



- * Arty Party

Saturday 29th June 10-4pm

Visit our art gallery! Art from the children across the school and over the year. Also come and learn a new skill e.g. origami or arm knitting.



Watch out for...

**Science at Home workshop,
E-safety workshop,
Bus Stop opening!**

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A MESSAGE FROM JULIA TRUEMAN, CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Have you considered becoming a school governor?

The Governing Board of our school consists of 13 members. We have 2 elected parent governors but vacancies for co-opted governors and would welcome interest from parents and members of the community, deaf or hearing, to fill this very rewarding role.

What do governors do?

Governors are responsible for setting the strategic direction and policies of the school and for monitoring all aspects of the school's work. Governors do not get involved in the day to day management or running of the school; that is the job of the Headteacher and her team.

Our current governors have a lot of experience in education and pupil welfare. Therefore, we would particularly welcome interest from those with experience in the areas of business and finance or in buildings and premises issues. However, as we have several vacancies, we would be pleased to hear from anyone who feels they might like to get involved, whatever their background.

What is the commitment?

- 5 Governing Board meetings per year
- 3 committee meetings a year
- Occasional school visits

Meetings are usually 7.00pm at school although this might change. We have also recently experimented (successfully) with using facetime to allow remote involvement in a meeting when a governor is unable to attend in person. Documents and information are sent out prior to the meeting so that governors can be prepared for the discussions. A BSL interpreter attends all meetings.

In addition to meetings, governors are linked to an aspect of the School's work. They might then meet once or twice with the relevant member of staff to monitor how it is going and what it involves. This can be one of the most rewarding parts of a governor's role.

So, what next?

I do hope you will give some consideration to the role of School governor. It is important for the school but it is also very satisfying to know that you are supporting the children's education in a real and practical way. The Local Authority provides voluntary training, including a very useful induction course which is recommended for all governors.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact the school. We could then arrange an informal meeting with the Headteacher and me as Chair of Governors, when we could answer any other queries you may have.



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Term dates for Academic Year 2018-2019

Spring Term 2019

Inset Day	Mon 7 January 2019 (no pupils in school)
Term Starts	Tues 8 January 2019
Half Term Holiday	Mon 18 February 2019– Fri 22 February 2019
Term Ends	Fri 5 April 2019 @ 12.30 pm

Summer Term 2019

Term Starts	Tuesday 23 April 2019
Bank Holiday	Monday 6 May 2019
Half Term Holiday	Monday 27 May 2019 – Friday 31 May 2019
Term Ends	Friday 19 July 2019 @ 12.30 pm
Inset Days	Mon 22 July 2019 – Wed 24 July 2019 (no pupils in school)

Any changes or amendments will be announced on our website
www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk