



Heathlands School

Progress Report and Self-Evaluation Summary

September 2019



Heathlands is a community Special School for Deaf children aged 3-16 maintained by Hertfordshire County Council. It serves as a regional centre of expertise and at the start of the 2018/19 school year have pupils on roll from 25 education authorities. Heathlands is currently funded for 110 planned places, the demand for places is high.

Heathlands caters for children who need a total communication approach to access learning. Children have the requirement for sign language or sign support in their Education, Health and Care Plan. Thus consideration is given to children irrespective of their audiograms so that the child's needs and functioning are prime considerations rather than medical criteria.

Heathlands is a school for all Deaf children and, like many mainstream schools, has some children on roll who have needs in addition to deafness such as learning difficulties or delay, social, emotional or mental health needs, sensory or physical impairment.

In September 2012 the school became an all age school on a single site having previously been split across three locations. Extensive building and re-modelling of the premises has ensured the suitability of the teaching accommodation for the full age range.

Heathlands works collaboratively with other local schools and in September 2017 joined other local secondary schools and academies in a mutually supportive Umbrella Trust with . The school is also very active within the national Deaf community.

CONTEXT

Heathlands has a very culturally diverse school community. The largest single group is children from white British backgrounds. In addition there are very large groups of children of Eastern European and Asian Heritage.

52% of pupils are from deaf family backgrounds with sign the main language at home or have deaf siblings.

37% of children have needs in addition to their deafness. For some this is a medical condition whilst for others it may be a physical and/or sensory disability or a learning difficulty.

Currently 41% of children are eligible for free school meals.

Staff Development

Distinctive Features and Challenges

- We have a small, outstanding weekly boarding base for up to 20 children.
- A large number of staff and parents are deaf themselves so are excellent role models for Heathlands' pupils.
- Cohorts are sometimes small, numbers are unpredictable and learning needs vary. We regularly re-view the curriculum offer to ensure it is appropriate.
- In recent years the school has admitted increasing numbers of pupils with needs in addition to deafness
- Some parents and families struggle to learn BSL at the level needed to support their Deaf children.
- Many pupils live far from school. They have long journeys to school and we have to think creatively about how to connect with parents.
- The high number of Local Authorities placing children at Heathlands means we have to work hard on relationships and administrative issues.

We have a highly motivated and skilled staff team. They are committed to their own development and that of the school. We have

- ◆ Subject specialists across the curriculum
- ◆ Qualified teachers of Deaf children and four staff currently being trained
- ◆ Staff undertaking higher level BSL courses. A large proportion of staff are native BSL users
- ◆ Staff undertake further accredited professional study e.g. masters degrees, NVQ4 in management, SENCO qualification, NVQ3 in child care
- ◆ Staff trained to meet individual needs e.g. diabetes management or to deliver physio/ occupational therapy programmes
- ◆ Three staff trained as STEPS behaviour management trainers.



Ofsted Inspection

“Children flourish and make excellent progress as a result of this exceptional school and residential provision.”

Heathlands had its last full inspection in September 2017 and was assessed to be outstanding in all areas. This was followed by an annual inspection of boarding provision in June 2018 when the school was again judged to be outstanding in all areas.

Ofsted Inspectors said.....

Leadership

“Leaders at all levels are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. They are committed to ensuring that deaf pupils receive the best possible education and care.”

“Leaders are constantly evaluating the quality of education pupils receive. They question and challenge each other to keep improving the school.”

Teaching

“Teaching is outstanding because all adults who work with pupils know their individual special needs exceptionally well. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled and adapt activities so that pupils achieve extremely well.”

“Pupils are given every opportunity to shine and develop their skills and understanding through the projects they are involved in.”

“The use and understanding of information and communication technology stands out as an exceptional feature across the school.”



Personal Development and Behaviour

“Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.”

“The exceptional culture of safety in the school makes a strong contribution to pupils’ outstanding personal development and welfare.”

“There is excellent behaviour in all lessons because pupils like and respect the adults who work with them.”



Outcomes

“Children have an outstanding start to their education in the early years.”

“Pupils make outstanding progress from their very varied starting points.”

Since then we have continued to improve

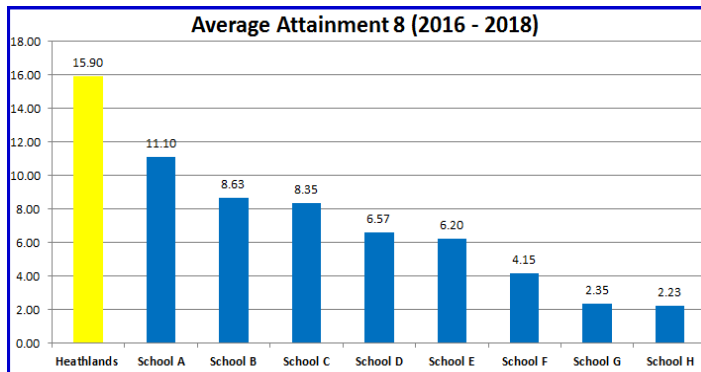
- ◆ A modern foreign language is now offered at KS4
- ◆ Textiles has been introduced into the curriculum
- ◆ We collaborated with local providers to offer a bespoke curriculum for students with additional learning needs covering life skills and transitions
- ◆ Personal Learning and thinking skills have been embedded into the curriculum at KS3/4

- ◆ Improvements have been seen in writing in Lower School.
- ◆ Classrooms have been updated with interactive ‘Clever Touch’ screens
- ◆ Provision for outdoor play and PE has been enhanced with an outdoor gym, long jump, shot put and trampoline
- ◆ Staff have continued to achieve qualifications in BSL and QTS or TOD status.

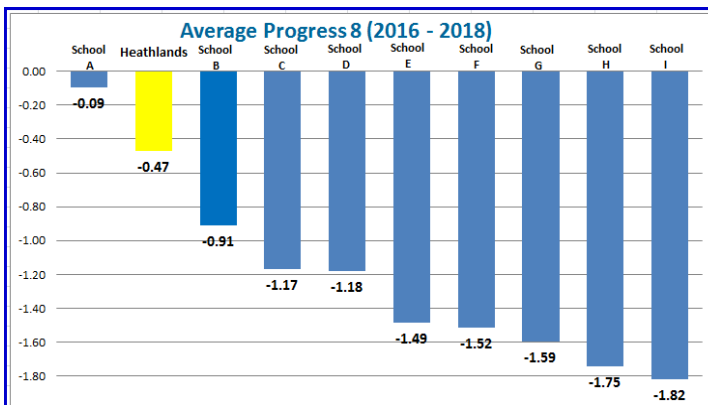
PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

With a very small cohort in 2018, data was 'suppressed' on government performance tables. An average score using available data for the past 3 years has been calculated to compare performance with other deaf schools nationally.

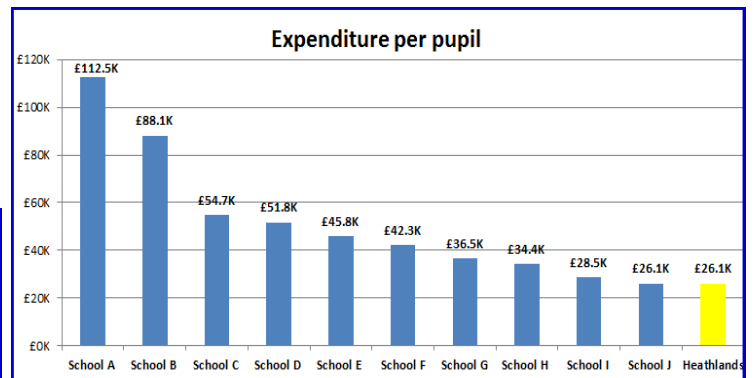
Heathlands achieved the highest average attainment of all deaf schools using sign language.



Heathlands has the 2nd highest average progress 8 score of schools for deaf children nationally.



Heathlands has achieved these results with the lowest per pupil expenditure of all schools for deaf children - indicating outstanding 'value for money'.



Heathlands has consistently been one of the highest performing Special schools nationally.

Pupil progress is closely monitored using the Heathlands Tracker and through termly pupil progress meetings enabling intervention at an early stage where appropriate.

Pupil progress monitoring for 2018/19:

- ◆ In Lower School 89% made good or outstanding progress, 100% making steady progress or better.
- ◆ In Upper School over 95% of KS3 pupils and 65% of KS4 pupils made good or outstanding progress, with over 90% (KS4) making steady progress or better.
- ◆ At all Key Stages, the progress of disadvantaged children broadly matched that of their peers with greater progress noted in areas of English following specific intervention for students in receipt of pupil premium. 93% of lower/middle pupil premium pupils made good or outstanding progress compared to 87% of non pupil premium. At KS3 there was no overall difference. The KS4 cohort was too small to make comparison.

We now need to:

Support students at KS4 to effectively internalise key subject knowledge to maximize external examination performance and achievement of target grades.

Communication and Language at the heart of learning.

Speech and Language Therapy

Our school is special because language and communication is at the centre of all we do. Language is the key to unlock all other learning: thinking, reasoning, understanding and literacy. Heathlands teachers are additionally qualified to work with Deaf children so have a high level of expertise in this respect.

In 2018/19 we improved our provision for Speech and Language therapy

- Lego and board games clubs at lunchtimes were a regular feature for students to focus on future work and communication skills.
- Our children's therapy room was refurbished to include updated technology now available as a support to communication development
- Parents have had opportunities to observe their child's SaLT sessions and see progress.
- The staff team received Word Aware, a SaLT based teaching approach to develop and strengthen vocabulary. This has been taken forward as a focus for whole school development in the coming year.

Heathlands Provision to develop our pupils' language and communication includes...

Speech and Language therapy

- Pool of experienced Speech and Language therapists and therapy assistants
- Child centred programmes based on assessed need.
- 1 to 1 and group therapy.
- Close collaborative work with classroom staff.
- Provision of programmes such as smILE, Live English and Lego therapy.
- Lunchtime SALT clubs
- Inclusion opportunities

Specialist Teachers

- Qualified Teachers of Deaf children
- Specialist and experienced staff delivering the National Curriculum appropriately for deaf pupils.
- Signing skills allow fluent two way communication between child and adults in the classroom
- Language development at the core of all teaching
- Speech targets embedded across the curriculum
- Total communication approach matches the communication needs of the child while developing the child's signed language and their speech/ lip-reading.

The Deaf child at the centre

Audiology

- On site audiology clinic
- Specialist audiology assistant
- Visits from county educational audiologist
- Hearing aid and implant checks
- Training for children to be independent users
- Impressions for ear moulds taken on site.
- Liaison with child's local clinic/ implant centre.
- Repairs co-ordinated.
- Individual Roger radio aids and soundfield systems
- Optimum acoustic conditions in classrooms

Learning Support Assistants

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) within class groups providing a range of

- Academic support
- Language development
- Emotional support
- Support for developing social skills
- Encouraging independence
- Mentoring

NEXT STEPS

A whole school focus on developing a strengthening and improving vocabulary as Deaf learners supported by our specialist speech and language therapists.

What did we improve in 2018/19?

Whole School Reading

This year the focus was on improving whole school reading. Staff training took the form of curriculum meetings and Inset with training running regularly for all. Students were tested twice in the year using the New Salford Sentence Reading Test (NSSRT) which gave a reading and comprehension age. This data was used to track pupil progress and led to interventions.

The accelerated reading groups were created on the reading ability of students, allowing staff to be more structured in their response to developing reading. This approach benefited students and allowed for some flexibility on the reading program.

Pupil premium money was allocated for students who needed additional support with reading in addition to the in class support.

Parental sessions were offered in the form of workshops and twilight sessions so that parents understood the importance of developing reading at home.

Impact:

- ◆ Teaching staff trained to deliver key interventions to develop reading.
- ◆ LSAs trained how improve their reading skills.
- ◆ More focused reading sessions.
- ◆ Pupil premium used to support students.
- ◆ Some parents furthered their understanding of developing reading at home.
- ◆ Positive reading culture promoted in school.
- ◆ Analysis of where pupils were presenting difficulties in the second round of the NSSRT testing showed that vocabulary knowledge is the biggest factor holding pupils back and key to developing strong reading skills.

Next steps

From this staff identify the need to develop vocabulary knowledge. Following Word Aware training staff have a wider range of tools to support pupils to develop vocabulary.

SEMH

Over the last year we have continued to develop the SEMH provision in school focusing on early interventions and emerging needs. We applied a consistent approach using Risk and Protective factors used throughout the school to assess concerns.

Early support plans were created for students who were identified and a program of interventions created. The number of therapies offered in school increased, offering 2 therapists, music therapy and Lego club. 15% of the school community benefitted from the counselling and as a result were secure and able to engage with their learning.

Sign Health approached the school and have asked to work in collaboration to develop national SEMH provision for Deaf students.

The appointment of an activities leader ensured a wider variety of clubs and activities on offer.

Impact :

- ◆ Deaf Camhs referrals decreased and changed in nature. Previously these were for students in crisis but now are for identification of an undiagnosed need.
- ◆ Consistent procedures used in all areas of the school.
- ◆ Funding for the counsellor was secured.
- ◆ Last year 16 students received counselling through the school provision.
- ◆ More students engaged via the Activities leader.

Next steps

To continue supporting students with SEMH and emerging needs.

To continue working with Sign Health to develop in house and National provision.

What did we improve in 2018/19?

Speech and Language therapy.

In 2018/19 both 'teams' of therapists, school based and NHS, worked on refining their collaboration in order to provide effective and speech and language provision to all students. This was also extended to working with staff and developing training opportunities across the school.

An inclusion programme was developed further to include speech and language therapists who would then use follow up sessions in school to embed good communication techniques.

Parents were also a focus with further opportunities throughout the school year for parents to meet with their child's therapist and also observe practice.

Impact

- ◆ Groups of students were effectively identified in which school based and NHS therapists could work together to focus on SaLT targets.
- ◆ Teachers showed a desire for more contact with therapists so SaLT surgeries have been established. This will also benefit staff who are currently in training too.
- ◆ Students are more confident when on inclusion placements with the follow up SaLT sessions highlighting and resolving any difficulties each week.
- ◆ Parents feel better supported in working on their child's SaLT targets at home having seen examples of skills they are working on.
- ◆ SaLT based training has led to a whole school focus on developing and improving Deaf students vocabulary.

Next steps

To embed the training from Word Aware into a whole school focus on vocabulary development to further improve students literacy and communication skills.

Student leadership.

In 2018 /19 we further honed our student leadership program to ensure it was focused on developing leadership behaviour and skills. As this was the second year of delivering it was possible to analyse the impact of the previous year to draw out key areas for development.

During the year the student leaders delivered on a number of items ranging from a study skills workshop, assemblies, stationary shop, students council and eco awareness. They made continuous contributions towards the school community and developed presenting skills

Impact

- ◆ Students leaders more confident at delivering and presenting information.
- ◆ Staff notice impact on student ability to communicate ideas, contribute, mentor and as positive role models.
- ◆ Submission of student evidence some students achieved the ASDAN award.



Next steps

Promoting student skills to further develop work ethic and promoting pride in the school community. Promotion of student leaders to become positive role models at all times.

PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

We want all Heathlands' school leavers to have the skills to be active and positive contributors in their communities. We want them to be independent and able to manage the pressures of a modern world. In the 2017 /18 year we further improved our provision to prepare children for adulthood in four key areas of; Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Health.

Our self evaluation showed there are relevant activities happening across the whole school which contribute to the preparation for adulthood objectives. Activities have included:

- ◆ Increased careers talks and visits including many role models from the deaf community
- ◆ Heathlands' first careers fair
- ◆ Action research project on developing students' leadership skills
- ◆ Personalised PSHE programmes, mentoring and introduction of a school counsellor
- ◆ Opportunities to participate in local events and national deaf community events
- ◆ Activities to develop respect, tolerance and consideration for others e.g. charity fundraising, assemblies
- ◆ Residential trips and independent living programmes



NEXT STEPS

- ◆ Continued implementation of the student leadership project and training of peer mentors
- ◆ Introduction of student voice into SEN profiles
- ◆ A focus on further improving work ethic and resilience
- ◆ Implement updated independent living programme in Heath House

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES and ENRICHMENT 2018/19

Heathlands Harmony signing choir were kept busy in 2019. They performed at the St Albans Remembrance service, the o2 arena, STAGS in Colours festival and at M Fest.



Heathlands students are participating in the Arts Award experiencing masterclasses, creating their own film and hosting the first Heathlands Film Festival!



With the help of FoH, we bought a bus! This is a community space for everyone!



Heathlands' swimmers won the National Deaf U11s swimming challenge for the second year!



Staff have shared their knowledge and expertise by submitting articles for publication and presenting as speakers at conferences.



Upper school students enjoyed a weekend in Wales developing teamwork and collaboration skills.



KS2 students were involved in a series of Deafinitely Theatre workshops. We also watched Horrible Deaf History!



IT'S ALL ABOUT LEARNING

In 2018/19 Heathlands offered an extensive enrichment programme broadening opportunities and expectations for children and young people. So much learning happens outside the classroom. The key skills applied and new skills learnt stimulate constructive use of leisure time, raise confidence and self esteem, encourage leadership and community participation. In some cases the enrichment programme has triggered future career interests.



The newly established debate team have participated in interesting debates with local schools and another Deaf school.



Some Upper School students developed their communication skills through work experience out in the community.



Heathlands won the U11s 5-a-side football tournament for Deaf children for the third year running.



The whole school enjoyed Dr Audrey Cameron's visit and the Kitchen Chemistry workshops!

Upper school students competed in local maths challenges working alongside hearing peers

Staff and a student were nominated for local educational Awards, winning the Special recognition Award



EYFS had different Secret Storytellers every week to enthral them with a love of stories!



FoH were busy all year with a Beetle Drive, International Day and an Arty Party!

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019/20

Every year the school evaluates its work and sets new targets for development which are contained in the School Development Plan. Heathlands' vision statement "Become the best you can be" runs through all aspects of the SDP. Everything is focused on securing the best possible outcomes and experiences for pupils.

Lower School

- ◆ To foster a sense of curiosity in pupils (across the curriculum) and the ability to ask questions.
- ◆ To develop staff skills, knowledge and understanding of computing to improve the teaching of computing across the department.

Upper School

- ◆ Raise standards of attainment in English
- ◆ Improvement to raise standards of attainment across STEM subject areas
- ◆ Improvement to raise standards of attainment in Humanities and the Arts

Whole School Learning Strategy

- ◆ To focus on good practice and strategies for developing pupils vocabulary in order to develop:
 - Language and communication.
 - Enhanced Reading progress
 - Tools for independent writing.

Leadership and Strategy

- ◆ To ensure the staff re-structuring and new leadership groups impact effectively and proactively to ensure continued good outcomes for all learners.
- ◆ Refine and enhance teachers practice through developing CPD.
- ◆ To promote and develop improve staff wellbeing and attendance.

Pastoral Care and Heath House

- ◆ Developing appreciation and pride in Heathlands community whilst maturing in empathy and understanding for others.
- ◆ To maintain and develop early intervention strategies for young people with SEMH needs or emerging needs.
- ◆ Widen the leadership opportunities for students as part of preparation for adulthood.

Support and Access

- ◆ To develop the new Deputy SENCo role to work effectively with current SENCo to improve whole school SEN provision.
- ◆ To develop further and refine effective transition procedures for incoming and outgoing students with SEN.
- ◆ To develop SALT surgeries in order to enhance a continuous programme of speech and language development across the whole school.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS THINK

Student Leaders completed a survey of upper school students to find out their views.

Total replies: 58

Please grade the following statements by circling



5 = strong agreement / happens a lot



1 = disagree / happens a little

	1	2	3	4	5	1-2	3	4-5
I am happy in school.		3	10	33	12	5%	17.2%	77.5%
I feel included by others.	1	3	11	23	19	6.8%	18.9%	72.4%
I have deaf friends.		1	5	9	42	1.7%	8.6%	87%
I feel safe in school.	1	2	14	21	21	5.1%	24%	72.4%
I get homework.			5	18	35	0	8.6%	91.3%
I am learning well.		3	8	29	19	5.1%	13.7%	83%
I want good exam results.	1	4	9	16	28	8.6%	15.5%	76%
My English is improving.		5	13	14	27	8.6%	22.4%	71%
My communication skills (oral /BSL/oral) are improving.	2	2	11	21	22	6.9%	18.9%	74%
I am trying to show good behaviour in school.	1	1	7	19	29	3.4%	12%	83%
I like to do special activity in school e.g. STEM days.	3	2	8	15	25	8.6%	13.8%	69%
I am learning to be independent.	1	1	10	24	21	3.4%	17.2%	77.6%
I want more school trips or holiday.]	1	1	3		53	3.4%	5.2%	91.4%

Upper School Survey - What is important to you?

