

Heathlands Autumn Term Newsletter

December 2023

A message from the Co-Headteachers



Dear parents, carers, students and staff,



We would like to start by thanking you for your continuous support over the term. This term has been full of excitement, hard work and changes. Our new building is nearly completed and we look forward to welcoming students back to school in January when they will see the new classrooms.

One of the highlights of the term was seeing the children exploring the building site, taking tours of the new classrooms and asking the builders lots of interesting questions. We were amazed at the questions the students asked which leads us to believe we have some potential candidates for futures architects and project managers!

The work ethic at Heathlands remains strong with learning being at the forefront of all, it is a credit to the wonderful staff how well students have progressed over the term and how well our Year 11s have approached up coming examinations.

We are hoping that 2024 will continue to be positive for everyone at Heathlands. We are excited about the new year and all that it will bring with more students joining Heathlands, a completed new building and exciting plans for our first year of sixth form provision, which starts in September 2024.

At the end of term we need to say farewell to some of our staff who are moving on to new adventures. Ms Woodgate has worked at Heathlands for an incredible 35 years. During this time she has taught many students, several whom are now parents or some of our current teachers! We would like to thank her for her long continuous and dedicated service to Heathlands over the years and wish her well with her upcoming adventures.

Another long server at Heathlands who is now looking forward to retirement is Mrs Jordan who has worked in various roles over the years, lastly being the audiology assistant for both upper and lower. We wish her a restful and relaxing retirement and thank her for her commitment to Heathlands over 17 years.

Mr Deo is leaving at the end of this term, he has very much enjoyed working at Heathlands and working with the upper school students but needs to seek employment closer to his home. We wish him luck.

Mr Lee also leaves us, he has worked in upper school and in Heath House and has enjoyed his time at Heathlands. He leaves us to spend more time with his new family.

Ms Mohamed has been with us a short time but all of Moons class have enjoyed having her as their teacher. She will be missed as she leaves us to be closer to her family. In the new year we welcome Ms Smith who is looking forward to working with Moons and the Heathlands community.

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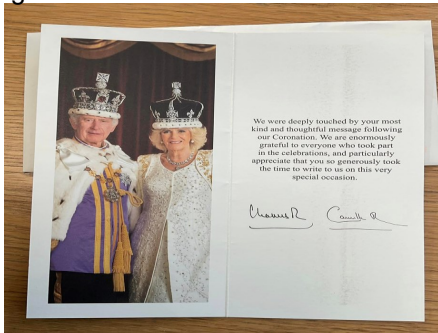
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We wish all our parents, staff and students a very happy Christmas and New Year.

We look forward to seeing you all in January 2024 when we re-start on 8th.

Lower School

This term we received an exciting letter with a card to us all from **King Charles** and Queen Camilla. The pupils had written to the King to congratulate him on his coronation.



A huge thank you to the pupils and parents for donating lots of tins to our **Harvest festival**. We collected & donated lots of tins to the food bank. Thank you to the children for your performances. It was a huge success!



Supernova and **Comet** class had a fantastic educational visit to 'The Vineyard Church' food bank in St Albans. They delivered all of the food that was donated to Heathlands for Harvest time and the food bank was extremely grateful.



Children in KS1 had a very special visitor come to school for **Children in Need**. You can view this on See Hear! on BBC iPlayer.



Moon class watched a PowerPoint called "We are all different, what makes you special?" They discussed the similarities and differences between themselves and others, such as eye colour, different types of hair, skin colour, and families. The children asked other pupils and staff if their hair was wavy, straight, curly or afro and labelled the pictures in the correct category.'

Nebula Class baked and decorated their own chocolate Christmas cupcakes. The **Bake Off** judge Mr Farooq was very impressed with all of them!



Remembrance Day



Pupils in **Rockets** Class created Remembrance Day Art. Pupils discussed that an act of remembrance is taking time to think about the sacrifices made for us by others.



With grateful thanks to **Burston Nurseries** for their generous donation of a Christmas tree to Heathlands this Christmas.



Heathlands School Facebook

Check out & 'like' the Heathlands School Facebook page for fantastic videos, photos and news!

facebook

Well done to everyone who took part in the egg design competition. It was such a hard choice we ended up with 10 winners instead of 2. Those **10 winners** just happened to show some EGG-CEPTIONAL designs.



The pumpkin in **Galaxy** class was feeling sad so the children thought of nice things they could write on it to cheer it up. The pumpkin now knows it has kind friends in the class and is feeling much happier.



Stars and Moon class have been exploring the senses, smell and taste. The children followed a recipe and made yummy coconut treats for the Sign and Play visitors. They used their noses to smell the ingredients then tasted the treats with their tongues.

Lower school pupils enjoyed an assembly video from **Sun** class (available to see on Facebook). The children acted out the story of Goldilocks and then explained how they used scenes from the story to write sentences supported by the shape coding "Who, doing, what?" (Subject, verb, object sentences.) Showing their writing to their peers in assembly.



Linked to their history topic learning about World War II, some of **Astronauts** class did a 'make do and mend' project. They designed and created bags and tops using a range of old clothes and materials.

In swimming lessons, students in **Astronauts** and **Nebula** class have been learning about water safety and self rescue. They have been able to fall backwards into the water, float on their back, take up the HELP position and tread water with one arm in the air to signal for help. They had to do this whilst wearing clothes additional to their swimwear. This was to simulate a real situation of falling in water.



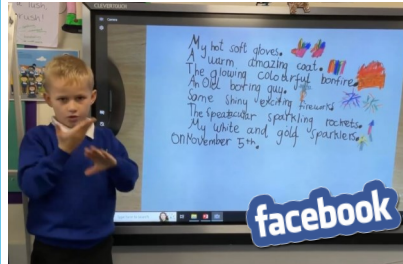
ROYAL AIR FORCE museum

Sun, Earth and Supernova classes had a fantastic time at the RAF Museum! The children saw aircraft from World War I and II, and even got to go inside a real aeroplane!

Rockets Class have been learning about rationing in World War II. The pupils learnt that much of our food and many other resources are imported and why rationing was therefore important during WW2. The pupils followed a 1940s wartime recipe to bake gingerbread biscuits and although they thought the biscuits looked nice, not many pupils like the taste!



Last month **Galaxy** class created poems using noun phrases, experimenting with using different adjectives. They wrote and signed their poems. You can see them being performed on our Heathlands Facebook page.



Some of the pupils from **Years 3 and 4** have been learning a new game in PE, Crab football.



Christmas Plays

Heathlands **EYFS Nativity play** was a huge success. Our younger students and staff worked very hard setting up & rehearsing the nativity, demonstrated by the children's confidence on stage. They did a great job, appreciated by all.

Huge thank you to the **Friends of Heathlands** who organised refreshments at the plays. A grand total of £168.50 was raised. Thank you all!



James and the Giant Peach by pupils from Key Stage 1. A huge well done to staff and pupils for your hard work with a fabulous performance. Thank you too to parents for the magnificent costumes.



Peter Pan by children from Lower Key Stage 2. Thank you to parents for the costumes, staff and pupils for your hard work and brilliant performance. It was really good to see so many parents and family members there to support their children.



Key Stage 2 Christmas Play **The Lion King**. The costumes, props, set, performance and everything in between was fantastic!



Susan Leonie one of our governors who attended the plays on Friday - thought it was wonderful and sends her thanks and congratulations to all staff and students, saying **"the students all shined!"**



Upper School



The pupils were very excited to be visiting the **new classrooms**, to see how far they have come. The builders showed them where the white boards will be, the air conditioning units, where it will connect to school and where the lift up to the second floor will go. The children had lots of questions.



We were lucky to have **Joanna Gardiner** visit us to talk about her volunteering work with the Royal Yachting Association. She spoke to all groups in Upper School and also some in KS2. It was interesting to hear about her passion for sailing and how important volunteering

is for the community. We hope that she will return to Heathlands and teach some of the students how to sail - but perhaps in the summer!

Heathlands School website

Check out the **Heathlands School website 'Parents page'** for current term dates, forms, school uniform, school meals, key documents and news!

<https://heathlands.herts.sch.uk/introduction-parents/>



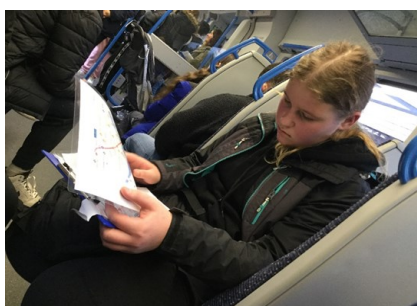
Some of our staff attended the **#BSLcurriculum** launch and some were part of the working group who developed it. Exciting times ahead!

The **Christmas Rewards Trip** this week was an exciting opportunity to explore Camden, London.



Anti-Bullying Week

For **Anti-Bullying week** and in Hertfordshire we stand against Bullying. In Upper School, students have been learning about the Equality Act and Protected Characteristics. We would like to say a huge thank you to our alumni pupils Davina and George who led the workshops for the students. Check out their video! @JustTalkHerts



Eta students did practical work to test which surfaces created more / less friction.



Well done to all of my **guitar students** this term who have been progressing really well! They have worked on a variety of songs by bands/artists such as Queen, Imagine Dragons and Ed Sheeran. There is also now a page on the website dedicated to BSL guitar tuition (visit: www.tomhunt.co.uk/bsl-guitar-tuition) where you can find more information about tuition as well as free lesson downloads, videos, TABs and more. I look forward to teaching students again next term!



We had a visiting Deaf pastry chef, **Summer Wheeldon**, who became deaf 3 years ago. She gave a talk with our KS4 students about her training and role at Sopwell House Hotel in St. Albans. The students asked her lots of questions about her career.



In the **after school GCSE tutoring**, students did practical work to further understand how to plan and carry out an investigation to determine the reactivity of metals.



It was great to welcome our **Dutch friends** again on their trip to the UK. Beta students did a great job showing them around the school before some very brave Dutch students delivered a presentation to KS4 in English. After sampling our school lunch, they had some time with Iota, Theta and Delta to discuss similarities and differences between life in the Netherlands and here and to learn some Dutch signs.



Alpha students have been learning about how electromagnets are used. They made a loud-speaker and followed instructions very well.

Lambda students discovered how to use functions to analyse data in a spreadsheet and learnt how to automatically create charts from data. They have been introduced to four functions: SUM, MAX, MIN, and COUNTA. Functions allow them to very quickly calculate results.



Year 11s had a zoom presentation from **Hamilton Lodge** students to find out about different post 16 courses available there. It was great to see 2 ex students amongst the current students so confidently sharing their experiences. It's good for our students to see the range of options available to them when they leave Heathlands.



Epsilon students went to Costa Coffee, St Albans this term. Students discussed & planned a route to St Albans. Enjoying a hot chocolate at the coffee shop & receiving certificates for their achievement.

One student in US led a fantastic assembly teaching us about the important achievements of some **black women in history**.



Parents or guardians of Heathlands students can call Heathlands School in BSL via SignDirectory using the school website!



Well done to Year 11 (and some Year 10) on their **mock exams**. Here are some of them working hard at lunchtime, revising.

Gamma & Omicron students were motivated to cook their own dishes. They opted for things, such as chicken fajitas, gingerbread, home-made pizza and macaroni cheese.



A group of KS3 pupils went to Derby to participate in a **cross country run** with other deaf children from different schools across the UK. All the pupils from Heathlands represented the school fantastically. Heathlands came first for both KS3 girls and boys team categories - Well done to all pupils that took part.

Heath House

How wonderful it has been to be back with the Heath House family this term. We have had a busy and fun packed programme of activities which have seen the children and young people try out new skills and work on old ones!

We started with trips to Center Parcs for swimming.



Then later in term, the Year 11s were challenged to work out the clues to escape a themed based room. They had to work together and eventually they managed to escape.

Well done Year 11!



Here at Heath House we are keen to support the children and young people to learn how to cook their own food.

It is a key life skill and necessary for independent living. It is also nice for the students to cook for each other and shows team work. They have to communicate with each other and staff to make sure it all goes to plan.



Washing, drying and tidying up might not be the favourite jobs in the kitchen, but like cooking, they are crucial life skills and steps towards independence.

Everyone takes their turn with staff supporting them to make sure the tasks are fairly shared.

The children and young people will also take responsibility to swap their duty day if necessary, proving their ability for negotiation and clear communication.



It's not all hard work here at Heath House. The children and young people got nice and messy with their pumpkin carving this year.

They worked in groups to design and then carve the pumpkin so demonstrated both team work and communication skills.

Staying active is good for the brain and the body, so we enjoyed being outside while the night's were lighter.

Now it is getting dark early, we still manage to use the flood lights with games of football and basketball.



Giving children and young people the chance to visit the town centre shops in St Albans, allows them to have some independence and practice road safety skills with the support of a staff member.

They are encouraged to choose where is safe to cross the road and have also taken part in a road safety quiz to help check their knowledge.

It is always good to see the children and young people using their skills and supporting their peers who are not as confident as they are.

A trip to town is always a favourite with everyone.



Another amazing trip out for some of the children and young people saw them try out Go Karting. The group enjoyed racing around the tracks and using their communication skills

Having fun is a key part of Heath House and trips out offer the children and young people diverse opportunities and chances to step outside their comfort zone to try new things.



Board games and hall games have been such fun when the weather has been bad. They encourage safe competitiveness and remind children and young people it is OK to not always win. It is also a perfect time for staff to teach new games and spend time getting to know the children and young people more.



As this term and 2023 comes to an end, we are looking forward to a New Year and lots more fun, games, trips and learning new skills at Heath House.

The children and young people are always consulted on what they would like to do and 2024 will continue to focus on their ideas and targets for the future.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!





An exciting start to 2023/24 as we welcomed new and existing learners who were greeted by a new teaching team; Liz, Stefano and Thomas.

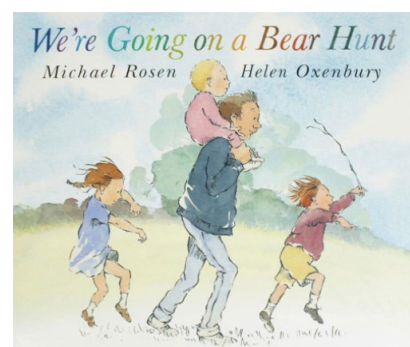
We have nine classes in our timetable, consisting of BSL Levels 1, 2 and 3. Our BSL Level 1 fast-track courses which are completed in 13 weeks has now concluded with our learners awaiting their results and hopefully progressing to our fast-track Level 2 course starting January 2024.

Our courses:

BSL Level 1: Our regular Level 1 classes have been learning how to use basic BSL in everyday situations. They can meet and greet, understand a basic conversation, also give and follow simple directions and information. They learnt about affirmation/negation and placements through the book "We're going on a Bear hunt" by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury = it's not just for kids!

BSL Level 2: Our learners continue to develop their skills and vocabulary with everyday topics like food/drink, shopping and travel, having longer and more varied conversations than Level 1. They have also been focusing on receptive video clips in practice for their assessments at the end of the course.

BSL Level 3: They have been focusing more on linguistics and developing social relationships as they continue their BSL journey, each of them eager to increase their knowledge about the Deaf community. They will be covering a variety of topics such as consumer issues and daily living as well as education and employment, and will be able to demonstrate the ability to use and understand a diverse range of vocabulary.



Our Team:



Having studied and gained her Level 3 at Heathlands' BSL Centre, Liz is very excited to be joining the team as a Level 1 tutor! She has spent the past ten years working in and with the Deaf Community, as a specialist teaching assistant, a care support worker and a communication support worker and brings those experiences with her to this new role. Liz is passionate about the joy to be found in life-long learning, both for herself and her students, and hopes she can share this with anyone who is taking their first steps into the world of learning BSL.

Stefano has a Level 6 Certificate in BSL. He worked and gained a wealth of experience in teaching BSL and Deaf Awareness for over 6 years. Also, he has been very passionate about providing as much service and support to and for the deaf community, directly and indirectly, teaching BSL in various sectors, especially public services. He always loved to travel to other countries to learn about their backgrounds, cultures, history,



Thomas has a Level 6 certificate from Andrea's School of BSL and is teaching from BSL Levels 1 to 3. Thomas enjoys BSL storytelling and poetry, and loves to meet Deaf people from all over the world.

Next year:

Do you know of someone who maybe be interested in learning a new skill for the new year? We have 2 x BSL Level 1 courses and a BSL Level 2 course starting in January 2024

For further information, please contact bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk



Wishing you the best for the upcoming year, happy holidays!





Save the date for our Summer fete Saturday 13th July 2024



We want this to be a fun event for everyone!
In previous years we saw someone sitting in a bath
of beans, rave workshops and more.

We will also be looking for volunteers
for a few hours on the day.

Any ideas or suggestions please email
friends@heathlands.herts.sch.uk





HEATHLANDS

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 Nursery, Primary & Secondary Provision, Day & Residential, BSL Training & Resource Centre

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HOLIDAY DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023 - 2024

Autumn Term 2023

Inset Day	Fri 1 September 2023 (no pupils in school)
Term Starts	Mon 4 September 2023
Half Term Holiday	Mon 23 October 2023 – Fri 27 October 2023
Occasional Day	Fri 1 December 2023 (no pupils in school)
Term Ends	Wed 20 December 2023 @ 12.30pm

Spring Term 2024

Inset Days	Thurs 4 January 2024 – Fri 5 January 2024 (no pupils in school)
Term Starts	Mon 8 January 2024
Half Term Holiday	Mon 19 February 2024 – Fri 23 February 2024
Term Ends	Thurs 28 March 2024 @ 12.30pm

Summer Term 2024

Term Starts	Mon 15 April 2024
Bank Holiday	Mon 6 May 2024
Half Term Holiday	Mon 27 May 2024 – Fri 31 May 2024
Term Ends	Fri 19 July 2024 @ 12.30pm
Inset Days	Mon 22 July 2024 - Tues 23 July 2024 (no pupils in school)

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

