



## Heathlands Autumn Term 2024 Newsletter

### *A message from the Co-Headteachers*

It has been another busy term at Heathlands with so many exciting things that have happened. It was fantastic to welcome a large group of year 7 students in addition to our first sixth form students. Heathlands is very full with over 150 students and more on the way in January 2025!

In September we welcomed all our students back to a new school year and a newly designed spaces that were created over the summer holidays. The Lower School playground was re-designed and now features a road and games for the children to enjoy, scooters to ride, a new trampoline and a great climbing frame for imaginative play! On top of that, an outdoor learning space was created and the dining room was re decorated. None of this would be possible without the generous donations from Friends of Heathlands as well as St Albans Arts Society. Last month we installed some amazing wall art, carefully designed by key staff displaying not just the world map, but a history wall showcasing different time periods and including deaf history within it; a photo of our students campaigning for the BSKL Act in 2022 is now a part of our shared history! The science corridor also boasts wall art with the periodic table (for revision purposes!) and a whole host of Deaf scientists that have made their mark on our world!

This term we have enjoyed a host of trips, a visit from BBC Newsround, cycling proficiency, Anglo Saxons day a Heath House Ofsted inspection and a very successful day at the Rotary tournament with two teams winning first and third place awards. We were successful in the Primary swimming gala too securing 1st and 3rd place and Heathlands also came 1st in the deaf schools Cross Country with individual students also coming 1st in both the boys and girls category!

This term we are celebrating our Progress 8 scores. Progress 8 is a way of measuring the progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 2 (the last year of primary school) to the end of key stage 4 (when they take GCSEs). The higher a pupil's 'Progress 8' score, the more progress they have made in comparison with pupils who started at a similar level. In the summer Heathlands had 18 students taking external GCSE exams and the results were phenomenal, which is testament to how hard students and staff worked. We are over the moon to announce that Heathlands was the **highest attaining school for Deaf children nationally**, with a progress score of 0.93. This means that our year 11 students on average achieved almost one GCSE grade better than deaf and hearing students across England with similar attainment at the end of key stage 2.

Heathlands was the only school for Deaf children to achieve a progress score within the category of "well above average" which concurs with the schools Ofsted Outstanding rating that "pupils achieve very well from different starting points". Heathlands is also the highest attaining special school in the UK (No 1 of 1718 schools) and is ranked Number 107 out of 6542 schools in the national schools progress table. We could not be prouder of the results students achieve at Heathlands and the hard work that staff do to attain this.

After an astounding term to start the school year, we wish you all a restful Christmas and a peaceful new year!

*Mrs Reeves Costi & Mr Aitken*

*Co-Headteachers*



#### Goodbye, hello and congratulations!

At the end of this term we are saying goodbye and good luck to Miss Smith, Mr Harris and Mrs Patel who are moving on to new jobs and exciting opportunities.

This term we have welcomed Mr Ansell who has taken over as the new Heath House Lead RSW and Mr Whitehead who joins our upper school team. We are sending all of our best wishes to our staff that have become new parents over the term; Ms Lakatos, Mrs Coxall, Ms Potter, Ms Monk and Mr McWhinney.

Some of the pupils in the Woodlands building met **Newsround** presenter Ricky. Heathlands children gave him a sign name and he watched some of our learning!



**Goldfinch & Peacock** classes walked to the Post Box to post their postcards.

## Lower School



**Firecrest class** welcomed Lisa from Blue Cross charity. She helped them learn about how to care for pets and reading a dog's body language. Ms Aitken also let them have a cuddle with her kittens, Marvel and Tiger.

In science, Year 2, **Goldfinch and Peacock** class, were investigating what it means to be alive, dead or to have never lived. There were lots of interesting discussions and contributions. I think there are some future scientists here!



The children in **Kingfisher class** have been busy practising their numbers - they even went on a number hunt!

**Magpie Class** had a fantastic time decorating the school Christmas tree. They realised there was no star for the top of the tree and decided to use their handprints to make a new one.

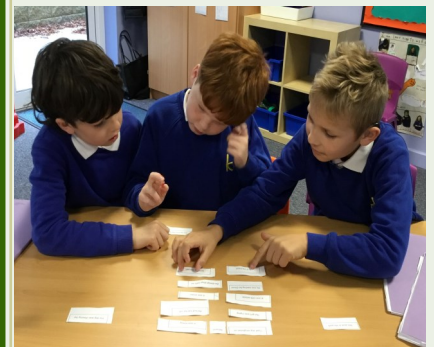


**Robins class** enjoyed exploring different items including remote control toys, circuit components, plugs and electrical games. Their challenge was to figure out what they all had in common, how they worked and what their topic in science will be this term.

Pupils in **Firecrest** illustrated and discussed what jobs they would like when they are older, and the skills they need to develop to help them achieve their goals. Jobs ranged from hair-dressers, to artists, to over ground train drivers!



**Swifts class** have been writing sentences using "because" and enjoyed sorting sentences in groups.



In maths, **Barn Owl class** have been learning to sort objects into groups. Pupils enjoyed working together to sort objects by shape or colour before completing their independent learning.

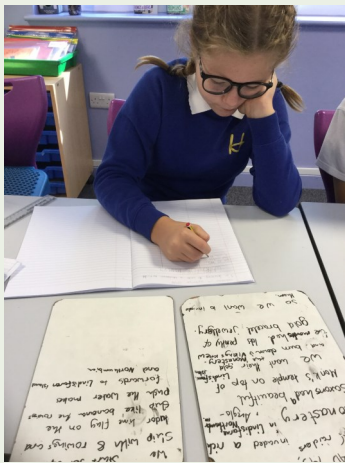


Year 2 have been learning how to use **Times Table Rockstars!** They are using their 10- and 2-times table knowledge to help them. They will be SUPER rockstars in no time. They have their logins on their orange reading record to keep practising. GOOD LUCK!



**Robins class** have been learning about the importance of oral hygiene and why we go to the dentist.

Year 3 (**Wagtails & Woodpeckers**) had a very important scooter driving test this term! They had to demonstrate they could ride the scooters safely. This included wearing a helmet, stopping at zebra crossings for pedestrians and keeping to the left of the new 'road' in the playground. We are pleased to announce that they all passed and are now 'Ready to Ride'!



**Hoopoe class** have been writing newspaper articles about the Viking raid of the Anglo-Saxon monastery of Lindisfarne in AD 793. Some children wrote the articles from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, while others wrote from a Viking perspective.



With the QR code, check out & 'like' the Heathlands School Facebook page for fantastic videos, photos and news.

Hoopoe and Cuckoo attended the **Primary Deaf Swimming Gala**. The teams achieved fantastic results of 1st and 3rd places!



**Lower School Christmas Plays** were a delightful festive treat that perfectly captures the magic of Christmas!

It was fantastic to see so many parents there to support and thank you to the Friends of Heathlands for serving refreshments.

Thank you to all the children and staff for their hard work!



**Robins class** have been making some revision posters for their English working wall. Here are their posters about nouns, adjectives and determiners.



KS2 pupils at Heathlands have swimming lessons at **Westminster Lodge**. The Westminster Lodge staff have been learning some useful signs.

# Heathlands Autumn Term Newsletter 2024

**Cuckoo class** used an atlas to identify Anglo Saxon and Viking settlement names which are seen in towns and cities within the UK today. They were able to identify the meaning behind these places.

ton = settlement    ing = meeting place  
ford = river crossing    stow = a religious or holy place

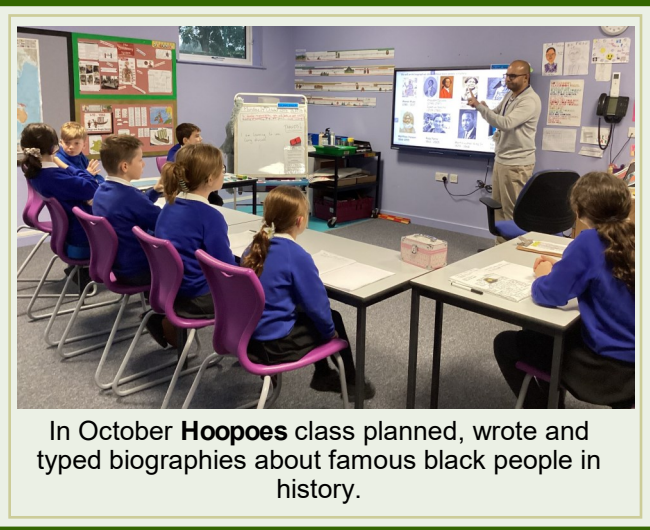
How many places can you think of?



**Kingfisher and Magpie class** have been learning about Autumn colours. The children learnt to mix some Autumn colours like orange, green and pink to match the colours of the Autumn leaves. Then they used the paint they had mixed to make leaf prints.

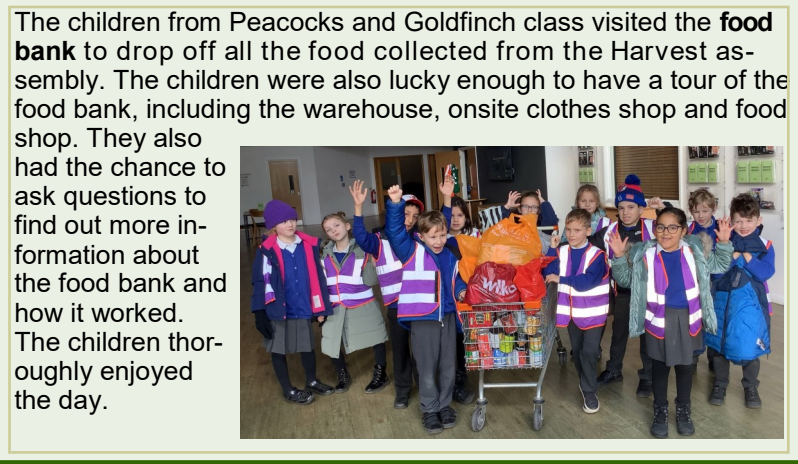


A huge thank you to parents, families and friends who came to our **Harvest Festival assembly**. Every child contributed something, including Harvest themed songs, stories, poems, prayers and art work. Many thanks to all for the generous gift of food, which filled the length of the stage and will be delivered to St Albans Foodbank. Thank you also to FoH for organising the refreshments.



In October **Hoopoes** class planned, wrote and typed biographies about famous black people in history.

KS1 enjoyed celebrating **Diwali**. Students dressed up in their most fancy clothes and looked amazing. They learnt why Diwali is celebrated and the story of Rama and Sita. They made beautiful lanterns, created rangoli patterns and even had the chance to decorate their hand with Henna. It was a fantastic celebration and one they will remember.

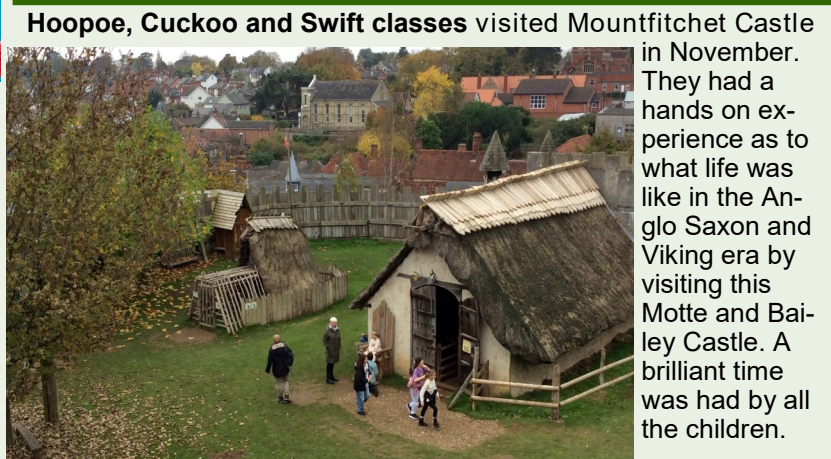


The children from Peacocks and Goldfinch class visited the **food bank** to drop off all the food collected from the Harvest assembly. The children were also lucky enough to have a tour of the food bank, including the warehouse, onsite clothes shop and food shop. They also had the chance to ask questions to find out more information about the food bank and how it worked. The children thoroughly enjoyed the day.



This term students have very much enjoyed our **newly painted outside classroom** area in lower school.

As we approach the winter months please remember to send your child to school with a coat, gloves and hat. It is important that parents and escorts remain with children until they are collected by the teachers at the start of the day and that children are not using the climbing equipment.



**Hoopoe, Cuckoo and Swift classes** visited Mountfitchet Castle in November. They had a hands on experience as to what life was like in the Anglo Saxon and Viking era by visiting this Motte and Bailey Castle. A brilliant time was had by all the children.



The sun shone in September for some of the year 5 and 6 pupils completing **cycling proficiency training**. Helping students become more aware and confident in their ability to ride bicycles safely-a valuable life skills they can hopefully use throughout their lives.

One of our CoHead teachers presented to the **BSL Advisory Board** on the gaps in provision for Early Years education of deaf children, the evidence, impact and possible solutions. This was alongside other Heads of specialist deaf schools who shared with same issues. There was a discussion with Stephen Timms, the Minister for Social Security and Disability about the changes that need to be made to ensure ALL deaf children get the language access and education they need from the outset.



alongside other Heads of specialist deaf schools who shared with same issues. There was a discussion with Stephen Timms, the Minister for Social Security and Disability about the changes that need to be made to ensure ALL deaf children get the language access and education they need from the outset.



**Cuckoo class** have been working hard on their literacy starter. Finding as many words as possible from the Word wheel. **Can you find the nine letter word?**

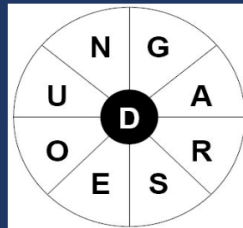
**WORD WHEEL**

Try and find the longest word (there is a nine letter word hidden in the wheel).

Try and find the most words!

**The rules:**

- You must use the centre letter in each word
- You can use each letter only once
- You can use a dictionary to help you



**Hoopoe**

Class made a life size diagram of the main organs of the body and each child wrote three facts about one different organ each.



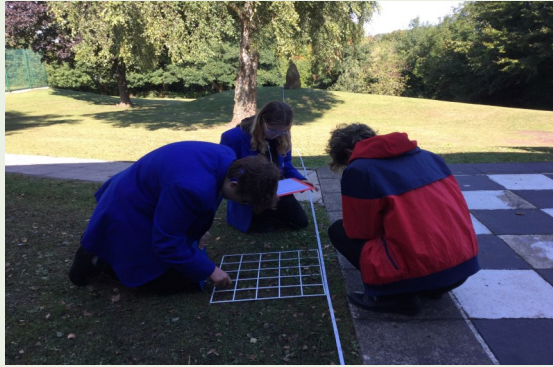
KS2 went back in time to when the Anglo Saxons and Vikings were alive!! The pupils travelled in a Time Machine and were met by two Anglo Saxons. The Anglo Saxons visitors were confused by Heathlands pupils all wearing blue, a colour that was very expensive for them to make so they associated it with rich people. Our visitors taught the children a little bit about life as an Anglo Saxon. There were lots of activities happening including making a 3D Viking longship, writing in Anglo Saxon runes, learning about Viking gods and goddesses, designing their own shields and examining Viking poo to find out what they ate.



**Wagtails** enjoyed the story 'Peter and the Wolf'. They went into the school environment to act out key events. This coming week they will make their own class version of the story. Thank you to all of the wonderful young actors!

## Upper School

During a lovely bright sunny September day **Y11 GCSE students** were able to complete their field surveying techniques. They calculated a total population estimate and investigated how biotic and abiotic factors affected the distribution of organisms.



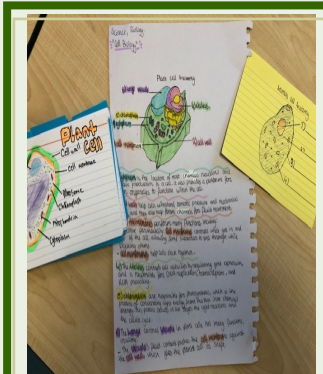
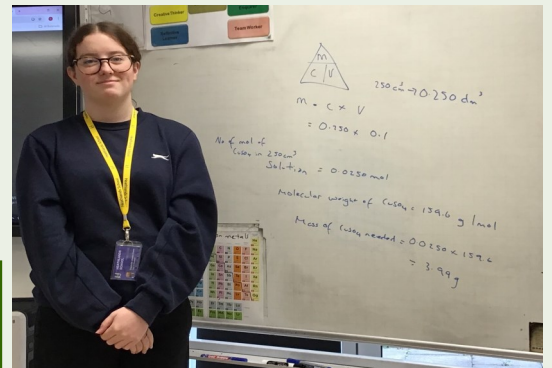
Two Heathlands students planned, practised and participated in the **Rotary Club Cooking Competition** at Oaklands College in St. Albans - the judges were impressed with the restaurant standard dishes! Well done!



**Congratulations to our students GCSE results! We have welcomed our first sixth form students this term.**



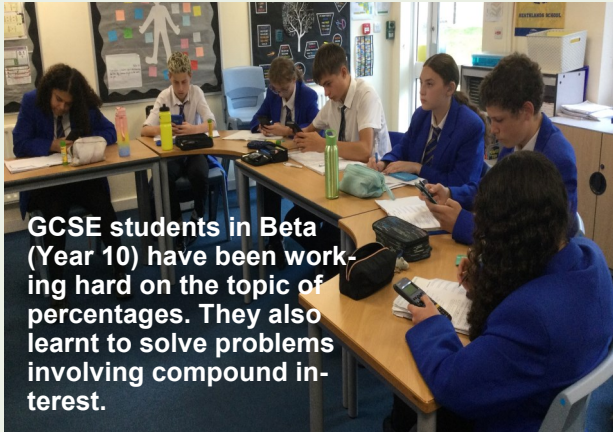
**A Level Chemistry** - Learning how to prepare a solution with known concentration. This involved a bit of maths calculating the amount of copper sulphate needed to make up the solution.



Some of the excellent revision notes produced by **Y9 GCSE Biology** students this term.



**Our new hall map**



**GCSE students in Beta (Year 10)** have been working hard on the topic of percentages. They also learnt to solve problems involving compound interest.



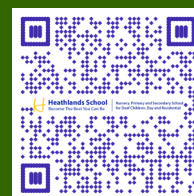
The **BDA** CEO Rebecca Mansell attended a GCSE and A-level Chemistry class... watch the video on Heathlands Facebook page!



They can be a compound but they can also be split up and if they are

Heathlands School website

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



## Deaf Cross Country Championships



Huge congratulations to the Heathlands squad who attended the **Deaf Cross Country Championships** in October. A Heathlands student came first in the girls event and our pupils came 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 10th in the boys races. This meant they won the overall team points, so Heathlands continue to be the cross country champions.

The students enjoyed meeting and talking to a range of professionals in different jobs at the **Heathlands' Careers Fair**. The students were able to ask questions and learn about a wide variety of interesting jobs, giving them options to explore for the future. A massive thank you to all our visitors who gave up their time to support the Careers Programme at Heathlands: Hertfordshire: Police, Bryan Whally, Tesco, Hertfordshire University, Ben Glover, Remark, NHS Deaf Adult Services, Asha NHS Peads nurse, Chris Laing, Zoe and Cherie - Actresses & Communities1st.



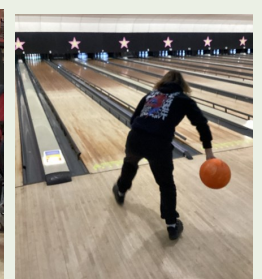
**Year 7** pupils were busy with making car models this term - they have designed and made the models, using woodwork tools, i.e. saws, file, sandpaper, power and pillar drills. They had the opportunity to be creative by adding extra features to their models. They had a small race at the end of project to see which models are the fastest!



A student in US delivered an excellent assembly on how to have healthy friendships.



Our **Christmas Rewards Trips** this week were an exciting opportunity for students to explore Kew Gardens, challenge themselves at bowling and decipher the treasure hunt clues! It was a fun way to finish a busy term.



In **Biology Y11** learnt about population sampling using a model game.



Heathlands brought 6 teams to compete in **Rotary Technology Tournament** - 4 for foundation task and 2 for intermediate task. The task was about designing, constructing and testing of a vehicle that needs to crawl along inside a pipeline and to clear the debris in the pipeline. Heathlands teams were not only victorious in the Foundation competition but also came 3rd in that competition out of the 18 competitors. A splendid achievement. All the students have enjoyed themselves and developed their team working skills.



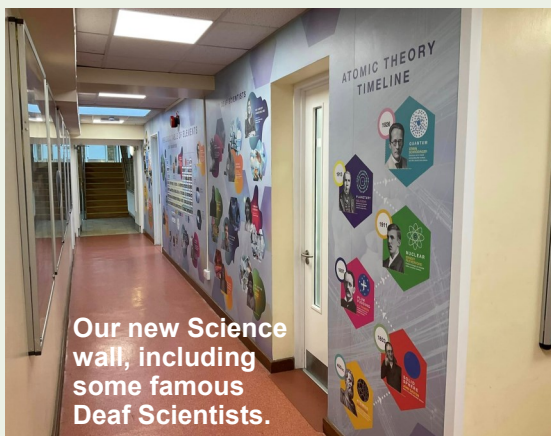
**Eta and Lambda** have been lino printing with designed images from the theme 'Patterns'.



As a culmination of their learning on **healthy eating** this term in science, some y11 students had to choose a healthy dish to prepare and make improvements to the recipe to make it even healthier.

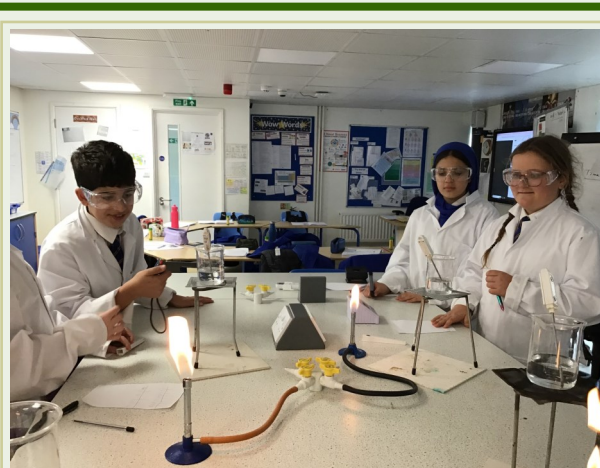


**Epsilon** class has been recreating Van Gogh's painting techniques using different brushes and forks.



Our new Science wall, including some famous Deaf Scientists.

A group of 10 girls attended the 'Belong in Computing' event called **'Empowering the Girls'** at Bletchley Park. They had the opportunity to learn how cryptography was used throughout history, particularly during World War II, to keep data secret. Their first workshop focused on the past, present, and future of encryption. They discussed the future of cryptography, especially with quantum computing on the horizon - such an interesting topic. They had the chance to walk around Bletchley Park and explore its history and museum.



**Sigma class** in science investigated the boiling point of water. Pure water boils at 100 C. If the pressure changes, then the temperature will also change.





## Heath House

QR code to the Heath House website page



### Relaxation Activities:

Our pupils have been participating in a range of relaxation activities to promote winding down in the evening and enjoyment, including: Monopoly, Cluedo, and Wii games.

These activities, along with many others, encourage our students to enjoy board games and try a variety of new games.



This term, our pupils have made excellent progress in culinary skills:

They have learnt to cook independently.

They can now prepare their own meals when they prefer not to eat the provided menu options.

For breakfast, they have mastered making pancakes and scrambled eggs on their own.

Every Tuesday, pupils take turns cooking dinner for the entire group.

They have developed a strong understanding of kitchen safety, including proper handling of hot ovens and sharp knives.

They have learnt to ensure food is thoroughly cooked.

We are immensely proud of their growing self-sufficiency and responsibility in the kitchen.



Students enjoyed the Halloween party. We had the hall to ourselves and played a variety of Halloween-themed games. We also had a lovely buffet for our meal. The students enjoyed the evening before their half-term break.



Students went to Youth Club with Remark! Student organised the events. They decided they wanted to go to the Trampoline park and crazy golf. They enjoyed it.



# Heath House

### Physical Activities:

This term, we have a variety of physical activities to enjoy and participate in, promoting our physical fitness and using our energy. These include:

Table tennis, badminton, four-corner hockey, CrossFit bodyweight workouts and crossbar challenges.

These activities, along with many others, encourage our students to stay active, develop teamwork skills, and enjoy the benefits of outdoor exercise.



During the first half of the term, we introduced a new house point system to encourage the pupils to complete tasks such as cleaning the kitchen, tidying their bedrooms independently, and checking in without prompts. They collect points every week until the end of the term. They receive rewards for going out for a meal. Recently, the pupils went to the Waffle House and enjoyed their rewards with waffles of their choice.

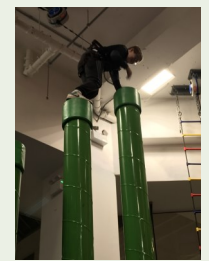
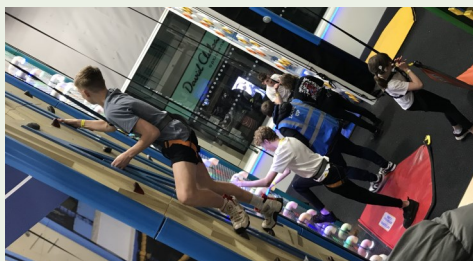


Every Tuesday, we go to town to buy our weekly snacks. We usually take a walk to St. Albans and visit a variety of shops. We learn how to walk safely across the roads. The pupils learn to buy or calculate the amount to spend on their snacks. Also, many bought food ingredients to prepare for food technology at school.



The students thoroughly enjoyed cycling in the local woods. Enjoying a challenge, with various hills to conquer.

Taking turns riding the bicycles, this activity also provided an excellent opportunity to reinforce important safety lessons. Our young people learnt about proper cycling etiquette, including the crucial importance of wearing helmets.





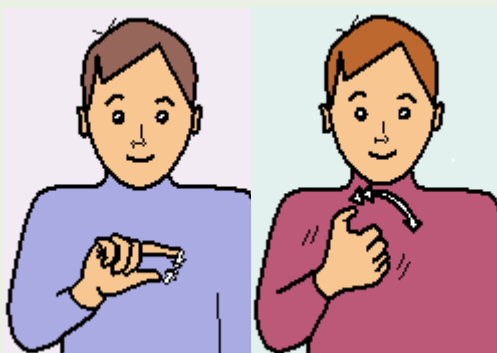
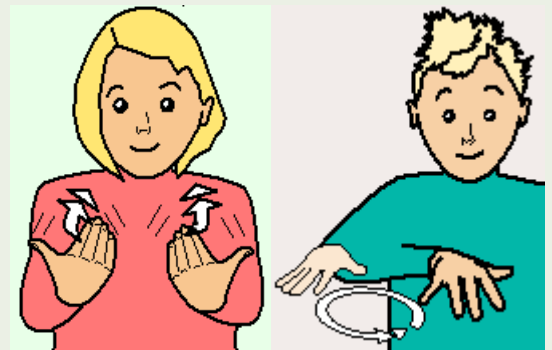
## BSL

We have had a wonderful start to the year, welcoming back existing learners and saying hello to new ones. We were able to offer BSL Levels 1 to 4 and all are progressing well. Already, our Level 1 fast-track course has been completed and those learners will start Level 2 fast-track in January 2025.

At the BSL Centre our team consists of deaf and hearing staff, who bring a variety of knowledge and experience to support our learners with their BSL journey.

We have our Family Sign group which is available on Mondays 2-3pm, term time only. These are free online sessions aimed at supporting communication within the family. So far various topics have been covered including Baby/Toddler routines and Seasonal Signs.

If you are a parent, grandparent, family member or carer of a deaf child at Heathlands School or live in the Hertfordshire area and would like to attend please email [bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk) for more details.

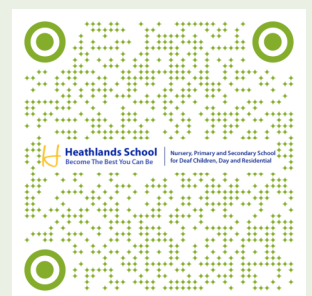


Starting in January we have an Introduction to BSL—unit 101 for young people course on Wednesdays 4.30-6.30pm. This is open to ages 11-16 years old. Here they will learn how to communicate with Deaf people in BSL on a range of topics that involve simple everyday language use.

For additional information please email [bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk)

For any enquiries about learning British Sign Language, please email [bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk) or check the Heathlands school website: [www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk](http://www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk)

Wishing you all Happy holidays and a prosperous New Year!



QR code to the BSL Centre website page

## Update from Friends of Heathlands (FoH)

Thank you to everyone who attended the AGM held in September 2024. The newly elected committee running FoH from 2024 are: -

- **Shana Weinbaum – Chair**
- **Ms Savage – Secretary**
- **Jay Thomas-Morton – Treasurer**
- **Mr McWhinney – Committee Member**
- **David Hay – Committee Member**

For more information on the aim of FoH and what we do, please check out our updated FOH webpage on Heathlands School website! It has been a busy time for the newly elected committee of FoH 😊 Please see our Events Calendar and save dates in your diaries/calendars if you haven't already!

We are also now on Social Media and donations can be made online - so give us a follow on Facebook & Instagram to keep updated on 'Friends of Heathlands'.

---

### 📅 QUIZ NIGHT at Heathlands School

GET READY!

📅 31st January @7pm

Gather a team of 6 and test your knowledge!

💷 Cost: £42 per team.

There will be PRIZES!

Follow us on Social Media for details

---



**Interested to support FoH? We welcome volunteers and will have BSL interpreters.  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

A big thank you to everyone who supported our FoH events recently – i.e. Harvest Festival and Xmas Play where the refreshments went down a storm! The Xmas party was a success with the kids! Funds raised from events so far will go towards purchasing new balance bikes for the Nursery and new Chromebooks for the Lower School! We welcome feedback from the school community as to requirements for funds. Just drop us a line on Email.

**Lastly, have a very Merry Xmas!**



# Heathlands Autumn Term Newsletter 2024

## HOLIDAY DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2024 - 2025

### Spring Term 2025

Inset Days	Mon 6 January 2025 (no pupils in school)
Term Starts	Tues 7 January 2025
Half Term Holiday	Mon 17 February 2025– Fri 21 February 2025
Term Ends	Fri 4 April 2025 @ 12.30pm

### Summer Term 2025

Term Starts	Tues 22 April 2025
Bank Holiday	Mon 5 May 2025
Half Term Holiday	Mon 26 May 2025 – Fri 30 May 2025
Term Ends	Fri 18 July 2025
Inset Days	Mon 21 July 2025 - Wed 23 July 2025 (no pupils in school)

## HOLIDAY DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025 - 2026

### Autumn Term 2025

Inset Days	Mon 1 September 2025 (no pupils in school)
Term Starts	Tues 2 September 2025
Half Term Holiday	Mon 20 October 2025 – Fri 31 October 2025
Term Ends	Fri 19 December 2025 @ 12.30pm

Any changes or amendments will be announced on our website  
[www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk](http://www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk)



QR code for term dates on Heathlands website.

