



# HEATHLANDS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER SPRING TERM 2026

MARCH 2026

## A message from the Co-Headteachers

Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of a wonderfully busy and inspiring term, we would like to share some of the highlights that have made the past months so memorable. Our community has embraced learning, exploration, creativity, and wellbeing in so many meaningful ways.

### **Science Week**

Science Week was a huge success, filled with hands-on experiments, STEM challenges, and fascinating discoveries. This included students exploring a very gruesome murder scene, animal adventures, visiting schools and carrying out a range of experiments. A special thanks goes to our STEM team for creating such engaging activities that sparked curiosity across all year groups.

### **Careers Week**

Careers Week opened our students' eyes to the incredible range of opportunities awaiting them in the future. Daily talks from deaf role models helped students explore career paths in a range of fields. They also learnt about some barriers they may face and the perseverance to overcome them as deaf people which was important.

### **Neurodiversity Week**

We proudly celebrated Neurodiversity Week last week, promoting understanding, acceptance, and appreciation for the many different ways people think and learn. Liam O'Dell, a deaf man with autism gave an informative talk. The student activities were focused on understanding how everyone has different starting points and some people have to work harder than others. The discussions around this also supported empathy and thinking about supporting one another with kindness and respect.

### **Feeling Good Week**

This term's Feeling Good Week focused on the theme "This is My Place", where when children and young people feel they belong their wellbeing flourishes. The aim was to teach pupils that every single one of them matters and they belong. It was a powerful reminder of the importance of community, looking after ourselves and each other.

### **Celebrating Our Community**

Across all these events, we have been incredibly proud of our students and staffs enthusiasm, curiosity, and teamwork. Staff and families have played an essential role in making this term such a success — thank you for your ongoing support.

### **Wishing You a Restful Break**

We hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved holiday. Have a restful, safe, and enjoyable break, and we look forward to welcoming you back for an exciting new summer term with a brand-new SMOOTH entrance road!

Ms Aitken and Mrs Reeves Costi

**Also this term...** We hosted a very successful Professionals Open Morning with 50 professionals in Deaf education attending. Feedback was very positive with many saying they have learnt a lot from visiting Heathlands and seeing the successful teaching approaches put into practice. There were lots of comments on how focused and committed to learning the students were which is a credit to them!



**Heathlands School**  
Become The Best You Can Be

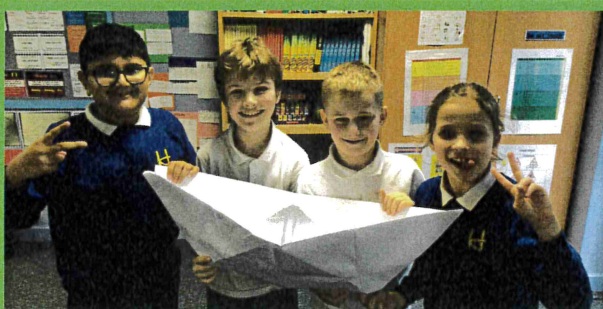
Nursery, Primary and Secondary School  
for Deaf Children, Day and Residential



## LOWER SCHOOL



Linked to 'feeling good week', several of the KS2 classes had the opportunity to try belly dancing. They had great fun.



Pine Martens worked together to make giant origami paper boat!

In January some of the KS1 pupils have enjoyed using their mud kitchen with the snow and ice.



Moles class went to St Albans library. They learned how the library operates. Some of the pupils have their own Hertfordshire library card, and Mrs Brinsden applied for a new library card for some pupils who live outside of Herts.



Pupils from Red Squirrels and Weasels classes are learning to play tennis with a specialist coach to develop their skills.

Seals class were learning about how people survive in the rainforest during their Geography lesson. They really enjoyed the topic and took part in an activity where they role-played as survivors in the rainforest, such as building a shelter using pretend wood and vines.



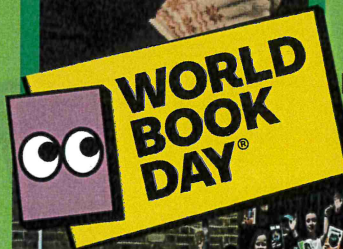
Otter Class got to see how their fossils looked.



facebook

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

Deaf parents or guardians of Heathlands students can call Heathlands School in BSL via SignVideo using the school website.

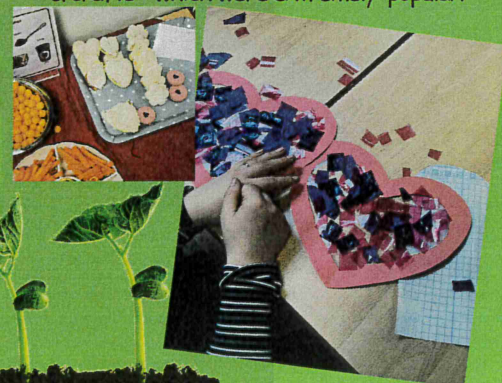


**WORLD BOOK DAY**



Some fantastic costumes, book and word choices for the World Book Day parade in Lower school.

Sign and play celebrated Valentine's Day. The children made cakes, heart shaped sandwiches & crafts - which were extremely popular!



In Dance, Foxes and Otters were taught by a professional dancer! They learnt Scottish traditional dancing, which was not easy. The foot work and balance needed was a challenge, but the children didn't give up and tried their best.



## LOWER SCHOOL



The pupils in Seals class learned about Early Human Settlement as part of their Geography lesson. They learned how people survived and what life was like during that time. The classroom transformed into an imagined prehistoric house, and the pupils took part in an activity where they drew symbols to show how people communicated with each other through cave art.

Lynx class loved their trip to the Natural History Museum in Tring. They had in depth conversations about different animal skeletons and used detective work to work out what animal the skeletons belonged to.

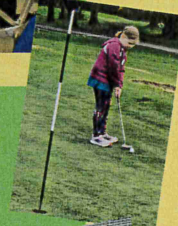


Year 6 were joined by Frank Barnes and Blanche Neville School for British Science Week. They became forensic scientists whilst solving a murder investigation through a range of scientific investigations. They tested blood, looked at fingerprints and analysed hair samples to correctly identify the murderer. In the afternoon they used their DT skills and became architects to work in teams and help the murderer escape the crime scene, by building a strong bridge to cross over the river.



Pine Martens have been reading 'How To Train Your Dragon' and have drawn and described their own dragons and written instructions on how to train them!

Weasels and Red Squirrels have been learning about Passover and the unleavened bread (Matza) that is eaten. They learned that this bread is unleavened due to there not being enough time for it to rise as the Israelites left slavery in Egypt in a hurry.



At the after school Heathlands golf club at Harpenden Common, a new golf bag and set of clubs was presented to one of the participants. This was possible through the generosity of the Rose Trust and in time all golfers attending will be presented with a similar golf bag and clubs as a sign of their commitment to the game. Rowena Hemmings, the Director of Hertfordshire Golf with responsibility for Golf Development and for the setting up of both this and the lunchtime club at Heathlands in conjunction with the Rose Trust was on hand to present the award. Rob Leonard the Professional from Harpenden Common who is taking both clubs is pictured with the other participants.



Moles class took part in an animal workshop. They were able to see and learn about a variety of different animals including tortoises, snakes, lizards, newts, toads, stick insects, giant snails, tarantulas and a rat. Everyone enjoyed it and some of the children who were less keen to start with realised there was nothing to be frightened of.



Seal class has been learning to take their time, painting lovely landscapes during their Art lessons. This connects with what they have been learning about biomes in their Geography lessons.





Heathlands sent five teams to the **national deaf schools football tournament** at St George's Park. Three of our sixth formers helped coach them. All played well and our girls team were victorious!

As part of **Feeling Good Week**, some Year 11 students visited the Lower School to tell stories. They were great role models for the younger children, who had lots of fun watching the stories being signed.



Our Students' Artwork on Display in a local art exhibition at **The Serge Hill Project**, Flower Light - Anne McKenzie. The artwork created by our students earlier this year will be part of the Flower Light exhibition at the Apple House, hosted by the Serge Hill Project for Gardening, Creativity and Health and London based artist, Anne McKenzie. Flower Light is a unique art exhibition by Anne McKenzie, she has been The Serge Hill Project's Artist in Residence for 2025-2026. Over the past year, Anne has been exploring the Plant Library of the Serge Hill Project, a living collection of over 2,000 plants, and creating botanical art inspired by the gardens and changing seasons. Earlier this year, our school joined one of Anne's workshops, and the children's work from that session will now be on display alongside her own pieces. Families and the community can see the students' creations in the amazing, community and event building, The Apple House on selected public viewing dates:  
 Friday 10 April, 2:00-5:00 pm,  
 Friday 17 April, 2:00-5:00 pm.

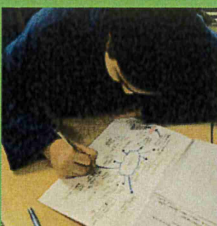


**Year 8** have been busy in Art creating their fantasy creatures in 3D

Y10 science group did a fun experiment modelling **species adaptation**. They used different utensils as representations of different beaks of a bird and black eyed beans to represent food in wildlife environment. This model helps students understand the different environmental situations and biology can impact species survival.



In **Science Year 7** investigated volume by measuring different sounds with a sound level meter, including measuring the volume of some special visitors!



**Yr 8** students are making mind maps in preparation for this end of unit test.

This term, the **6th formers** have been working hard finishing their final units and coursework. Those studying BTEC courses have had external exams and are exceeding their targets. Two students have started the Sports Leadership Course which is an extra qualification which will hopefully lead to them being able to work as coaches once they leave school. Six out of seven students applied for University places at the end of the Autumn Term and they have all been receiving offers to study a range of different courses across the country. The seventh student is applying for apprenticeships which can only be done later in the year. A number of students went to a Parliamentary event with one student sitting on the panel and expressing her views about access to education which was a scary, but exciting experience.

## UPPER SCHOOL



As part of the British Science curriculum, **A-Level** students have been busy with their practical work. One group focused on synthesizing aspirin, while the other tackled the preparation of benzoic acid—a process involving many complex steps.



Year 8 students had a lovely day visiting the **science museum**, where they explored the space gallery and other parts of the museum.

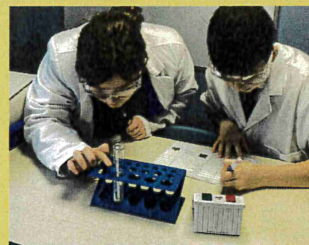


Children have enjoyed being outside in the sunshine at break times

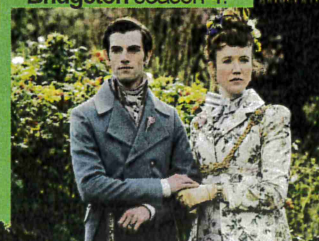
In **Biology Y9** carried out flipped learning into how **Coronary Heart Disease** can be treated and gave presentations on their findings



In **Science Year 7** investigated cooling using wax



Eagle eyed viewers may have spotted Heathlands School alumnus on **Bridgeton** season 4!





As part of **British Science Week**, we held a STEM day where children from Frank Barnes School, Blanche Nevile School and Heathlands came together. They learned about forensic science and worked on a cross-curricular project combining Design & Technology with Maths.



Year 11 RE revised key concepts for their GCSE exam by making a Easter garden.



Upper School students had their first free golf lesson as part of a new lunchtime club on Wednesdays, organised by the **Hertfordshire Golf Association**.

The students had fun learning new skills from Rob Leonard from Harpenden Common Golf Club.



Heathlands school introduced pickleball into the PE curriculum for 13-16-year-olds, most of whom were BSL users. Over four weeks, the students practised with new pickleball equipment, outside on the playground, and they took part in a competitive event at Batchwood sports centre, which boosted engagement and skill development. Feedback showed that most students enjoyed the sessions, found them physically beneficial, and were motivated to improve despite finding the key skills challenging. Many expressed interest in continuing the sport, with nearly half considering joining a club in the future. As a result, pickleball will now be embedded into PE lessons at Heathlands School to support students' fitness, coordination, and participation in racquet sports.

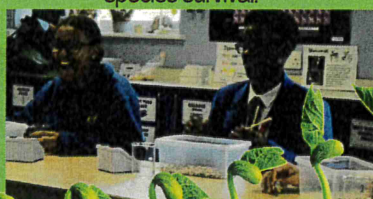


**KS4 cultural trip to Amsterdam.** We visited the Deaf Centre in Amsterdam ([www.swda.nl](http://www.swda.nl)), where we learned about its history as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. It was a fantastic place with a wealth of information about its past.



Year 7 students visited the Science Museum in London, where they explored the Space Gallery, the Who Am I? gallery, and the Energy Gallery to widen their science knowledge.

**Y10 science group** did a fun experiment modelling species adaptation. They used different utensils as representations of different beaks of a bird and black eyed beans to represent food in wildlife environment. This model helps students understand the different environmental situations and biology can impact species survival.



Heathlands school took two teams to participate in the **deaf secondary schools swimming gala** at London Aquatics Centre. We are pleased to say that both Heathlands teams took 1st and 2nd places in the final rankings. All the swimmers worked hard and demonstrated good teamwork skills.

## UPPER SCHOOL



Year 11 led Upper School in celebrating **World Book Day**, with the theme: Celebrating the 2000s. Congratulations to Y11 for a really successful day, including delivering an assembly, a catwalk fashion show, an all-day competition and games at break times.

Some Upper School students enjoyed a fantastic morning at the **Sky Studio**. They had a tour around the studios learnt about different rules within the industry and made a film from their own idea.



**Sign Language week!** Our Co Headteacher and one of our sixth formers spoke at a parliamentary event at Portcullis House titled, 'Deaf Voices: Breaking Through Barriers in Education' hosted by Jas Athwal MP with Empowering Deaf Society. With the right specialist teachers and resources we know deaf learners thrive, but unfortunately this is not the case for many deaf children and this needs to change.

## BSL



It's been a busy start to the year, and we're here to share some updates on our BSL courses and community with you

In January, we were delighted to introduce another BSL Level 1 course and also have our Level 2 fast-track course start. It has been great to see the energy and dedication they have brought to these sessions and we look forward to supporting their development throughout the coming months.



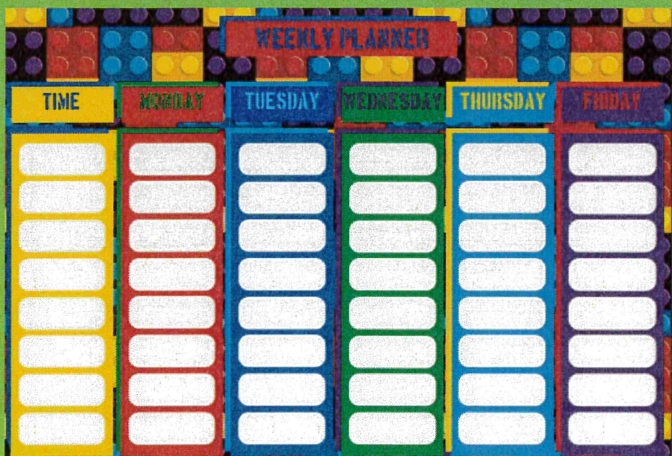
Our continuing students are now past the halfway mark, a fantastic achievement since the start of the year. While some have moved their assessment dates forward, the main focus for most is now the upcoming summer exam season. Between May and July, our lessons will be fully geared toward exam success. We'll be diving into the marking criteria and practicing with mock assessments to make sure everyone feels 100% prepared to pass!



Our Family Sign Group is designed to support communication at home in a relaxed, friendly environment. Whether you want to discuss what your child has been learning at school or simply need a refresher on those essential everyday signs.

The group is free to join and is open to any family member or carer who has a child at Heathlands or lives within the Hertfordshire area and a fantastic way to stay connected and keep your skills sharp!

Every Monday 2-3pm (term time only) via Microsoft teams.  
Please email [bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk) for the link to join.



It may feel early but we are already looking ahead to the next academic year.

Work on the 2026/27 timetable is well underway and we hope to share the new schedule very soon. All of our courses will be advertised on the Heathlands School website.



We are pleased to share the latest updates and upcoming activities from Friends of Heathlands (FOH), highlighting the continued support and engagement within our community.

## FRIENDS OF HEATHLANDS

### Quiz Night Success

We are delighted to share that our sold-out FOH Quiz Night, held on 6 February, raised an impressive £280. A sincere thank you goes to our fantastic Quiz Master, Mark Wheatley, and to everyone who attended and contributed to such an enjoyable evening. Your generosity and enthusiasm directly support our work and make a meaningful difference to the school community.



Deaf mother of four deaf children, **Honesty McWhinney** is taking on the London Marathon with no prior running experience to raise funds for Friends of Heathlands.

**LONDON MARATHON 2026**

**Step Back to the 70s:  
Fancy Dress Competition**

Friends of Heathlands

FREE ENTRY



## SUMMER FETE

27 JUNE 2026 - 11AM TO 3PM

<b>BBQ</b> 	<b>Bouncy Castles</b> 	<b>Go Karts</b> 	<b>Hair Braids</b> 	<b>Human Arcade</b> 
<b>Lucky Dip</b> 	<b>Sand Art</b> 	<b>1970s Photo Booth</b> 	<b>Old Fashioned Sweets</b> 	<b>Card Making</b> 
<b>Book Stall</b> 	<b>Canvas Painting</b> <small>with Vicky Barber - Crimes artist</small> 	<b>Bowling</b> 	<b>Coconut Shy</b> 	<b>Guess the item</b> 
<b>High Tea</b> 	<b>Hula Hoop</b> 	<b>Entertainment shows</b> 	<b>Experiences</b> 	<b>and many more...</b>



Tokens available to buy on the day

HEATHLANDS SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN  
HEATHLANDS DRIVE, ST ALBANS AL3 5AY



### London Marathon 2026

We are proud to support Honesty McWhinney, who is running the London Marathon in aid of deaf children at Heathlands School.

Taking on the full 42.2km challenge, Honesty is raising vital funds for Friends of Heathlands. We wish her the very best of luck and encourage everyone to support her incredible effort.

### Summer Fete 27 June

Please save the date for our Summer Fete, taking place on 27 June. This is always a highlight of the FOH calendar and a wonderful opportunity for families and the wider community to come together. We are currently looking for volunteers to help organise and run the event. If you are able to support, please contact us at: [Friends@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Friends@heathlands.herts.sch.uk) Your involvement is essential in making this event a success, and we greatly appreciate any support you can offer.

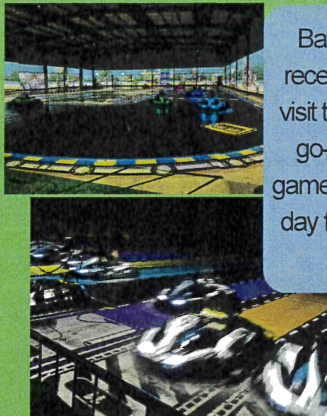


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## SPRING TERM 2026

MARCH 2026

### HEATH HOUSE



**Battle Kart:** Heath House recently enjoyed an exciting visit to Battle Kart, combining go-karting with interactive games. It was a fun, energetic day filled with teamwork and laughter.

This winter, Heath House has enjoyed a range of fun and engaging activities. Highlights included trips to Center Parcs, the Snow Centre, and Battle Kart, all filled with excitement and laughter.

Back at Heath House, residents took part in bike sessions, hall games, and creative activities like Valentine's baking, building confidence and teamwork. Overall, it has been a positive and enjoyable season for everyone.

**Center Parcs Swimming Trip**  
Heath House recently enjoyed a fantastic trip to Center Parcs, where everyone had a wonderful time in the swimming pool. The visit was filled with laughter, excitement, and plenty of splashing around, making it a truly memorable experience for all.

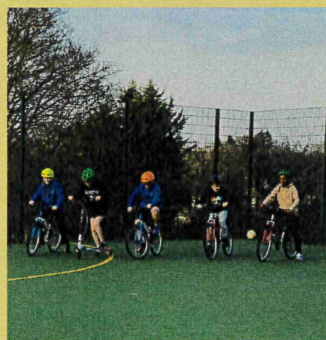
**Baking:** Heath House celebrated Valentine's Day with a delightful cookie baking activity. Everyone enjoyed getting creative in the kitchen, decorating their cookies with festive designs and sweet treats. It was a heartwarming and fun-filled session that brought lots of smiles and a touch of sweetness.



**Hall Game:** Heath House enjoyed a lively hall games session featuring pickleball and table tennis. Everyone took part with great energy, showing teamwork and friendly competition throughout. It was a fun and engaging activity that kept everyone active.



**Bikes:** Heath House enjoyed a fun and active bike session, where everyone took part with enthusiasm. The activity was a great way to build confidence, stay active, and enjoy time outdoors together. It was a refreshing and enjoyable experience for all involved.



**Snow Centre Trip**  
Heath House had an exciting trip to the Snow Centre, where the group enjoyed the thrilling donut ride. Laughter and smiles filled the day as the children sped down the slopes, creating unforgettable memories together. It was a fun-filled experience that will be remembered for a long time.



### HEATHLANDS

Heathlands Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5AY  
 Tel: 01727 807807 or Email: [admin@heathlands.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@heathlands.herts.sch.uk)  
 Nursery, Primary & Secondary Provision, Day & Residential, BSL Training & Resource Centre

#### Summer Term 2026

Term Starts	Mon 13 April 2026
Bank Holiday	Mon 4 May 2026
Half Term Holiday	Mon 25 May 2026 – Fri 29 May 2026
Term Ends	Wed 22 July 2026 at 12.30pm

#### HOLIDAY DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

##### Autumn Term 2026

Inset Days	Tuesday 1 September 2026
Term Starts	Wednesday 2 September 2026
Half Term Holiday	Monday 19 October 2026 – Friday 30 October 2026
Term Ends	Friday 18 December 2026 at 12.30pm

##### Spring Term 2027

Term Starts	Monday 4 January 2027
Half Term Holiday	Monday 15 February 2027 – Friday 19 February 2027
Term Ends	Thursday 25 March 2027 at 12.30pm

##### Summer Term 2027

Term Starts	Monday 12 April 2027
Bank Holiday	Monday 3 May 2027
Half Term Holiday	Monday 31 May 2027 – Friday 4 June 2027
Term Ends	Thursday 22 July 2027 at 12.30pm

