



The Hemel Hempstead School

News

13 February 2009

www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

HeadLines

In a week thankfully free from snowfall, the world has moved on for The Hemel Hempstead School. Further to my message of last week, I am delighted to note that we have been included in the hundred most improved schools list again because of the continued and sustained rise in our GCSE results. The 10% increase from Summer 2007 to Summer 2008 meant that for a second year running we have secured a place on this illustrious list. As ever we have been summoned to a grand dinner and awards ceremony in London which falls, unfortunately, on the performance night of Rock Challenge at Stevenage. Therefore Mr Jordan and I will share the honours of attending both events. Congratulations to staff and this year's Year 12 students for enabling us to be amongst the handful of schools who appear on the top 100 list for two years in succession. I would reiterate that we are third in the county, and that includes schools who select on the basis of ability, for value added scores at Key Stage 4 or GCSE and that we are fifth in the county for GCSE results 5A*-C. Our 'including English and Maths' figure is also one of the highest. Hertfordshire, it has to be said, is one of the best achieving counties in the country.

All this means that more and more of our students qualify for Sixth Form places. That in turn means that it is even more vital that the quality of guidance and the outcomes of advice leading to taking up A level and Btec and Diploma and other courses is the best it can be. Whilst our Post-16 record is very strong with the majority of students gaining good A levels and good university places, I want it to be the equal of our GCSE success for the sake of our students. That is my mission for this academic year and next!

In the meantime, I would ask for parental support on another issue. In the Local Authority's consultation on the Published Admission Number or PAN for our school it has been put at 186 students not the current 180. I have written in the strongest terms to contest this. We do not have the classroom spaces or the space within classrooms to take more students and, organised as we are to a six form entry, I do not wish to increase our class sizes beyond thirty. We are a popular and over subscribed school and we often have to increase beyond our numbers because of successful appeals. Some years have gone as high as 189 in the recent past because of this. Increasing the PAN to 186 could lead to year groups of 192 or more and that is unacceptable. Please feel free to write to me so that I can pass on your comments to the local authority or go to www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/consdocadms1011.pdf page 34 of the document which indicates the predicament which looms over us and comment on the consultation directly.

My own chances of TV stardom have increased considerably since coming to Hemel Hempstead and GMTV has become a familiar second home over the past two years. I am considering an invitation from 'Noel's HQ' for Saturday's show as I write but more importantly, following in the footsteps of 'Poirot', the BBC are filming here from tomorrow for a comedy programme featuring Sam and Mark (the Beeb's answer to Ant and Dec if you've never seen them on children's TV) which may well turn into a series but will appear firstly as part of 'Comic Relief'. Many of our younger students are taking part with most of the footage being shot over half term. My study is one of the main locations, but they have, very mistakenly in my view, declined to utilise my unusual acting talents. A big mistake, surely? Seriously though, it is another great opportunity for our students and helps to keep this Performing Arts school on the media map.

Finally, there are many events which should hearten us about school and what our students achieve. I always feel very happy on a Friday morning when I am giving out my Headteacher commendations and this week I will be rewarding Nicola Kennett for writing a beautiful sonnet as part of her English work. Mr James Mitchell, her English teacher, thought it was exceptional for a Year 8 student and so do I. Here it is:

A Lifetime Ago

As my head travels to lands I know,
As I float away to the land I love,
I see you all, my friends, you come and go
Around me in the African skies above.
As you lift me up on the great eagle's wings;
We soar together above all the nations,
Fly with the wind, we are raised like kings,
The great Africa and God's creations.
But suddenly we are thrown away,
Separated across foreign lands: wait,
Rejoice my friends we'll meet again one day.
There will be a chance, don't worry don't be late.
Orange and yellow of the sunset
Do you remember that young day we met?

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher



‘Anything Goes’



Cast lists and programme notes make fascinating reading, especially when they mark a large whole school project such as ‘Anything Goes’. Hidden away behind the evocative artwork of Phil Kourris are many, but not all of the names of those who contributed to the successful run of this production. Anonymous some may be in this printed record, but Diane Heale and her team know the tremendous, and practical, goodwill that supports their hard work.

‘Performing Arts’ at The Hemel Hempstead School is giving pleasure and experience to so many in our community, whether performers or audience; it was especially exciting that some of our Consortium students were willing to give up so much time and effort to be part of the musical.

Principal singers and actors have rightly received their well-earned plaudits: Amie, Imogen, Abi, George, the Tobys, Matt, Emily, Jake, Callum, Kris and Louis, and ALL the other members of the cast and crew, should be thanked again for giving so much exhilarating pleasure to so many people. You will perhaps permit me to highlight a few of the less frequently mentioned names. A dangerous process, but in this review, anything goes.

Nobody could believe that the lights were operated, on the last three performances, by Kieran Duke, a Year 9 student. Notably, he was trusted by our professional lighting engineers, former students Matt Hayball and Andy Bird, to have sole charge of thousands of pounds of their Lighting Company’s equipment. Imagine his nerves on Thursday evening when given the nod, by the ever present director, to lower the house lights, yet the cues were followed flawlessly.

Vibrant dancing by Toni, Rosie (both stalwarts of so many productions over the years), Karen, Sidonie and Luke gave the show a depth that few ‘school’ productions could hope to match.

Everyone assumes that the Front of House management can run itself, but John Mitchell and his team of ushers and caterers always provide a professional level of service to the audience; like a good referee, they do an excellent job that often goes unnoticed.

Rachel Barlow, working to a very tight deadline, never fails to provide the stunning photographs that Jane Gilden uses for the displays that fill the foyer on the opening night and serve as a lasting reminder of the entertainment. Set construction by Colin Hollick, Gary Townsend and Matt Hayball is always practical, safe and intriguing.

Alex Brook was a rock, albeit a slightly tipsy one, around which the rest of the cast spun their crazy and joyous stories; there can be few other students in the history of the school who have made such a successful switch from technical staff to principal performer.

Read the programme yourselves; each name heads up a group of supportive parents, guardians and partners who also made contributions to these four magical evenings.

You are all the tops!

Mr P Stanbridge

ANYTHING GOES – A Triumph!

In this present ‘credit-crunching’ climate, there was no better way to spend an evening than watching this year’s musical production of Anything Goes. For a couple of hours all other problems were forgotten as I was swept away on a tide of romance, laughs and song produced by a wonderful cast and the fantastic production team Heale, Bailey and Sepala.

The whole company produced a sublime performance and that is what is great about The Hemel Hempstead School productions; the fact that everyone on stage and working backstage gives 100% effort throughout. For a number of the cast it was probably their last school performance and they are going out on a high – Alex Brook, Matt Bailey, Toby Smith, Abi Spear, Amie Flowerdew, Toby Gilden, George Pearce, Ian Patrick, Toni York, Adam Beer, Louis Bransgrove, Lauren King, Bijou Bond and Kris Banks. They will be missed but I am glad to say the future is bright; if you watched those mopping the decks and taking tea whilst the leads fell in and out of love, they are the stars of future productions. So, don’t worry Year 13 performers, of course we will miss your talent but the next school production is in safe hands!

Well done to all of those involved in Anything Goes and thank you for such a brilliant show!

Miss F Dayton

MIKE PENNING MP
Member of Parliament for Hemel Hempstead
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Ms Sandra Samwell
Headteacher
Hemel Hempstead School
Heath Lane
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RECEIVED
30 JAN 2009

28th January 2009

Dear *Sandra*

I have been written to by the Rt Hon Jim Knight MP, Minister of State for Schools & Learners advising me that your school was amongst the top performing schools this year based on sustained improvement in 5_A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics.

I would like to add my congratulations on your achievement and would be pleased if you could pass this on to your students, staff and governors in recognition of all their hard work.

I hope to hear of your continuing success next year.

Yours sincerely,

we
Mike Penning

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA



HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATION

For Representing the District at the County Swimming Gala: Alex Hatt 10L, Lois Moore 9N, Louis Mayhew 8L, Ben Barnes 8L, Curtis Barnett 8A.

For Service to the School: Harriet Bullock 11L.

For Excellent Work in Geography: Lamorna Hooker 9P, Sydney Clark 9P, Charlotte Blair-Smith 9C, Jack Dickinson 9A, Lillith Hickling 9N, Elissa Benedetti-Smith 9N, Louise Donovan 9N, Holly Lamb 9P, Amelie Lecoecuche 9P, Jordan Kelly 9P, Jack Benedetti-Smith 9N, James Baxter 9C, Rebecca Hall 9C, Elliott Craven 9P.

For Excellent Work in English: Nicole Kennett 8N, Amber Lane 8C, Olivia Church 8A, Amy Dowse 8C, Nicholas Mower 8F, Emma D'Amery 8L, Tom Whalley 8F.

For Excellent Work in Science: Andrew Coe 9P, Glen Taylor 9F, Lamorna Hooker 9P.

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 122 BBC Comic Relief Auditions

Letter 123 Cancellation of INSET day

Letter 124 Year 7 Gifted and Talented Performing Arts
Masterclass

Letter 125 Gifted and Talented Athlete Register

Letter 126 Years 12/13 trip to Germany

Letter 127 Year 12 Geography Field Trip Meeting

Letter 128 Year 8 Geography trip to London Docklands

Letter 129 Year 11 End of Key Stage Report

All Gold Letters can be viewed on our website:

www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

Year 7 Students Amazed by Mandir Wonder

On arrival at the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir 90 students were chatting excitedly as we lined up outside the magnificent Hindu mandir. After passing security barriers, we took off our shoes and entered one of the four assembly halls for a powerpoint presentation about the thirteen year old temple. We then entered the prayer hall and were amazed by the intricate designs and carvings. After the prayers, we had a chance to walk around and see the wonderful statues, followed by fifteen minutes to buy a souvenir from the temple shop. Before leaving we watched a DVD about the temple. Finally we reluctantly boarded the waiting coaches for the long ride home.

Sophie Kinley 7A



M arble towers strong and tall,
A ssembly hall inside,
N ice and peaceful.
D oing the calm things they like to do,
I n the Mandir the gods live,
R avana, Vishnu, Shiva and more



The visit to the Hindu temple was very interesting. I think we learnt a lot. It was very beautiful. I would like to go there again.

Joanna Toms 7A

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir is a very spectacular place. I was stunned by the details that went into the carvings. The Mandir is a great place for education, for Hindus and non-Hindus alike, as it's a good place for school trips with over 8,600 visits. It features a sports hall for youngsters, with a badminton club, keep fit classes, self-defence, yoga, football, table-tennis and cricket being some of the sports played.

Joshua Kelly 7A

The temple was completed in August 1995. It is massive and there are lots of things to do there. Some people consider it to be one of the wonders of the world. It is a great experience and it's worth going.

Here are some of the comments made by others in my class about their visit to the temple:

'It was a great school trip. I would definitely go back!'

'The temple part was amazing. The carvings were breathtaking'.

'It was magical.'

'There are no words to describe it. It was just magnificent.'

'It was a once in a lifetime experience.'

Keziah Buckley

School policies can be viewed on our website under 'about HHS/School Policies'. If you require a hard copy of any of the policies please get in touch with the School Office.

S J Samwell



SPORT

FIXTURES

- Tues 24 Feb** Yr 7 County Cup Soccer semi-final v Mount Grace (A)
2 - 4.30 pm
- Weds 25 Feb** U18 County League Basketball v Beaumont (H)
3.30 - 5.30 pm
- Thur 26 Feb** Yr 7 Basketball v Bridgewater (H) 3.30 - 5.30 pm

SPORTS NEWS

Shelley Netball

It was *so* cold. Sunday 1st February saw the Shelley teams at full turnout on this cold, dry day. Students of The Hemel Hempstead School from Years 7, 8 and 9 (Shelley 6 Development squad) met a strong Connexions Vipers. Although holding their own during the first half, Shelley 6 could not maintain it on this bitterly cold day. Shelley Juniors were next on court, against Cosmic, and came away with a fine win of 36-29. Shelley 5 met a strong Panthers side, and although matching them in defence and centre court, could not maintain their goal scoring. Finally, Shelley 4 met Connexions Ice (and the weather felt like that!) and came away with a great win of 36-27.

Well done everybody, for showing such great commitment.

Mrs K Worrell MBE

Dates for Your Diary

Gold Week

23rd - 27th Feb Year 11 English Speaking and Listening Exams

23rd Feb Rock Challenge

24th Feb Year 11 'Invitation' Revision Evening
(re-scheduled from 10th Feb owing to inclement weather)

25th Feb Dacorum Rotary Technology Tournament
Year 7 Gifted and Talented Students' Performing Arts Masterclass at Stevenage

26th Feb Year 13 Theatre trip to London
Year 9 Triple Science Information Evening, 6 pm

Blue Week

2nd Mar Year 11 German Seminar
Year 12 Geography Field Trip Meeting, 5 pm

3rd Mar Year 11 Art exam preparation trip to London

4th Mar Year 11 Extra-curricular Art trip to National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery

5th Mar House Book Challenge for World Book Day,
Library at lunchtime
Comic Relief 'X Factor' competition, 7 pm

Comic Relief X Factor Competition

X Factor is back! This year we want even more people to audition, to raise even more money and to have even more laughs; after all, that's what Comic Relief is all about! Auditions are on Thursday 26th February at lunchtime and after school. The judges will be looking for the best performers as well as the best singers. Audition forms are available from Student Services.

The 'Live Final' will be taking place on Thursday 5th March. Tickets will cost £3 and will be on sale from Student Services from Friday 27th February.

Youth Connexions

Year 11 students are welcome to pick up a West Herts College or Oaklands prospectus from room M5. I suggest that students who wish to apply for college courses do so before the Easter holidays!

Apprenticeship or job search - Year 11 students who wish to search for a job or an apprenticeship for next year can visit www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.co.uk to register and search for local vacancies in Hertfordshire.

Helen Ewers - Youth Connexions Adviser

Year 7 English Texts

All Year 7 students were issued a copy of *Artemis Fowl* at the beginning of September. Any copies that are currently still hiding in school bags or underneath beds need to be returned to their class teacher by Monday 23rd February, as invoices for outstanding texts will be sent home that week.

English Department

Sickness/absence line Please will all parents contact us daily if your child is sick, going to be late in due to a medical appointment, or is absent for any other reason. Please call our sickness/absence line on 01442 390103 by 9am if possible.

PTA News

JUMBLE SALE

SATURDAY 21st March

Over half term would be a good time to empty those wardrobes, cupboards, lofts etc and gather all your unwanted sellable items for our jumble sale. We can take things from you after the half term and store them. So please get rummaging and help us raise lots of money for all those extras we give to the school.

Summer Fair

The event has been arranged for Saturday May 16th.

If you would like to run your own stall, or know someone who would, please get in touch.

We have lots of things planned already including Hemel's Got Talent, which Miss Samwell will be hosting.

Our Sports Leaders are putting together a tournament for our linked Primary schools' Year 6 students.

Next meeting: Monday, 2nd March 7pm in Library

Judith Stallworthy, Chair HHSA (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350), email s.stallworthy@sky.com

LIBRARY NOTICES

The Times/Sunday Times Books for Schools

The Times/Sunday Times Books for Schools scheme started on 11th January. We can exchange these tokens for free books of our choice from a catalogue of 170 titles. There will be 12 tokens printed each week and with books starting at just 10 tokens you don't have to be a regular Times reader to make a difference to our collection. Tokens can be deposited in the collection boxes in Student Services, Reception and the Library. With your help we can make a real difference to our Library, ensuring that students have access to some of the very best titles available to help them to read and improve their literacy.

Mrs E Krajewski, Librarian