



The Hemel Hempstead School

News

20 March 2008

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HeadLines

It's been a very short term but an extremely eventful one. Punctuated by our OfSTED inspection the school found itself in receipt of praise and recognition galore from national bodies. The top 25% of schools in the country is where we are placed, fairly and squarely. On some indicators, such as the most improved schools at GCSE including English and Maths, we made the top 1%. Our students were praised for their attitude to work and I would wish to recognise their contribution on the extra curricular front given the marvellous productions, sporting triumphs and excellence achieved in so many areas. Students have worked hard on their coursework and preparation for exams but there is a way to go! However, events such as the wonderful Science Week or House Science or the National Theatre play, 'It Snows' or the Spring concert or the trip to the Somme do not happen without the dedication and commitment of some marvellous staff, for which I thank them wholeheartedly on your behalf.

I hope that everyone has a peaceful and happy Easter break and that our students return to us ready for a very significant term for so many of them and an important term for all. May I also thank parents, staff and students for all they do to make this such a wonderful school. We knew it was great but this term the experts have confirmed that for us officially. Well done everyone!

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Headteacher's Commendations

For Excellent Work in History:

Christopher Garrett 8A, Rebecca Hall 8C, Lillith Hickling 8N, Jordan Kelly 8P.

For Excellent Work in Graphics:

Alice Markham 7L, Louise Guthrie 7L, Zoe Dennis 7L, Emma D'Amery 7L.

For Excellent Work in English:

Stephanie Foster 8L, Olivia Scott 8L.

For Excellent Work in Child Development:

Helen Gleave 11C.

Dates for Your Diary



- 21st Mar–4th Apr** Easter Holiday
24th Mar–6th Apr Sports Tour to South Africa
7th and 8th Apr INSET days—school closed to students
*****Gold Week*****
9th Apr Summer Term begins
Parents' Forum, 6.30 pm (for parents who have already confirmed their attendance and any other parents/guardians who do so prior to the meeting).
10th Apr Yr 9 Science Level 7 Masterclass 3.45 pm
13th Apr A Level Dance Exam

Armed Services Personnel

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) wishes to collect information about the number of students whose parents or guardians are current members of the regular armed forces. This information will facilitate research into the problems faced by Service children, allowing trends to be recognised and, possibly, resources targeted more effectively. If this applies to you, please give details in writing to the School Office. Thank you.

Gold Letters issued recently:

- Letter 138** Sixth Form Study Leave
Letter 139 Yrs 11/12 Trip to Honduras (2009)
Letter 140 Key Stage 3 Assessments (SATs)
Letter 141 Yr 8 Hidden Histories Trip
Letter 142 Yr 12 Interim Report
Letter 143 Yr 12 AS Textiles Textbook
Letter 144 Yr 12 Higher Education Finance Mtg

English Trip to the Theatre

Year 9 recently went to Henley on Thames to watch 'The Tempest' in a theatre. Four coaches packed full of The Hemel Hempstead School students made their way up the M1 to an awaiting cast of Shakespearian actors.

Once we arrived, we were slowly moved through the lobby of the theatre in groups of six, and then shown our seats. As the final people were brought in to be seated, the actors went off into the wings to prepare. The lights went down. The safety curtain was raised and the crowd of chatty Year 9s was silenced.

Overall I thought the play was performed to a high standard, but if they could have just added an actor to play Ariel, and if they had changed the setting of each scene, it would have been rated as outstanding. *Chris Veall 9N*

'The Tempest' is a play written by William Shakespeare, in which the rightful Duke of Milan, Prospero, using skill gained from magic studies, seeks to avenge his brother Antonio, who usurped the title. During the play, Prospero uses his servant spirit Ariel to direct his enemies' ships toward the island that he and his daughter Miranda landed on, surviving only on supplies and books provided by kind nobleman Gonzalo. The plot thickens as his monstrous slave Caliban plans to kill him in drunken delusions of grandeur along with two of his enemies' ships' lowest members; a drunken butler and a drunken jester.

Once analysed and understood, Shakespeare's plays can be very entertaining and unique as each is open to creative interpretation, so performing and directing such plays is a challenging and rewarding opportunity. When dramatising 'The Tempest', original, interpretive risks have to be taken and unfortunately within this production they failed to convey the key themes of 'The Tempest': revenge, slavery and the supernatural.

Overall, for an amateur company, the performance was good and could provide additional understanding for anyone studying the play; with a few major changes and a larger cast the play could have massive potential. *Fay Breed 9N*

We recently visited a small theatre next to the River Thames. We had driven to this theatre to watch the famous play by William Shakespeare, 'The Tempest'. At first I thought it would be a boring play. How wrong I was.

The actor who played Prospero was fantastic because he knew his lines, added humour to the otherwise dull lines and created wondrous spells and schemes against characters.

Overall, 'The Tempest' at this theatre was quite enjoyable, a cheap day out and quite educational. It will help improve my direct a scene exam question. *James Barnett 9N*

On the 29th February, Year 9 went to the Kenton Theatre in Henley-on-Thames, to take part in assisting the directing of our two set scenes, Act 3 Scene 2 and Act 4 Scene 1, as well as watching the majority of the play performed by just four actors, plus two extra actors (children from the other school viewing the performance). We left school at half past one, and after an hour-long journey along the winding country roads, twisting like vines along our unknown path, we arrived, ploughing on bravely through dim, dank and dingy drizzle, at our destination. The warm, contented, cosy atmosphere inside the small, yet elegantly decorated theatre was the ideal surroundings for a rowdy school to enjoy a cleverly crafted play.

As we arrived, the main actor, Rupert, who was playing Prospero, was half-way through a small workshop to use our (the audience's) ideas to help the three actors perform as Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano in the first of our set scenes. It was a frantic business and like a balloon suddenly released into the sky, the audience were bubbling with ideas: Rupert and the other actors came round to us with notepads, scribbling down our suggestions. Quickly their pads were full as so many of the eager pupils had put forward their suggestions: some of the best from my area (suggesting ideas for Caliban) were hiccup, be sick, slur your words and raise your voice. After this intriguing session, we got to watch our suggestions being put into action; some of the consequences of our over-enthusiastic ideas were hilariously funny! It was clear that we were not very gifted in the art of directing: the general approach being the more action the better. Therefore, as we watched our ideas manipulated and improved by the talented actors, our directing skills were enhanced, thus improving our chances of doing well if a directing question comes up in the SATs. *Sarah Kinley 9P*

'It Snows'

On Thursday night, it snowed. However, it was unfortunately only artificial snow, pumped out of the top of the stage at The Hemel Hempstead School in 'It Snows', our entry in the National Theatre Connexions competition. 'Boy doesn't meet girl, girl doesn't meet boy. And then it snows!'

This was the latest addition to the great line of productions at HHS; a fantasy love story with a deep emotional aspect underpinning the whole piece. An enjoyable performance directed by Miss Keen, 'It Snows' included a wide variety of physical routines which were well executed by the cast who, despite the weather, showed little sign of 'cold feet'. This ensemble was supported by a wide age range of students and particularly the lead roles of Max Farrelly, Sarah Nicholls and Rosie Hoskins. The lighting and sound were also of a very high standard. Our very own Matt Hayball and his apprentices, Kieren Duke and James Baxter, certainly shouldn't go unnoticed. With the help of George Mann and Ms Lang's choreography, the audience enjoyed many imaginative physical motifs and numerous moments that left the audience in hysterics. A very big well done to everyone involved.

Emma Saunders, Grace Alexander 11L and Katie Gillingham 11N

House Science Competition

With the expansion of the House System this year, the first House Science Challenge took place on Monday evening, kicking off Science and Engineering Week in style. Each House entered a team of four pupils from Year 8 through to Year 11 and were aided by House Captains and cheered on by staff. The brief was to build a lighthouse from the set of resources provided and each design had to fulfil a list of criteria ranging from minimum height to the presence of an on/off switch. The pupils rose to the challenge superbly and were extremely inventive with their designs, demonstrating excellent team-work throughout the challenge. Despite some initial setbacks trying to make each design free-standing, all teams completed the challenge successfully in the allocated time. The final constructions were judged against the criteria by our invited guests, Mr Pennycook (Chair of Governors) and Mr Hart. Both judges were extremely impressed with all the designs and found it a difficult decision to make but finally judged Chalfont to be the winners. Congratulations to all involved and we look forward to the House Challenge next year.

Science and Engineering Week

Thank you to all pupils who took part in the Paper Aeroplane Competition last week. All planes were judged for distance, time in the air and design.

Congratulations to the winners:

Distance: Tom Cullinan 10.52m

Time: Mark Cowley: 3:59secs

Design: Glen Taylor

Miss Simson

'One World One Voice'

Joint CD – HHS and Mgezwa School

By the time you read this our school concert will have come and gone. If you attended I am sure you will have been treated to some excellent live performances from many of our pupils. However, you can also listen to many of these performances by buying our Joint CD 'One World One Voice' for a donation of £5 (all profits to go towards the Partnership with Mgezwa School). In addition, you will be able to enjoy the performances of Mgezwa School Senior and Intermediate Choirs. The harmonies they produce, in a completely natural way, bring a taste of Africa to the CD.

The joint track 'Raise Me Up' is also a feature for the groundbreaking experience of the two choirs singing together even though 6,000 miles apart.

The CD cover also incorporates artwork from students from both schools. You can purchase your copy from Student Services next term – you won't be disappointed.

Mrs Botha

Year 9 at The Somme March 14 2008

We don't know how to sum up this trip in a few hundred words, but we're going to give it a go! On Friday 14th March, Year 9 students arrived at school at 4.55 am. Half asleep we clambered into three different coaches carrying bags of Wellington boots and food to last us the day. The coaches set off at 5 am and we got comfortable in the coach as the parents that waited to wave goodbye, waved. We drove to the Eurotunnel, then drove for another one and a half hours when we reached France.

The first place we looked around was Vimy Ridge, a place where some of the fighting had taken place in WW1. We walked through the trenches where many soldiers had been killed; it gave us a real understanding of how frightening it would be. We went up to a huge monument about a five minute drive from the trenches. The monument was two huge pillars, representing how close the two enemy trenches were from each other, not very far as we found out. We then took another short drive, passing some of the British, French and German graves, line after line. There were also mass graves where hundreds of bodies were buried in the same place. It was unbelievable, and to think they were just a few of thousands. Later on we visited a huge monument at Thiepval with all the soldiers' names on who had died but had never been found. There was also a visitors' centre and we were able to look and see if any of our relatives had fought in the war. Later on we went to the part everyone was looking forward to the most, the main Somme battlefield and 'no mans land'. We were allowed to walk to the tree in Newfoundland Memorial Park which it is said very few soldiers got past without being shot. It was strange seeing how close the armies actually were to each other. Unfortunately, we were not able to go onto 'no mans land' as it was very wet and muddy.

After this, we headed back to the Eurotunnel but had to wait forty-five minutes for the train, so we went to the shops. We all bundled onto the coaches for the remainder of the journey home; our coach was able to watch Black Adder but most people went to sleep. We eventually arrived home at 10.20 pm. The day was full of moving moments but at the same time it was amazing to be able to see where the soldiers had sacrificed so much for their country.

Thanks to all the teachers who made this trip happen. I'm sure the others in Year 9 would agree that it was worth the long journey.

Bethany Doona 9L and Georgina Ellis 9F

Year 8 Hidden Histories

The School has been nominated to take part in the Hidden Histories Project, led by Hertfordshire Archives and the Local Studies department at Hertfordshire County Council. Some of our Year 8 students will be visiting County Hall on Friday 11th April and will also be taking part in a one day workshop programme of Drama and Spoken Word with Beacon Theatre Company for Young People on Tuesday 22nd April.

Miss Ramnarine

Muslim Celebration

Prophet Muhammad's Birthday - Thurs 20th March

This holiday celebrates the birthday of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. It is fixed as the 12th day of the month of Rabi 1 in the Islamic calendar. *Mawlid* means birthday of a holy figure and *al-Nabi* means prophet. The day is commemorated with recollections of Muhammad's life and significance.

Families, especially children, meet and share in this celebration by eating a traditional meal together.

Hindu Spring Festival - Fri 21st March

Holi is a popular Hindu spring festival, celebrated on 21st March. It is observed in North India and Nepal and is also called the Festival of Colours.

On the first day, bonfires are lit at night to signify burning the demoness Holika, Hiranyakashipu's sister.

On the second day, known as Dhuleti, people spend the day throwing coloured powder and water at each other. The spring season, during which the weather changes, is believed to cause viral fever and cold. Thus, the playful throwing of the coloured powders has a medicinal significance. People invite each other to their houses for feasts and celebrations later in the evening.

Mrs Ramnarine

Creative Writing Competition

Congratulations to Danielle Lewis and Ben Catt, who both produced pieces of creative writing for a recent, popular competition. Impressing the judges, their entries stood out from the many others submitted and will be published in a book entitled 'Mini S.A.G.A.S. Fiction from Hertfordshire'. Well done Danielle and Ben!

English Department

Sixth Form / Part-time Work

In the lead up to the exam period I would like to remind students, and parents, about the recommendations for part-time work. Research has shown that a full time student working more than 8.5 hours a week is likely to reduce their grades by 1.5. In the coming months students should be cutting back on their hours in order to give themselves every opportunity to achieve the best grades they can.

Also, students should not be doing paid work during the school day as they are full time students and should be in school for five periods. If we are informed about a student doing paid employment during the school day we shall assume they have left school and take them off the school roll.

Miss Dayton, Student Achievement Leader: Key Stage 5

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.**

Sport

Fixtures

Thurs 10th April Yr 7 Girls Basketball v Bridgewater (H)

Fri 11th April 1st XI District Cup Soccer v Longdean (A)

Results

Second in Yr 7 County Basketball Rally

Semi final v Richard Hale won 18 – 2

Final v Columba's College lost 30 – 12

Sports News

Congratulations to all those athletes who have competed this term and represented the School, District, County or higher.

I hope you all have a fantastic Easter and come back fit and ready for the athletics season.

Miss Bevan, Learning Leader, PE Department

German Exchange

On Sunday 2nd March we were made to get up at 6.30 am to depart for the German Exchange. We were all very excited and a bit anxious! We were all very excited about going on a plane with the school for the first time. As we approached the school in Speyer we were becoming more and more anxious. We met our partners for the first time and were all very pleased. We spent the next day in Speyer and met the Mayor. We all tried Bretzels for the first time and most of us loved them. At lunch we had a 'monster' pizza. Over the next few days we went on some excellent trips (although the weather wasn't great!). In the evening we spent time with our families and then we all met up. We attempted to watch 'Germany's next top model' but didn't really understand what was going on. On the Friday we went to the Technical Museum and discovered the amusement of the slides. We also went to the IMAX which was a great experience. Even though we went to Germany during the worst week of weather in years, on the week transport strikes paralysed the state and the mountain railway in Heidelberg had shut for repairs, we had a fantastic time. We made some great friends, formed lasting memories and even managed to speak a bit of German!

A big thanks to Ms Cunnie for organising the trip and to Mrs Walker for coming with us.

Andy King, Amber Bartlett 10F and Graham Taylor 10P

PTA News

Summer Fair June 14th

All our efforts are now aimed towards this event.

Help us make it the best Summer Fair yet. Do you wish to run a stall? If you do please contact me as soon as possible to ensure you have a table.

We are looking for donations for our Tombola stall. If you have any unwanted gift items we would be happy to take them from you to swell our stall and profits.

Next meeting is Tuesday 15th April at 7pm in the library. Judith Stallworthy, Chair HHSA (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350), email: s.stallworthy@sky.com

