



The Hemel Hempstead School

News

23 January 2009

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HeadLines

It's been an historic week for the world. Despite the pundits trying to find fault, Barack Obama created history by becoming the first black American president and made a most moving and memorable speech. I liked so much of it and so much of it resonated with what a Headteacher would want for her school but I particularly admired the words: "Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends--- honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism... these things are old. These things are true."

Last week, the league tables for schools were published. As expected we did jolly well. There we are in the top twenty for Herts, the top ten of county non selective state schools on a number of indicators and most interestingly in the top three in the county for value added between Key Stage 2 and 4, referring to the difference that being in this school makes compared with similar schools nationally. Mr Mullings and I have been asked to speak to leadership teams and staff at other schools in order to support them with their quest to gain a better value added score. And I am often asked how we improved our results so much in such a short space of time.

The answers are complex, but they include

- Self belief: believing that we as a school are capable of the very best and that we will not settle for less
- Exemplary analysis of our data
- Setting high targets for the school, departments and individual students
- The extraordinary commitment of staff over and above the expected
- Inspirational teaching and positive attitudes of students who are open to inspiration
- Sheer hard work and tenacious efforts which enable individual students to improve

The list could go on but you get the picture. Our success has been very marked at Key Stage 4. My aim for the next year is that Key Stage 5 will improve markedly and substantially. That is not to say that sixth form results are bad. Our value added and points scores are good as Ofsted indicated. But I know that they can be exceptional.

Today, the University of Buckingham published a study showing, allegedly, that specialist schools are ineffective and do not raise achievement. Apparently, the example was quoted of the specialist Music college where Physics was the highest attaining subject. I'll take issue with most of these assertions. The Specialist Schools movement has transformed state schooling in this country more than any other initiative of recent years. Individual schools and schools working together have been transformed, not in a simplistic way but in a very complex one. I'd expect students in a Music specialist school to do better in Maths and Physics. There is a well proven correlation. Although we do very well indeed in the Performing Arts subjects, English has headed our league tables for some years. The aim is to do well across the board with the Arts specialism helping us to raise our game in many unmeasurable ways: giving students confidence, encouraging articulate responses, enhancing imagination and creativity. All of these intangible elements combine with fine teaching to produce exceptional learning, which in turn affects our results.

Next week sees four performances of 'Anything Goes'. Those who participate and those who support will enliven their lifelong learning. Our specialism enables us to resource the most ambitious productions. Our second specialism will allow us to enrich our Maths and Science provision. We will make sure that our specialisms add value to our offer and raise the roof on results.

President Obama took his oath twice to make sure that there was no doubt he was really the president of the USA. Headteachers aren't required to take oaths or be inaugurated but I'd be delighted to take an oath along the lines of 'I promise to uphold the fine traditions of The Hemel Hempstead School, leading the staff and students of this illustrious school to be the best they can be. I am honoured and privileged to be the Headteacher and will undertake my duties and responsibilities with care and pride so that all will thrive and flourish. Esse quam videri!'

The taking of the oath would be followed by a medley of wonderful songs from 'Anything Goes' although I am unsure whether Mrs Heale would consent to wear a hat of the proportions and floral extravagance of the one worn by Aretha Franklin on Tuesday!

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Fair Processing Notice and Data Checking Sheet

An updated copy of the Fair Processing Notice and a Data Checking Sheet will be sent home with all students to parents/guardians over the next week.

Please take time to read carefully the information shown on the Data Checking Sheet, and if changes need to be made to the data we hold, please make clear amendments, sign the sheet and return it to Student Services.

Please return the Data Checking Sheet ONLY if changes are required.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Parental Forum

The next Parental Forum will take place on **Wednesday 28th January (5.45pm)** in the Library. Our forums meet regularly and are open to all parents. The focus for our next meeting is **behaviour**. If you have views on this subject which you would like to share with us, you are most welcome to attend. I would be very grateful if you could contact my PA, Mrs Coe, to indicate your interest in attending. If you would like to propose a topic for future meetings, please contact us in the same way. I look forward to seeing you at the forum.

Mr T Jordan, Deputy Head

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.

Food Technology/Catering/Child Development Coursework 2008: Please collect any remaining folders from the June 2008 exam series from M15. Any folders left after 30 January will be disposed of. Thank you.
Mrs A Walker, Head of Technology



'ANYTHING GOES'

Weds 28th – Sat 31st January

Please remember to buy your tickets soon for this year's musical, 'Anything Goes', as they are nearly sold out! Performances take place next Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, starting at 7.30 pm. Tickets cost £7.50 (£5 concessions) and are available from Student Services at break and lunchtimes.

Mrs D Heale, Subject Leader: Drama

LIBRARY NOTICES

The Times/Sunday Times Books for Schools

The Times/Sunday Times Books for Schools scheme started on 11 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.

Year 8 Author Visit

Children's author, Alan Gibbons, will be visiting school on Tuesday 2 February to talk to Year 8. Some of his books will be on sale on the day and he will be happy to sign them for you. We have several of his books in the Library if you would like to read some of his work before the visit.

Mrs E Krajewski, Librarian

HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATIONS

For Service to the School: Ryan Bellman-Jeffreys 12C, Emma Fredskild Green 12C, Duncan Philpott 12C.

For representing the school in the County Cross Country Championships: Rebecca Armorgie 10A, Sophie Morris 9C, Sarah Grover 9P, Alex Eykelbosch 9F, Jack Eykelbosch 9P, Rory Tinker 8P, Sam Izzard 9L, Ross Taylor 9A, Christian Schramm 9P.

For Excellent Work in Maths: Christabel Dodd 7F.

For Excellent Work in French: Sarah Cosgrove 8C, Emily Crawley 8F, Philippa Gobby 8A, Glen Mitchell 8A, Luke Harris 8C, Sarah Worger 8A.

For Excellent Work in English: Amy Dowse 8C, Lucy Wiseman 8P, Holly Woollatt 8P.

For Excellent Work in BTEC Sport: Alex Dukes 10L, Adam King 10C, David Lloyd 10N, Alexandra Hatt 10L, Alexander Blake 10F, Jake Bannister 10A.

PTA News

Jumble Sale

Saturday 21st March 10 am Please begin to sort out your unwanted clothes and household items for the Jumble Sale. We are able to store them now.

If you received any unwanted Christmas gifts we could really use them for our summer fair tombola stall.

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.

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

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 101 Year 9 Triple Science Information Evening

Letter 102 Rock Challenge

Letter 103 GCSE Textiles Revision Guide

Letter 104 Year 12 Textiles at the Cutting Edge

All Gold Letters can be viewed on our website: www.hhs.herts.sch.uk

Letter 105 Year 11 English Department Information

Letter 106 Year 11 Careers/Options Forum

Letter 107 Years 12/13 trip to Germany

Letter 108 Fair Processing Notice and Data Checking Sheet

SPORT



FIXTURES

Mon 26th U14 Basketball v Cavendish (A) 3.30 - 5.30 pm

Tue 27th U15 Basketball v St Columba's College (H) 3.30 -5.30 pm

Yr 8 Hockey Mini League @ Tring

Wed 28th Yr 8 Girls Basketball v Cavendish (A) 3.30 – 5.30 pm

U14 Basketball v St Columba's College (H) 3.30 – 5.30 pm

Yr 8 Girls Football Mini League @ Cavendish

Sat 31st Yr 9 and 10 Soccer v Berkhamsted Collegiate (A) 9 – 11 am

RESULTS

1st XI County Cup Soccer v St Michaels lost 3-0

Yr 9 County Cup Soccer v Mount Grace lost 6-0

Yr 7 County Cup quarter final Soccer v Kings Langley won 2-1

Yr 8 Girls Basketball v Bridgewater won 32-26

Yr 8 County League Basketball v Westfield won 69-39

Football v Adeyfield

Yr 7 won 4-2

Yr 9 lost 5-3

Yr 10 drew 0-0

U13 Dacorum Schools v Northampton Schools National Cup last 16 lost 3-2

County Cross Country Championships

Rebecca Armorgie 9th 17:40 Inter Girls

Ross Taylor 8th 16:13 Junior Boys

Sophie Morris 13th 12:37 Junior Girls

Jack Eykelbosch 46th 18:34 Junior Boys

Rory Tinker 30th 17:23 Junior Boys

Christian Schramm 22nd 17:01 Junior Boys

Sam Izzard 35th 17:55 Junior Boys

Sarah Grover 34th 13:49 Junior Girls

Alex Eykelbosch injured Junior Girls

Mr P Bryson

SPORTS NEWS

Many congratulations to the nine students who competed in the County Cross Country Championships in St Albans on Saturday. In tough, cold conditions all athletes ran well with some notable performances from Ross Taylor, Sophie Morris and Rebecca Armorgie, all finishing in the top 15 in their race.

Miss E Bevan

Netball News

At last, we had sunshine, even though the temperature was only 6°C. First to go was Shelley 5 (ex HHS students) who took on a strong Gadeside side. Although trailing in the last quarter, they pulled the score back to a five-goal deficit, to gain one point at the end of the game. Next to play were Shelley 4, with some good goal scoring, to finish with a good win against Flamstead Green on a final score of 26-19 to Shelley.

On the adjacent court was Shelley 6 against a tall Parkside team. With some good centre court play, they never tired against this tall, adult side and finished with a credible score of 13-25 to Parkside.

In the next round Shelley Juniors met Dacorum Youth 4. At the end of an exciting game, with both teams battling to take the lead, Shelley Juniors won the game with a score of 38-37! Some great, accurate shooting by Shona Berloth and Francesca Quinn, sealed the win. Good play by everybody.

Mrs K Worrell MBE

Dates for Your Diary

Blue Week

27th Jan Year 7 RE visit to Hindu Temple

Year 12 Art visit to Tate Modern

28th Jan Year 7 RE visit to Hindu Temple

Year 9 Options Forms return deadline

Parental Forum (please see separate item)

28th – 31st Jan *School Musical 'Anything Goes'*

30th Jan A Level Music Conference

Gold Week

2nd Feb Year 12 Art visit to Tate Modern

3rd Feb Year 8 Author visit to Library

Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening, 4.30–7 pm

'Reverb' at Herts County Dance Festival

5th Feb Years 9/10/11 Intermediate Maths Challenge

Year 11 'Into the Sixth' Evening, 7.15 pm

6th Feb Year 12 Biology visit to Whipsnade Zoo

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