



The Hemel Hempstead School

News

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HeadLines

It's been a year of accolades for the school in one way or another; more letters arrived this week, two of which are reproduced for you on this page. They congratulate us on being one of the top hundred schools in the country in terms of improving our results at Key Stage 4. This means that we are one of the top hundred 'most improved schools'. This is excellent news, but it seems to me that these particular headlines require more analysis. I have looked closely at the results of the other 99 schools and with all due respect, I see schools there who had a GCSE 5A*-C score of 15% who have risen to 40% and those on 30% who have risen to 45%. In other words, many of their students are still not achieving what they need in order to progress to the next stage of their education.

Alan Gray left me with a fine legacy of school achievement where this school was attaining over 70% 5A*-C. I have been pleased to raise that by nearly 15% whilst our figure including Maths and English has risen by over 20%. Our A level results also show a sustained improvement and compare well with County and national results. Our 'most improved' accolade shows a very good school becoming an outstanding school for the benefit of our students.

We have just written our School Development Plan for the coming year, 2008-9, and a more strategic plan that encompasses 2008-11. The vision directing the plan is my vision that the school will become outstanding in every way and be recognised as such nationally and internationally. Behind the vision is a specific ambition underpinned by excellent pastoral care for each of our students.

I would welcome parental input and comment on our school development and to this end I would invite you to contact me if you would be willing to take part in a parental forum next half term to discuss our strategic school development over the next three years.

I will also be setting up regular meeting times, once every half term when parents are welcome to come along and have questions answered or express points of view to myself and members of Senior Leadership Team. We will publish the dates in the first newsletter after half term.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

Dear Miss Samwell

I am delighted to congratulate you and your school on the excellent performance you have demonstrated at Key Stage 4 in the 2007 Achievement and Attainment Tables published on 10 January.

The results for your school show that you are amongst the top performing schools this year based on sustained improvement in 5+ A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent) including English and mathematics GCSEs.

Nationally, there has not only been another impressive increase in the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C but we have impressively already met the 2008 target of at least 60 per cent of pupils achieving that level with 60.8 per cent of pupils achieving the indicator. We also continue to see improvements in the numbers of pupils performing well in the basics - the proportion of pupils achieving a good pass in English and mathematics has risen again this year. This continued progress is an excellent achievement and evidence of the effective efforts of all those involved in raising standards in our schools.

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your pupils, staff and governors for their hard work and success, and I send my best wishes for sustained improvement in the year ahead.

I am sending a copy of this letter to your local Member of Parliament.

Jim Knight MP

Dear Sandra

It is with great pleasure that I write to offer my congratulations to Hemel Hempstead School, for appearing in the top 100 most improved secondary schools in England achievement list.

It is a real achievement and a tribute to you and the school team. I would be extremely grateful if you would pass my sincere thanks to all staff, governors and pupils involved.

I hope the local community is as proud of this achievement of the school as I am and my appreciation goes to you all.

Yours sincerely

John Harris
Director of Children, Schools & Families

Safety Warning

We are continuing to have an extremely dangerous situation occurring in the mornings, particularly wet mornings, at our Anchor Lane gate.

Parents who pull up opposite the school entrance to drop off their children not only inconvenience drivers behind them in this narrow road, but also endanger their own children. A student crossing in front of his parent's car last Friday was nearly knocked over by a driver who had pulled out to overtake the stationary vehicle and did not see him until the last minute. Furthermore, cars pulling up in Anchor Lane caused gridlock between 8.25 and 8.30am, leading to some dangerous manoeuvres having to be performed to free the traffic up.

Parents who drive onto the site to drop off their children (other than those who have permission for medical reasons) are potentially an even greater hazard. Staff cars have to come on site, but every extra vehicle increases the risk of injury while we await funding from County to separate pedestrians more securely from traffic in this area.

Rainy mornings, like last Friday, are particularly dangerous. Limited vision of drivers caused by windscreen wipers and condensation in cars, and obscured vision of pedestrians caused by hoods and umbrellas, both mean that the fewer cars we have in Anchor Lane, the better. Your child may get a little damp walking up the hill from Beechfield Road or the Sports Centre, but this is easily remedied. An injury caused by a heavy car in poor visibility is not.

So we reiterate our request to have students dropped off safely, and not opposite the gates. We have asked our link police staff to help us reinforce this, particularly on wet days. Your help with this would be much appreciated.

Ms N Darby

Library Notices

A big thank you to Year 10 parents who donated over £200 worth of new books to the Library during last week's parents' evening. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Waterstones will be attending the Year 7 Parents' Evening and parents will be offered the opportunity to donate a book to the Library or make a purchase on which the Library will receive commission. We are working hard to update the Library stock and your support will be much appreciated.

May I remind students that printing in the Library is charged at the rate of 5p per A4 page for black and white and 20p per A4 page for colour.

Orders from the Scholastic Book Club leaflet need to be handed in to the Library by the end of the school day on Monday 28th January.

Mrs E Krajewski, Librarian



Headteacher's Commendations

For excellent Presentation to Year 9 Students and Parents: Amber Bartlett 10F, Sam Beasley 11A, Joshua Crosswell 10F

For excellent Public Speaking: Thomas Durrant 9F, Sarah Kinley 9P, Lloyd Petchey 9N, Eloise Phillips 9F, Ben Storrie 9N, Max Taylor 12Fg, Jenny Tucker 12Pb, Chris Veall 9N, Huw Wales 12Fb,



Dates for Your Diary

Blue Week

January
Tues 29th Year 7 RE Trip
Wed 30th Year 7 RE Trip
Wed 30th Year 11 Careers Forum
Thurs 31st Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening

February
Fri 1st Year 10/11 BTEC Theatre Trip

Gold Week

Mon 4th Year 12 Biology visit to Whipsnade Zoo
Tues 5th Year 11 'Into the Sixth' Evening
Thurs 7th Years 9, 10 and 11 Intermediate Maths Challenge
Fri 8th **INSET Day (School closed to Students)**



Dance in Herts Gifted and Talented Boys Project.

On the 14th January at The Hemel Hempstead School, I, along with a few other boys from here and other schools in the area, was lucky enough to be selected to participate in the Dance in Herts Gifted and Talented Boys Project. This is an opportunity to train alongside professional dance artists in three separate workshops with other male dancers from schools in Hertfordshire and surrounding counties.

The first workshop took place at Queens School, Watford in December 2007 with Tim Blowfield. The second workshop was hosted by HHS, with guest choreographer/performer Tom Roden. Tom is the Co-Artistic Director of New Art Club. Tom's work is theatre, dance and comedy based. Tom's workshop was truly amazing and I thoroughly enjoyed the day as I experienced dance in a different format.

I must say a huge thank you to Tom Roden for giving his time to share his dance experience with the boys. In addition, I would also like to thank Miss Billinge and Mrs Lang for selecting me and the other boys to participate.

The third workshop to be held as part of the Herts Dance Project will be held in Welwyn Garden City in March with Michael Joseph, Assistant Director of Union Dance Company.

Lloyd Petchey, 9N



Music

We are pleased to announce the results of the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music exams held in December :

Matthew Prowse	Violin	Grade 2	Pass
Emily Woollatt	Flute	Grade 3	Pass
Megan Impey	Saxophone	Grade 3	Pass
Glen Taylor	Saxophone	Grade 3	Pass
Thomas Bower	Piano	Grade 5	Pass
Sophie Moore	Saxophone	Grade 8	Distinction

Many congratulations to you all !

Mrs D Bailey, Head of Music

Sport

RESULTS

Hockey Year 7 v Tring A, lost 0-2
Year 7 v Tring B, won 4-1
Year 7 v Bridgewater, won 4-0
Year 9 v Tring, lost 4-0

Year 7 Basketball v Tring, won 34-22

Year 8 Basketball v Astley Cooper, lost 8-10
v Tring, lost 6-8
v Adeyfield, won 10-8
v Longdean, lost 4-6
v Bridgewater, lost 8-12

Year 9 Basketball v Parmiters, lost 76-74

Year 10 Basketball v St Georges, lost 81-51

U19 Basketball v West Hatch – walkover

U19 Basketball v SCC, lost 47-101

FIXTURES

Monday 28th January

U16 ESBA v Mildenhall College (A)

Tuesday 29th January

Year 7 Basketball @ Tring

Year 8 Hockey @ Tring

Wednesday 30th January

U15 ESBA v Ashlyns (H)

U16 District v Cavendish (A)

Thursday 31st January

Tour Squad Hockey v AC (A Tring)

Saturday 2nd February

Football v Parmiters

County Cross-Country Championships

County Cross Country

Several athletes have been entered in the County Cross Country Championships being held in St Albans on Saturday 2nd February. All athletes selected will meet with Miss Bevan this week to discuss arrangements.

Another very busy week in the PE department!

Many fixtures have taken place over the past week including the first matches in the District Table Tennis league last Friday. On Wednesday ten students were entered in the District Swimming trials. The following students are awaiting notification of selection. If successful they will represent the district at the County gala on 22nd February : Year 7 – Ben McFarlane, Curtis Barnett, Connor Reynolds, Daniel Ford, Louis Mayhew, Zoe Littlechild, Nicola Kennett. Year 8 – Sam Piggott. Year 9 – Alex Hatt and Philippa Carr.

Last Friday saw the first matches in the District Table Tennis League. Our Year 9 team beat Cavendish, scoring a total team score of 354 points.

James Moss, played 8, won 8

Alex Dukes, played 11, won 6

Luke March, played 8, won 3

Bradley Penhallow, played 10, won 6

Good Luck on Friday vs Ashlyns

Miss E Bevan, PE Department

Help :

If you still have a school PE skirt which you no longer want to keep, could you donate it to the PE Department please. Bring it in as soon as possible and give it to a member of PE. Thank you.

Mrs G Cracknell, PE Department



Items Urgently required for this year's Rock Challenge

We need twenty boiler suits to fit Year 10s - these can be any colour or fabric, even disposable ones! Also, if you have an old black cocktail dress (short or long) that you no longer wear and could donate I would be extremely grateful.
Mrs C Lang, Dance

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 97 Into the Sixth

Letter 98 GCSE Support Evening

Letter 100 German Exchange payment schedule

Letter 101 CGP Revision Guide

Letter 102 Chinese Calligraphy Workshop

Letter 103 COPE Discussion

Letter 104 BTEC First Aid Course

Letter 105 Metamorphosis – Lyric Theatre

Letter 106 Parent Consultation

Letter 107 Thames River Boat/Wicked COPE Trip

Letter 108 Sport BTEC First Aid Course

Letter 109 Sport BTEC First Aid Course



PTA News



Summer Fair – 14th June 2008

Plans are underway for this year's Summer Fair with lots of activities set to take place. If you received any unwanted Christmas gifts we can and will make very good use of them on the tombola stall. Please send or bring them in to Student Services. If you would like to run a stall at the Fair, please contact the numbers below.

Next meeting is Monday 3rd March 2008 at 7pm in the Library.

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

School answerphone for sickness and absence



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 school answerphone on **01442 390103** by **9am** if possible.