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HeadLines

In a week where doom and gloom are hard to avoid and 'feelgood' stories such as the octuplets in the USA are few and far between, I have been cheered by the work and enthusiasm of our students and staff. Let me elaborate.

Despite my meandering thoughts every week about a range of global and parochial topics, the main work of our school should be and is teaching and learning or, as some educationalists prefer to describe it, learning and teaching. I don't really mind which way round it is expressed as long as it happens to the highest standards and the best outcomes for students. I do mind when schools are called something other than schools. With due respect to local Headteacher colleagues and friends from my previous local authority, I remain unimpressed and unconvinced when secondary schools are referred to as colleges, which to me speaks of further education or Oxbridge definitions. I step back in horror at the idea of being Head of a 'learning village' and am still pondering the efficacy of the designation 'academy'. I really like the name of our school. I like the definite article which I have re-emphasised in my time here. I like the name of the town in full and I like 'school' written or said at the end of our title. I'm not keen on using the acronym HHS although I do so in moderation and I don't like the shortened form 'Hemel' without anything else because it is casual and imprecise and dilutes the pride factor. So there you have it; my prejudices laid out to dry!

Do I have any rationale for any of this apart from middle aged grumpiness and middle class pedantry? First of all, I am very proud of our school and I know you are too. Therefore it deserves its full title when we speak of it to ourselves or others. Secondly, it has been a significant part of Hemel Hempstead for 78 years and the 'old girl' (please excuse the sexism; I was equating the school with the way ocean going liners and the like are described) has earned our respect as a flagship for education in the town. Thirdly, the definite article suggests something of value and something unique and distinctive. No argument there. Finally, it is very much a school, not a learning village or an academy or a college. It doesn't need to be renamed as many schools have been so that it sounds trendier or because it has failed or needs to be rebranded. It is what it is and won't be diminished in any way whilst I have any say at all in the matter.

And how is teaching and learning at The Hemel Hempstead School? It is very well indeed. I and my leadership team colleagues, Advanced Skills Teachers and others observe many lessons in the course of a term. I observe all the teachers new to the school or who are newly qualified. Over the past week I have seen outstanding lessons in PE and Science from teachers new to the profession. I have also seen teachers with thirty years or more experience produce sparkling and dynamic lessons to the delight of the students and for the benefit of their learning.

Sometimes a Headteacher's week can revolve around tricky situations and naughty students sent to her for the ultimate telling off and more. Seeing students learning so enthusiastically and teachers teaching so passionately against a background of the melodious buzz of the triumphant school musical 'Anything Goes' is a 'ruby beyond price'. What a fantastic school The Hemel Hempstead School is!

Note: see next week's Headlines and Newsletter for a full review of the musical and updates on catering, buildings and maintenance issues, (particularly new food rooms) and Heath Barn.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATIONS

For Excellent Work in Biology Jessica Richards 10L, Rebecca Tyne 10F, Philippa Carr 10P

For Service to the School Grace Kershaw 8F

Learning Leader Commendations

Students' good efforts are rewarded in many ways. Every week we publish the names of those who reach the highest pinnacle of reward, the Headteacher Commendations, but we thought that parents would be interested to see the names of those awarded Learning Leader Commendations this week, to indicate the many ways in which excellent attainment is rewarded.

Sandra J Samwell, Headteacher

For Outstanding Work in English

Daisy Bodiam 7L, Sam Catt 7L, Tom Hill 7L, Hayley Scott 7L, Rob Veall 7L.

For Outstanding Independent Learning Folders in English

Laura Dowse 10P, Karina Maduro 10L, Rebecca Tyne 10F, Chris Veall 10N, Molly Blake 10A, Sarah Kinley 10P.

Dates for Your Diary

Gold Week

2 nd Feb	Year 12 Art visit to Tate Modern	
3 rd Feb	Year 8 Author visit (Library closed)	
	Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening, 4.30–7 pm	
	'Reverb' at Herts County Dance Festival	
5 th Feb	Years 9/10/11 Intermediate Maths Challenge	
	Year 11 'Into the Sixth' Evening, 7.15 pm	
6 th Feb	Year 12 Biology visit to Whipsnade Zoo	

Blue Week

9 th Feb	Year 12 General Studies Day
10 th Feb	Year 11 'Invitation' Revision Evening
11 th Feb	Year 12 Biology visit to Whipsnade Zoo
12 th Feb	Year 12 Science/PE visit to 'Bodyworks' London
13 th Feb	INSET Day – school closed to students
13 th – 15 th Feb	Years 12/13 MFL trip to Germany

HALF TERM 16th – 20th February

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

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 3 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. Please note that the Library will be closed for the school day to all but Year 8. *Mrs E Krajewski, Librarian*

Chinese New Year – 26 January 2009

This is the most important event in the traditional Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first lunar month. The festival is colourfully celebrated with fireworks, dances (such as the famous Lion Dance) and the giving of gifts, flowers and sweets. Gold is a dominant colour to symbolise the wish for prosperity and red is also much used as a lucky colour. Business accounts should be settled and all debts paid before the new year begins. Celebrations can last three or more days. 2009 is the year of the Ox.

MFL Stars of the Month for January

Year 7 French Sam Acors, Emily Loosely, Sophie Kinley, Thomas Hill, Zoe Bothwell, Andrew Sells.

Year 8 French Kristian Fomes, Dominic Wood, Sarah Worger, Anna Wales, Chloe Capel, Torin Grey, Madie Johnson.

Year 8 German Olivia Church, Ben Freeman, Dominic Holmes, Hollie Clarke, Dominic Wood, Philippa Gobby.

Year 9 French Kieran Duke, Chandni Patel, Rebecca Martin, Tanya Teasdale, Lia Pritchard, Sasha King, Ross King.

Year 9 German Amber Townsend, Sasha King, George Fripp, Cale Tilford, Chandni Patel, Lydia Carroll-Aylett.

Year 10 French Eloise Phillips, Rebecca Walsham, Lewis Jewell, Harriet Posner.

Year 10 German Sam Stride, Pippa Carr.

Year 11 French Jo Lovell, Amy Capel, Kelly Egerton.

Year 11 German Coco Alania, Craig Woodland.

Year 12 German Chelsey Osborne.

Year 12 Spanish Rosie Prestege

Year 13 French Tom Lewisohn.

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 109 Year 11 College Students

Letter 110 Year 12 Art trip 27 Jan

Letter 111 'Into the Sixth' Discussion Evening

Letter 112 Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening

Letter 113 Work Experience 2009 Private Placement

Letter 114 AS Biology Coursework and Field Work

Letter 115 Year 12 Art trip 2 Feb

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

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

FIXTURES

Sat 31st Jan Yrs 9 and 10 Football v Berkhamsted Collegiate (A) 8.45 – 11 am

Tues 3rd Feb Yr 8 Hockey Mini League @ Tring

Weds 4th Feb Yr 8 Girls Football Mini League @ Cavendish
U13 Basketball v Cavendish (H) 3.30 – 5.30 pm

Thurs 5th Feb Yr 7 Basketball v Bridgewater (H) 3.30 – 5.15 pm

RESULTS

Yr 7 Netball v Queens

A Team : won 16 – 9

B Team : won 10 – 2

Yr 8 Girls County League Basketball v Bridgewater won 43 – 40

Yr 7 Basketball v Longdean won 16-8

Mr P Bryson, PE Department

SPORTS NEWS

Year 7 Netball Queens v HHS

The game started with some strong play from Queens and they scored the first two goals. Our team fought back well with some good defensive play from Sophie Kinley and Ellie and Tessa Wilson. Our first goal soon came from Georgie Bartlett and the ball continued to be sent down our end by excellent play by Alicia Marsh.

The first two quarters were very equal in goals but when we moved into the third our strength showed and Maddy Wood and Georgie continued to score goals as the ball was fed so well into the circle by Alicia, Elouise Kimmance and Frankie Ellis. The final score was 9 – 13 to HHS. Well played everyone!

Years 7 and 8 Girls Basketball

On Thursday 22nd January Years 7 and 8 girls Basketball played their second County League match against Bridgewater. It was a very close match.

At the end of the second quarter Bridgewater were winning 26-13 but the HHS girls played well and fought their way back. The game ended with Bridgewater having two shots from the free throw line. Fortunately the game ended 43-40 in Hemel's favour.

Squad: J Gardiner, C Bartlett, S Worger, A Stride, K Tyne, G Bartlett, E Wilson, F Quinn, Z Littlechild, A Markham.

The girls have one more game in their County pool against Beaumont. Good luck girls!

Miss E Bevan, Learning Leader: PE

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

Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening

As you will be aware, Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening is taking place on Tuesday 3rd February. As a school we work incredibly hard to help and support the students to achieve and be happy in school. An essential part of this process is the support of and contact with parents, and the evening is a prime opportunity to strengthen this relationship.

All of the students have been given an appointment sheet to obtain times for parents to see all of their teachers. Tutors and Student Achievement Leaders will be reminding them of the need to get these filled in and taken home to share with their parents. The evening is a brilliant opportunity to have contact with your son/daughter's teachers and to find out how well they are progressing. We look forward to seeing all of you on the 3rd.

Mr A Stuart, Assistant Headteacher