

# The Hemel Hempstead School

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Dear parents and carers,

## Improving our school

I am really pleased to be writing to you about something other than COVID-19! One of the few positives that has come out of the lockdown is that we have had a golden opportunity to bring together a number of big improvements in the way the school operates.

I opted to let us get settled into the new academic year and then write to you all about some exciting and valuable changes we have implemented for this year.

### New staff roles

We have created a number of new staff positions. The first is a Positive Behaviour Mentor Role. Miss Fuller, who holds a masters degree in child psychology and mental health, will be working with a very targeted group of young people to help remove any barriers that might exist to them excelling at school and within their peer group.

We have then created two Progress Champion Roles, specialist expert teachers known as lead practitioners who will work with students and staff to help close gaps in learning and enable everyone to make the best possible progress. The first of these, Mrs Joshi, started at the beginning of this term and is a very experienced teacher and leader of mathematics; a second colleague will start in January and will be recruited from a similar background in English, languages, humanities or spoken performance.

### New timetable structures

As the school grows, both in the sixth form and in each new year group, our old ways of timetabling and setting no longer worked properly. The timetable is a huge monster, which takes months to write, and has thousands of working parts.

We have redesigned the timetable and so some of you may have noticed that your child has changed set in some subjects. Please do not worry. This does not mean that they are now in a group that is completing work that is any harder or easier, nor that the change is because of something they have done.

The reason is that we have had to move them to make the following timetable improvements, which will benefit this year and all future years:

<b>Now</b>	<b>Before</b>
One numbering system.	Different numbering, meaning that set 8 in one year might be called 4x in another. This was very confusing for everyone.
Set moves are only for academic reasons.	Set moves were sometimes necessary to avoid timetable clashes for an individual.
English, mathematics and science can be set independently of each other.	Moving in one of these subjects, might have necessitated a necessary move in another.
Higher or foundation tier choices can be taken independently within a subject.	Decisions about taking a higher or foundation paper in one subject might dictate another subject's choice.
We can expand our offer and have more courses.	The number of courses, or classes in a course, was more restricted.

Parents and carers should also remember that sets must be thought of as overlapping, rather than stacking on top of each other. The work being done set one, two and three, for example, will be very similar to each other and different students excel in different areas of each subject during the year.

#### New subjects on offer as a result of these structural changes

We are very excited to be offering A Level Ancient History for the first time, and can now every year review our sixth form offer and look at more courses. We recently polled the current cohort and are exploring a number of possible options, including core mathematics, more languages and more level three NCFE courses.

At key stage four we can now allow subjects to grow where they are more popular, such as business, which has four groups in year ten this year. Triple science is now a full option subject, providing students with the additional time they need to cover the additional content of this course.

We have completely reviewed our Personal and Citizenship Education (PACE) curriculum and are hugely grateful to all the parents and carers that contributed to this consultation.

#### Continuing to improve our facilities

Our refurbished toilets, the new sports hall and music, science and languages block have been in use for a full year now, and students greatly appreciate these fantastic, modern facilities. This summer we have carried out a significant amount of maintenance and redecoration.

We continue to increase the amount of information technology in the school, with new chromebooks and improvements to the wireless network, to support lessons in all years with school equipment, and to support sixth form in 'bringing their own device'.

I am excited to say that we are very close to agreeing a new project with Dacorum Borough Council, to bring new tennis courts, netball courts, a hockey 5 pitch, a 5-a-side football pitch and an outdoor classroom/eating area to the school next year.

In a few weeks we will start to operate our newly installed security gates. These will bring additional safety to the school and prevent anyone coming onto site during the day that we have not invited and also prevent vandalism at night.

### A growing intake means a bigger staffroom!

As we grow as a school, some colleagues move on to new pastures new, and as a result of some internal promotions we are very proud to be welcoming a number of new colleagues this year, in addition to those in newly created posts:

Mr Perry joins as head of PE, with both Mr Heward having been promoted to Assistant Headteacher, and Mr Smith being promoted to Director of Learning, last year.

Mrs Adulukwe joins us as head of mathematics and also welcomes to her team Mr Richardson, Mr Pena-Marquez, Mrs Hy and Mrs Beeton.

Mr Cuthbert joins science, Mr Ali joins social sciences, Miss Bartlett joins PE, Miss Jevon joins English and Mr Hornby, Mrs Ireland and Miss Martin join languages. Mrs Shafi is our new HLTA and Mrs Akther is our new matron. Mrs Marrocco is with us whilst Mrs Oates is on her maternity leave.

As a school we are actively involved in training the next generation of brilliant teachers and are delighted to have Miss Porter in English, Mr Sutton in science, Mr Onbasi in PE and Miss Butterfield in languages; all completing their initial teacher training here at The Hemel Hempstead School

### And there is more to come. with your help

Before Christmas you will have a chance to help us improve our reports system, so that we can make sure we are giving you the clearest and most useful information, each term, about your child's progress.

There was great progress made, prior to March, in planning the relaunch of The Hemel Hempstead School Association (HHSA), our parents association, and this work will begin again, with gusto, in October. We seek to link the work of HHSA much better to our growing alumni network.

Finally, we are starting to look ahead, to 2021 when this fantastic school will celebrate its 90th birthday. I welcome suggestions from parents and carers as to how you would like us to mark this special occasion.

Yours aye,



Mr N Hassell  
Headteacher  
The Hemel Hempstead School