

## Working together in harmony

It's official – we are making GOOD progress on both our Ofsted targets from the previous inspection. Hurrah! As I wrote last week, the process gives no time for preparation at all – from the first telephone call at 10am in the morning, only 4 hours elapsed before the Lead Inspector arrived in the school at 2pm that afternoon. The following day's inspection confirmed his findings and all is revealed in Ofsted's letter to parents contained in this edition of Hertsbeat. Please take the time to read it; we are very, very proud of ourselves. One of many lovely things the Lead Inspector noted was how well we work together as a team and he wasn't talking about any single team, but how the whole staff, student and governing body work together in harmony and with purpose. He said that there was "a lot to celebrate", and how right he is.

As I write this editorial (Thursday) we are looking forward to the Year 11 County Cup Final this evening and we all have everything crossed!

Please note that the timetable for Easter revision sessions is contained within this edition; do take the time to read it and discuss with your son or daughter which they are going to attend. With the examinations looming very large, they really must spend time over Easter in revision and practice if they are to do their best in May and June. If you are planning ahead, our last day of term is Friday 8 April and we will be dismissing the students from 12 noon; we return on Wednesday 27 April (Tuesday 26 is an Inset Day for staff only) and of course there is the holiday for the Royal Wedding on Friday 29 April.

Jan Palmer Sayer - Headteacher

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18 March 2011

Mrs J Palmer Sayer  
Hertswood School  
Cowley Hill  
Borehamwood  
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Dear Mrs Palmer Sayer

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hertswood School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the governors, staff and students who gave up their time to meet with me during the inspection.

Apart from the fact that the school currently has a vacancy for the post of director of specialism, there have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the previous inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 14 October 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

good progress in making improvements

*and*

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C rose significantly in 2010 from 65% to 73%, slightly below the national average. The proportion gaining five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, rose by 11 percentage points. The school has had a major and

successful drive to improve students' performance in English, and the rise in standards in English has contributed to the good overall improvement in students' attainment and achievement.

Key elements in the wide-ranging programme of improvements have been:

- an overhaul of the school's homework policy to include a major weekly focus on writing
- revision and reinforcement of the school's marking policy
- an emphasis on writing across the curriculum
- intervention strategies and booster groups for those making slow progress
- themed weeks for the whole school and neighbouring primary schools, such as the 'Funky Fairytales' week which was in flow during the inspection.

Staff and students are very clear about the importance of raising the quality of students' writing. They have embraced the new initiatives wholeheartedly, and regular checking of students' books by senior leaders shows that staff are following the school's new policies consistently. Random sampling of students' work during the inspection confirmed this to be the case. However, it also indicated that students do not always gain maximum benefit from the marking of their work by responding to the comments made by their teachers, by redrafting their work or by correcting the mistakes they have made.

In ensuring the school challenges higher-ability students more effectively, the school has looked carefully at many of its procedures to ensure they are enforced rigorously and consistently. The school is using the most ambitious predictions of future grades to set challenging targets for students. Students are given very clear indication of the level at which they are working through regular assessment of their work, and there is frequent emphasis in lessons on what is required for them to reach the next level or grade. Staff appreciate the weekly staff meetings in which individuals share good practice and provide new resources for others to implement in their lessons. Senior leaders carry out a rigorous programme of lesson observations to assure the quality of the teaching and identify areas for improvement. Occasionally, evaluations err on the generous side, although all feedback to teachers contains useful pointers for improvement. Current assessment data show that all those identified as higher-ability students in Year 11 are on target to reach challenging targets and to contribute to a further rise in standards by the end of the year.

Through the improvements in attainment and progress, and the imaginative ways in which the school has sought to develop students' literacy skills and share good teaching practice, the school's leaders have demonstrated greater capacity for sustained improvement than was evident at the previous inspection. This improving capacity is also demonstrated through the rigour with which all aspects of the school's work are evaluated. Progress against the detailed actions outlined in the school development plan is reviewed by the governing body. 'Results Evaluation Documents', produced for each subject, record the evaluation process that subject leaders have undertaken and the strategies for further improvement which faculties intend to implement during the year. These plans are evaluated through regular line management meetings. The progress of the many different groups of students is monitored carefully to ensure that all students are making sufficient progress. Staff are united behind their leadership team and show a determination to continue the improvements which have been evident over the last four terms since the previous inspection.

The school's arts specialism continues to have a major impact on the life of the school, providing students with a broad range of curricular options and extra-curricular activities in art and design, music, drama and dance. Evidence of high-quality work in these subjects is displayed throughout the school. Students' participation in a wide range of performances has had a major impact on improving their confidence and self-esteem. Through wide-ranging outreach work, the specialism has strengthened the school's links with the local community and, in particular, primary schools.

The school continues to benefit from a close and supportive relationship with the local authority, which has provided consistent and helpful advice and consultancy for the school's leadership team. On a practical front, funding from the county council has enabled the school to create an excellent multi-use games area on the lower school campus. The borough council has made a significant investment in the school's community theatre, which provides a state-of-the-art performance space which the school shares with the local community.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Graham Sims  
Additional inspector

March 2011

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### End of Term Arrangements

The Spring Term will end on Friday 8 April 2011. Arrangements for that day will be as follows:

Registration at 8:45am  
Lesson 1 as normal  
Lesson 2 as normal  
Break  
Registration in form rooms  
Dismissal from 12 o'clock

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### Dates for your diary

Tuesday 26 April – INSET Day, staff only in school  
Wednesday 27 April – first day of the new term  
Friday 29 April – Bank Holiday for the Royal Wedding  
Monday 2 May – May Bank Holiday  
Monday 30 May to Friday 3 June – Half Term  
Monday 20 June – INSET Day, staff only in school  
Friday 22 July – last day of term

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### Lost Property on Lower School

We're doing a lost property stall on Tuesday 5 April 3:45 - 4:15 where parents and students can come to search for items they may have lost. Any items unclaimed after this date will be donated to charity.

### Funky Fairytales :

On Thursday 17 March, 60 Year 4 students from Clore Shalom and Shenley primary schools joined myself and Design Technology teacher Sarah Robertson for a day of creative funky fairy tales. The day involved the students reading the fairy tales of Rapunzel and Three Billy Goats Gruff. They were then set the challenge in groups to make Rapunzel's tower and the bridge from the Billy Goats Gruff fairy tale. All teams certainly rose to the challenge!

The day was a fantastic success and the imaginative creations that the students produced were amazing. The day helped forge links between the two schools and encouraged teamwork and co-operation.

I was impressed by the maturity, hard work and creativity that all the students demonstrated throughout the day. The day had members of Sixth Form and students from Year 11 helping with the smooth running of the very messy but fun event! The students involved were: Mollie Morrison, Arti Mistry, Daisy Brown, Paige Blackwell, Charlotte Scott, Lucy Stratford and Nickole Aluko. The students were a great asset to the school and helped greatly in making the day a success.

A big well done to all of those who were involved.

Charllotte Nethercott - Head of Year 7

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### Year 11 Maths Revision

Year 11 Maths revision will be on Mondays after school in LM5 from 3:30 - 4:45

### Key Stage Three Extended Writing Homework

Extended writing tasks form an essential part of the homework completed by all our students at Key Stage Three. The box below highlighted which subjects will set tasks throughout the coming half term. Copies of word limits in relation to the different National Curriculum Levels are available from subject teachers or form tutors.

Date	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
4/4/11	English	English	Geography

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### Magic Maths Day

Last Thursday Year 5 and 6 students from our partner primary schools joined us for a Magic Maths Day. The intention of the day was to boost student's confidence in Maths and to learn, that like Magic, Maths is a skill that needs to be practiced many times before it is perfect! The students had the opportunity to learn some tricks about how to master some of the more difficult Maths problems like the 'tricky timetables', and also learn a few Magic tricks as well.

All the primary students who attended felt that the day really helped improve their confidence in Maths. The day also had members of Year 7, assist the students throughout the day. The students involved were: Amy Simpson, Abbie Welch, Thomas Cooley, Charlie Lunniss, Ryan Matthews, Chaid Rizzo, Sofia Tyson, Mollie Quinn, Tiannah Emmanuel, and Robbie Plumb .

The students were a great asset to the school and helped greatly in making the day a success. A big thank you also to Mr Godfrey for leading such a successful day.

Charlotte Nethercott - Head of Year 7

### MFL Trip to Spain

The MFL Department is pleased to announce a trip to Spain in February 2012.

This trip is open to students from Year 8 to Year 11.

Should your child wish to participate in this trip, letter will be available from the MFL Office on the Lower School and from Mrs Sichel on the Upper School

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### Year 13 visit Pompeii

Year 13 Geography students spent 3 days visiting Vesuvius and the remains of Pompeii as part of their unit on earthquakes and volcanoes. Highlights of the visit included spending a whole day in the city that was buried by the eruption 2000 years ago and climbing Mount Vesuvius to see the crater of the volcano which could erupt at any time...

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### What is the most exciting thing in your world?

What does an ecological dress look like? Why did ancient Greece defeat the Persian Empire? What inspires a children's author? These are just some of the questions Year 12 students are considering for the extended project qualification. Students choosing to take this extra AS Level (worth up to 70 UCAS points) are working independently to prepare an essay, presentation or artefact (including comic books and dresses) to answer the question they have set themselves. Not only will they be able to learn about something they think is the most exciting thing in the world but they will also give themselves a substantial boost in preparation for university applications.

## Easter Revision Timetable

Date	Time	Subject	Venue	Member of Staff
Mon 11 April	10am – 2pm	AS History	D19	Miss McFerran
	10am – 3pm	Textiles	C19	Miss Panayiotou
	10am – 2pm	GCSE Product Design & Graphics	C19	Miss Tanswell
	10am – 2pm	AS Product Design	C10/C12	Mr Pearce
	10am – 2pm	Y11 English	LE2	Mr Ratcliffe
Tues 12 April	10am – 2pm	Y12 Sociology	D6	Miss Chafer
	9am – 3pm	Y11 English	LE2	Mr Ratcliffe
	10am – 2pm	AS Product Design	C10/C12	Mr Pearce
	10:30am-2:30pm	A Level Dance	Dance Studio	Miss Travess
Wed 13 April	12:30-2:30pm	A2 History	D19	Miss McFerran
	10am – 2:00pm	Y13 Sociology	D6	Miss Chafer
	10am – 2pm	GCSE Science coursework	F Block ICT Room	Science Faculty
Thurs 14 April	10am – 2pm	AS Politics	D19	Miss McFerran
	10am – 2pm	Y11 Psychology	D14	Miss Carr
	10am – 2pm	Y11 Spanish Written Improvement Session	E12	Mrs Sichel
	10am – 12:30pm	Maths	LM5	Mr Julius
	10am – 2pm	GCSE Geography	D17	Miss Cleasby
Fri 15 April	10am – 2pm	Y10 Geography	D17	Miss Cleasby
Mon 18 April	10am – 2pm	Y11 Sociology	D14	Miss Carr
Tues 19 April	10am – 2pm	Y11 Sociology	D6	Miss Chafer
Wed 20 April	10am – 2pm	GCSE Science coursework	F Block ICT Room	Science Faculty
	10am – 3:00pm	GCSE & AS/A2 Media & Photography	F14	Mr Wallace & Mr Allen
Thurs 21 April	10am – 2pm	Y11 Art	B Block Art Rooms	Miss Newton & Mr Schmit