



Become the best you can be

Heathlands School

The development of pupils' communication, language and literacy is at the centre of all teaching and learning



Heathlands School

Nursery, Primary and Secondary Provision
for Deaf Children, Day and Residential

Welcome to Heathlands School



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Every child is valued, and their potential recognised to the fullest. Classes are small, so all children have attention, and are taught by qualified teachers of the deaf, assisted by specialist learning support staff.



Foreword: Head Teacher, Deborah Jones-Stevens

I am proud to welcome you to Heathlands. Our vision sums up our approach: "Become the best you can be".

High expectations

Established in 1975, we set high expectations for pupils, encouraging each child to achieve academically, develop independence and to contribute positively in their communities.

Special curriculum

We have developed a curriculum specially designed to meet the needs of deaf children. We have placed extra emphasis on:

- communication
- language
- literacy

...the foundation stones for the effective education of deaf children!

Dedicated staff

We have a team of highly experienced staff, many of whom are deaf themselves. We are passionate about educating deaf children and committed to ensuring the best opportunities and outcomes for your child.

We never stand still!

Set in beautiful grounds, with state-of-the-art facilities, we are designed with the needs of deaf learners in mind. Specialist teaching areas have been developed and extended to suit the delivery of a modern curriculum.

Heathlands never stands still, and is constantly developing.

Parent partnership

Another important part of our school, is you, the parent! You will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories within this prospectus, that you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and parent and work very hard to involve you in every step of your child's time here.

Get in touch

I would urge you to visit our school. I am confident you will find this a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. I know that you will be impressed by the quality of education and care we can offer your child.

To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask me a question, please call the school office on 01727 754060 or email head@heathlands.herts.sch.uk

"We always use BSL at home, and so it was very important for me to find a school with a BSL environment, as it is my children's first language."



Struggles at mainstream school are a thing of the past, and Maira's children are thriving at Heathlands

Maira and Jaan Laumets live in London Colney with Ervin 10, Roger 7, and Marfa, three.

Finding the right environment

When Maira moved her children from mainstream school two years ago she made a list of priorities for an ideal educational facility. The list included the right language environment, low class numbers and an ability to make lots of friends. Maira decided that Heathlands suited all her children's individual needs.

"We always use BSL at home, and so it was very important for me to find a school with a BSL environment, as it is my children's first language" explains Maira.

Improved skills

"There has been a massive improvement in Roger's signing, as well as his reading, maths and communication skills... Ervin is also much more expressive than he was and his reading and writing skills have really improved."

Children say:

"I like school because it's interesting to watch the storybook with our teacher," says Roger. "I also like to chat with my friends and play football."

Ervin also enjoys having fun and chatting with his friends and adds: "It's easy to learn because there is always signing."



Heathlands School is set in attractive, secure and well maintained grounds. Every room is equipped with up-to-date ICT equipment including interactive white boards, digital visualisers, internet connection, DVD players and other equipment... enabling the most effective visual presentation for teaching.



Heathlands Harmony school choir

School hours

School hours are 8.45am - 3.30pm. Residential pupils arrive Monday 8.45am and are picked up Friday 3.30pm.

There is a breakfast club for upper school pupils, which runs 8.15am-8.45am



School meals and snacks

Nutritious fresh food is prepared on site by our catering team. Children can also bring in packed lunches. Fresh fruit and homemade bread is always available. Younger children have healthy snack-time every morning.



Working with Parents

We work closely with parents in order to raise student achievement and develop the school community. We can communicate with parents via Facetime and Facebook, and also benefit from parent Governors and parent volunteers in classes. There is also a wide range of school events that parents can attend, and we run regular parent/teacher consultations.



Enhanced curriculum

Clubs

To further enhance the curriculum, and encourage lifelong learning, there is a wide variety of clubs that children can join, during lunchtime and after school. Options often include:

- skiing
- football
- signing choir
- multi sports
- cricket
- street dance
- basketball
- film club
- drama
- ballet

Off-site learning

Away from school learning opportunities have included:

- British Museum Egyptian room
- Geography field trip to Epping Forest
- St Albans Abbey art trip
- Sky Studios - English
- Luton Airport - humanities survey
- Schools' Shakespeare Festival
- St Paul's Cathedral
- Tree Planting in Heartwood Forest
- Various inter school sports activities
- Big Bang Science Festival

Partnerships

Heathlands is an inclusive school such that all members of the school community are encouraged to be active participants. The school collaborates with other local schools to provide an enriched social and academic experience through shared projects and learning opportunities.





“Heathlands uses the same curriculum as mainstream schools. The only difference is that there are smaller class sizes and the teachers can sign. Our girls are so happy here, they absolutely love it.”

Lyndon and Georgia have high academic expectations for their daughters, which Heathlands helps them to fulfill

Lyndon Borrow and Georgia Dimopoulou live in Chiswick with daughters Chloe, eight and Thalia, seven.

High expectations

“Our academic expectations are high,” says Georgia, “and at Heathlands we felt that parental and school expectations matched each other. The girls have attended since they were two and have never looked back.”

“Absolutely love it”

“Heathlands uses the same curriculum as mainstream schools. The only difference is that there are smaller class sizes and the teachers can sign. Our girls are so happy here, they absolutely love it.”

Valuing opinions

The school works closely with parents to help develop student potential. “Parental involvement is encouraged and the staff value our opinions,” says Lyndon. “Communication is excellent. The Head Teacher has a very busy, responsible job, but always has time for the children and will drop everything to talk to parents if necessary.”

Children say:

When asked what she likes about Heathlands Primary, Chloe says: “everything!” ...whilst Thalia adds: “I like science, reading and all my friends.”

Heathlands School is fantastic and I recommend it 100%!”

Heathlands Nursery



Heathlands Nursery provides a vibrant and language rich learning environment.

Heathlands Nursey is extremely well resourced to support pupil learning and staffed by qualified and specialist learning support staff. A child centred approach is used in line with National Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

All children within the Nursery have individualised Learning Journals in which skills development, learning and achievements are noted and next steps are identified. Close liaison is kept between nursery staff and parents, for example through the Home –School books. A popular sign and play session for pre-school age children and their parents is held every Wednesday afternoon.



Oyin wants the best of both worlds for her twins, and Heathlands School provides just that

Oyin Kalejaiye lives near St. Albans with son Seni, age nine and twins Toni and Tosin, age six.

Moved from Kent to use Heathlands School

Oyin was so committed to finding the very best education for her twins that she sold her house in Kent and moved the entire family to live near Heathlands School.

“Toni and Tosin are both profoundly deaf and had cochlear implants at the age of two,” says Oyin. “The boys could already sign, and I knew that implants would never be a cure for deafness but I wanted them to have access to sound so that in later life they could choose whether they wanted to use the implants or communicate by signing.”

Role models

“Some of the teachers and learning support assistants at Heathlands School are deaf and I liked the fact that they are all such good role models. My boys are learning that nothing will prevent them from doing what they want to do with their lives.”



“Some of the teachers and learning support assistants at Heathlands School are deaf and I liked the fact that they are all such good role models.”

Visual techniques

“I think all the staff are fantastic because they are well trained, passionate about the children and supportive of the parents. They know the visual techniques that will make learning fun and interactive and the children don’t get bored or frustrated. They are also incredibly helpful and supportive. Heathlands School is fantastic and I recommend it 100%!”

Lower School: Primary



Heathlands Lower School provides a broad and balanced curriculum which engages pupils and develops their love of learning.

Development and learning

The curriculum in lower school focuses on the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the development of learning and thinking skills across all National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation stage subject areas.

Heathlands Primary Curriculum:

- core subjects of English and maths are taught each morning with literacy and numeracy skills then applied throughout the rest of the curriculum
- learning is enhanced through a thematic approach focusing on the development of pupil skills as well as knowledge
- curriculum planning and delivery is differentiated to meet individual needs and modified to suit deaf pupils
- language and communication skills development is central to learning and is integrated within the daily planning for each child
- requirements of the National Curriculum, PSHE and RE are in line with mainstream schools.

Achievement

The curriculum is designed so that our children become successful, confident learners who enjoy learning, making progress and achieving.



As an ex-pupil of Heathlands Shabina has happy memories of the school, which offers the best of care for her sons

Shabina Kuesar and her husband live in Watford with their sons Ali Akbar Shah, 13 and Ali Asghar Shah, seven.

“It’s a brilliant school”

“Both of my sons...go to Heathlands as day students and they absolutely love it,” says Shabina. “As a child I came here myself so I didn’t hesitate in sending them as I knew that they would be happy there. It’s a brilliant school and my sons are both really happy and doing well, which makes me happy too.”

Finding a second family

“As a child of hearing parents I had a lot of communication problems. This was very difficult, but when I came to Heathlands it was like I had found my second family. Everybody was so positive and I was able to sign with everyone. I have such happy memories of being at Heathlands.”



“I would definitely recommend Heathlands to other parents. It is fantastic. I had such a lovely time when I came here.”

Happiness and confidence

“I would definitely recommend Heathlands to other parents. It is fantastic. I had such a lovely time when I came here. It helped me to grow in confidence and I wanted to pass that happiness and confidence on to my children. Heathlands has done that.”

Upper School: Secondary



Heathlands Upper School is a strong and vibrant department catering for Years 7-11. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided which is challenging and stimulating. Expectations are high for each pupil to achieve their potential. Pupils are grouped according to ability and the curriculum adapted to suit differing learning needs.

Curriculum learning pathways

Our prime objective is to enable each student to achieve their maximum potential through a stimulating and challenging curriculum.

We have developed three possible learning pathways to suit differing needs and abilities.

One route allows students to study GCSE courses in at least 8 subjects (most students will be expected to achieve grades between A* and C).

A second route enables students to study some GCSE subjects and also follow some nationally accredited vocational courses.

A third learning route to develop independent living and life skills will operate if there are students for whom this is appropriate.

Each learning pathway ensures that:

- development of literacy skills takes place across the curriculum and this is recognised as essential in order to facilitate success

- all pupils have access to their preferred learning style and mode of communication
- students are grouped according to needs so pupils of all abilities can achieve success
- pupils are given professional guidance about choice of subjects to be studied at KS4.



An unhappy teenager at mainstream school, Amy's life totally transformed on moving to Heathlands



Mandy and Steve Lawrence live in Enfield with their daughter Amy, age 14 and son Alfie age 16.

Troubled times

"Although Amy came through mainstream primary school the secondary school that her friends moved to was out of our area and so we had to send her to a school where there was no suitable peer group of British Sign Language users," says Mandy. "There was a lack of deaf awareness and Amy quickly felt isolated, lonely and bullied, which was heartbreaking."

Why Heathlands?

"Heathlands is a specialist school for deaf children and it ticked all the boxes for everything Amy needed in terms of academic progress and social interaction with a peer group that she felt included in."

Inclusion and enrichment

"Since going to Heathlands Amy is completely different. I would go as far as to say the school has totally transformed her and changed her life for the better."

Children say:

Amy says: "I feel comfortable here and more confident. I have good friends and two best friends. The teachers help me a lot so I understand everything. I like maths, English and PE best. I want to get good grades in my GCSEs then go to college and get a good job, maybe working with horses"



Heath House is the residential department of Heathlands School, providing weekly boarding for both primary and secondary aged pupils. It is a happy, safe, positive environment in which openness, trust, tolerance and respect are encouraged...and where all activities support the learning and developmental objectives of all our boarders.

Parents

Staff work collaboratively with parents to ensure the best outcomes for boarders; communication, social skills, independence and preparation for working life.

Residency: ‘home from home’

We create a home from home atmosphere so the children are actively involved in the planning and organisation of their environment. Pupils in residence are organised into groups according to age and gender. Boys and girls sleep in separate corridors on opposite sides of the building. Some have single bedrooms and some share with their friends. There are common rooms where boarders can mix and socialise, play games or watch TV and DVDs. A domestic style kitchen allows boarders to develop a sense of responsibility and independence skills.

Independent living

Heath House operates an Independent Living Programme. The programme covers key areas of

- personal care skills
- managing day to day domestic tasks e.g. meal times and laundry
- taking responsibility for their individual health needs
- staying safe and managing risks
- caring for their belongings and the environment
- independent travel and going out in the local community
- solving problems and seeking help.



Boarding at Heathlands School has transformed Justin into a happy, confident boy

Linda Dean lives in Reading with her sons Justin, age nine and Jamie age seven.

Overcoming loneliness and frustration

When Linda’s son became isolated and frustrated at his local mainstream school she decided that boarding at Heathlands would provide a perfect solution.

“Some of my friends had attended Heathlands and the school had an excellent reputation. It sounded ideal for Justin. I had boarded at a deaf school myself as a child and knew how beneficial it could be. Justin began boarding in September, and absolutely loves it. In fact he’s so happy that I’m sending my other son Jamie there later this year.”

Dramatic improvements

Since starting at Heathlands School Justin’s life has improved dramatically.

“Because Justin can work and play with deaf children all the time he now feels part of the team,” says Linda. “He doesn’t have to rely on someone to help him communicate so his signing skills and work have dramatically improved.

“Justin gets involved with so many things now that he is boarding. For example, every Tuesday he goes to Cubs and sometimes they go swimming. It’s brilliant to see how much he has changed and how much happier he is.”

“Justin began boarding in September, and absolutely loves it. In fact he’s so happy that I’m sending my other son Jamie there later this year.”

Language development is the key to all areas of pupils' learning. It facilitates:

- thinking
- reasoning
- understanding
- literacy.



Our pupils

Pupils at Heathlands have a wide range of language needs, with most having language skills on a par with their hearing peers. A large percentage of pupils are children from deaf families who have British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language, or children with hearing parents who have signed from diagnosis or the early years. We also cater for:

- children with additional needs
- children with late diagnosis
- children who have come to Heathlands late, from other settings or having used other communication approaches
- children with specific language impairment
- children with language delay.

Total communication

Heathlands has a 'Total Communication' approach, which includes:

- British Sign Language
- Sign Supported English
- spoken English
- written English
- visual support for teaching (e.g. through ICT)
- lip-reading
- listening: assistive technology (including Soundfield Systems and/ or radio aids)
- audiology: hearing aids, implants.

Our aim is for children to become confident learners with optimum language ability.

Audiology

Heathlands is built for deaf children, so classrooms are designed with optimum acoustic conditions for listening. Sound absorbing surfaces and careful choice of resources further contribute to an excellent listening environment. Each child is supported with individual communication approaches, which often include the effective use of hearing aids and cochlear implants to develop listening skills.

Sign language

For most of our pupils early language and communication will be acquired through sign language. Staff are fluent in BSL thus allowing direct communication with pupils. All members of the school community learn to sign supported by Heathlands' BSL Centre.

Speech and Language Support

Heathlands also has:

- qualified teachers of deaf children trained in language development and skilled in a variety of approaches to meet the needs of deaf pupils
- Speech and Language Therapists, specialist in working with deaf children
- an Audiology Assistant and visiting Audiologist
- specialist Learning Support Assistants.



BSL Centre

Becoming a Specialist SEN College in 2008 helped us to build a new state-of-the-art BSL training centre. Designed and equipped with superb ICT facilities, the centre has a wide range of other resources to support deaf awareness and the learning of BSL.

Sharing our experience

With the establishment of our BSL training centre Heathlands expertise, experience and facilities can be shared with our partner schools and the community. Heathlands provides BSL and deaf awareness courses to many local schools and offers accredited Signature courses. Our parents and carers signing group meets every week. For more information: bsl@heathlands.herts.sch.uk



Applications

Heathlands School acts as a regional resource centre and welcomes enquiries from parents across the UK. Applications are usually made through the child's Local Authority, but we welcome visits from parents.

If parents feel our school meets the needs of their child they should contact their LA. The LA will then consult with Heathlands and make a formal application.



Visit the school

Parents who are thinking of applying for a place at our school are invited to visit and look around at any time. Please contact the school office to make an appointment.



How to find us

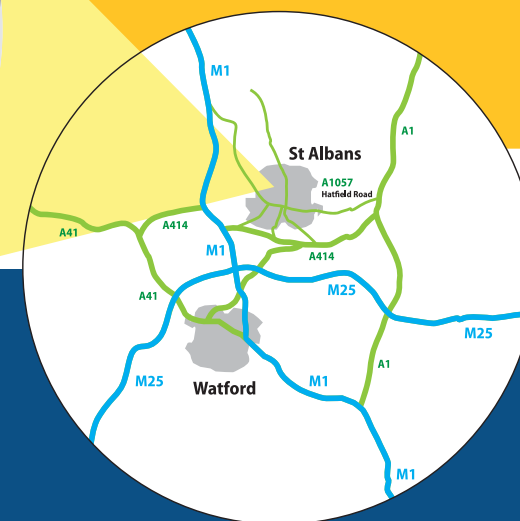


Vision statement: become the best you can be

Our Vision is for Heathlands to become synonymous with high achievement. We aim to provide a consistently challenging, stimulating and caring learning environment that engages and develops our pupils through personalised learning.

We commit to recruit staff of the highest calibre who, through their continuous drive for improvement and innovation, create an enriching and supportive environment. Every individual in our school community is valued and all success is celebrated.

The whole school community is encouraged to develop the moral values, confidence and resilience to make a difference to lives in Heathlands and beyond. By striving for excellence in all that we do, we can become the best we can be.



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