North Herts Education Support Centre Newsletter

A Message From The Deputy Heads

As we come to the end of Spring Term 1, we would like to reflect on a busy and purposeful half term for our students. Over recent weeks, pupils have engaged positively with their learning and taken part in a range of activities designed to support both academic progress and future aspirations.

This half term has included several careers events aimed at raising aspirations and helping students to explore future pathways. Alongside this, Y10 and Y11 students have completed mock examinations, which have provided valuable experience and helping students to identify strengths and areas for further development.

We would like to thank parents and carers for their continued support. This newsletter highlights key updates and events from the half term and shares important information as we look ahead to the next stage of the Spring Term. We wish everyone a well-deserved break and look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready to continue their progress.

Mr Lewis and Ms Robinson

MARCH MOCK EXAM SERIES

Mock Exams Week – Monday 2ND March – Friday 6TH March – All Year 10 & 11

All students to take note of their personalised timetables that have been issued and to ensure they are on time for their Exams.

This will also be their **last** Mocks in preparation for their Final Exams series which commences nationally on the ***5th May 2026.***

Personalised student Summer Exam timetables will be sent out during the month of March.

We wish ALL our students the best for their upcoming Exams and preparation thereof!

JCQ-Preparing-to-sit-your-exams_-2025_2026.pdf

NEW BUILD

Exciting Developments: Our New Facility Update

We are thrilled to share some exciting news about the progress of our new facility, which will soon replace our current buildings for both Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). As we embark on this transformative journey, we want to keep you informed every step of the way.

A New Beginning

The site in Hitchin will soon become redundant, and we are pleased to announce that our KS4 students will be moving to the KS3 site in Letchworth. This change is not just a logistical shift; it represents a significant step forward in our commitment to providing an educational environment that truly meets the needs of our students. Our current facilities in both Letchworth and Hitchin have served us well over the years, but they are no longer fit for purpose. The new building will have a transformational effect on our students, significantly improving their life chances and supporting their next steps, whether that be college, university, an apprenticeship, or returning to mainstream education.

What to Expect from the New Facility

The new facility is designed to accommodate 40 students on one site, creating a close-knit community where each student can thrive. We are particularly excited about the additional amenities that will be available, including a sports hall, an outside football pitch, and a kitchen that will provide hot meals. These facilities will not only enhance the educational experience but also promote a healthy and active lifestyle for our students.

All classrooms in the new building are being designed with the curriculum and the needs of young people in mind. We want to create an environment that both staff and students can be proud of, one that fosters learning and growth. The new facility will open up opportunities for enrichment that our old facilities simply cannot provide, ensuring that our students have access to the best possible resources as they pursue their educational goals.

Progress Update from ASHE Construction

We are pleased to report that ASHE Construction, the building contractors working on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, are making great strides with the groundwork phase. This includes preparation works for a new grass games pitch, which will be a fantastic addition to our outdoor facilities. The building structure is scheduled to be erected in March, with brickwork commencing in April.

In line with our commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency, all windows and curtain walling will be double glazed, and the south-facing windows will feature solar shading to prevent overheating. This thoughtful design will help create a comfortable learning environment for our students throughout the year.

Once the building is watertight in June, ASHE will move on to the next phase: mechanical and electrical works. This will include the installation of floors and ceilings, which are crucial for creating the welcoming atmosphere we envision. Following this, ASHE will undertake the fitting out and decoration of the new building, ensuring that it is ready for our students to move into their brand-new, purpose-built facilities in **November 2026**.

Looking Ahead

As we look forward to the completion of this project, we firmly believe that the new facility will provide our students with an exceptional environment in which to learn and grow.

We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are confident that this new building will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our school community. We look forward to welcoming you to our new facility later this year. Together, we are building a brighter future for our students.

Mr Nearney, enjoying a go on the machinery

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE (N H E S C)

The proposals consists of a two-storey building, with the main public reception, kitchen, hall, changing rooms and education facilities located on the ground floor, with the administration, plant area (external) and further education facilities located on the first floor.

Given the supervisory nature of the ESC, the internal layout on both floors consists of a single access corridor running down the centre of the building where by all rooms can be accessed and avoids any blind spots which prevent external supervision.

On the ground floor, the KS4 facilities are located towards the southern end of the building with the public entrance, reception kitchen and hall located towards the northern end. The main plant room is located in the centre of the building.

On the first floor, the KS3 facilities are again located towards the southern end of the building with administration facilities located at the northern end. The external first floor plant area can also be accessed via the central corridor.

Stairs and a platform lift provide vertical circulation between the floors and the external first floor plant area can be accessed via a ladder external to the building on the northern elevation.

Street Elevation

View - Main Entrance

View - Hear Activity Area

View - Sports Hall

Ground Floor Plan

First Floor Plan

The landscape proposals have been created to achieve a high quality, attractive and functional design for the proposed Briars Patch Education Support Centre, which will create a safe and aspirational space for students, teachers and visitors. The built form is to be constructed on the existing building footprint which allows many mature landscape features to be retained.

The landscape layout has been informed by BB104 guidance which includes soft and hard play areas, playing fields for sports, hard sports courts and space for ecological and habitat provision.

Landscape Masterplan

NEW BUILD

wsp

North Herts Education Support Centre

Pellings an RSK company

ASHE

Saunders Boston Architects

ONE Creative environments

BCAL CONSULTING

Hertfordshire

CITY & GUILDS CONSTRUCTION STUDENTS VISIT THE BUILDING SITE OF NHESC NEW SCHOOL

Students were privileged to be allowed to visit the ASHE construction site at Briar Patch this term to see NHESC new school. Students got to see the final concrete pour of the school's foundations and also how GPS equipment was used to position the steel anchor points for the next phase. Students were able to ask questions about the site and were looking forward to our next planned visit, which will see the build come out of the ground.

HORSE RIDING

With new KS3 students arriving at Briar Patch, this means that more students get to enjoy the horse riding experience every Thursday morning. The students have access to four ponies, Dennis, Bandit, Socks and Precious and they initially learn how to sit on and balance in the saddle whilst the pony is working. As students gain confidence, they learn to trot on the ponies and then to walk and trot independently without a leader.

CAREERS EVENT SUPPORTS YEAR 11 STUDENTS' NEXT STEPS

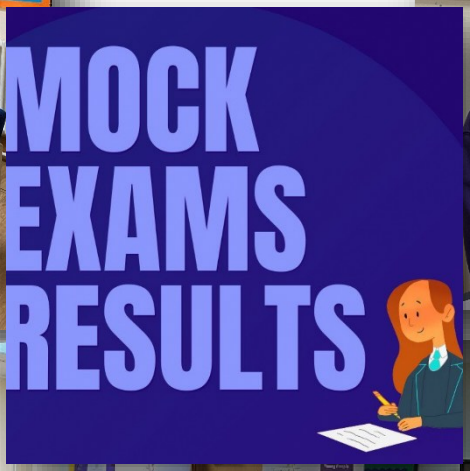
Year 11 students recently took part in a careers event designed to support them as they prepare for their next steps after school.

As part of the event, students received their mock exam results from their December mocks and along with their parents had had the opportunity to discuss their progress with subject teachers, helping them to understand their current performance and identify areas for improvement ahead of the summer exams.

The event also included a practical CV workshop, giving students the chance to develop and refine their CVs, particularly their personal profile and how to present their skills and achievements effectively, and gain valuable advice to support applications for further education, training and employment.

In addition, students met with representatives from Oaklands College, North Herts College, GRIT, and Services for Young People, who provided information and guidance on a wide range of post-16 pathways, including college courses, training programmes, apprenticeships and career support services.

The day encouraged students to ask questions, reflect on their progress and explore future options with confidence. We would like to thank all staff and visiting organisations for their support in making the event a success.



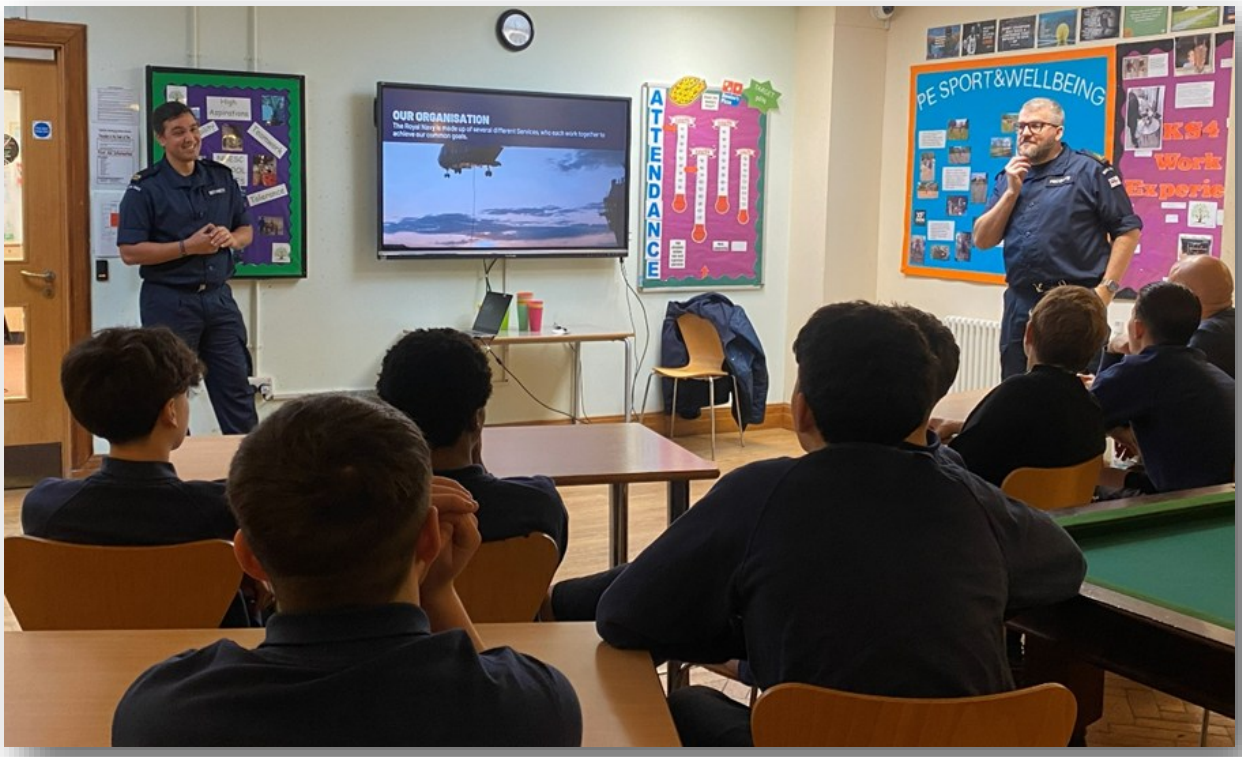
ROYAL NAVY VISIT SUPPORTS GATSBY BENCHMARKS AND RAISES ASPIRATIONS

This half term, we were pleased to welcome representatives from the Royal Navy into school as part of our ongoing commitment to high-quality careers education and meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks. Students across all year groups took part in engaging sessions that provided a meaningful insight into life in the Royal Navy and the wide range of career opportunities available.

The visit strongly supported GB5 (Encounters with Employers and Employees) by giving students direct contact with serving professionals. Pupils learned about the variety of roles within the Navy, including engineering, technical, medical, logistical, and leadership pathways, helping them to understand how different skills and subjects link to real-world careers (GB4).

Students were also informed about training routes, progression opportunities, and starting salaries, enabling them to make informed and realistic decisions about future pathways (GB2). The sessions encouraged aspiration, challenged stereotypes, and highlighted the breadth of opportunities available beyond school.

The Royal Navy visit was well received and made a valuable contribution to our careers programme. We would like to thank the visiting team for their time and enthusiasm, and for helping to inspire our students as they consider their future options.



STUDENT COOKS UP SUCCESS IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

A talented Y11 Catering student Jasmine has taken an impressive step forward in her culinary journey after winning the local heat of a national cooking competition based at North Herts College, delivered in partnership with Springboard.

The competition saw students put their skills to the test against other aspiring chefs, with both competitors demonstrating creativity, strong technical ability and professionalism under pressure. Alongside the winner, Y10 Catering student Johnny also represented the school with distinction, producing a high-quality dish and gaining valuable experience from the event. Jasmine prepared an Italian inspired tortellini soup with mozzarella filled bread. Johnny chose to prepare falafels, hummus, picked cucumber & flatbreads.

Jasmine's winning performance secured first place in the local heat and a coveted spot in the next stage of the competition. As a result, the student will now progress to the Sout east of England regional heat in Chelmsford, where she will compete against top performers from across the area. Jasmine won a chef's jacket embroidered with her name, a recipe book and mentoring from chef Simon Woodward.

Springboard, a national charity that supports young people into careers in hospitality, tourism and catering, played a key role in organising and supporting the competition. Their work continues to open doors for students to develop confidence, industry skills and real-world experience.

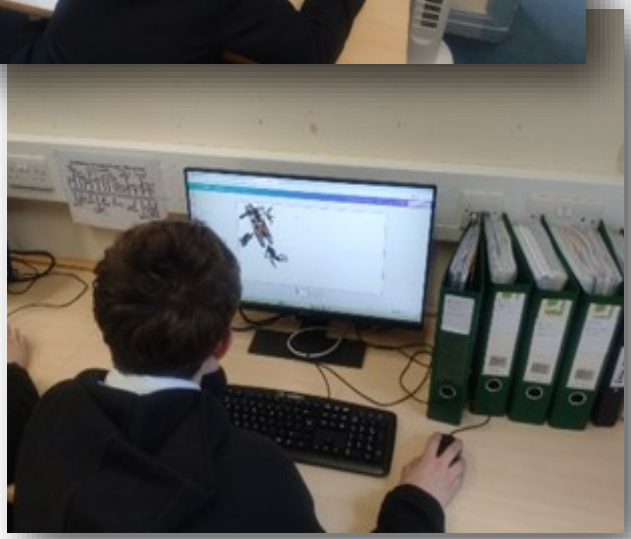
NHESC is extremely proud of both students for their hard work and commitment and wishes Jasmine every success as the competition continues. Please see the next edition of our newsletter to see how she gets on!

WEDNESDAY SPORTS PROGRAMME

This half term students have been using computers to design their own rule books for a sport of their choice. This project has given them the chance to dive deeply into how games work while also practicing important digital and academic skills. By creating their rule books, students have strengthened their ability to research, organise information, write clearly, and think critically about how rules shape a sport. They've also gained experience in digital publishing, learning how to format documents, use layout tools, and present information in a clear, user-friendly way. This combination of creativity and technical skill helps build their confidence as both digital learners and effective communicators.

This half term students have been using computers to create their own sports-themed collages based on the sport of their choice. By selecting images, equipment, athletes, and key moments related to their sport, they have been able to visually express what makes that activity unique. This project supports their understanding of sporting concepts, such as teamwork, strategy, movement, and environment, while also giving them the chance to explore how sports are represented visually.

Working digitally has helped students build valuable skills, including image editing, layout design, and digital creativity. They have learned how to choose meaningful visuals, organise information in a clear and engaging way, and communicate their ideas about sport through design. At the same time, the activity encourages decision-making, attention to detail, and a deeper appreciation of the chosen sport's culture, equipment, and key elements. Altogether, the collage project strengthens both their digital literacy and their understanding of sports.



HERTFORDSHIRE BEE YOU

Hertfordshire

AutismOxford UK Limited

NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board

Understanding my Autism and ADHD Pre-Diagnostic Online Courses

A new virtual service, jointly commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS, designed to support children & young people who think they might be autistic or ADHD.

This service offers tailored support to those aged 7-16, covering a variety of weekly topics related to autism and ADHD.

FREE PRE-DIAGNOSTIC SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO YOU!

Scan the QR code to complete the contact form for a referral and further information.

Email **hertsbeeyou@autismoxford.org.uk** if you require further assistance.

Family and Health Services Commissioning

SEND

For further SEND information, advice and/or support, contact our school SENCO, Helen Emery.

Email: h.emery@nhf.school

Tel: 01462 419020

Or have a look on:

SEND 0-25 years Hertfordshire's Local Offer

- Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer Facebook page
- @SendHerts

Useful Contacts

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Nessie Tel:01763 255427 OR 07949 368941 Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm Freephone: 116 123, 24 hours a day, every day

Childline Freephone: 0800 1111 via 1-2-1 chat between 7.30am and 3.30am every day.

Crisis Support Freephone: 0800 6444 101, or call NHS 111

Carers in Hertfordshire Tel:01992 58 69 69

ADHD and Autism

ADD-vance Tel: 01727 833963

Angels Tel: 01462 685150

Links to websites can be found on our website for advice and workshop bookings

KEY INFORMATION

SPRING 2026 STUDENT KEY TERM DATES	
Date	**Details**
Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February	Half Term
Monday 2nd March - Friday 6th March	Mock Exams – (Wednesday 4th March: Work experience)
Monday 23rd March	KS3 KIT Day
Friday 27th March	KS3 and KS4 Celebrations
Monday 30th March – Friday 10th April	Easter Holidays
Monday 13th April	Student inductions with parents/carers

The school day starts promptly at 8:45am. If you wish for your child to have breakfast, last serving time is at 8:40am. Please ensure your child arrives on time.

North Herts Education Support Centre

Breakfast Available Daily 8:30-8:45am

Briar Patch: 01462487207
Bancroft: 01462419020
admin@northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk