

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another very busy half term with all classes fully engaging in so many activities. This is our longest term of the year and we have filled it with activities such as an author visit to promote reading across the school, sensory play for our younger pupils, an external company presented 'Wind in the Willow's', while our Hub pupils worked with Belfour Beatty as part of our Art curriculum and went to the riding stable for a Nativity.

We ended the term with a fantastic school production. As always it was wonderful to see our pupils having the confidence to perform in front of an audience and they certainly did themselves proud with so many amazing performances. The school ran an extended day, taking pupils to a local bowling alley and then back to school for a Christmas party.

It is great to see so many parents attend our different events, being part of the school community, seeing our biggest turn out ever at the school production, so thank you so much for your support.

I look forward in seeing our pupils continue to make progress in 2024.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!

Adam

Principal

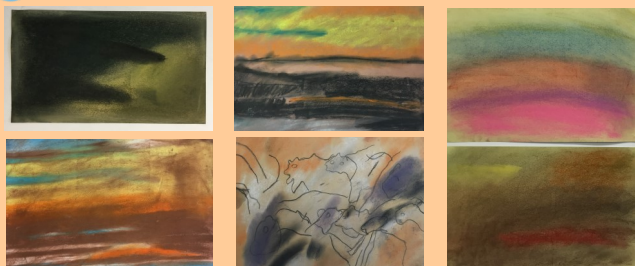


British Values

The various activities highlighted in this newsletter are an example of just some of the diverse learning opportunities that are undertaken by our students. Many of these activities take place within the local community as well as at school for real opportunities to explore these values in order to support students to understand the needs of others in a wider context. Helen Allison School teaches students by planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. British values embedded within this curriculum and these values are defined as: Democracy, Rule of law, Individual liberty, Mutual respect, Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would like to hear from you. If you would like to contribute to the next Newsletter, please let Francesca Shaxted have your article.

Warwick Class have been taking part in live Science lessons, through the Lightyear Foundation. These sessions have involved developing working scientifically skills as well as covering content from the Science KS3 curriculum. The students have been investigating bubbles, creating human electrical circuits, experimenting with dissolving and making torches.



During art sessions at the Hub, some students have been learning about Prehistoric paintings and a lot of students produced their own representation using chalk pastels and charcoal. Some of the students have also been exploring a particular technique of blending using chalk pastels to create mood.



This term during Art, some of the students have been making Christmas paper trees from old books. Some of the other students made some Christmas trees out of lolly pop sticks. As well as this, students have been designing their front covers for their art books.

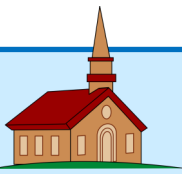
Christmas Stories

To kick off our Christmas countdown, we were joined again by the author Chris Connaughton at the beginning of December. Students enjoyed Christmas stories such as The Little Christmas Tree, The Christmas Elves and the Shoemaker and A Christmas Carol as part of our English curriculum. Chris brought all stories to life, with a great range of voices and actions that kept the students engaged throughout the whole session. He even gave a bespoke story telling session of The Little Christmas Tree and the Gruffalo, helped with the actions and story sequence by Jude from Camber class. Each student was gifted a book to take home as part of the experience. A big thank you to the PTFA who kindly donated the books.



On 17th November students and staff took part in a fund raising event for Children in Need. As part of the fundraiser students were invited to play a range of games, wear spots or yellow and spend their money on a cake or two, which were kindly donated by parents. Kit from Hever class designed and ran the Catch the Cube game, which was great fun and raised a fantastic £5.40. As a result of all the fun and games, the school raised £137.56 in total. Well done everyone!

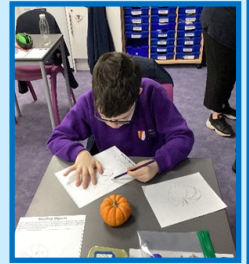




Hever Class

Art

Observational drawings looking at line and shading techniques. Hever drew pumpkins and visited the local church, studying all of the interesting shapes.



Forces

Hever have been learning about forces, experimenting with Newton Metres, measuring objects we found around class. We looked at friction and how different surfaces effect movement and speed.



This term Leeds class topic in RE was 'How do our communities help others.' They took a trip to 'The Giving Tree' at Bluewater to buy presents for children who need a bit of magic this year. The pupils took a tag from the tree and carefully chose a present for the child they had picked. Lots of thought and excitement went in to each gift and they were all very proud of the class.

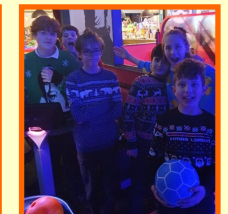
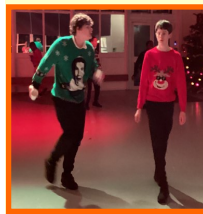


Embracing Arts Visit

An interactive, Christmas sensory story was delivered to some of the students by Embracing Arts. Parents were also invited to join in the fun, which involved lots of lights, different materials to explore, as well as lots of singing and dancing.



Extended Day



Wind in the Willows

In November we were lucky enough to be visited again by the Image Musical Theatre Company, funded by Happy Day Children's charity, who performed the Wind in the Willows for students from both the school and the Hub. The interactive element allowed students to become actors, with some wily weasels and suspicious stoats, along with audience participation encouraged throughout. The puppet Mole was a big hit with some of our younger students and the whole play was thoroughly enjoyed by both students and staff.



We were very pleased to be able to offer the students another extended day. Once the usual school day had finished, some students were taken to a local bowling alley, where they enjoyed their game of bowling, which involved a few strikes and even more celebratory knee slides! The students were then able to explore the arcades and enjoyed playing the two pence machines, as well as the life-sized Hungry Hippo game and a variety of other arcade games. Once they had returned to school, the students were very happy to see that the canteen had been transformed into a Christmas party room which was ready for their buffet dinner. Dinner was followed by a disco, where there were some fantastic dance moves on display.

Christmas Concert 2023



On the last Thursday of term, we held our annual Christmas Concert. It well attended by parents, carers and family and it was lovely to see so many faces! The students, as always, performed really well and we are so proud of each and every one of them!

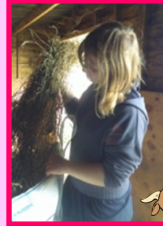
This year we focused on showcasing the instrumental programme with eight of the twelve songs performed by the students. They all played incredibly well and everyone enjoyed their versions of the Christmas songs they performed.

Thanks to everyone who helped the concert be an incredible success and most of all, a special thanks to the parents, carers and families who attended, and gave the students so much support!



Curly's Farm

This term the students who attend Curly's farm have been working with a variety of animals and completing other jobs on the farm.



Handling animals for health checks and making sure they have enough straw for the animal's beds in this cold weather



The students have been able to walk the pigs, goats and lambs



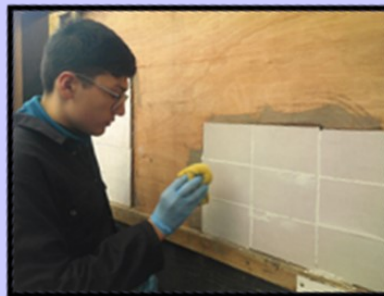
Working as a team moving straw/hay racks and water troughs in the mud

The students have also been working with 2 new additions to the farm a pair of donkeys. They have been learning all about the donkeys, what they eat and how their needs are different from the other animals on the farm.



Rowhill Construction Group

The students have been learning how to tile a wall during their construction sessions this term. They have measured and cut the tiles to size, then used adhesive and stick the tiles to the wall, then used grout to fill the gaps between the tiles.

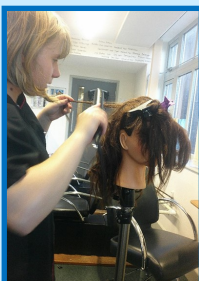
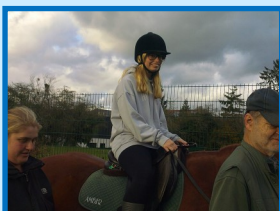
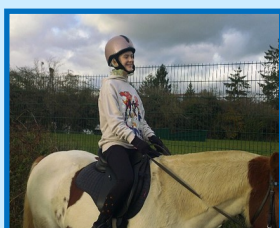


This term with Rufus Class



There has been lots of fun learning happening in Rufus class again this term. The students have been learning about their bodies and their senses in Science. They explored around the school to see what they could see, smell, touch and feel. Back in the classroom, the students were able to explore that taste sense, with a wide variety of different food and drink. The class text this term, *Orion and the Dark*, has given the students an opportunity to think about what they are scared of, as well as having some fun in the dark tent. There have been some great opportunities for the students to show and develop the life skills, including trips out into the community, as well as in our breakfast club and independent living lessons.

Group 3



Group 3 at the Hub have been actively participating in their lessons this term.

They have enjoyed taking part in their Wheel of Independence lessons, which have taught them to find things in the supermarket, compare prices, look at special offers, use the self-service checkout as well as the manned till, and engage in conversation with a member of supermarket staff on the till.

Cooking lessons have also been a huge success. Most of the recipes produced are vegan friendly and Alecia, Micah and Anara, have worked independently, cooking such goodies as shortbread biscuits, sausage rolls, banana bread, jammy buns and that festive favourite, mince pies. Micah, Alecia and Kai, have advanced in their riding skills, visiting Leybourne Grange Riding School every Wednesday afternoon. They have mastered control over walking, trotting, stepping over poles and commands.

Dylan and Carmen as always have been working hard at Curly's Farm and one of the donkey's even took an interest in Dylan by grabbing hold of his t-shirt with its mouth!

Carmen has also made great progress in her Hair and Beauty course at Rowhill. She has learned to wash and blow dry, even using the curling tongs, plus paint nails. Soon we shall be able to open a salon at the Hub for her! Group Three have made excellent progress, and continue to make us proud every day.

Camber Class

This term in Camber Class, the students have continued their topic of "Once Upon a time". They have looked at traditional tales as well as seasonal stories and songs. During carousel play and sensory story time they learnt about Halloween, fireworks, the gingerbread man, winter and wondered could you be an elf? The children engaged with some lovely activities and their friendships have really blossomed this term. Camber have done very well in their Independent Living Skills lessons, cooking some lovely dishes and learning about hygiene and cleaning up. It has been wonderful to see their creativity flow in art this term, as they focused on drawing and craft. They have made the most of their outdoor space (in between rain and snow!) by climbing, bouncing on the trampoline, riding trikes and practising their ball skills. Music lessons and song time are firm favourites, and they are transferring these sounds and skills into phonics lessons.

The children's communication with adults and each other has come on leaps and bounds this term and we are so proud of what they are achieving.



Longitude and Latitude



In Geography lessons, Warwick class have been looking at longitude and latitude amongst other geographical features. They visited the Prime Meridian Line in Greenwich which represents the Prime Meridian of the world.

Santa came to visit!



At the end of term, Helen Allison School were very lucky because Santa came to visit us! Students were very excited and got to tell him all the things they were hoping for, for Christmas!



The term finished with a whole school assembly, where we were very lucky to have the school band playing again as the proud moments from each class were being displayed. Some wonderful student and staff achievements were celebrated, including Bev Newby who received an award for her 25 year service to the Helen Allison School! We also have another long standing member of staff who is celebrating a very special birthday in the Christmas holidays. Happy Birthday Pilar!

Wheel of Independence



This term in 'Wheel of Independence' sessions, students have been working on many different skills. They have been looking at healthy eating and budgeting and using online websites and shops to work to a budget. They have also been experimenting with different methods of cooking such as how to make a full meal using only a microwave. The students have also been looking at how to use kitchen equipment safely.

In November, poppies were on sale on reception at the main school to raise money for the Royal British Legion. Thank you to those who purchase a poppy and donated. We raised a total of £13.62 which contributed to the £6631.45 total raised in the local community.





Dates for the diary



21st-29th December 2023
Half Term

1st January 2024
Bank Holiday

2nd January 2024
Inset Day

3rd January 2024
Term 3 Begins

5th—9th February 2024
Children's Mental Health and Online
Safety Week

12th-16th February 2024
Half Term

19th February 2024
Term 4 Begins

7th March 2024
World Book Day

15th March 2024
Red Nose Day

25th—29th March 2024
Autism Awareness Week

Keep an eye on the My Child at School app for additional dates.

my **child** at school.com

The school have now moved to a new home/school communication portal called MCAS (My Child At School). This portal should be used for all communication to staff. You can also view your child's attendance, update their records and pay pocket or dinner money via this portal.

Please contact Francesca or Lynn if you have any problems with this system as step by step guides can be provided.

Thank you!

We would like to say a huge thank you to all the wonderful local businesses and parents who donated to our Christmas Raffle this year. We appreciate your continued support for Helen Allison School.

- * Thank you to Costa, Meopham for donating hot chocolate and syrup sets.
- * Thank you to The Salon, Meopham for donating a cut and blow dry voucher.
- * Thank you to Tesco, Meopham for donating bottles of wine.
- * Thank you to Costcutter, Meopham for donating chocolates and biscuits.
- * Thank you to Larkfield Leisure Centre for donating a family swim voucher.
- * Thank you to Images Unlimited, Maidstone for donating family portrait vouchers.
- * Thank you to DSL for donating a bottle of prosecco.
- * Thank you to all parents who have donated items throughout the year for the hamper.

If you have any concerns around your child's computer or internet use please don't hesitate to ask us for help, guidance or support. Contact the school on 01474 814878 and ask to speak to a safeguarding officer. The Helen Allison School website has all of our safeguarding information as well as Internet Safeguarding links you might find useful.

Safeguarding Team

The following staff are our school safeguarding team. If you have a concern or wish to speak to one of them, please call the school and we will



Adam
Lead DSL



Luke
Deputy DSL



Lisa
Deputy DSL



Francesca
Attendance and
Welfare



Chelsea
Behaviour



Natasha
Financial Supp.