Headstart School

Positive learning for life

News round up

Newsletter

May 2026

Headteacher's Message

It has been another busy and rewarding term at Headstart School, and it is a pleasure to reflect on the many achievements, experiences and moments of growth our students have enjoyed.

Across the school, there has been a strong emphasis on learning through real-life experiences. From visits to the RNLI and the Fire Service, to Careers Week, travel training, and trips into the local community, our students have continued to build confidence, independence and essential life skills.

It has been particularly encouraging to see how these opportunities are helping students apply their learning in meaningful, practical ways.

Outdoor learning has been a highlight this term. Whether at Forest School, Beach School, on residential at Blacklands Farm, or exploring places such as Bushy Wood and Drusilla's Park, students have embraced new challenges with enthusiasm. These experiences have supported not only their academic development but also their resilience, teamwork and wellbeing. The Blacklands Farm residential, in particular, was a fantastic success, with pupils demonstrating determination, cooperation and a real sense of adventure.

In the classroom, students have continued to make steady progress across a wide curriculum. From developing money and time skills in Maths, to exploring science through hands-on investigations, and producing creative work inspired by literature and mythology, there has been a clear focus on building knowledge alongside confidence. It is also wonderful to see the introduction of initiatives such as the All Aboard phonics programme, supporting students in developing their literacy skills step by step.

Life skills remain at the heart of what we do. Activities such as running a pop-up café, volunteering in the community, caring for animals, cooking, and managing budgets all play a vital role in preparing our students for the future. I am continually impressed by the maturity, independence and pride our students show when engaging in these opportunities.

We are incredibly proud of individual achievements this term, including students completing qualifications and demonstrating exceptional effort and resilience in their learning. We also take pride in the kindness, teamwork and perseverance displayed by so many of our pupils in their daily school life.

As always, none of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our staff team, whose care, creativity and enthusiasm make such a difference every day. I would also like to thank our families for their continued support.

Warm regards,

Scott Fasciolo-Barnes

Executive Headteacher of Headstart School

News from the farm

It has been a busy and rewarding time on the farm, with students building confidence, independence, and practical skills through hands-on learning.

Students enjoyed a fantastic Land-Based Day, taking part in a wide range of practical activities across the farm. Throughout the day, they were involved in planting in the sensory garden, helping to create a calm and engaging space that everyone can enjoy. They also worked together on building a polytunnel, learning how structures are put together and why they are important for growing plants.

In addition, students supported with feeding and caring for the animals, helping to maintain daily routines, and took part in clearing barn spaces in preparation for lambing, giving them a real sense of responsibility and involvement in farm life. One of the more creative tasks included building a cloche to protect plants from rabbits, helping students understand how we care for and protect crops.

It was wonderful to see students trying new activities, asking lots of questions, and showing determination when tasks were challenging. The day really highlighted their growing curiosity, as well as their ability to keep going and problem-solve, showing excellent resilience. It was also great to see how well students worked alongside one another, supporting each other and being inclusive throughout the day.

Students have been working closely with our goats, sheep, alpacas, and horses, developing their confidence and care skills. A particular highlight was the shearing of the sheep and alpacas, which gave students a great opportunity to understand how we look after animals throughout the seasons.

We have also incubated chicks, and students were very excited to watch them hatch. This has been a brilliant way to spark curiosity and help learners understand more about animal lifecycles.

Through daily tasks such as feeding animals and maintaining the farm environment, students are showing increasing resilience and independence. It has been lovely to see them supporting one another, being inclusive, and taking pride in their achievements.

A big well done to all students for their hard work and positive attitudes—we are very proud of how they continue to demonstrate resilience, curiosity, and inclusivity in all they do.

Aimee and Heather's Class

This term has been busy with lots of small steps and new experiences. Our theme has been Superheroes, where we have explored both imaginary characters and real-life helpers. We visited the RNLI in Hastings and learned about how they keep people safe at sea. We also thought back to our visit from the Fire Service, helping us understand more about people who help us every day.

We have spent time at the beach, where we made transient art using shells, stones and other natural materials. The children enjoyed creating their own patterns and pictures, and it was a nice way to work together.

In our outdoor sessions, we found tadpoles, which was very exciting. We brought some back and made a small habitat for them in our garden so we can watch how they grow. We have also been learning about plants, planting seeds and bulbs in planters and taking care of them as they grow. These activities have helped us practise patience and responsibility.

Aimee and Heather's Class cont...

$a^2+b^2=c^2$

In Maths, we have been working on money and time. We have been practising recognising coins, buying simple items, and talking about times of the day. The children have been building confidence with these everyday skills at their own pace.

We are really proud of one of our students, who has achieved an Introductory Award in his BTEC, as well as completing Entry Level English and Maths. This has taken a lot of effort and determination.

Our life skills sessions have continued, with visits to local shops, the library, and Bateman's National Trust. We have also kept up our volunteering at Barby Keel's Animal Sanctuary, where the children are becoming more comfortable and confident over time.

Back at school, we have enjoyed being outside more in the sunny weather. Some children have liked spending time on the swings, while others have enjoyed watching football activities or just being on the field.

We have also started a new phonics programme called All Aboard, taking small steps to build confidence with sounds and reading.

It has been a steady term, with the children trying new things, spending time outdoors, and building confidence in their own ways. We are proud of the effort they have all shown.

Matt Young's Class

Maths:
The boys have enjoyed exploring shape this term, particularly impressing with their ability to visualise 3D shapes/nets. They have also worked well through our position and direction topic, showing good knowledge of coordinates.

Goodbye to Ashton – good luck at Oakfield!
The class had a great time sending Ashton on his way to Oakfield, we had a lovely morning at the beach and park and sent him on his way with lots of gifts and positive memories. He will be (and is already being) missed, but the boys are looking forward to their overnight trip at PGL where they can catch up.

English:
The boys enjoyed learning about Beowulf in English this term, creating some great pieces of writing inspired by the epic poem. They have then progressed on to learning and writing

Matt Young's Class cont...

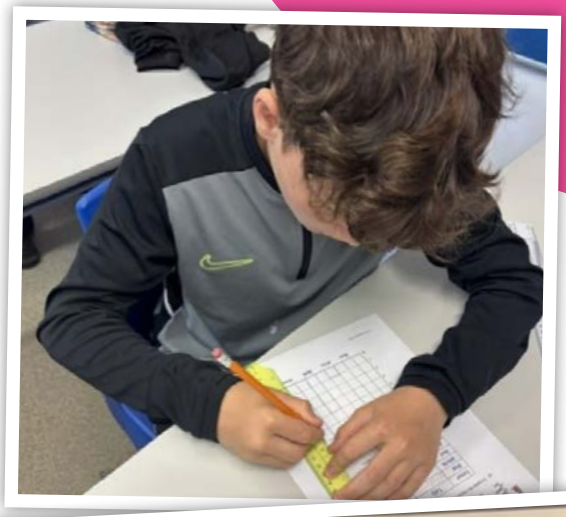
about other Norse mythology, culminating in an awesome set of Top Trump cards based on their Gods.

Science:
We've been looking at how plants grow, including testing different types of soil and attempting to grow different bulbs and seeds!

Cuckmere River Kayaking:
The boys have loved the opportunity to have a go at kayaking with Buzz Active on the Cuckmere river, they still have another couple of sessions to look forward to next term as well!

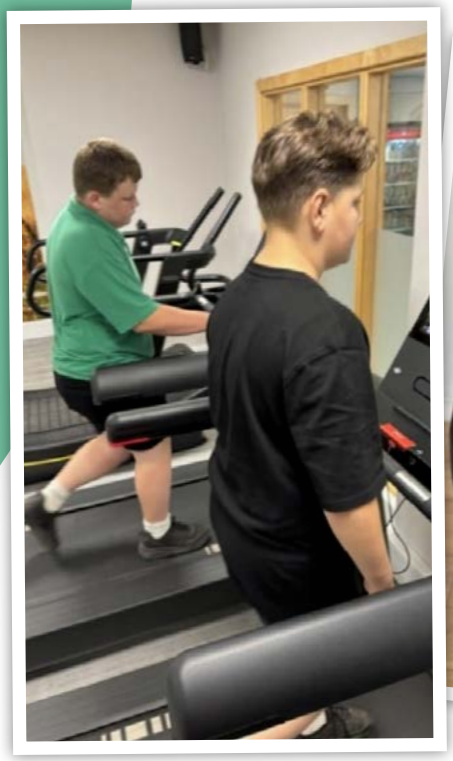
Oli's Class

In OBO class for Maths, students have learned how to collect and record data clearly and accurately. We practiced organising information into tables so it could be easily understood and compared. After gathering the data, we then used it to create bar charts.



Students in the OBO class have used the gym this term as an important space to improve their health and fitness. They take part in a variety of exercises and activities that help build strength, stamina, and overall wellbeing. By engaging in regular physical activity, students also learn the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, teamwork, and personal motivation.

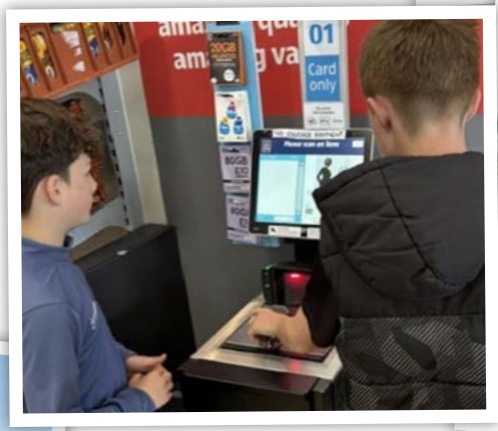
Students in the OBO class explore the topic of plants through hands-on learning and practical experiments. They investigate different types of soil by comparing how well plants grow in each one, helping them understand what plants need to survive and thrive. As part of their learning, students also try to grow their own plants,

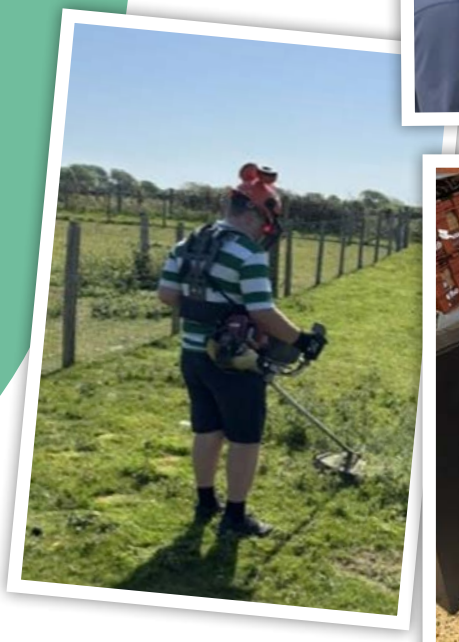


Oli's Class cont...

developing skills in observation, data recording, and responsibility while gaining a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

Students in the OBO have taken part in a range of practical activities that help develop life skills and personal growth. They practice money skills by budgeting and purchasing breakfast items from Lidl, gaining confidence in real-world situations. Through fishing trips, students build teamwork, patience, and communication skills. They also contribute to maintaining the school site by mowing and strimming, learning responsibility and pride in their environment. Visits to the beach provide valuable opportunities for social interaction, helping students build confidence and positive relationships with others.





Conner's Class

It has been a great term in the Link One class this term with lots of learning, exploring the world around us and fun. We have been learning and thinking about the real-life heroes that we have in our lives as well as the heroes in the emergency services that help everyone. We have been learning about money and time in Maths and applying this in real life contexts during off-site visits and have been observing our own plants growing in Science.

As well as lots of learning on-site, we have been exploring the outdoors at Forest school through visiting Bushy Wood and a highlight was being able to complete the low ropes course where the children showed resilience and confidence when

Conner's Class cont...

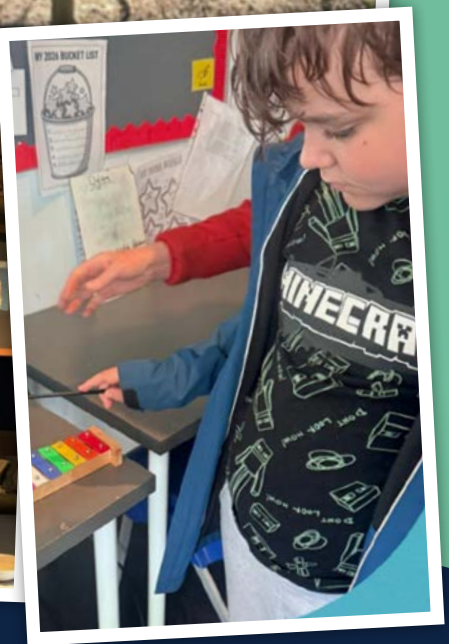
climbing around. We have been taking part in Beach School sessions and have combined our exploring with art sessions by creating art pieces on the beach.

The children have been showing independence as well as working together by deciding where some of our visits have taken place and visiting Hastings seafront has been a winner this term.

As the end of term reward for all of the children's hard work, we are visiting Chessington World of Adventures which will be a day filled with fun, exploring and teamwork.

In Art, the children were drawing their own face using a mirror and then transferred to using chalk on to the outside wall. Then the students observed their artwork each week to see what happens, if the weather has made the drawing lighter or washed away from the rain.

In PE, the children were practicing their balancing and co-ordination skills and pupils were also practicing their cutting skills during cooking lesson.



Celia & Stephen's Class

We have been getting lots of hands-on experience this term. In Construction we have been using various tools to practise different skills under the guidance of Mark.

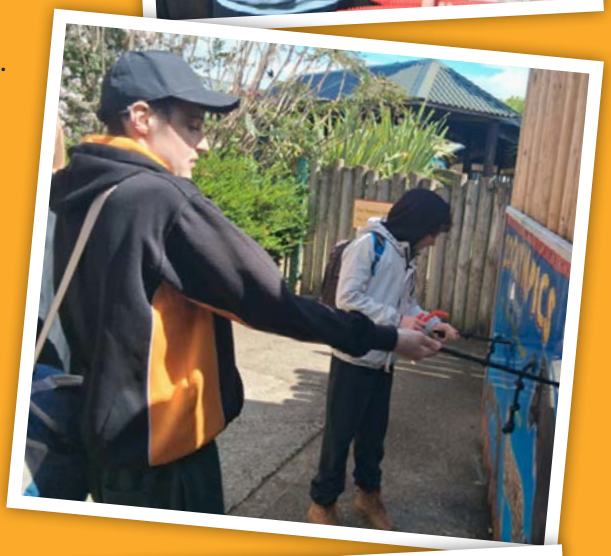
In forest school we have been enjoying the warm, sunny afternoons working together and practising skills under the guidance of Catherine.

In science we have been learning about the importance of soil through exploration. We observed different properties of soils to see similarities and differences. We planned and carried out a comparative test to explore the absorbency of different soils, ensuring it was a fair test.

We have enjoyed time with the animals on the farm and spending time out and about to help our wellbeing, in particular our mental health, that we have been talking about in PSHE.

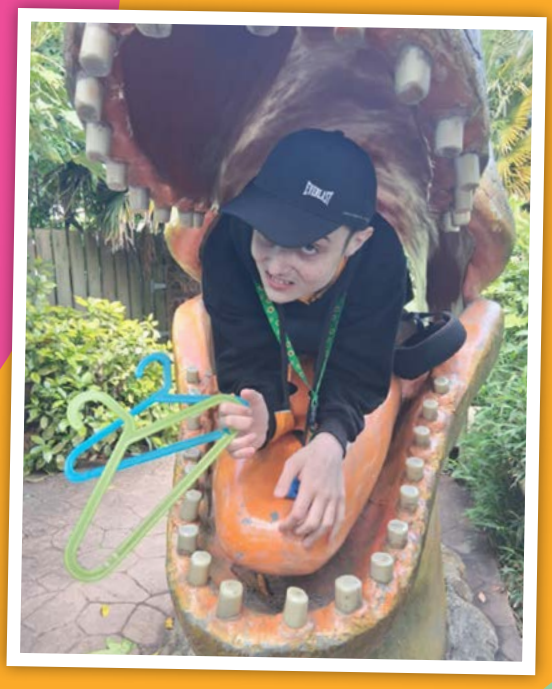
Celia & Stephen's Class cont...

The Link Oakfield



This term, the students in Link Classroom have been busy exploring the exciting topic of **"People Who Help Us."** We have been learning about the important roles that community helpers play in keeping us safe, healthy, and supported every day. The children particularly enjoyed learning about the **police**, **ambulance service**, and **fire brigade**. Through stories, discussions, role play, art activities, and interactive games, students developed their understanding of how these helpers support our community. Students were able to recognise different people who help us and began to understand the special jobs they do. They learned that police officers help keep people safe, paramedics and ambulance staff help people when they are hurt or unwell, and firefighters help during emergencies such as fires and rescues.

To celebrate the end of term, students also enjoyed a wonderful trip to Drusilla's Park. This experience linked closely with our Science learning, where we have been exploring the life cycles of different animals, including humans. The children were excited to see a variety of animals up close and enjoyed talking about how animals grow and change. The visit provided a fantastic opportunity for students to apply their classroom learning in a real-world setting while developing their curiosity about the natural world. We are very proud of how engaged and curious the students have been throughout this term. It has been wonderful to see them growing in their understanding of the important people who help care for our community every day.



Key Stage 4 and Post 16

This term KS4/5 Students have enjoyed making pancakes and homemade burgers during life skills.

Careers Week provided our students with exciting opportunities to explore future pathways and build key life skills.

Students visited North Kent College, gaining insight into further education options, and toured a working factory to see real-life job roles in action. Travel training sessions helped students develop confidence using the train independently.

In school, students ran a pop-up café, building teamwork and customer service skills, and took part in practice interviews to prepare for employment. A music industry-themed escape room added a creative element, encouraging problem-solving and collaboration.

Overall, students showed great enthusiasm and resilience, making the week a valuable and inspiring experience.

Blackland Farm Residential 2026!

On Thursday 14th May, some of our pupils and staff went to Blackland Farm Outdoor Activity Centre in East Grinstead. The forecast was rain, but this did not dampen our spirits!

We packed four vehicles, looking like we were away for a week! After arriving and setting up in our bell tents, we went to our first activity – rock climbing. Whilst an individual climbed others were belayers -the climber's partner responsible for managing the rope to protect the climber from fall
(the belayer must maintain constant attention and control rope tension). Pupils showed determination and resilience, supporting each other as they scaled the wall. Young K was like Spiderman!

Our next activity was archery. Pupils listened carefully to the teaching points to improve their techniques as they shot the arrows at the target, showing control, strength and concentration. Ashton scored an impressive 29/30!

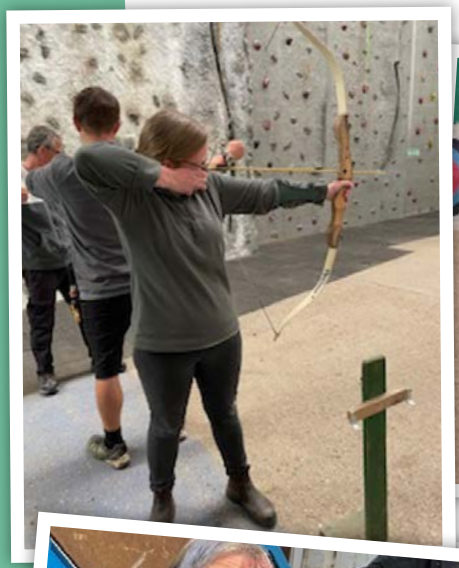
After a tea of sausage/mash and ice-cream, we went on a woodland walk to find the firepit for our campfire. Pupils found wood and lit the fire so marshmallows could be roasted and smores made. Singing round the campfire was attempted, resulting on baby shark plus other songs being sung to the trees!

Blackland Farm Residential 2026! cont...

Once back at camp, we enjoyed hot chocolate before getting ready for a good night's sleep however, it was soooooo cold many struggled to settle and sleep so they were layered up with extra blankets, sleeping bags and one hot water bottle was shared!

Considering the lack of the sleep, pupils managed amazingly the next morning, having fun doing team building activities, demonstrating communication and problem-solving skills before starting the task of packing up! For lunch we had pizza and chips before one last visit to the shop then returning to school. The pupils were amazing and much fun was had by all! We are very proud of them!

A massive thank you must go to Catherine for instigating and organising this trip and to Ryan, Stephen, Helen, Kath, Emelye, Mark and Carol for their time, wonderful company and support.



Blackland Farm Residential 2026! cont...