



Welcome

We are delighted that your child will be joining Heath Lane Academy in August 2024. We wanted to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome and share some of the things that your child can look forward to as they move to our school.

We know that you are already looking forward to a lot of the changes and new experiences that you will have in 'Big School.' We also know that a few pupils may have small worries. Please don't worry - staff and pupils at Heath Lane Academy will be with you every step of the way, ready to help you achieve new challenges and develop yourselves to be the best you can be! We plan activities and work with your child's Primary School to make sure they're well supported. During this year, we have hosted several visits from our Primary Partner Schools involving classroom activities that developed new skills, built confidence and enabled the children to feel more comfortable in a new environment. As parents and carers we know that you want your child to be safe, to be happy and to do well. We want the same, which is why we build our Academy around these principles. We hope many of your questions will be answered in this newsletter and that it will help you to feel confident in the choice you have made.

At Heath Lane Academy

- Our school culture is based on our values of Work Hard, Be Kind and Be Respectful
- Our mission is 'to develop good people'
- We pride ourselves on the high expectations we have of our pupils in everything that we do
- We prioritise academic success for all of our pupils
- We deliver an aspirational knowledge rich curriculum
- We are passionate about our pupils learning beyond the classroom to develop a holistic education and strong character
- Our school is proud to be at the centre of our community

What do the current Year 7 think about Heath Lane Academy?

We get a lot of support in lessons

Afterschool clubs are free, anyone can do it

I enjoy doing a wide range of subjects, and we have specialist teachers for these

We make great food in technology to enjoy with with our families

The students have a good relationship with their teachers and each other

A lot of students can get involved in the student council, it gives you independence and a voice into the things we do

Term Dates	
Autumn 1	Tues 27th Aug 2024 - Fri 18th Oct 2024 (Bank Holiday Mon 26th Aug)
Autumn 2	Mon 28th Oct 2024 - Fri 20th Dec 2024
Spring 1	Mon 6th Jan 2025 - Fri 14th Feb 2025
Spring 2	Mon 24th Feb 2025 - Fri 11 Apr 2025 (Bank Holiday Fri 18th April and Mon 21st Apr)
Summer 1	Mon 28th Apr 2025 - Fri 23rd May 2025 (Bank Holiday Mon 5th May)
Summer 2	Mon 2nd Jun 2025 – Fri 11th Jul 2025
Academy closed for teacher training	Thu 22nd Aug 2024 Fri 23rd Aug 2024 Tue 27th Aug 2024 Fri 29th Nov 2024 Fri 20th Dec 2024 Mon 6th Jan 2025 Mon 17th Mar 2025 Fri 11th Jul 2025

The curriculum we offer is designed to develop your child and extend their learning. Unlike primary school, your child will have a timetable of lessons that involves them moving around and carrying their lesson items in their hands as they have different teachers and classrooms. We find this builds independence and responsibility, as the children learn to manage their time and arrive punctually. At Heath Lane Academy we have a knowledge based curriculum, and set high expectations from the very start of Year 7. In order to be successful, we believe that children need to learn key facts and processes for each subject, so they have a secure base to build their learning upon.

Your child will be given a Knowledge Organiser for each subject with these key facts on. We use these to set homework, so you can see exactly what they need to know, and can support them in their learning. We believe that knowledge is key to success and are confident that you will soon see the difference that this approach makes for your child.

Will my child get lost in a big school?

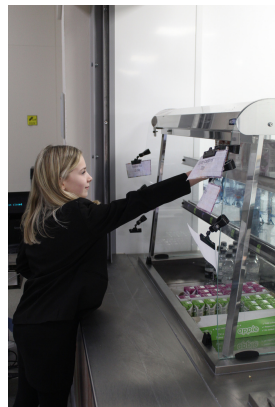
We know that many children worry about getting lost, so we do everything we can to help your child familiarise themselves with their new environment and settle quickly. We use some of the older pupils to accompany new pupils to classes until they are confident in making their way around the school. If they do get lost, members of staff are always around to point them in the right direction.



What is the food like?

Our food is awesome! Our canteen offers a variety of food options during the school day. We have a reputation for excellent home cooking - all our food is cooked on the day using fresh ingredients. We cater for special dietary requirements and include a wide range of dishes from traditional to international.

Our school uses a 'cashless' cafeteria system - money for food is prepaid and the children use their finger through a technique called biometrics to debit money as they buy food. We find that this system works very well and prevents the need for carrying cash. If your child currently qualifies for a free school meal this is taken care of through the same system. Of course, your child can bring a packed lunch if they prefer and eat this in the canteen with their friends.



Getting to know your child

During the summer term, staff from Heath Lane Academy will be visiting all our Primary Partner Schools to find out key information about each child. This information ranges from who they are good friends with to any special education or learning needs we need to be aware of. We have a team of staff who support the children in classrooms and also with any medical issues they may have, again to ensure a smooth transition. You will also have a number of forms we will need you to sign which include medical information, emergency contact details and safe use of ICT to name a few. These will be given to you towards the end of term. The forms and the information provided is kept confidential and are designed to keep your child safe.



Can I come for a visit to Heath Lane Academy?

Absolutely! We are always happy to meet parents and carers. If you can arrange it around your commitments, we'd always recommend coming to visit during the school day – we are very proud of our school and would love to show you around whilst lessons are in progress. Even if you have visited the school before, you are very welcome to revisit. We want you to know that you are sending your child to a school where every individual matters and every effort is made to secure excellent progress and a happy school experience. To arrange a visit call 01455 845061.

Do you have any extracurricular activities?

Yes – we think it's an essential part of the school experience. We offer lunchtime and after school activities ranging from sports clubs to chess, led by our teachers. We encourage children to join something to widen their circle of friends and to develop their skills and interests outside the classroom.

How is my child supported at Heath Lane Academy?

Your child will have a form tutor and your child will have a Pastoral Leader who will have met them on their visit to their Primary School and also during 'Advance to go' transition. The Pastoral Leader will get to know your child well and will provide support where needed for both any academic or pastoral needs. The pupils will also have a form tutor who will see them daily with their form group. We promote good attendance, punctuality, high standards of behaviour and uniform as we know this provides the conditions which enable all children to be successful. We use a system called weduc, a mobile app that is perfect for keeping the whole-school community up to date. We regularly message parents so you are fully aware of everything you need to know.

What do Heath Lane Academy do to support the transition from Primary to Secondary school?

We believe that children need to feel at home in their school environment. Once they do, we find they settle quickly and can start to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer. That's why we offer a 2 day transition experience called 'Advance to go' from 4th and 5th July 2024 from 8.45am-2.50pm both days. We want your child to become familiar with our school, enjoy a wide range of lessons and feel confident about the new academic year before the start of the summer holidays. Activities include:

- Getting to know other Year 7 pupils, older pupils and HLA staff.
- Becoming familiar with the school, where classrooms are and lessons take place
- Where key places are eg First Aid, the library, the office and the lecture theatre
- Experience new subjects and lessons
- Know what to do if the fire alarm rings and where to go
- The routines and expectations of Heath Lane Academy
- Practical lessons like Food Technology and PE
- Beginning learning in all your subjects

Settling in...

All of these activities and many more help to settle and support the changes from Primary to Secondary school and build confidence. During this week there will be another opportunity for parents to come and meet the Principal, the staff and the form tutors. Here are some of the comments from last year's parents:

“My child really enjoyed the 2 days transition as it helped them be more confident in starting Year 7

My daughter really enjoyed the lessons on the transition days as they experienced lessons in a variety of subjects, and is looking forward to starting in August

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