



Jacqueline Clearkin
Headteacher

Spring Term 2025

This term's newsletter has a special focus on communication and in particular the adoption of AAC to facilitate this.

Throughout the school year and as part of our continued professional development, staff have increased their awareness & understanding of how AAC supports expressive language.

In January of this year, Sarah Riley, a speech and language therapist with a particular interest in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) facilitated our INSET training on the integration of ACC at school and at home.

With this in mind, there is a wealth of information contained in this newsletter to explain how AAC is used & its positive outcomes for learners and staff.

There is also a section with a QR code for you to access ideas for using AAC at home.

We really hope you will find this information helpful. Do let us know how you might plan you use AAC at home and if you need resources. We are more than happy to support you.

There is of course much more contained within the pages of this term's newsletter including the linking project with Brushwood School, the ASDA Heroes scheme and some useful general reminders.

I wish you all a Happy Easter

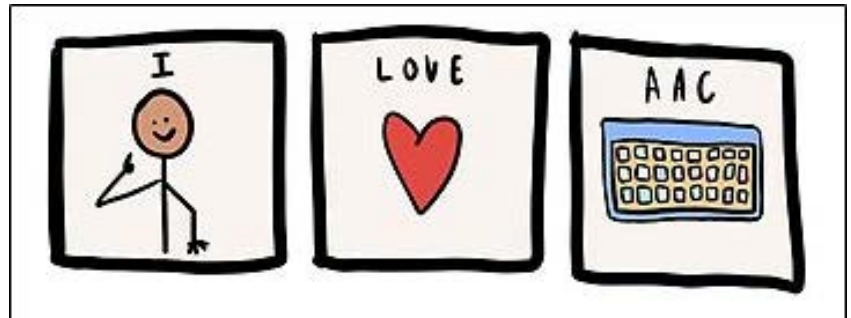
Jacqueline

Summer Fun & HAF at HHS -

Building on the success of last summer, we are delighted to offer 'Summer Fun 2025'! The scheme will run from Monday 28th July until Wednesday 6th August 2025, more details to follow.



Alice Bennett
Speech and Language
Therapist



1. What is AAC and what is it not?



AAC is...

- * a system to support EXPRESSIVE language
- * a means of communicating for lots of different functions on the child's own terms!

AAC is not...

- * Now and next boards, visual timetables or lanyards with visual rules...
- * These are used to support RECEPTIVE language such as understanding of transitions or instructions.

PIC-COLLAGES

What is AAC?

AAC stands for augmentative and alternative communication. It refers to tools and strategies that can enhance speech or provide a completely different means of communication. AAC can be aided (i.e., using a tool or unaided (i.e., no tool needed), such as sign language or gestures. The truth is we all use some AAC. We text, type, write and use gestures. Additional tools, such as communication devices, books or apps, can provide a means of communication for individuals who are unable to speak or for whom speech is not always their primary mode.

AAC

©theaaccoach

Heritage House School Newsletter

April 2025



Alice Bennett
Speech and Language
Therapist

At Heritage House School, learning environments support learners to use a range of AAC.

Here are a few examples:

Displaying photos with resources supports learners who use objects to communicate



Aided Language Displays are located near learning activities, such as this reading/phonics area and also near appropriate resources



We also set-up our learning environments with visual supports to help learners to understand – such as, visual timetables, red/green boards, now/next boards, instructions, and daily information. In the Discoverers and Young People phases, we also use visual job rotas:

This is a display of learner photos alongside object cues, that learners can use to request a regulating item.





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Speech and Language
Therapist

2. The goal of AAC is for learners to be independent communicators

Here are learners saying what they want, to whoever they want, whenever they want... they are independent communicators:





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Speech and Language
Therapist

3. The importance of Core Vocabulary – imagine choosing one of the two Aided Language Displays (ALDs) below to communicate at a café, which would you prefer to use?

This one only includes items (fringe ‘topic’ vocabulary) and so can only be used to order (request).



This one includes lots of different words (core vocabulary and fringe vocabulary) and so can be used for lots of different reasons.

You can order, request different sizes, ask questions, ask someone else what they would like, clarify what you don’t want, let the server know if they got the order right or wrong, negotiate, ask for help, say thank you, self-advocate that you have had enough, and *so much more!*



Communication Functions!

The Many Reasons We Communicate!

Instruct	Disagree	Describe	Greet
Pretend	Comment	Tell a story	Protest
Remind	Gossip	Agree	Request
Compliment		Argue	Negotiate
Tell on someone			Express opinions
Share information			Answer questions
Get attention			Express a feeling
Share an idea	Argue	Direct	Tell secrets
Discuss an interest			Share physical needs
Get help	Whine	joke	Make choices
Ask questions	Clarify	Flirt	Complain
			Etc!

Each helps us build relationship and share ourselves with the world.




<h3>Core Words</h3> <p>Approximately 80% of the words we use each day</p> <p>Words used with frequency and across multiple contexts</p> <p>E.g., "go," "you," "can," "no"</p> 	<h3>Fringe Words</h3> <p>Approximately 20% of the words we use each day</p> <p>Words used with decreased frequency that are usually context specific</p> <p>E.g., "pointing," "robot," "popcorn," "boat"</p>
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The Goal of AAC:

Autonomous Communication

"Being able to say what I want to say, to whoever I want to say it to, whenever I want to say it, however I choose to say it."

-Gayle Porter
Speech-Language Pathologist
Developer of POCOD



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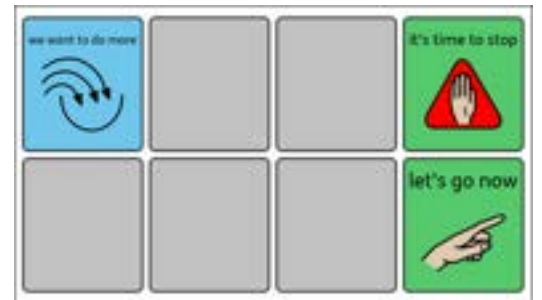


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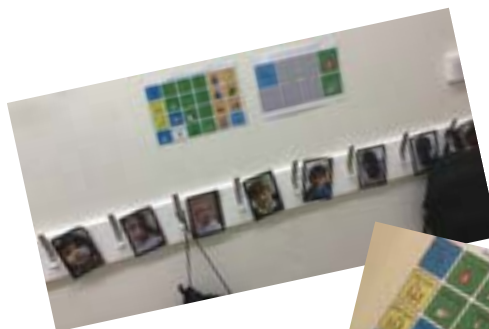
In school there are a range of ALDs. Some learners are learning to use ALDs with core vocabulary across a lot of different situations:



Gradually increasing the core vocabulary over time:



Some learners are learning to use ALDs containing core vocabulary and fringe vocabulary for a range of topics. Below are some examples for transitions, managing belongings, and phonics:





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Speech and Language
Therapist

4. Modelling Without Expectation – learning to use AAC is learning a language, so learners need to see adults using AAC around them in natural situations, without expecting them to copy – if they are given time, they are more likely to use it themselves.

Staff model without expectation across a range of situations:



MODELLING :
Use AAC to
Teach AAC

During our training, the staff watched a video explaining how to Model Without Expectation – on YouTube search for “The AAC Coach modelling without expectation” OR use this QR code:





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Speech and Language
Therapist

Suggestions for using AAC at home

Sarah Reilly has lots of advice on her social media platform- 'A Grain of SALT'.



Suggestions for using AAC at home

Smartbox is an AAC company – they suggest these tips

Smartbox also has some aided language displays on their website -

<https://hub.thinksmartbox.com/topic/resources-super-core/>



Scroll to the bottom of the page and select 'Super Core Learning – English (UK)'. Open the zip file.

Choose the PDF files that have 'widgit' in the title – these are the ones we use in school.



Choose either the ALDs with 12 symbols or 20 symbols per page.

Choose the ALDs that are most meaningful for your child and your family.





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Grid for iPad

At Heritage House School, we also use a communication app, called Grid for iPad.

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, Smartbox are offering 50% off Grid for iPad between 1-11 April 2025 – the special offer price is £149.99

Grid for iPad on the AppStore:
<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/grid-for-ipad-vpp/id1339153708>

Or, use this QR code:





In other news...

Police Community Support Officers Emma Dyer and Jasmine Allport visited YP2, Maple, Chestnut, Buttercup and Foxglove classes.

We all learnt that we dial 999 if we need the police, fire brigade, ambulance or coast guard.

We learnt what police officers do and how they can help us.

They taught us how to stay safe when we are out and they have promised to come back soon!



PCSO Emma was particularly impressed with all our questions and engagement with them.



Hold the date!

Preparations are well underway for the Schools Carnival 2025

The date is **Saturday 14th June 2025**
The parade is in the morning followed by lots of fun in the park.

More details to follow

We hope you can all join us for a fantastic family fun day!





In other news...

As part of our learning journey at HH we encourage our learners to become independent. Learning independence takes many different forms- from self-care to increasing autonomy in their day to day activities.

This term a learner was given the role of Register Monitor for the whole building, taking on the responsibility of collecting the registers from all the classes, using the key fob to gain access to various parts of the school and returning the registers in a timely manner to assist with logging attendance.

George, although at first unsure, rose to this new responsibility and did a fantastic job. It became a highlight of the morning to hear George greeting each class as he efficiently moved through the school to complete his very important job.

George received a platinum certificate in recognition of his sterling work from Jacqueline, Head Teacher

He has now passed on the mantle to Zac, who is keeping up the high standards set by George.



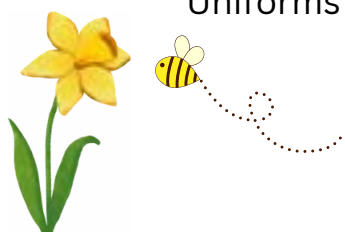
School Uniform



School uniform has been mandatory since January 2022. The uniform consists of a green sweatshirt/cardigan with items such as a polo shirt optional.

Please ensure your child wears the school uniform each day.

Uniforms can be purchased from: [PMG Schoolwear](https://www.pmg-schoolwear.co.uk) online or instore.





In other news...

Linking Project with Brushwood School



As part of our personal, social and emotional education, learners in Buttercup class will be visiting Brushwood Junior School to meet with their peers as part of the School Linking Project.

This project connects schools to develop positive, cohesive ethos by helping learners explore identity, celebrate diversity, champion equality and promote community.

This initial visit focused on getting to know each other, exploring things we have in common and things we can do together.

Brushwood were wonderful hosts and Buttercup Class had a wonderful time connecting with peers and making new friends.



We can't wait to welcome them for a visit to Heritage House next term.



In other news...

Online Safety and the Joy of Play

The recent workshops on this theme covered topics such as the use of social media, the role of play and parental guidance.

Thank you to all parents who attended the workshop right across the phases.

I know from the many positive comments that you found the information beneficial.

We are all concerned about how invasive social media can be and how accessible it can be for learners which can increase their vulnerability.

If you feel you might benefit from future support, please do get in touch via email office@heritagehouse.bucks.sch.uk or phone 01494 771445

We asked parents for their feedback on this workshop and what actions they may consider taking to support their child at home, learners have been anonymised:

'more one-on-one time at home in his quiet space, we also bought a mini massager after seeing how much he liked this at school'

'I found the session rewarding'

'more and stop symbols at home, messy play with edible items'

'enjoyed learning about the soundboards'

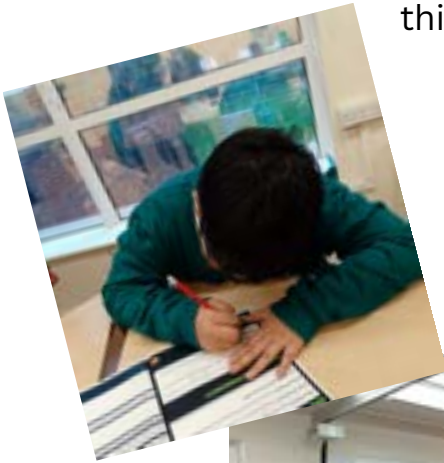
'activities such as paint in bags to mix colours, my daughter doesn't like getting too messy so this will help'



Careers and Aspirations

ASDA Heroes Scheme

The Young People phase has continued to work with ASDA on the ASDA Heroes Scheme. We have been learning about reusing, recycling and sustainability. Since being a part of this scheme all classes across the school are now composting fruit/snack waste and adding this to a compost bin. Once this has become compost this will be reused in the garden area at school to continue to grow food.



We have planted tomato, strawberry and basil seeds and have been exploring how we need to care for these as they grow. Once these have grown we will harvest the fruits/leaves and use these in our food tech lessons to make some delicious plates to donate to the local community.

As part of this project we have conducted research with local organisations and produced a presentation detailing all that we have done and wish to do, we will be presenting this in the coming weeks following sending out invitations to members of the school community.





Sarka Viehoff
PE Coach

Active In The Community Inclusive Cycling sessions are back!

Running in Aylesbury and Marlow, these sessions provide opportunities for individuals with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities to enjoy the benefits of cycling. The programme uses adaptive cycles such as hand cycles, tricycles, wheelchair carriers and tandems, ensuring everyone, regardless of age or ability, can experience the joy of cycling, alongside family and friends.

Marlow Sessions: Saturdays 12:30pm - 1:30pm at the Little Marlow Athletics Track
Aylesbury sessions: Sundays 11am - 1pm at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium Track

Visit the website link below to find out more or book your space:
<https://www.activeinthecommunity.org.uk/inclusive-cycling/>

The flyer features a QR code in the top left corner. The main image shows the entrance to Stoke Mandeville Stadium with an 'AITC' sign. Below this are three circular inset photos: a person in a wheelchair on a cycle, a person on a hand cycle, and a group of bicycles. A green circular badge on the left says '£5 per session PAYG'. The title 'Aylesbury Inclusive Cycling' is in large green font. Below it, text describes the range of adapted cycles. The session details are: 'Aylesbury sessions run every Sunday, 11am-1pm at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, HP21 9PP.' At the bottom, it says 'To find out more and book a space, please visit:' followed by the website link and a QR code. The contact email 'Amelia.Evens@aitc.org.uk' is at the very bottom.

The flyer features a QR code in the top left corner. The main image shows a group of people on various adaptive bicycles on a grassy field with an 'AITC' sign. Below this are three circular inset photos: a person on a hand cycle, a person on a tricycle, and a person on a tandem. A green circular badge on the left says '£5 per session PAYG'. The title 'Marlow Inclusive Cycling' is in large green font. Below it, text describes the range of adapted cycles. The session details are: 'Marlow sessions run every Saturday, 12:30-2:30pm at Little Marlow Athletics Track, SL7 3RS.' At the bottom, it says 'To find out more and book a space, please visit:' followed by the website link and a QR code. The contact email 'Katie.Youngman@aitc.org.uk' is at the very bottom.



Information

Reminders

Heating Food

Please note the Handling Food Safety guidelines prohibit us from re-heating food in school.

Learner Absences

Should your child be absent from school on any day, you must inform the school office on the first day of absence as early as possible, as well as Transport. Transport are not obligated to pass messages to the school.

Diarrhoea/Vomiting

Following the Health Protection Agency advice, if your child is sick with diarrhoea and/or vomiting, please keep them at home for at least 48 hours following the last bout of either. They will not be able to swim for two weeks following sickness.

School Uniform

Please could you ensure all of your child's uniform, swimming clothes and personal items are clearly labelled with your child's name. Uniform is mandatory - school sweatshirt only. If your child needs them, please also send in clearly labelled spare clothing along with any other personal care items.

Punctuality

School opens at 8:50am, please note that arrivals any time after 9am are recorded as late.

Appointments

When possible, medical appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours. If your child will be absent due to a medical appointment, you must inform the office and provide a copy of the letter/screenshot of appointment confirmation for our records.

Parking

Reminder of arrangements for the mornings and at the end of the day, to continue to encourage a low arousal start to the day, to keep everybody safe and the traffic flowing, we would ask that parents/carers arrive on site for 8.50am and 2.40pm. We are mindful that traffic builds up from 2pm at each site and request you *do not* arrive at this early time.