



Newsletter 2



Aylesbury High School

October 2016

Staffing news by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

We are saying farewell this week to two members of staff.

Mr Simpson has been our Network Manager since 2013 and during that time has overseen major improvements to both the hardware and the way that we use IT in the classroom and for administration. IT support requires endless patience when dealing with 1500 users and also the ability to keep up with developments in an ever-changing environment; Mr Simpson has done a brilliant job in his time here and he leaves with our warmest thanks to take up a job in a larger group of schools.

Mrs Cornwell started with us in 2010 as Data Manager and has been responsible for collecting, processing and communicating thousands if not millions of items of data, and keeping our school data up to date. Data systems have, of course, evolved over the years, and Mrs Cornwell has managed to reform our systems to meet the changing requirements, and ensure that all of the types of 'customer', including the government, local authority, staff, students and parents, receive the right data at the right time – not an easy task! She hangs up her mouse to travel as part of a well-earned retirement.

Our new Data Manager, Mrs Bonilha, has started this week and is quickly getting to grips with data used in the world of education, having come from the world of data analysis. Expect to receive communications such as reports and data sheets from her in the not-too-distant future.

Term dates 2017-18

We are just about to finalise the term dates for 2017-18 and they will be on the website by 1 November, if not earlier. Apologies for the delay but we are having to co-ordinate our dates with other schools which has taken a little longer than expected.

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A big welcome to Billie Snakespeare (Billie as she is a she) who has joined the Biology Department.

Aylesbury Vale Teaching Partnership

by Miss Brigden, Assistant Headteacher

It is an exciting year ahead for AHS as we embark on launching the AVTP, which is the only teaching school for the area.

Teaching Schools have been set up by the government over the last few years to be a central part of a 'school-led improvement system', ie the government are no longer dictating so much to schools but, instead, asking the strongest schools to take the lead on attracting high quality people into teaching, helping all teachers to be the best they can be and support teachers in developing leadership skills. This is mainly done through three areas of focus:

- developing high quality Initial Teacher Training provision across the partnership schools
- providing effective professional development opportunities for teaching and support staff at all stages of their careers
- providing school-to-school support for identified areas of need across the partnership schools.

Whilst a Teaching School's main job is to develop teachers, it must always have, at its heart, the needs of the students. We firmly believe that the development of a teaching school in the Aylesbury Vale area will benefit all students.

Further news about AVTP will be published during the course of the year.



Raising funds to raise standards

by Mrs Bennett, Development Director

A big thank you to parents who have chosen to donate to our 'Girls of S17' and General Funds this half term. A dozen families have raised a fantastic £11,000 in cash and pledges to the school, towards our £35,000 target for this year.

S17 is the final science laboratory to refurbish following last year's transformation of the rest of the labs. Students of all ages use this 57 year-old lab daily, but its condition and facilities compared to the refurbished laboratories leaves it as the very poor relation.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is an area which is growing in prominence for women. We want to provide inspirational STEM teaching and learning, appropriate to the 21st century. Around 40% of our Sixth Form go on to study STEM-related courses after AHS.

Giving your daughters a real love of learning sciences is key to inspiring the future molecular biologists, neuroscientists and chemical engineers of tomorrow, as well as those who are going in non-scientific directions. It is vital that their learning environment is modern and suitable for 21st century science.

As an academy, we receive government funding for the day-to-day operations of the school; however the funds we receive do not stretch to covering the costs involved in improving our facilities so that's where we need your help.

Please [join us now](#) in securing your daughter's success by funding their future, if you haven't already done so. Even a small donation of £5 per month will generate £525 over 7 years with Gift Aid; and Higher Rate taxpayers can claim back the basic rate of tax on donations, meaning that £525 gift will cost only £336.

Student leadership

by Mrs Wilkes, Assistant Headteacher

At AHS we want to put student voice at the heart of learning and school life and to engage students by giving them control over aspects of their learning. Our Student Voice meetings are led by the Head Girl with each form sending a representative to the meetings. The meetings will link with the core work of the school and keep communication channels open between students, teachers and governors. We will have a three week cycle each half term where the first week sees the release of the agenda and discussion in form time, the meetings will take place in the second week and the minutes will be released in the third week with dissemination of information in form time.

The Student Voice meetings are just one example of our girls taking on leadership roles in school. The Cabinet is also working on its school improvement target to get AHS students debating more and they have presented this in assemblies this week. Our Subject Ambassadors are supporting their subject areas with a number of clubs and activities.

Our Student Ambassadors have recently received training from MIND to act as mentors. Finally, our House Captains are currently planning their second assemblies of the year and are going to use this to tie in with the Student Voice agenda.

It is incredible to see what our girls can achieve for the benefit of their peers and this is only 7 weeks into the year! We look forward to updating you about further events that the girls are leading.

Introducing Spectrum

by The Student Ambassadors

Spectrum is a new initiative at AHS; it aims to raise awareness and promote debate around issues related to the LGBT+ community. The group led by two of our Student Ambassadors, plus Mrs Hamnett and Mr Annat, is for students in Years 9 to 13 on a fortnightly basis. So far we have discussed personal identity and LGBT+ terminology.

If you would like further information, you may find <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/> helpful.

Interested in teaching...?

by Miss Brigden, Assistant Headteacher

AHS (in collaboration with the ASTRA SCITT) is hosting an Initial Teacher Training open event here on **Monday 7 November 13:00 – 15:00**.

If you or someone you know may have thoughts about a teaching career, or are just curious to find out more, please email abrigden@ahs.bucks.sch.uk to register your interest in attending this event.



University applications 2017

by Mr Ochiltree, Head of Sixth Form

Our Year 13 students are well advanced in their preparations for life after AHS. Quite apart from all the hard work that they are doing to prepare for their A Level exams, they are also submitting applications for the next stage of their lives. At the time of writing, over 50 students have submitted applications to UCAS, often for the most competitive courses and highly-regarded institutions, and it has been a pleasure to read all their applications and to be reminded what extraordinary students we have.

Most of our Sixth Form students will apply to Higher Education, and this year we have enabled them to use a new resource called Unifrog, which helps them gather information about the different courses that are most appropriate for them, supports them as they draft their personal statements and better allows their reference writers to see the full range of their experience and aspirations. We're delighted that Unifrog has been so useful, and have already built a reputation with the provider as one of their most engaged clients.

Unifrog also allows us to better support those students for whom Higher Education is not their preferred route, as it connects them to the world of apprenticeships and training in a way that we have never been able to do before.



100 Pioneers

by Kirsty Peacock, History Ambassador

As part of the centenary celebrations of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, Aylesbury High School is going to take part in a campaign to pay tribute to 100 pioneers of the suffragette and suffragist movements, coordinated by Lesley Clarke OBE in her role as national chairman of the Women's Local Government Society. This act allowed women of property who were over 30 to vote, as well as abolishing property qualifications for men, and so was the first step towards greater political and gender equality, as it allowed millions of women to vote for the first time as well as acting as a trigger for further social change. However, as this may not have occurred without the determined and resilient campaigning efforts of the suffragists and suffragettes, it is vitally important that we mark their efforts with a series of lasting memorials, with particular emphasis placed on those individuals who are not widely known. Moreover, the primary aim of the project is to ensure that anyone recognised by the Women's Local Government Society as a pioneer will have their actions recognised and appreciated, by having their story included in a collection of 100 stories and by being given a plaque.

In order to carry out this campaign, we ask that anyone with stories of local suffragists and suffragettes get in contact with the school by sharing them, preferably through the email address historyambassadors@ahs.bucks.sch.uk. This could be anyone, male or female, who was involved in activities such as canvassing, letter writing and even marching as they still contributed to the rising tide of pressure placed upon the government for female voting rights, something that we take for granted in 21st century Britain. Regardless of how great or small their contribution to the cause was, we would love to hear your stories.

Governor update

by Mr Chaudhry, Chair of Governors

I am delighted to have been re-appointed as Chair of Governors for Aylesbury High School, in what is my daughter's final year at AHS. It's certainly been a busy start to the academic year and having just completed our first set of Committee meetings, it is clear that we have a challenging but productive academic year ahead of us.

I am pleased that James Chandler (parent), Kate Weir (parent) and Cindy Bull (co-opted) have agreed to take on the Chair roles for the 3 sub-committees (Resources, Personnel and Teaching & Learning respectively) with Jane Blagg re-appointed as the Vice Chair of Governors. The Full Governing Body (FGB) is a mix of parent, staff, community and co-opted Governors and we are responsible for the overall strategic direction and performance of the school. We also monitor progress against the School Improvement Plan and review and update school policies. Details of the 2016-17 Full Governing Body including their roles, Committee membership, Terms of Reference and minutes will shortly be available on the Governor page of the school website.

At the start of the year I was pleased to be invited to attend the GCSE and A Level certificate evenings and meet with the students and proud parents, as well as hear from the form tutors and former students. Whilst academic results are an important part of school life, it was clear from the tutors and students that AHS has provided much more.

As part of our wider school engagement we intend to be regular contributors to the Parents' & Students' Newsletters and Highlights Magazines updating you on our work. We also plan on attending and supporting school events and look forward to discussing the challenges and opportunities the school faces. We would particularly welcome your views and comments on how we can further improve the school for your daughters.

www.ahs.bucks.sch.uk/about-the-school/governors/

AHS facilities for hire

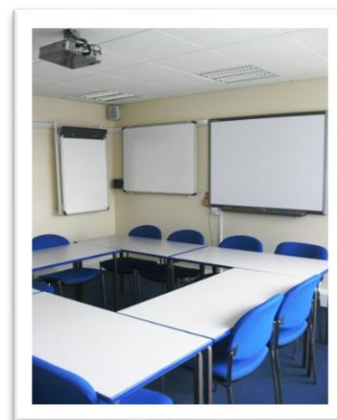
by Mrs Knox, Facilities Administrator

The School has a number of rooms and spaces that are available for hire after school and at weekends. We have two halls, which can be used for a variety of productions including plays and musicals, as well as lectures and quizzes.

Our sports facilities are very popular; our Sports Hall can accommodate a range of sports including; basketball, badminton, volleyball, netball, five-a-side football and hockey. Outside there are 4 netball and 5 tennis courts, all floodlit. These are ideal for training and tournaments. We also have a Gym that is perfect for martial arts and fitness classes such as pilates and yoga.

There are a number of smaller rooms that are suitable for groups of 15 to 32 people that could be used for meetings, seminars, tutorials and discussion groups. All rooms have whiteboards, data projectors and guest Wi-Fi available on request.

For more information on hiring charges or to obtain a booking form and a copy of our terms and conditions, please call Pam Knox on 01296 388211 or send an e-mail to pknox@ahs.bucks.sch.uk.



Curriculum change

by Dr Holmes, Curriculum Manger for English

It continues to be a busy time for staff at AHS as we are roughly half way through a significant programme of curriculum change for both Key Stages 4 and 5. In the summer, students sat reformed AS examinations in Art, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English, History, Physics and Psychology. Summer 2017 will bring new examinations for all remaining subjects with the exception of Mathematics and Politics which will follow in the 2018 examination season.

New specifications are also in place for 2-year A Level courses and students will sit reformed examinations for the first time in summer 2017 for courses that have already been reformed. The changes vary across subjects from small content amendments to new texts or periods of history being studied for the first time.

In addition to A Level reforms, we are also preparing students for new GCSE courses including the change to 9 - 1 grades. Year 11 students will receive the numbered grades this coming summer for Mathematics and English, whereas the current Year 10 will gain 9 - 1 grades in all subjects with the exceptions of Business Studies, Product Design and Textiles who will be a year later.

The government aims to ensure that the new GCSE and A Level reforms *'prepare students better for further and higher education, and employment...with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement'*.

It is important that students and their parents realise that the new GCSEs have more grades. There is more differentiation in the reformed qualifications, as there are three top grades (7, 8 and 9), compared to two in the unreformed qualifications (A and A*), so you would expect that fewer students will get a grade 9 than previously achieved an A*.

In most subjects, students will no longer be required to complete

Controlled Assessment pieces as part of their GCSE or A Level courses.

Our work does not end here, as changes in KS4, and in KS2 for our primary colleagues, dictate changes to the KS3 curriculum to ensure that transition between key stages is seamless.

Despite all the hard work in creating new programmes of study, grading systems and examination preparation material, positives are to be gained:

- increased cohesion and stronger links between key stages
- a more rigorous and thorough curriculum
- better preparation for university courses
- greater freedom at KS3 and choice of curriculum and assessment
- refreshing to teach new material
- more freedom to focus on the quality of teaching and learning
- stronger teamwork and collaborative working.

E-Safety advice for parents

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/



Home Get Advice Concerned about your child? How to get help Who are we? Support tools

Get Advice

Planning to talk to your child about sex, relationships and their lives online can be tricky. Find lots of advice about these complex areas here.

Newsletter style...

As you may have gathered, we are experimenting with different styles for the newsletter to see which you prefer: do give us any feedback by e-mailing Mrs Hamnett nhamnett@ahs.bucks.sch.uk

I would like advice on.

