



Newsletter 8



Aylesbury High School

June 2017

Transitions ...

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

Yesterday saw a lot of people breathing a sigh of relief at the end of the public exam season. For many, it's now just a case of patiently waiting until August to see how the examiners think they have performed.

Both Year 11 and Year 13 celebrate the end of their exams with a Ball; Year 11's is tonight while Year 13 still have a week or so to plan their outfits.

However, on the one-out, one-in principle, the school has been busy this week welcoming next year's Year 12 in for their Induction Day, while next week will see 180 Year 6 students in school for two days to get them acclimatised to AHS and ready for September.

It's always nice to see students complete their time here after up to seven years with us, but it's also sad to see them go. Our best wishes to both departing students and their parents - we will miss you - and thank you for everything you have contributed to the AHS community over the years.

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Outward Bound: Wales

by Mr Rob Sharpe, Esri



Esri UK has been working with Outward Bound for the past 3 years to enable students from schools local to our offices in Aylesbury, Cambridge and Edinburgh to participate in their world leading courses. Esri UK strongly believes the challenges Outward Bound presents young people can be life changing; helping young people realise they can achieve things they never thought possible. We are proud to support AHS and all staff who have acted as ambassadors on the weeks away and have come back full of enthusiasm for the students they have shared the week with and share stories of how they have all developed. We look forward to supporting AHS on Outward Bound courses in 2018; they make a positive difference to all involved.

School Funding - what's happening?

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

The General Election brought with it a couple of months of limbo for decisions on school funding. However, many commentators have pointed out how all parties were having to engage with the funding crisis because of the huge pressure that schools and parents had applied in the preceding months. Thank you to everyone who contacted their MP in response to our request - your support is much appreciated and you may be interested in a [survey](#) on how the issue affected voting patterns.

There was a commitment in last week's Queen's Speech to implement the National Funding Formula but no mention of timescale, so we are unsure whether it can be in place in 2018, as was the intention prior to the election. We will update everyone on any progress with the NFF as and when we know any more.

AHS D of E goes from strength to strength

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

While the Expedition is in some ways the most obvious part of the Award (especially if you've seen how many students trek around the Chilterns each weekend), the other three sections are just as worthwhile and demanding.

Our students, in 2016/17, completed:

- 3848 hours of volunteering (equivalent to around 2 years of full-time work)
- 3848 hours of learning a skill
- 3913 hours of physical activity

Our Awards Achieved statistics are quite remarkable - it's not a competition with other Bucks schools, but it is a sign of the tireless commitment of the staff volunteers and the dedication of the students that we have more students achieving Awards (110 Bronze, 45 Silver and 22 Gold) than any other Bucks schools (and we have a suspicion that we do very well across the whole South East Region).

The D of E scheme is now just over sixty years old and its origins are very closely tied to Aberdyfi and the Outward Bound movement, which our students know very well from their Year 8 Personal Development week. It's a scheme which can be found in 141 countries, with AHS being one of 2601 Licensed Organisations in the UK.

A special thank you to Mr Torpey, Mr Marshall and everyone else who volunteers their time so generously throughout the year.

GCSE Information

by Mrs Hamnett, Deputy Headteacher

Is your daughter studying for GCSEs, now or in the future? If so, you might be interested to read a [GCSE Parent Factsheet](#) from the Department for Education regarding the change to GCSEs in England.

ICT Development for 2017/18 and beyond

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

We have been consulting widely over the past six months or so on how we should develop our use of ICT, particularly in the classroom.

Ironically, we have also had some technical issues over the past month which reminds us that we must make sure that our infrastructure is strong enough to cope with whatever demands we place upon it, as ICT becomes ever more mission-critical. For example, we are sourcing a second internet line into school at the moment so that a break in service from one provider (which we have had recently) does not bring everything in school to a halt.

We believe we have two choices - carry on much as we are at the moment, with an evolutionary approach to moving our ICT forward, or 'go for it' and have a revolutionary approach.

We are very conscious of the way ICT permeates almost every aspect of our lives now, and that our students will be spending their lives in an ever-more connected world, so we have a clear duty to equip them with both the technical and critical thinking skills to navigate technology in a safe and efficient manner.

We are therefore going to focus significant time and effort on transforming our use of ICT, particularly in the classroom, to meet this aim:

Between 2017 and 2020, AHS will transform its ways of working so that we are a centre for innovative and exciting ICT-based learning.

Our present use of ICT in the classroom, and visits we have made to other schools, have convinced us that lessons which exploit the power of ICT can make learning easier, make the curriculum more transparent

and greatly improve communications. Clearly there are plenty of lessons when ICT is neither appropriate nor useful, so there is no expectation of using ICT all of the time. Access to technology is key to this, and it is our intention that students will, over the next couple of years, move towards having their own device which they bring to lessons every day (this is known as a 1-1 policy: 1 student to 1 device).

We haven't decided precisely what technology to adopt, but it is most likely to be Chromebooks, which support our present, very successful, use of G Suite for Education (so Google-based). We will be inviting parents, over the next two years, to purchase a device which their daughter will be able to bring to lessons and use at home. The probable cost of this will be around £200 although we will make arrangements for those on Pupil Premium and anyone who doesn't wish to purchase a device.

Next term is devoted to consulting with students and parents, and training staff not only to use the technology but also to adapt their teaching to make the best use of the power of ICT - there is little point in using ICT if it's just to do the same things as pen and paper would achieve; it's more about learning in ways that only ICT can provide.

So it's going to be a busy and exciting journey - we look forward to engaging with students and parents to make sure that the transformation works for everyone.

As a school, we already use ICT in more ways than most, as parents may be aware, but we are reviewing some of our ICT systems (particularly SchoolComms and ParentPay) to see if they are still meeting our needs. If we decide to change (and we need to decide on some of this very soon) we will, of course, let you know what is happening well in advance.

PE Teamwear by Mrs Arber, Curriculum Manager PE

Following feedback from students and parents, the PE department has been investigating some potential new team-wear for girls who represent the school in our sports teams. At the moment, our competitive students play in a variety of kits; we are aiming to have a common design that runs across the range of sports we compete in, whilst offering a range of products to suit different teams. We are currently speaking to the students about the final specification and design and we are interested in parent views too. We plan to hold a meeting in school at 3.45pm on Thursday 6 July for any parents that are keen to find out more. We will be able to show you images of the products and designs we are considering. If you are interested in attending this meeting, please email Mrs Lee (llee@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) by 9am on Wednesday 5 July and we will get back to you with further details.



Fire Risk! by Mr Marshall, Support Staff Director

In the light of recent tragic events, we thought it would be re-assuring to parents to explain how we manage the risk of fire in the school.

- On becoming an Academy, we completely replaced and upgraded our fire alarm system, covering roof voids and storage areas as well as all the classrooms and corridors in an integrated system linked to an alarm monitoring station (and the system is checked and serviced annually). Therefore, if a fire does break out the alarm is sounded throughout the school before the fire has a chance to take hold and the fire brigade is alerted within 3 minutes if it is not confirmed as a false alarm by site staff.
- All staff are trained on arrival and annually in fire prevention and emergency response actions.
- All staff and students are drilled in evacuation procedures on a termly basis. The fire drill is monitored and reviewed for speed of evacuation (typically all persons are out of all buildings within 2 minutes of the alarm) and for roll call effectiveness.
- The school employs a professional company to regularly update and review our fire risk assessment, which ensures we maintain our emergency exits, our smoke barriers, our emergency signage and our fire points, as well as alerting us to any changes in legislation or best practice.



Fire is a real danger which cannot be totally eliminated, but we are confident that our systems and procedures ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that if a fire does occur it is detected quickly and everyone is evacuated safely.

Chair of Governors Update by Arfan Chaudhry, Chair of Governors

The Governing Body has a busy run up to the end of another academic year. Earlier this month the Senior Leadership Team and a number of Governors spent a morning considering the key issues that will be reflected in our School Improvement Plan for academic year 17/18 and our longer term plans. As this work is refined the Headteacher and I will look to keep you informed of our key priorities and challenges.

In addition to this term's Resources, Personnel and Teaching & Learning committees, we also hosted an informal get together with the AGS Leadership Team and Governing Body. It's clear that we have a number of similar challenges and opportunities to work more closely. As part of our wider school engagement, the Governing Body also takes the opportunity to attend Consultation Evenings and meet with staff and parents. I took the opportunity to attend the Year 8 Consultation Evening and had a number of useful conversations. We aim to ensure that we have at least one Governor at each Consultation Evening, so please feel free to come and have a chat – we have AHS ID badges and Governor Lanyards.

As we look forward to the rest of this academic year, our last Full Governing Body committee meeting on 3 July, will include the Governing Body spending the whole day together at school. We will take the opportunity to observe lessons, meet the Support and Teaching staff and most importantly, take the opportunity to meet the students. In addition, I will be at the Year 7 Presentation Morning and will give the 'Vote of Thanks' as well as handing out certificates and prizes, so again please feel free to come and have a chat.

Members of the Governing Body will also be attending the Midsummer Music, Movements and Muses event, meeting with the newly appointed teaching staff, supporting the Year 6 Parent Information Evening and the planned Open Evening so please don't hesitate to come and chat. As for the start of the next academic year - I expect to have vacancies for 2-3 Parent Governors and a formal notification will go out in the September Newsletter. If you are interested in becoming an AHS Governor and have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the Governing Body.

Summer building work at AHS

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

The better weather is the time when we can carry out major repairs and improvements to our site, and visitors to the school recently will have seen that much of the front of the school has scaffolding around it, to enable much-needed work to be carried out on the flat roofs above the staffroom, gym, Main Hall and Dining Room.

This project should be completed in early September and was partly funded by the school and partly by a successful application for a government grant open to academies.



At the same time, work has started on replacing our main block boilers, also paid for through a successful bid plus school money.

One of the three boilers failed 18 months ago and was declared irreparable. They date back to 1988, so we have limped through the winter hoping the other two would be able to cope with the demand – fortunately, the 2015 refurbishment of the Main Hall and Dining Room windows, and the science block, has meant that they weren't having to work quite so hard as previous years due to improved insulation.

Even when this work is completed (costing around £500,000), we have a long to-do list (as you would expect with any site our size) and we will continue to maintain it to the highest-possible standard. Even with the very difficult budget position, we believe that it is a false economy to neglect the fabric of the buildings, and providing a comfortable and safe environment will always be a priority.

Exciting New Development Initiatives Ahead!

by Mrs Pexton, Development Director

Elements Fundraising Campaign

First of all thank you to all those who have supported our Elements Fundraising Campaign for the refurbishment of S17. **There is still time to sponsor an element square on our AHS Periodic Table, so please support us if you can <http://www.ahs.bucks.sch.uk/about-the-school/in-our-element-sponsor-a-square/>.**

We are currently drawing up a tender for the S17 work and are hopeful that it can be completed during the forthcoming academic year – watch this space for more details.

Company Support

Over the past month, we have been approaching businesses to support our fundraising campaigns and there has been an excellent local response, as well as the discovery of some AHS alumnae too! **If you know a company that would like to support our fundraising, please email me at apexton@ahs.bucks.sch.uk.**



Alumnae

We have also been working further on building our Alumnae base and finding out more about the interesting and exciting career paths of our 'Old Girls'. Over the course of the next academic year, we will be strengthening these links further and arranging alumnae reunions and events – so watch this space for more news! **Contact me if you would like to join our AHS Alumnae.**

Development Fundraising

Our development and fundraising work is crucial to AHS, as we seek to fund important elements of school life including projects which enhance academic studies, extra-curricular activities and improvements to our core student facilities.

We are one of the lowest-funded state secondary schools in England and so cannot fund significant improvements from our school revenue budget alone – *this is why we need your support so much.*

We will be sending out more information on our new fundraising initiatives shortly so thank you in advance for your support.





For more info
contact Emma
the-mes@outlook.com
07478 756250

Music Theory Classes

Beginners 4:30-5:10
Intermediate 5:15-5:55
Advanced 6:00-7:00




Tuesdays in the Needlework Room at Queens Park Centre