



Newsletter 6



Aylesbury High School

March 2017

Marching on...

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

Bits and Bytes

We have been having a good look at our ICT set-up over the past month or two, partly examining our infrastructure to see how we want to develop it but also, and more importantly, looking at the role of ICT in the classroom to enhance learning. Our use of ICT has been transformed over the past few years, with the various Google tools being used widely and with a variety of desktop computers, iPads and Chromebooks available for use, but there is definitely more we can do to learn effectively, and to collaborate in a 21st Century way.

(Ironically, while looking to be more ICT dependent, we haven't had a totally reliable service in the last fortnight, due mainly to a hungry squirrel, some network maintenance that went wrong, and an Aylesbury-wide loss of service from our broadband provider for some hours)

The initial findings of our research are suggesting that, while it would be advantageous in some ways to just use one of the 'Big Three' software/hardware providers, we do need to keep a mixed economy in terms of Microsoft and Google – each has its own advantages at the moment (Microsoft is far ahead for our serious number crunching, for preparing publications [like this one] and for doing more sophisticated presentations, while Google is great for classes to access course materials, to communicate with each other and to work together in and out of class). iPads and Apple products are rather niche but, for specific purposes, still offer functions that their rivals do not (yet), so we may need to keep some iPads for the foreseeable future, but they won't be the general workhorses.

In terms of equipment, we are now looking seriously at students bringing their own device in some shape or form, and will be spending time next term learning from other schools who have already moved in that direction.

So we have no decisions yet, but we are encouraged that students, staff and parents have expressed support for really embedding smarter ways of working that both help teaching and learning today and also equip our students for the working environment that they will be joining all too soon.

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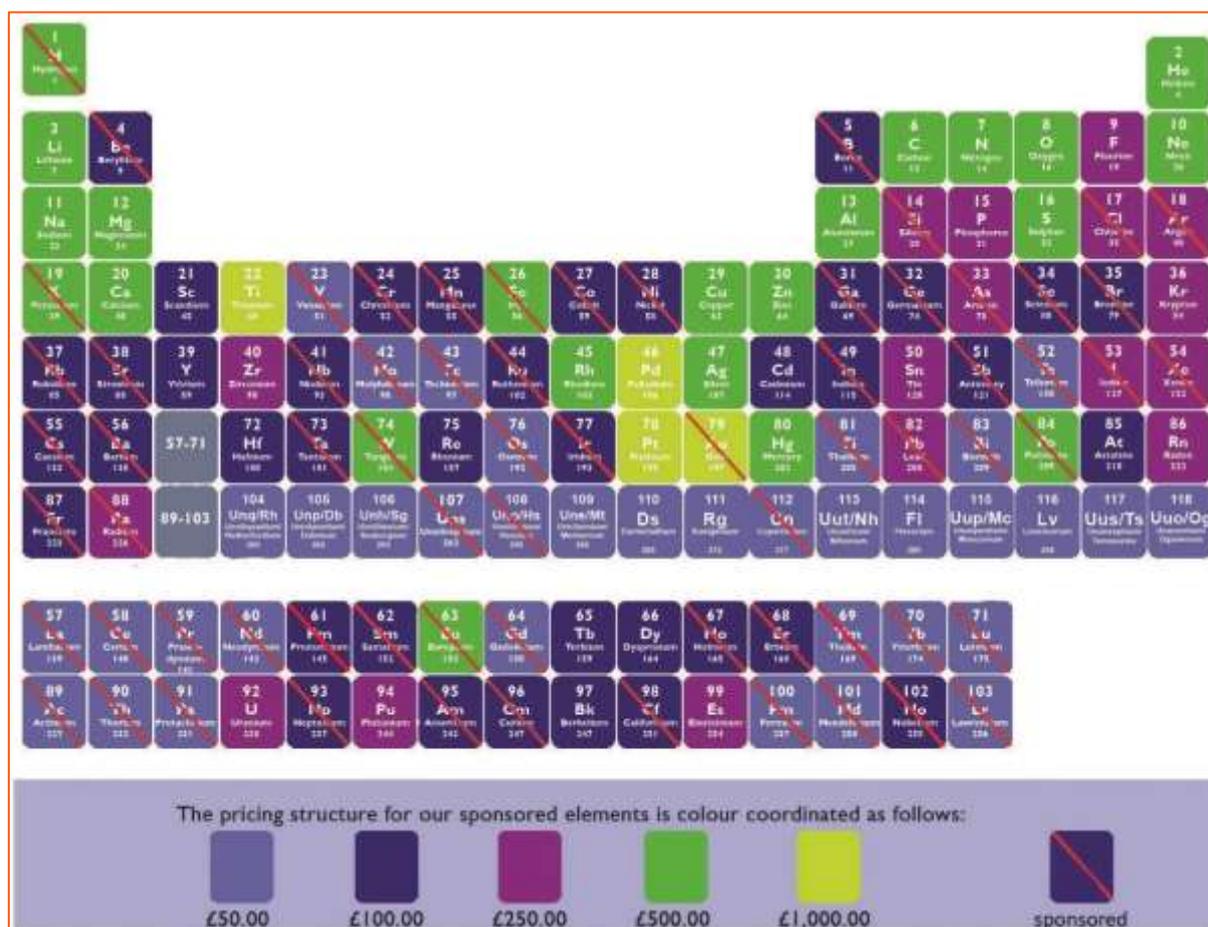
Fairer Funding

Thank you to parents who have already expressed their support following the letter sent home last week concerning school funding. The latest report confirming the difficult position came on Wednesday this week from the [Public Accounts Committee](#) of Parliament and confirms that, for example, “The Department [for Education] does not seem to understand the pressures that schools are already under” and, “the Department has not assessed the impact of all the cost pressures that the Government is placing on schools”.

So please (parents *and* students) do have another look at the letter sent home last Friday and consider writing to your MP if you feel able to add your voice to ours.

In Our Element campaign

A huge thank you to everyone who has sponsored an element of the periodic table, to support our refurbishment of the final science lab, S17. The table at the time of sending this newsletter home looks like this, with 70 elements already sponsored, and 39 to go:



Please consider sponsoring an element by going to the [In Our Element](#) page of the website.

Next term, we will also be inviting parents to make regular donations to our wider development campaign so look out for the brochure when it's sent home.

Interested in a Career in Teaching?

AHS can help you train to teach!

If you or someone you know is thinking about starting a career in teaching please get in touch. We provide several different routes of teacher training for a range of subjects to suit your needs. If you would like further information please contact Amanda Brigden at abrigden@ahs.bucks.sch.uk.

Changes to the Secondary Transfer Test for 2019 entry onwards

The secondary transfer test was changed significantly a few years ago. As we approach the end of the contract period, the 13 Bucks Grammar Schools have put both providing and administering the tests out to tender. This is for the tests which will be taken in September 2018, for September 2019 entry into Year 7 (the tests next September for 2018 entry are under the existing contracts).

The new tests will be provided by GL Assessment and administered by Buckinghamshire County Council; the 13 Grammar Schools are very pleased with the process that has been undertaken to secure the testing system for the next few years. This doesn't affect the Late Transfer Testing system (for late entry into Year 7, or into Years 8 upwards).

Governor update & SIP update

by Mr Marshall, Support Staff Director & Mr Chandler, Deputy Chair of Governors



In previous newsletters we have shared updates on our progress with the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This month the focus is on Resources, overseen by the Resources Committee.

Resources

We established the Development Director post at the start of September and a lot of work has been undertaken already to restructure our fundraising efforts and to source other potential grants to support development of the school. We will have a replacement for Isabella Bennett in post at the start of May to continue this effort. The marketing of the school has been refreshed to attract new students, with an updated prospectus and a new website, and further work has been completed to improve the look of Highlights.

Much of the work carried out by the Resources Committee concerns setting and monitoring the budget of the school and managing within the tight funding position. Over the forthcoming term, the next stage is to set the budget for the coming years. With continual changes in the funding we might expect from the government, influenced by the local authority's decisions on priorities, this work will not be finalised until the summer term. The overall funding position and landscape continues to be a major concern for the Governing Body. Hopefully, you will have seen the recent letter sent by school about the Buckinghamshire School Funding Crisis. As noted under Fairer Funding in this newsletter – please read and discuss with family and friends, and if able, add your voice.

As part of the ongoing development of the school, the challenge to raise funds to refurbish the last science lab, S17, has increased; as we have defined the work with specialist engineers, we have found it a more complex and costly job. We remain hopeful that with parental donations we will raise sufficient funds to complete this work in the summer holidays. Looking further ahead, we are investigating with an architect the feasibility of a major project for the school. This will then enable us to plan accordingly and match with the school's ambitions.

As part of our focus on the upkeep of the school, we have placed bids for government grants to repair and refurbish boilers and roofs and hope to hear the result of those bids shortly. Internally, there has been a significant campaign to raise awareness about litter with the students, including them taking on community litter picking in our immediate area.

Growing up with the internet

by Mrs Hamnett, Deputy Headteacher

The House of Lords Communications Committee published a report on [Growing up with the internet](#) in March. The report encourages children and young people to be taught about the internet, stating that keeping safe online is as important as learning the three Rs.

It goes on to recommend that a children's Digital Champion is appointed to coordinate action across government in addition to ensuring that industries comply with child-friendly standards. For example, the report states that firms such as Google and Facebook "should respond quickly to requests by children to take down content".

It calls for "digital literacy" to form a key part of the curriculum, with "online responsibilities, social norms and risks" being included in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. At AHS this content is covered in L4L and in Computing. The committee also recommended that all internet service providers and mobile networks should be required not only to offer filters to prevent access to adult material but for them to be switched on by default - requiring users to actively choose to disable them to view material unsuitable for youngsters. Whilst AHS has such filters in place, at school, we cannot easily safeguard material that our students may access through hand-held devices such as mobile phones.

The internet provides our students with the ability to learn in a much more varied, engaging and rapid manner than the

generations of students before them but it also brings risks. The internet if used incorrectly enables children and young people to view material that is not suited to their age, a reliability on social media which prevents them from switching off their phones or promotes the posting of personal and confidential information, about themselves, which may cause them future harm.

I shared an article on 'Sexting' in a previous newsletter as we are aware that young people need support in avoiding 'inappropriate' content about themselves finding its way onto the internet. Advice on how to remove it was also shared.

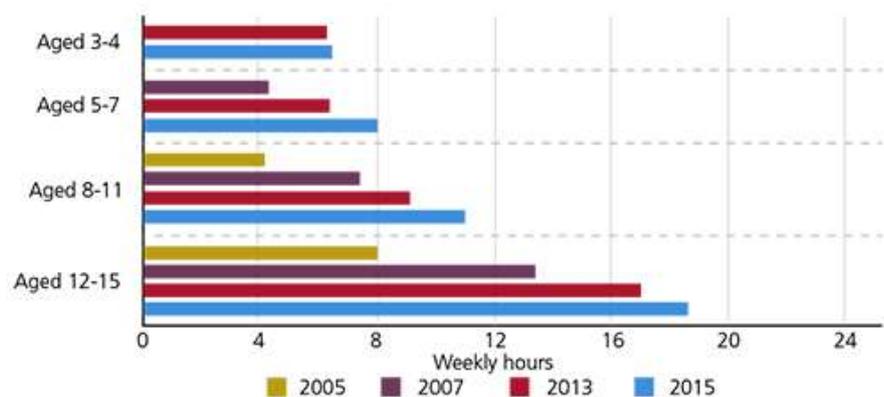
On occasion, we discuss internet use with individual students as our filter system can make us aware if students do try to access websites that are not deemed appropriate for their age or for a school environment or if a student searches for particular key words.

New figures from an NSPCC survey have recently highlighted that most adults do not know when children and young people are old enough to be using social networks such as Facebook and Snapchat. 59% did not realise the sites required users to be 13 or over and a fifth thought there were no age requirements at all.

A representative from the NSPCC said, "Age restrictions need to reflect the content and conduct possible on each site and be crystal clear to parents and their younger users...platforms need to work harder to protect children and young people, building in child safety to the design of each site and that parents can be proactive by having conversations with their children about online safety as soon as they start using the internet."

Calls to Childline showed that children under the age of 13 were using social networks and in some cases having negative experiences online.

The chart shows the increase in the use of the internet by children and young people over the last decade.



Young Carers at AHS

by Mr Sara, Governor responsible for Child Protection, Safeguarding and Equality



A governor's job is to try to ensure all students in a school have the opportunity to reach their full potential wherever possible and by whatever means are available. With this in mind I recently visited the school to see and hear the impressive work of the Young Carers group.

Young carers often work in difficult situations and can easily go unnoticed, but the negative impacts of caring on young people can be very real and enduring. If young carers are left unsupported they can take on responsibilities that will have a lasting effect on their school work, their health and their wellbeing.

Therefore I am delighted that there is a Young Carers group meeting in Aylesbury High School and in that group students can share their joys and their sorrows and so help and support each other. This sharing can be of enormous help as it can not only support students but also direct them to other sources of help.

AHS has recently promoted the role that carers play at home not only at AHS but around the county by dedicating assembly time to raise awareness of the support available to young people and their families.

Student Leadership

by Mrs Wilkes, Assistant Headteacher

We have had a great set of applications for the Student Leadership positions in the last few weeks. We started with over 40 applications for **the Cabinet** and, following shortlisting, we had 12 girls involved in the Cabinet Hustings on Wednesday 15 March.

When Year 13 leave, **Bronwen Reed** becomes our new **Head Girl** and **Ivana Hladusz, Mehreen Khan, Harriett Robson** and **Lauren Whitworth** will be **Deputy Head Girls**; they have already started talking with the current Cabinet to ensure a successful handover.

Immediately following the Cabinet decisions, our students could apply for one of the remaining roles: House Captain, Student Ambassador or Subject Ambassador. There has been some stiff competition as we had over 150 applications. House Hustings have taken place this week and the Student Ambassadors have been put through testing interviews.

Congratulations to the following girls who take up **House positions**:

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------|--|
| ● Ascott | Captain | Sasha Appleton | Deputies: | Amelia Beel & Amelia Santerre |
| ● Claydon | Captain | Ife Oyedele | Deputies: | Bethany Lewis & Isla Verney |
| ● Hughenden | Captain | Sophia Brown | Deputies: | Chloe Smith & Serife Unsal |
| ● Missenden | Captain | Phoebe Siaw | Deputies: | Maddie Berkeley & Anna O'Sullivan |
| ● Stowe | Captain | Lucy Taylor | Deputies: | Ellie Kiely & Jodie Michael |
| ● Waddesdon | Captain | Becca Scoble | Deputies: | Yekta Kassaei & Georgia Page |

The newly appointed **Student Ambassadors** are:

Adanna Ewuzie, Jasmine Hart, Chloe Matthews, Soraya Mohammed-Choudhry, Stephanie Odukoya, Madeline Sandon, Deepika Sundararajan and Alex Trueman.

Betty McLaren and Amy McMunn are our **Ambassadors for HEART** (Healthy Equality and Rights Together).

The Subject Ambassadors will be announced after Easter to give Subject Team Leaders a chance to discuss the applications with their departments. We wish all of our new Student Leaders success in their new roles.

Exam season

by Mrs Burchell, Examinations Officer

The summer term will include the 2017 public examinations and internal testing season for most students. Information regarding examinations/tests for each year group will be shared with parents/carers and students electronically in addition to being placed on our school website on the respective year group page.

The timetable for **Year 10** was sent home earlier this week. Additional information regarding venues and clash information will be shared after the Easter break.

Year 11 start their study leave for GCSE examinations on Monday 15 May.

Year 12 have a three-week study leave period, also starting on Monday 15 May; during this time they have both AS examinations (for unreformed subjects and those subjects they are not taking to A Level), and internal tests.

Year 13 start their study leave for GCE examinations on Monday 22 May.

Please encourage your daughter to balance her time between revision and relaxation, and encourage them to clearly note the dates and times of each paper.

Do contact me at kburchell@ahs.bucks.sch.uk if you have any query about examinations.

Vacancy at AHS

If you or someone you know might be interested in a role involving both reprographics work and supporting Food and Textile lessons then please contact Mr Marshall at kmarshall@ahs.bucks.sch.uk for further details. We are keen to employ someone early in the summer term.

Staffing update

Earlier in the month we said thank you and farewell to Mrs Bennett who set up our new Development Office; we will introduce our new Development Director early next term.

At the end of this week, Mrs Hughes starts her maternity leave with our very best wishes and her timetable will be taken by Mrs Burger who joins us after Easter.

Mrs Steer is retiring with our sincere thanks after almost 15 years at AHS working in the Finance Office. She will be known to countless students and parents as the person who has co-ordinated the running of hundreds of trips. Staff have especially appreciated her skills behind the scenes in ensuring that everything runs smoothly.