



# Newsletter 3



## Aylesbury High School

### November news

by Mr Rosen, Headteacher

#### Money Matters

The government has delayed the implementation of a National Funding Formula for schools until at least 2018-19 and we are expecting the next phase of consultation to be launched fairly soon. That could give a clue as to the future direction of school funding, which we hope will be to our advantage.

Regular readers will recall that we have, in recent years, been the lowest-funded school in the country (2014-15) and are presently the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest (2016-17), out of around 3000 secondary schools. Bucks schools of all types do particularly badly in comparison with many other parts of the country although fortunately, and through lots of hard work, our exam results don't correlate with our level of funding.

Of course, you would expect school funding to reflect the cost of employment in different parts of the country, so, for example, London schools *should* receive more than us and we should receive more than some other areas. A bit of simple maths enables us to work out how much we would have received this year if we were funded at the rates used in each local authority in England, having removed the Area Costs to make a level playing field.

If we somehow moved to adjacent local authorities, we would receive an additional £300,000 to £500,000 because, for no coherent reason, they have been funded at a higher level than Bucks for many years. I am working with fellow heads this week to send the Secretary of State for Education and the Prime Minister (and local MPs) a letter highlighting (again) the unfairness of the funding set-up, and asking for changes for 2017-18.

We have experienced significant budget reductions over the years, as have most schools nationally, but we do all we can to mitigate the effects and protect the quality of education that we provide. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it!

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### Next time...

A progress update on our 2016/17 School Improvement Plan

# School Games Mark 2015/16

by Kerry Carpenter, School Sports Co-ordinator

We are delighted to announce that, for the second year running, we have achieved The School Games Mark at Gold Level.

The School Games Mark is a Government-led awards scheme which was launched in 2012 to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community.

The Mark, awarded at three levels is a retrospective award, validating success over the previous academic year. AHS has achieved a Gold Mark for its outstanding commitment to school sport by fulfilling the following criteria:

- Providing all students with two hours of physical education per week within the curriculum
- Engaging at least 50% of students in extra-curricular sporting activities every week
- Offering talented young sports people specific support to help them to balance their sporting commitments with school and home life
- Providing the opportunity for girls to take part in the appropriate level of competition
- Promoting School Games to parents and the local community
- Providing every young person with the opportunity to 'learn to lead' through curriculum PE
- Engaging at least 15% of students in leading, managing and officiating School Games activities
- Training wider school staff to support school sport
- Creating active links with at least six local sports clubs

## Aylesbury Vale Teaching Partnership

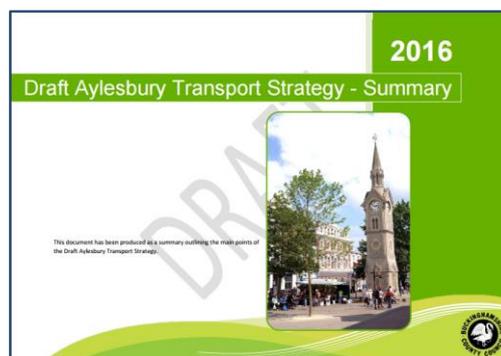
by Miss Brigden, Assistant Headteacher

The Aylesbury Vale Teaching Partnership is pleased to share its new logo with you. The logo was designed and created by one of our very own students, Isabel Avery-Hughes in 9W. Isabel will be receiving a £10 Amazon voucher as thanks for her creative input!



## Plans for Aylesbury

Bucks County Council and AVDC are working on the [Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan](#), which looks at the development of the area, particularly in terms of housing. This should be out for consultation next spring and ahead of that a draft [Aylesbury Transport Strategy](#) has been published. If you have ever had an opinion about local traffic, it's worth a read; the consultation ends on 3 January.





Before

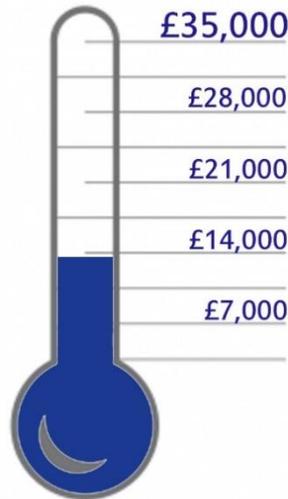
## Fundraising update: Over a third of target raised for S17

by Mrs Bennett, Development Director

A big thank you to parents who have chosen to donate towards S17 or general funds this half term. Just over a dozen families have raised nearly £14,000 in cash and pledges for the school towards our £35,000 target for this year. We're also reaching out to trusts and grant-making foundations to match that sum 50:50, ensuring our fundraising projects are truly collaborative with our local (and national) community.

S17 is the final science laboratory to refurbish, and it's not just the benches and worktops which need a little TLC. As a lab which is primarily used for Chemistry, we need to install new air handling units and a fume cupboard to ensure the safety of all using the lab for lessons. Students from Years 7 to 13 use this 57-year-old lab for science and chemistry lessons, but the newly refurbished laboratories leave it as the poor cousin of the department. We want *all* of our students to be 'in their element' in their science lessons at AHS.

### 'The Girls of S17'



We really need your help, so please [join us now](#) in securing your daughters' success by funding their future. 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 a £525 gift will cost only £336, less than £1 a day. If 40 families each gave £525 - we'd reach our target by Christmas.

We are also working on plans for further major developments of our facilities and will update everyone next term.



After?

## Governor update

by Dr Blagg, Vice-Chair of Governors

As we progress on our journey through the year, AHS continues to be wholly committed to providing an excellent and challenging educational experience, preparing our girls for their futures.

AHS governors are constantly reflecting and considering best practice, principles and approaches with the school's leaders, interpreting performance data, and addressing key areas of teaching and learning, finance, personnel and school improvement. The school does this under increasing funding pressures.

We will continue to ensure that the views of parents, staff and students are taken into account and are used to identify improvements and we will be initiating our bi-annual school questionnaire next term. I really hope that you will make the time to respond this. Your views do matter and are an important guide to how effective we are at delivering the very best we can to all our students.

### Dates for December

Thu 1 Dec	Y12 Consultation Eve
Fri 2 Dec	Y7 Disco
	Y12/13 trip to CERN
Mon 5 Dec	Governors' meeting
Wed 7 Dec	Xmas Concert
	Y9 trip to Germany
Fri 9 Dec	Old Folks' Party
Mon 12 Dec	Carol Service
13/14/15 Dec	Fundraising Week
Wed 14 Dec	Y8 Aladdin
Fri 16 Dec	End of Term, 3.30pm

**AYLESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
SIXTH FORM OPEN MORNING**  
(for students from other schools)

**Thursday 1 December, 9.15am (tours will last about an hour)**

For students looking to join our Sixth Form in 2017

You are invited to have a look round the school and visit lessons to see what a normal day is like at AHS. You will have the opportunity to see our great facilities, speak to students and staff and ask us any questions.

Please e-mail [office@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) to let us know you are coming.

Walton Road, Aylesbury HP21 7SX  
[www.ahs.bucks.sch.uk](http://www.ahs.bucks.sch.uk) @AylesburyHigh



**SIXTH FORM PROSPECTUS AVAILABLE**  
- go to Curriculum, Options

Applications should be submitted as soon as possible but by Monday 9 January at the latest for external applicants.

## AHS Sixth Form

by Mrs Wilkes, Assistant Headteacher

It was a pleasure to welcome our Year 11 girls and their families to our Sixth Form Information Evening last week. In addition to our own Year 11 students, we had 125 families from other schools and the feedback we have received was that it was a useful and informative evening. Details of this week's Open Morning for external applicants can be found above.

In addition to the evening, our girls have had advice in an assembly from Mr Rosen, information from our Subject Ambassadors in form time and guidance from form tutors and subject teachers. The decisions our students now face about their A Level choices, whilst exciting, can also be daunting and we will do all we can to support them. We encourage our students to do their own research into their future studies and a particularly useful guide is called *Informed Choices*.

*Informed Choices* can be opened via the Options section of the Curriculum tab on our website. Students will also find a link to the UCAS Course Search which will help them if they have an idea of the subjects they might want to study post AHS.

AHS students have until 9 December to submit their Sixth Form application (9 January for external applicants) and this will be followed by a meeting in February with a member of staff from the Sixth Form or Leadership Teams.

Choosing to study at AHS provides many opportunities as alongside our excellent examination results, we offer a variety of Extension Studies to add breadth and depth to the students' studies. The high quality teaching on offer throughout the school continues in the Sixth Form and our girls continue to benefit from our excellent facilities and strong pastoral teams.

One of the most striking features about our Sixth Form is the opportunity to develop leadership skills; whether that be through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Dance or Sports Leaders, being a member of the Cabinet, a House Captain, a Subject Ambassador or through helping younger girls as a Student Ambassador.

We are grateful to all the support of our students and staff in making the Sixth Form Information Evening a successful one and we look forward to receiving applications from current Year 11 students over the next couple of weeks.

## We Live by the Sea

by Mrs Hamnett, Deputy Headteacher

We are excited to announce that one of our ex-students Alex Brain has agreed to come back to AHS in January to perform her play 'We Live by the Sea' to our KS4/5 Drama students. Alex and her theatre group received 5-star reviews after performing at the Edinburgh Festival this summer and as result went on to perform in New York and Covent Garden.

[Review](#)

Alex plays the part of an autistic girl called Katie.

Each performance will be followed by a workshop as our drama students are expected to discuss how to devise a play in addition to commenting on a piece of live theatre, as part of their examination work.

In addition to the examination support this play offers, it also aims to increase the awareness of ASD.



## Student progress

by Mr Baird, Data Coordinator and Curriculum Manager for MFL

The last 18 months have seen lots of changes in the way in which teachers give feedback on students' progress at AHS. After the government announced that National Curriculum levels were disappearing, and that letter grades at GCSE were to be replaced with numbers 9-1, schools across the country were left to their own devices when it came to how they wanted to show student attainment and progress from Years 7-11.

At AHS, in common with the majority of schools nationwide, we decided to replicate the new 9-1 GCSE grading system being put in place for Years 10-11, for Years 7-9. We want students to go from the lower grades in KS3, up to the higher grades by the

time they reach the end of Year 11.

Consequently, students in Years 7-10 (and Y11 for Mathematics and English) have been receiving number grades 9-1 when they do assessments, and when they receive their LAGs (Likely to Achieve Grades) each term. The target grades they receive are also number grades, and students are able to compare their performance to these target grades.

For more information on how target grades are arrived at, and the processes teachers go through to decide on LAGs, please view our help page on the website, where there are a number of videos with FAQs.

<http://www.ahs.bucks.sch.uk/data-videos/>

In addition to the LAGs, students are still receiving termly effort

codes 1-5, which provide a snapshot of how hard teachers think students are working. This information will be sent home to both students & parents by email, as reports will subsequently be too. We would encourage you to discuss the progress reports with your daughters.

Each student in Years 7-11 has subject pages in her planner; we would ask that the target grades, LAGs and effort codes are recorded in the planners. It is then important for students to set themselves smart targets for each subject, using the space available in their planners.

NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE	CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
U	G
	U

## Attacked not Defeated

by Isabella Bidlake Hull, Year 13

Former AHS student Phoebe Tansley, came to address the Sixth Form in a Current Issues talk last week, simply by telling her own harrowing yet hopeful and inspirational story.

In one of the most memorable moments of our entire school career, a packed Main Hall listened to Phoebe tell how a volunteering stint she was enjoying in Uganda after leaving AHS turned into a nightmare when she was set upon by two men one night. Despite the efforts of her host family, she was given little medical aid and emotional support and even had to make the trek herself to the next town to buy emergency contraception. It was only on returning to the UK that she found adequate support and began to recover.

However, Phoebe is determined that her own ordeal won't define her, for this harrowing story is also one of hope, determination and inspiration. Phoebe reframes the perception of those who have experienced rape, describing herself as a rape 'survivor' rather than a 'victim'. Her own strength of character is evident in her actions in the aftermath of her attack; she returned to Uganda, despite her family's obvious concerns, and completed her volunteering programme there.

But one of the things that most captivated the Sixth Form is the way that she responded to the events that changed her life. Determined to put in place the support she found so lacking when she needed it most, Phoebe has founded a women's charity in Uganda. *Attacked Not Defeated* works in Kampala to offer support to survivors of rape through community outreach and advocacy, and strives to combat the stigma surrounding sexual and gender-based violence. 'Attacked Not Defeated' now has two paid workers on the ground and is continuing to expand. Find her website here: <http://www.attackednotdefeated.org/>

The Sixth Form were so moved and inspired by her story that they wanted to do something tangible to show thanks for her brave talk and provide support for her charity, and a spontaneous cash collection raised over £180 for *Attacked Not Defeated* - students are looking for ways to provide more on-going support for Phoebe's charity.

# Bucks Wellbeing Conference 2016

by Mrs Hamnett, Deputy Headteacher

I had the pleasure of presenting two workshops entitled 'A Whole School Approach to Wellbeing' earlier this month at Green Park in Aston Clinton. The Emotional Wellbeing in Schools Conference was delivered by Buckinghamshire County Council's Public Health team with a particular emphasis on mental health and wellbeing.

The conference aimed to raise awareness of services and resources to promote mental health & wellbeing of young people, provide an opportunity for professionals to network and share best practice and to enhance the knowledge, skills and confidence of professionals working with young people.

Two of our students Helena Meadows (Student Ambassador in Year 13) and Beth Lewin (Buddy and Young Carer Leader in Year 10) joined me for part of the presentation and their account of the day will be available for you to read in Highlights next month. Both students gave an overview of the pastoral support systems that are in place at Aylesbury High School and they discussed the roles that our students play in offering student to student support. The girls were well received and attendees were really impressed with the ways in which they support other students at school.

During the presentation we highlighted a number of regular clubs that run at school to further support our students. The clubs/activities include:

- Young Carers
- PENN Resilience
- Spectrum (LGBTQ+)

- FACT - Fun and collaborative teamwork
- SEN&D drop-in sessions
- KS4 Chill Club - help with general and examination related anxiety
- SHARE - an email system monitored by the Student Ambassadors
- Room of Requirement – a quiet drop-in space that is coordinated by the Student Ambassadors
- Alternative sporting activities such as fencing to offer less-competitive sports that all can enjoy
- Re-energised Student Voice – to enable our students to offer suggestions on what could be improved at AHS

The conference was well attended and the most useful part of the day was sharing resources and tips for supporting young people with colleagues from other schools and professionals working for charities and other external agencies.

This quote from Sir Michael Marmot of Healthy Lives summarises the need for schools to continue to find new approaches to supporting young people in addition to providing them with the skills to support one another.

*"....It is inaction that cannot be afforded, for the human and economic costs are too high. The health and wellbeing of today's children depends on us having the courage and imagination to rise to the challenge of doing things differently...."*



## He4She

by Mrs Hamnett, Deputy Headteacher

We are delighted to hear that the hard work of Elena Brooks, Emily Critchlow, Jess Trueman and Amy Williams, all in Year 10, has been recognised by Buckinghamshire County Council. Their suggestions about how to promote gender equality in schools, devised in Active Citizenship lessons last year have been included in the updated Buckinghamshire Equality Strategy.

The girls are due to present at two further conferences early next year and have been tasked with creating resources for younger students within the region. We wish them luck and congratulate them on what they have already achieved.



### The Giving Machine™

Please sign up to The Giving Machine before starting to buy anything online this Christmas! It costs you absolutely nothing but gives a percentage of whatever you purchase to the AHS.

[www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk)

Thanks!