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*Summer Successes to
Autumn Actions*

Two weeks into term and the holidays are becoming a distant memory. We've now completed the first full cycle of the timetable and it's great to have the school going full steam ahead into the Autumn Term.

The new students and staff seem to have settled in and found their way around, and we hope they soon become accustomed to our ways of working, and enjoy their time here.

We have a busy year ahead of us, with curriculum and exam changes at GCSE and A Level, an ambitious improvement plan and a new Development Campaign to launch, so wish us all luck!

Alan Rosen

Examination success

It was rewarding to see so many of our students come into school in August to share their examination success in GCSE, AS and A Level with us. With our introduction of electronic examination results being sent directly to students on the morning of results day, we did not know if our well-tested email system would be successful or if any of our students would in fact come to school at all. We were delighted that the system worked so smoothly and that so many students came into school to share their achievements with us.

We took a second opportunity to say well done to the students now known as the 2015/16 Alumnae in a celebration event last week. Below you will see the top ten subject choices that our students will be reading and the top ten university destinations for this cohort. The diversity of courses they are taking, at a wide range of

Nottingham
York
Durham
Bristol
Leeds
Oxford
Warwick
Leicester
Oxford Brookes
Cardiff

universities and other institutions, is really impressive. Our former Year 13s are now packing their bags to go to university, packing their bags to go on gap-year trips, or starting employment in some really interesting jobs. Almost a quarter of our students achieved 3 A grades at A Level or better and six students achieved three or more A* grades.

Chemistry
Politics, PPE, International
History
Law
Business Management
Geography
Biochemistry
Biomedical Sciences
Medicine
Natural Sciences

We continue to be impressed by the breadth and depth of our GCSE results with students taking 32 different qualifications including two AS Levels, the full range of arts and humanities subjects, and six languages. The average grade overall was an A and 15 students did brilliantly to achieve 10 or more A* grades at GCSE.

A warm welcome to new staff

We are delighted to welcome the following staff to the school

Mrs Askew	Mathematics
Miss Beattie	Art
Mrs Bennett	Development Director
Mrs Blunt	Mathematics
Mr Christie	Physics/Science
Miss Contreras	Science Technician
Mr Cook	Product Design, Computing, Photography
Miss Daniels	PE
Mrs Fox	Learning Assistant
Mrs Franklin	Biology/Science
Mrs Harwood	English
Mrs Jayatillake	Psychology
Mr Jones	English
Miss Kilkenny	Geography
Miss McKendrick	Dance, Drama, English
Mrs Morris	English
Mr Petty	STL Computing
Dr Phillips	Mathematics
Mr Phillips	Computing
Mrs Powton	Sixth Form Pastoral Assistant
Mrs Saunders	Food & Textiles
Mrs Taylor	English
Mrs Wilkes	Mathematics, Assistant Head

Introducing our Development Director

As you may recall from previous Newsletters, school funding is tight and AHS is one of the lowest-funded schools in England. We receive just £100 per week to teach your daughter a full complement of subjects and activities, heat her classrooms and provide equipment and care.

We don't believe that a lack of government funding is a good enough reason for inaction when it comes to the environment in which AHS students learn. Some of our facilities do not currently reflect our ambitions for the school or our pride in our students' achievements. Through the generous support of our parents in previous years, we have transformed large parts of the school, with a new, much-needed Sixth Form Centre, a refurbished Library, increased numbers of classrooms and fantastic science laboratories to name just some of our recent projects.

Our new Development Office, led by Mrs Isabella Bennett, was created this year to help us seek support from our community of staff, pupils, parents, alumnae and friends of AHS, ensuring we don't stand still when looking to provide your daughter (and future generations of students) with facilities that do justice to her abilities and aspirations. We have one science laboratory to complete, at a cost of £70,000, and will be looking at the Tower Block as a priority for internal improvements later this year.



You will be hearing from Mrs Bennett later this month about ways to support your daughter's education at AHS, but if you'd like to contact her in the meantime, you can email ibennett@ahs.bucks.sch.uk.

AHS Sixth Form Team

We have taken the opportunity to reshape the Sixth Form team for the start of this new academic year.

With reformed A Levels compelling us to remodel our curriculum and approach to exams, and the post-18 landscape becoming more complicated - with sponsored degree programmes and modern apprenticeships increasing the options available to our departing Year 13 students - this new team is well-placed to ensure that our Sixth Form get the best possible experience, support and guidance in their final years of school.

Transitions Co-ordinator Mrs Sutton



Mrs Sutton's new role sees her take responsibility for the transitions that fundamentally shape Sixth Form life. She will assist with potential Sixth Form students and their AHS applications, support our admissions process on Results Days and guide the new Sixth Form through their first weeks at the High. Our Year 13 students will work with Mrs Sutton as they research their post-AHS futures, prepare UCAS, job and training applications and she will help prepare them for interviews, admissions tests and getting ready for the world of higher education and employment. She will coordinate the Community Involvement programme for Year 13s too.

Head of Year 12 Miss Weir



Miss Weir will guide our Year 12 students through their first year. That vital role sees her support all aspects of their academic and extra-curricular life at school, and she will be the person that parents contact when they have specific concerns or queries about their daughter's education, health or well-being. She'll liaise with subject teachers and help prepare students for the challenges that they face in Year 13 as they begin to prepare for life beyond AHS. With five Sixth Form Biology classes on her timetable, Miss Weir is well-placed to observe her year group's academic progress!

Pastoral Assistant Mrs Powton



Mrs Powton joined the Sixth Form team this summer, and she has responsibility for the essential day-to-day work behind the scenes that keeps everything - and everyone - running smoothly. Mrs Powton will be the person that parents contact when their daughter is sick or requires a Leave of Absence. She will support the Form Tutors with a variety of reports that underpin their pastoral role with students, from reports on lateness to summaries of behaviour, and she will be a first-point of contact for student enquiries about the detail of life in the Sixth Form.

Head of Sixth Form and Year 13 Mr Ochiltree



Mr Ochiltree takes overall responsibility for the direction of the Sixth Form, coordinating the work of his three colleagues, and also serves as the Head of Year 13. He will work closely with Mrs Sutton to ensure that students get the best advice and preparation for their post-AHS futures, whether that be through the UCAS process or the other post-18 options that are becoming increasingly attractive. As well as teaching History and Politics, he runs the Current Issues programme that seeks to extend student awareness beyond the strictly academic boundaries of their different subjects, and is always keen to hear of potentially interesting future speakers.

School enhancements over the summer

Once the building was clear of busy students and (most) staff in the summer months, we took the opportunity to improve some of the fixtures and fittings around the school.

ICT work focussed on installing new machines in S3 and the Sixth Form Study Centre, upgrading the Wi-Fi system to provide faster and better roaming, and supplying a set of Chromebooks for use in classrooms.

We have created new office spaces for the Development Director and Miss Brigden, Assistant Headteacher, who is taking the lead on our designation as a Teaching School - we will update you on what this involves later in the year.

Some of you may have noticed when attending one of our information/presentation evenings this term that we have freshened up the Main Hall with a coat of paint. New carpets have been fitted in some of the tower block rooms which has created a much nicer working environment for students and staff.

We have also updated the signs around the school site to help visitors and new students.



Website face-lift

We hope you have had a chance to browse our new look website, where information should be easier to find under clearer 'Parent' and 'Student' sections.

Latest news, the Calendar and our Twitter feed are on the front page; please do follow us! You will find Quick Links right at the bottom - so items such as Parent Pay, Term Dates, Who's Who and the Leave of Absence form are just one click away.

Medical Information

Please can you remember to inform Mrs Nix, our Matron, if your daughter's medical circumstances have changed over the summer break. If you are new to AHS please ensure we have the necessary information to manage her needs at school. It is vital that we are informed of any regular medication that she takes and we encourage you to read the guidance provided by Matron under **Students— Student support** and then **Medical** on our website.



2016-17 Improvement Plan

Staff and Governors spent time towards the end of the last academic year preparing a set of actions for 2016-17, informed as always by feedback from students and parents.

With so many competing pressures on schools, it's important that we identify the actions that will have the most effect, and focus our tight resources on the most important priorities.

It's an ambitious list, with lots to keep us busy, and it includes a number of areas where students and parents can be involved. We are using the start-of-term Information Evenings to get parents up to speed on the relatively new 9-1 assessment system, and will use future newsletters to provide updates on the plan.



AYLESBURY HIGH SCHOOL Improvement Plan 2016/17

TL1 QUALITY OF T&L

Aim: All teachers supported to deliver the best possible teaching and learning

- ❖ Each teacher's personal target(s) to include a focus on an aspect of T&L which:
 - involves visits (3?) to other classes (/schools)
 - reports back to own team on best practice
- ❖ Focus on reducing between-subject variation and in-subject variation in exam performance
- ❖ Share best practice in the use of ICT in the classroom through visits, team sessions and Learning Lunches
- ❖ Improve teachers' awareness of their classes and strategies to address SEND and EAL barriers to learning
- ❖ Provide targeted support for developing high quality teaching and team leadership

TL2 ASSESSMENT & DATA

Aim: Promote marking, assessment and the use of data across the school which is Meaningful, Manageable and Motivating

- ❖ Improve the effectiveness of our use of 9-1
- ❖ Improve the use of data systems inc. FFT to inform target setting
- ❖ Establish more effective and consistent use of the student planner for targets

TL3 CURRICULUM CHANGE

Aim: Successfully implement and benefit from curriculum reforms

- ❖ Plan and manage GCSE specification changes
- ❖ Refine AS/A Level curriculum models
- ❖ Core subjects to visit primary schools to respond to KS2 curriculum changes

TL4 POST 16 PROVISION

Aim: Re-structure and refresh the Sixth Form

- ❖ Establish a clear strategy for the long-term development of the Sixth Form, with a revised staff team
- ❖ Make the UCAS and post-AHS process more effective for students and staff
- ❖ Focus on effective tutoring, with clear and suitable systems for tracking and supporting students

TL5 DEVELOP STUDENTS

Aim: Improve students' confidence, independence and voice

- ❖ Promote students' self-help strategies when facing challenges
- ❖ Extend Student Voice through a reformed SEC, the House system and other forums

[Cabinet projects]

- ❖ Introduce a student debating forum to improve awareness of current issues and develop confidence in public speaking.
- ❖ Promote Good Cause, including the Sixth Form

P1 TEACHING SCHOOL

Aim: Set up a new partnership to support schools in Aylesbury Vale and beyond

- ❖ Launch the Aylesbury Vale Teaching Partnership (AVTP) with some activities in 2016-17 and full operation from 2017 onwards
- ❖ Work with other Teaching Schools to provide a coherent offer across the area

P2 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Aim: Attract, develop and retain staff

- ❖ Increase our ITT provision
- ❖ Identify opportunities to reduce staff workload

R1 RESOURCES

Aim: Make the best use of our tight budget and improve our ability to generate funds

- ❖ Appoint a Development Director
- ❖ Launch a refreshed, focused campaign
- ❖ Focus on marketing the school effectively

R2 PREMISES

Aim: Improve the AHS site

- ❖ Increase site security
- ❖ Promote a litter-free and tidy environment
- ❖ Update our visitor/door management systems
- ❖ Develop plans for major premises improvements

Parking Restrictions

The leadership team have been enjoying the morning sunshine and monitoring the new parking restrictions around the school site since the start of this term.

The introduction of controlled parking, double yellow lines and zig-zag markings in Turnfurlong and improved signage on Walton Road provide a much safer environment for students and staff at AHS and our neighbouring schools in addition to our local residents.



Please do support us in keeping your daughter safe by adhering to the restrictions; in particular do not stop on the zig-zag markings at the school's entrances, or try to drive onto the school site before or after school.

On this note it is of great concern that some of our students are not aware of their own safety when

arriving and leaving school - whilst listening to music might make for a lovely start or end to the day it is also vital they remain alert, particularly when crossing roads.

Diamond Challenge

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is celebrating its Diamond Anniversary and



THE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH'S AWARD

has asked us to let you know that, as part of their Diamond Challenge (<https://dofediamondchallenge.org/>), the Countess of Wessex is cycling 445 miles from the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh to Buckingham Palace in London, over seven days in September.

The Countess and her cycling companions will be leaving from **RAF Halton, main entrance HP22 5PG at 09.30 on Sunday 25 September** and you are encouraged to go along to show your support. The JustGiving link is www.justgiving.com/Countess-of-Wessex.

What do they do at AHS all day?

Last Friday, a tour of the school revealed a wide range of activities going on. Here's a flavour (and we'll leave it to you to work out the subjects involved!)

- Vocabulary to describe personality
- Talking about freetime activities
- Revising the alphabet
- Using verbs about various topics
- Dramatic monologues
- Average and marginal costs of production
- How to sketch eyelashes
- Surrealism using collages
- Making a storyboard for animations
- Social learning theory: how children learn their behaviours
- The origins of slavery
- The sources of the British Constitution
- Debating the pros and cons of Brexit
- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Romeo & Juliet: how characters are developed and how effects are used to enhance the stories
- The 'Magic If'
- Classical Myths
- What is God?
- How population changes over time
- Three-way forces
- Rationalising the denominator
- Composite functions
- Equilibrium
- What it means to change variables
- Molecules and compounds
- How to calculate currents
- Where does background radiation come from?
- Simple circuits
- Polysaccharides
- Appliqué
- Mood lamps
- Badminton
- Leadership skills

There was challenging higher-level questioning, considerable creativity being required and quite a lot of use of glue sticks, scissors and highlighters to help with sorting, prioritising and structuring arguments. It was good to see students being challenged to articulate their ideas and to speak with confidence.

Staff Vacancies

We currently have the following vacancies at school - please see our website for further information.

Network Manager

Data Manager

Lunchtime Supervisors

Cleaners

Energize

We have been invited to take part in *Aylesbury Energize*, which is a collaborative performance involving local primary and secondary schools on the evenings of Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 November, at the Waterside Theatre.

Each evening will have primary schools working together on a joint production, with secondary schools having individual performances. We will be taking part on the second evening, Wednesday 2 November, and our exciting Steel Pan group will be preparing over the next few weeks.

This is the first Energize performance in Aylesbury and builds on the long-established model which has run in High Wycombe for many years, so we are delighted to be taking part and hope that the whole evening will showcase the creativity and energy of local schools.

AHSA News

The AHSA is preparing for a number of events this term starting with the Information Evening for new Year 7 parents earlier this week.

October 17 - 19 will be a busy time for us when we complement the performance of *Fame* with an **extensive Bar and Raffle**. For anyone who would like to contribute, Raffle donations will be gratefully received in the School Office (by 14 October).

Don't miss getting tickets for our ever-popular **Quiz Night** on **25 November** and the **Year 7 Disco** is tentatively scheduled for **Friday 2 December**.

We look forward to seeing you soon, and welcome new helpers to join our friendly team at any time! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support.

Don't forget to sign up to the Monthly Cash Draw by **23 September** - thanks to everyone who has already done so (via ParentPay).

Christine Hughes
Chairperson AHSA



AHS ASSOCIATION
parental support at the heart of our school