

Professional Development

Autumn 2017

Big Day Out Offers Inspiration

// Ashby School teaching and learning team spent an inspiring and thought provoking day organised by Independent Thinking called the Big Day Out— and it certainly was!

There were numerous speakers all of whom had different messages allowing us to take the time to reframe not only our own pedagogy but also develop our thinking in terms of the school's teaching and learning programme for the coming year.

The sessions were varied and diverse ranging from leadership, dealing with change (very important in education currently!), Revolt Revolution to the Holistic Wellbeing and Growth Mindset, with each member of the team attending different sessions. It became clear as the day progressed that, as a school, the CPD training programme was 'on point' with current academic thinking but importantly focussed on the specific needs of the School.

Therefore, the programme this year concentrated on supporting those C/B GCSE students to develop an understanding of the requirements and stresses of the new A level courses and how classroom pedagogy could match their needs. The sequence of sessions focussed on sharing good practice in terms of developing student confidence, scaffolding their learning and incorporating GCSE teaching techniques into A level lessons.

The commitment of the Ashby School staff to ensure the success and progress of these student's and indeed of all the students in the school is unquestionable and we hope that the implementation of the skills learned in the training sessions have a positive impact by developing confident and well rounded individuals."

**INDEPENDENT
THINKING** 

Carolyn Pearce

The Year Ahead

by Ali Jackson, Head of Continued Professional Development

// *By placing professional development at the heart of our school, I believe we have the knowledge, understanding and experience necessary to stay at the forefront of teaching and learning—and to fully prepare our staff to ‘surf the wave’ of change our education system is currently experiencing.*

We are actively involved in all aspects of teaching training and respected by our providers. Our NQTS are well supported at the start of their careers. They form close working relationships and bring new ideas into the faculties and the wider school community.

Teaching staff are not only prepared for the content and challenges presented by the linear courses but also the way this curriculum should be planned and assessed. They are exploring and developing classroom practice to ensure our students become resilient learners prepared to embed and master knowledge. They are

determined to provide the educational experience our students deserve.

Staff have attended courses within and outside of curriculum areas, covering leadership, teamwork and health and safety, to name a few. The teacher subject specialist courses have enabled our lead practitioner team to retrain teachers in maths and physics. These sessions have been well received and a number of staff are now teaching outside their subject specialism. Several have reported a boost to their professional confidence.

Finally, I am proud that our provision provides genuine opportunities for personal career development at every level. Teachers at Ashby have a grasp of the education system that goes beyond classroom practice. They have opportunities to progress and explore as the professionals they deserve to be."

'My First Head of Faculty' by Sam Blatherwick

// My first head of faculty (not at this school, I hasten to add) was quite a character.

Physically he was on the wane, and that is an understatement. He was wheelchair-bound, going blind and teaching in a three-storey maths faculty. He smoked like a chimney and would wheel himself down to the school gates every breaktime so that he could light up. I was a very late appointment and there wasn't much time for pep talks before I stood in front of my first class – his pep talk was to go through the rest of the department and tell me everything that they didn't do properly and that it didn't matter if you find what works for you.

Being part of the lead teacher programme has been an enriching, exciting and sometimes stressful experience. It has been a lot more than simply delivering sessions – it has been time to sit and talk about teaching and learning, and sharing experiences of teaching and generalising across subjects about successful approaches has really improved my practice. The team of lead teachers works in an extraordinary way in that it

is like a faculty with little management responsibility, but a great deal of leadership responsibility and hence those who are part of that team get hefty doses of leadership experience throughout the year, without the worry that those admin tasks aren't being done.

Of course those sessions we deliver have also been an experience – experience of bringing a team (the professional learning community) together, of fostering those relationships and of getting to know those nuances of personalities. If I go back to my chain-smoking ex-head of faculty – he knew his faculty inside out, they were his team and he knew how to get the best out of them. I really believe that the skills the lead teacher programme has developed will guide the maths faculty to get the best out of ourselves."



NQTs Share their Thoughts

"Ashby School has been a fabulous place to start my career as a MFL teacher. All new teachers were lucky enough to attend a residential at the beginning of the year which gave us the opportunity to get to know each other and find out more about the school. Since then, we have been taken through a fun and informative induction programme, which covered areas such as pastoral care, SEN, marking and Pupil Premium. I also attended a course run by Forest Way where we were encouraged to reflect on and share good practice with teachers from different schools and subjects.



Through a combination of organised sessions, learning walks, observations and countless conversations, this year at Ashby School has taken me one step closer to becoming the teacher I aspire to be. As an NQT, I have felt extremely supported throughout the whole year and looking ahead into the future I know there are people in the school who will continue to support me both professionally and on a more personal basis." **Esther Darrah**

"I have had a thoroughly enjoyable NQT experience at Ashby School. The variety of sessions on offer in the NQT induction programme enabled me to understand the various policies and practices within the school, in addition to me being able to meet fellow colleagues from across the school.

The feedback I have received following observations has been invaluable in helping me progress towards the teacher standards, with observers setting me challenging, achievable targets. Furthermore, the regular support I have received from my mentor has been a vital part of my success during my NQT year, with them being approachable and supportive at all stages.



Overall, the opportunities available as part of the NQT experience at Ashby School have enabled me to develop further as a psychology teacher which I am very grateful for." **Jennifer Swallow**

Pssst...Have you Heard about TSST?

It's not just NQTs who are tackling something new. The advent of Teacher Subject Specialism Training has encouraged more established teachers to step out of their comfort zones

// Despite being an experienced Head of Faculty, when I heard about the opportunity to gain experience in a second subject I was extremely interested. I had taken maths at A Level and had always enjoyed the subject. After careful thought, I signed up for the course and I remember how much I was looking forward to getting going. The delivery by Simon McCarron was exceptional – the pace was fast, we covered plenty of topics and we started to understand the difficulties that students in maths classrooms face. I enjoyed the course and completing the assessment tests – they were challenging but it was rewarding to finish them all. As I look forward to the next academic year, I am excited that I have been given the opportunity to take on a Year 10 maths group. I am passionate about conveying my passion of the subject to students and am looking forward to working with a different faculty. I simply cannot understand why there is a shortage of teachers in such a fascinating subject.." **Vikki Rundle-Brown, Head of PE**

Surfing the Wave of Changes in Teacher Education

The last decade has seen an unprecedented amount of changes in our education system. From all state schools being administered by a Local Authority (LA), we now have a mixture of LA schools, stand-alone academies, multi-academy trusts, teaching school alliances, free schools and more. Established standardised assessment levels have been scrapped to be replaced by a plethora of local measures of attainment. School performance measures have changed to include such things as progress 8, Ebacc etc. The curriculum has been completely overhauled along with qualifications. The traditional letter grading system is being replaced with a numbering system at GCSE but not at A level. Modular examinations, coursework and practical components have been replaced with almost exclusively terminal formal examinations.

Teacher education has also seen dramatic changes. A decade ago, there were two well-established routes into teaching. For those already holding a degree, there was a one-year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). For those looking to enter the profession straight from KS5, there was a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (BEd). There were also the beginnings of a school-based route called the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP). In the following decade, there has been a conscious effort from the government to move teacher education away from Higher Education institutes and into schools. In 2016/2017, just over half of trainees went through school-based courses.

During recent years, there has been consistent under-recruitment into the profession as demonstrated in figure 1 below:

	Secondary	Secondary target	Percentage of Secondary target
2012/13	14,293	13,817	103%
2013/14	13,050	13,340	98%
2014/15	12,971	13,866	94%
2015/16r	15,183	18,541	82%
2016/17p⁵	15,713	17,687	89%

Figure 1: Overall recruitment into secondary teaching.

The under-recruitment issue has been particularly acute in certain subjects as demonstrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Recruitment into maths and Physics (we do our bit! – see article on TSST)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/2016	2016/17
Subject	% of subject Target				
Mathematics	91%	86%	92%	95%	84%
Physics	0%	-	67%	70%	81%

To try to counter this shortfall, the government has developed an—at times bewildering—array of different routes into teaching, at last count 44! This includes schemes such as ‘troops to teachers’, ‘researchers in schools’, and ‘future teacher scholars’. In tune with the government’s national strategy, our local higher education institution partners for teacher training have had places cut back; Loughborough University, where many of our staff trained, no longer offers science or DT; the number of trainees at Leicester University has steadily declined.

Clearly, if not mitigated, these changes could have long term consequences for Ashby School and we need to follow a strategy that enables us to continue to thrive. A school is only as good as the teaching and learning that occurs in the classrooms, which in turn can only be as good as the staff delivering our lessons. Therefore, our objectives with regards to staffing are simple; recruit the best, train them well, retain the best. Achieving these objectives requires a steady flow of well-trained teachers entering the profession locally. To help achieve this, we will continue to support our partner higher education institutions, Loughborough and Leicester Universities, by taking trainees for placements. We will also become increasingly involved with School Direct provision in conjunction with the Forest Way Teaching School Alliance to ‘grow our own’ staff locally. The advantages of this route are that we can become involved with recruitment and interviewing of trainees and have some say over where they are placed. We were pleased to host Rebecca in drama for a long placement this year along with three other trainees for short placements. (You can read more about Rebecca’s experiences in this newsletter). Next year we will be expanding to host three trainees in chemistry, textiles and geography.

I would just like to close this article with a plea to all colleagues. Teaching as a profession often gets a negative press. However, I believe that we have the best job in the world. It is not the easiest profession, not the best paid, but we have the opportunity every day, every lesson, to make a real difference in young people’s lives. I was recently privileged to witness an ex-student, now 23, come back into school to seek out Emma Dannhauser to let Emma know that she had just got her dream job as a trainee genetic counsellor. The ex-student was able to describe the exact moment in Emma’s lesson from five years ago when Emma had suggested that she would be good in that career. That one inspirational moment in that one inspirational lesson had shaped a young person’s future. She was so grateful, that she made a special trip to come back and share her good news with Emma. In what other profession would we get the opportunity on a daily basis to have that sort of impact on young people? So yes, we go home tired sometimes, but this is because we have given our all for our students – being an inspiration takes effort! However, the rewards and satisfaction that making a difference brings are well worth it. So please, if you have any family, friends or acquaintances who are interested in teaching, encourage them. Let them know that they can train very locally with us and Forest Way. If they would like any advice or discussion about teaching as a career I am always very happy to speak to them and who knows how many young people they will go on to inspire?

Phil Newman

Bringing the Drama

Rebecca-Jane Mason completed the School Direct programme through Forest Way Teaching School. When she was allocated Ashby School as her main placement, she took centre stage (literally)...

"As soon as I arrived at Ashby School, I was delighted to see evidence of students' progress and outcomes through scanning and observing their achievements. I knew that, providing I worked hard, I would be part of a team that would help me to fulfil my potential.

Ashby has been an incredibly supportive and wonderful main placement. I have had the pleasure of working with a variety of teachers (including heads of faculty, heads of teaching and learning, subject specialists and the senior leadership team) and have been included in all meetings, trips and productions etc so that I could gain as much experience as possible.

I completed my teacher training with confidence and excitement, knowing that Ashby had gone above and beyond in the support and opportunities it offered to help me become an outstanding teacher. Colleagues have actively encouraged me to get involved and be proactive with my ideas and resolutions. When I decided I wanted to direct my own play as part of the school's enrichment programme, I was fully supported and encouraged throughout the entire process and production.

I will be leaving at the end of this year with great respect for, and gratitude to, Ashby School for allowing me to fulfil my teacher training year with so much advice, support and encouragement. I have taken every opportunity that I have been given and have developed in areas of pedagogy, wider responsibilities as a teacher and in my specialist subject. Ashby School has enabled me to leave feeling empowered to become the best teacher I can when moving to the next stage of my teaching career development."



...and Turning it into an Art

// CPD is an integral part of our faculty and our school. It inspires us continually to think about and develop teaching and learning, *writes Catherine Matthews*. As head of The Arts, I feel it has to be at the core of our faculty to drive improvements in the experiences and learning we deliver to our students. The internal programme enables us to focus as a whole school on our practice as teachers. I have been fortunate not only to run these but to be involved in sharing and developing ideas with other faculties.

This always inspires me to do new things and feeds into our faculty twilight sessions, giving staff not only the inspiration but courage to rethink teaching and learning immediately. With the changing curriculums of the past couple of years, it is important that our staff have a full understanding of the exam boards' curriculum and the support from the school for staff to become examiners is an integral part of this. Nicola Conn in film/media and Sally Kesterton in art have both

taken this opportunity.

All subject staff have been on new course training to not only ensure understanding of the exam board but the value of networking with other teachers, which is a vital part of CPD development in small subject departments. CPD can take on many forms and, as a faculty head, the start of every year exam analysis is important to inform and develop your teaching. I was able to share some of the work we do in the faculty with the whole school as this has been part of our strategy to improve achievement in the arts.

As well as being a HoF, I am a music teacher and continue to want to develop my skills and knowledge as a musician and to be a better teacher. So the opportunity to go on a very specific music course on Bach chorale teaching at A level summarises the importance that Ashby School places on the range of CPD requirements and opportunities."

Taking the Lead

"The pathways to leadership course has benefited our career development significantly and made us look differently at our approach towards planning the next steps in our careers.

The course has allowed us to attend numerous workshops on data, assessment and working on school projects. It has also exposed us to outstanding key note speakers who have inspired us with accounts of how they got where they are today in education, what it takes to get there and what mind-set they have.

As part of the course, we have taken it upon ourselves to encourage NQTs to adopt roles/ activities, whether it be in faculties or whole

school. We believe this adds to the already exceptional NQT programme Ashby has to offer, by supporting NQTs as they develop their own projects. This will hopefully further their careers by not just looking at their own subject but at what they can introduce and how they can make an impact on the whole school."



Ricky Wickwar

Taking the Leap

Outgoing PE teacher Heather Scullion explains how Ashby School helped with the next stage of her career journey...

Throughout my seven years at Ashby, I have always taken every professional development opportunity that has come my way. Whether to better my own practice as a teacher of physical education or as a leader in my role as house manager, or to gain experience in a whole school setting for raising student progress, this collaborative approach has undoubtedly prepared me for my new role as Subject Lead of Physical Education at Chellaston Academy. The 'Good to Outstanding' programme led by Ali and Simon gave me time to enhance my reflective practice, to unpick my strengths and to understand how to enrich my areas for development.

For me, the best part of this programme was the opportunity to share good practice, thoughts and feelings about our teaching across faculties. Not only did this programme improve my teaching but it also taught me how to deliver effective feedback in order for others to improve too. The highlight? The disappearance of that shooting pain that sears through your body the moment a clipboard walks into your classroom. Why? Because the recognition that observations enable us to become better at what we do best means I now see them as a CPD opportunity.

My first whole school professional development experience was given to me by Jevon where I took on the 'Success to High Achievement' programme, more recently known as 'HAP' (High Achievement Programme). This professional development experience gave me the opportunity to progress my data analysis skills and to design a whole school revision programme for the underperforming high achieving students within our school. I was also very fortunate to be able to use the work I did with these students to inform my dissertation to complete my Masters in Educational Leadership and Management through the University of Nottingham. However, the climax of my professional development was given to me by Ali whereby I had the opportunity to plan and lead our January INSET for us to focus on one of Ashby's key focus points of raising the achievement of our high ability students. From this, I learnt how to lead a group of experienced staff to come together to deliver timely yet diverse revision ideas and facilitate the running of the day and to develop my professional speaking skills. Undeniably, it has been the support of the senior team and the professional development opportunities that they have given to me that has supported the progression in my career."

Literacy Across the Curriculum

Having the opportunity to lead a whole school initiative is an excellent way to utilise CPD sessions from across the years, but also to work on my own, bespoke professional development.

Literacy is an area I have always been passionate about, and I have worked tirelessly as a classroom teacher to develop ways to make accessing language more engaging and relevant to students. Taking on this role then provided me with the chance to create whole school strategies in order to be able to make an explicit difference in classroom practice. I attended an inspirational CPD event at Salford University which really pinpointed the notion that each student's ability to communicate accurately and appropriately is at the heart of each subject area. Having the opportunity to attend such an event, and discuss best practice with existing Literacy Coordinators, as well as David Birch from the National Education Trust really engaged me with the task at hand. Taking the focus from that CPD event, my hope is that over the next academic year, a number of simple whole school changes can make a significant difference for our learners.

What has been really exciting is being able to work with Ali to learn how to strategize and implement whole school change. From

considering how to best present information to Heads of Faculty and Senior Leadership, to how to structure professional discussions about current classroom practice.

As a leader, I know feel like I have a strong platform in order to reiterate to staff the idea we already know, literacy is the key to attainment.

I have also been able to join the Lead Teachers which has been amazing. Having time to work with like-minded people, who are passionate about learning has been a privilege. The discussions we have had have highlighted to me how much of an impact CPD has on teachers and the way that informs how learning is shaped for our students.

After a rollercoaster of personal learning since returning from maternity leave in February and becoming an integral part of how language can be used in our classrooms, I feel ready to embrace the challenge!



Nicola Conn

What's Coming Up?

There are opportunities throughout the year for teachers to further their personal development.

The next teaching and learning sessions are scheduled to take place on:

7 September 2017: Literacy

5 October 2017: Faculty session

7 December 2017: Faculty session

8 January 2018: Training day—Mastery

All training sessions are listed on the school calendar.