



Professional Development

Issue 3 - Summer 2011

A New Chapter for Ashby School



Headteacher Mrs Vivien Keller-Garnett will step down at the end of the academic year, after 14 years at the helm.

She will be accompanied by more than 20 other staff, who are either retiring or moving on to new posts elsewhere.

Some of them – including Sue Ridley, Tim Procter and Anita Allsop – have been in post for more than 20 years.

Mrs Keller-Garnett said: "I am very proud to have been part of Ashby School during a time of great change and success in

the school's history. I am very grateful to all the fabulous staff I have worked alongside and wish everyone who is leaving the school this Summer every happiness in whatever they decide to do next."

Headteacher Eddie Green will take over in September.

CPD FAO VIPs

A group of Norwegian educationalists visited Ashby School to find out more about leadership and professional development in a successful UK school.

The 18 visitors, who train Headteachers in their native Norway, were given a tour of the school by students.

They then heard about the success of the school's various CPD initiatives from Headteacher Mrs Vivien-Keller Garnett and Director of Care and Guidance, Matt Hall.

Ken Gill, from the National College for School Leadership, who accompanied the visitors, said: "Coming to Ashby School is like opening Pandora's Box. There is so much more going on inside than there seems to be from outside. It is fascinating."

He also joked about the number of acronyms in use in the school.

For full story, see page three.

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Introduction from the Director of Continued Professional Development (CPD)

Wow! Another year almost over.

For our NQTs, it must seem like an eternity of lesson planning and observations – more than 12 observations in one year!

We have had 12 very professional new additions to the teaching profession, who, no doubt, have successful careers ahead.

Training has been high on our agenda this year with a real focus on the two 'P's: Pace and Progress - and this is just the start! To raise achievement at Key Stage 4 and 5, we need to focus on our teaching and learning along with fine analysis of data. With this combination, strongly supported by Inset, we aim to enable students to achieve their full potential.

Most colleagues have been on at least one course each this year. Many have achieved additional qualifications. A new financial year brings new challenges and a new budgetSo if you have any requests, come and see me.

Following a 'quality assurance' visit, we are proud to have been recognised by County Hall as having an excellent programme of induction for our new staff. We have also been praised for our ITT programmes following two Ofsted inspections, involving Leicester and Loughborough Universities. This is due to your hard work and enthusiasm, thank you.

Next year will see changes at the helm of CPD. I will be working even more closely with Sheila as she uses her many skills and talents to run the programme. I will be adding the Sixth Form to my portfolio of responsibilities, a challenge I know I will enjoy.

The staff continue to impress me with their enthusiasm to learn and take both themselves and the students to new heights. I am sure this will continue into next year and beyond.

To those leaving us in the summer, you will certainly be missed and I personally wish you many happy experiences ahead. For those remaining, have a wonderful summer and come back in August revived and raring to go!

Margaret Hawksworth



Clock Ticking for National Strategies

Get it while you can – because valuable online information for teachers may soon disappear as Government websites are updated.

The National Strategies for Secondary teaching have become a popular resource for teachers wanting detailed tips on issues such as behaviour, attendance, assessment, intervention and functional skills.

The Strategies also include useful subject frameworks, including planning tools for English, Maths, Science and ICT.

Now the Strategies themselves may be about to vanish.

Headteacher Viv Keller-Garnett said: "Although the National Strategies have been abolished, the principles embedded in them live on.

"It is definitely worth visiting the website while the Strategies are still on there, to access and download the wealth of information available. The Strategies are still very relevant to today's teaching staff."

The Strategies also cover issues such as literacy across the curriculum, thinking skills, tracking and target setting, and narrowing the gap.

The National Strategies can still be found at <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary>



Where Next with the Secondary Curriculum?

Teaching staff who want to stay ahead of changes in secondary education can sign up for a one-day workshop to be held at Ashby School in June.

The session – entitled 'Where next with the secondary curriculum?' – will be run by the National College (for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services).

The course will give staff a better understanding of how Government changes to education are likely to affect the curriculum.

They will also be able to share knowledge, information and emerging practice with colleagues from other schools.

Topics will include the impact of the new English Baccalaureate and proposed changes to vocational education.

Staff will also consider how curriculum changes can continue to meet a broad skills-based curriculum.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop on Tuesday 14 June should register on the National College website. The session will take place from 1 – 4pm in the Sixth Form Centre.

Thumbs Up for NQT Training

Ashby School's NQT training programme is an example of 'outstanding practice', according to inspectors.

Inspector Heather Osgood reviewed evidence compiled by the school's 12 newly qualified teachers and interviewed four of the NQTs.

Margaret Hawksworth said: "The inspector liked the fact that the programme was very well-organised and that our NQTs had clear deadlines, good evaluation and a good induction programme. She also loved the idea of the two-day residential induction for all new teaching staff."

Other schools wishing to improve their NQT programme may now be encouraged to visit Ashby School.

Norwegians Learn Importance of CPD *(from page one)*

Ashby School was the only UK school visited by a group of Norwegian educationalists during a two-day visit to the country.

Talking about CPD, Headteacher Mrs Vivien Keller-Garnett said: "Our students can only have their greatest success if we, as staff, are as highly trained as we can be."

Mrs Keller-Garnett talked about the importance of succession planning, which had allowed younger staff members such as Matt Hall to be promoted into leadership roles.

She also explained the middle leadership development programme, saying: "There are leadership roles throughout the organisation. We make sure that people with the skills, aptitude and ability are promoted."



Viv Keller-Garnett and Matt Hall with the Norwegian visitors

Changes Ahead for SEN

A new Green Paper on the future of Special Educational Needs in schools could mean significant changes at Ashby School.

Under the proposals, the Government will give the parents of SEN students their own budget to pay for a place at the school of their choice. This could mean extra funding for Ashby School which currently receives no cash for its out-of-catchment SEN students.



SEN students follow a diverse and stimulating curriculum

SENCo Linda Salt said: "We have between 10 – 15 SEN students from out-of-catchment every year, of which three or four have Statements.

"We don't get funding for any of these children. So, if the parents of all SEN children control their own funding, it may mean that we gain financially under the new system."

However, the Government may cut the number of children on the SEN record. The number of SEN children has almost doubled from 10 per cent in 1995 to more than 18 per cent in 2010.

If fewer children are included on the SEN record, this could have adverse funding implications for schools like Ashby – and for the prospects of some children who are left off the register.

Mrs Salt said: "Fewer children may be on the SEN record but we will still have to look after the children who no longer meet the criteria. They will still need extra help – for which we may not receive any funding."

In future, children may also be assessed differently. The current Code of Practice – which determines whether a child requires School Action, School Action Plus or is Statemented – could be scrapped and replaced by a multiagency approach.

Local authorities and other agencies will be required to set out clearly for parents what services are available.

Mrs Salt added: "In all of this, the parental budget will bring the biggest changes. We need to see the small print before we know whether SEN children are going to benefit from the changes."

The consultation period for the SEN and Disability Green paper runs from 9 March to 30 June.

Top Tips: Teaching and Learning

Good teaching and appropriate learning strategies are at the heart of Ashby School's commitment to student enjoyment and achievement.

The chart below shows how different teaching strategies can create improved learning opportunities.

Learning Aims	Teaching Strategies
Sharing learning objectives with pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Share learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and, where appropriate, during the lesson, in language that pupils can understand. » Use these objectives as the basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries. » Evaluate this feedback in relation to achievement of the learning objectives to inform the next stages of planning.
Helping pupils to know and recognise the standards they are aiming for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Show pupils work that has met criteria with explanations of why. » Give pupils clear success criteria and then relate them to the learning objectives. » Model what it should look like, for example, exemplify good writing on the board. » Ensure that there are clear shared expectations about the presentation of work. » Provide displays of pupils' work which show work in progress as well as finished product.
Providing feedback that leads pupils to recognise their next steps and how to take them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Value oral as well as written feedback. » Ensure feedback is constructive as well as positive, identifying what the pupil has done well, what needs to be done to improve and how to do it. » Identify the next steps for groups and individuals, as appropriate.
Promoting confidence that every pupil can improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify small steps to enable pupils to see their progress, thus building confidence and self-esteem. » Encourage pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos.
Involving both teacher and pupil in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reflect with pupils on their work, for example, through a storyboard of steps taken during an investigation. » Choose appropriate tasks to provide quality information (with emphasis on process, not just the correct answer). » Provide time for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and understood and to identify where they still have difficulties. » Adjust planning, evaluate effectiveness of task, resources etc as a result of assessment.

How the White Paper Might Affect You

"Our schools should be engines of social mobility... (so) this White Paper outlines the steps necessary to enact whole system reform... at the heart of our plan is a vision of the teacher as our society's most valuable asset."

Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State

The Government's White Paper is expected to introduce wide scale changes to the Education system.

Its key aims appear to be to reduce the role of local authorities and to encourage individual schools to work together.

The Government is also planning to set up a network of teaching schools, similar to the current system of teaching hospitals. Teaching schools will take on much of the work currently carried out by universities in training teachers.

It also seems likely that Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) will disappear. Instead, staff identified as outstanding middle leaders will become Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs). These posts will be open to teaching and non-teaching staff.

At the heart of these reforms, the Government insists that teachers will be 'society's most valuable asset'.

How Tracy Became a Teacher

In 2004, Tracy Price began work at Ashby School as an LSA. Seven years on, she is about to embark on a career as a teacher. Here she tells the story of how she finally found her true career path.

"When I heard that Ashby School was looking for four LSAs, I was working as a self-employed reflexologist and massage therapist. Before that, I was an aerobics instructor for 10 years at a local leisure centre and, before that, I did a series of jobs.

I even worked as a lab assistant, even though I hated Science at school.

I always regretted not doing as well as I wanted to in my A levels and not doing a degree when I was younger. Without those qualifications, there seemed to be no way to get a foot on the career ladder. I felt that I had missed the boat for furthering my education

But at Ashby School, I worked my way up from an LSA to a TA and finally to a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) in the Student Support Unit (SSU).

And when I heard other staff talking about doing a foundation degree, I wondered if I could scrape through and get a degree, too. That was how high my confidence was! But I had lots of determination and put in hours of work. I didn't want to fail.

At one point, I was working on my HLTA qualification and my degree course at the same time. It was hard work.

So when I got a Distinction in my foundation degree and later a First in my BA, I was pleasantly surprised and delighted.

Because I have worked so hard for this degree, I feel that I want to use what I have learned and put it into practice.

I have decided to work with primary school children because of what I have seen in SSU. When I meet students who can't read and are struggling with their numeracy, I wish I had been able to help them seven or eight years ago when they were at primary school.

I will be leaving Ashby School at the end of the Summer term to embark on the Graduate Training Programme, with a PGCE attached, through Nottingham Trent University.

Mad for Science

In 12 months' time, I will be a qualified teacher. Perhaps surprisingly, I have chosen Science – which I never liked as a child – as my specialism.

As a child, Science lessons didn't seem to have any relevance to my life. But, during two years based in the Science Faculty at Ashby School, I developed a real love of Science. In future, I would like to be a subject leader in Science.

As a teacher, I want to inspire young people and make them realise that Science is for everyone. Without it, there be no progress: they would not have their mobile phones, digital TV, vaccinations, cancer drugs...

If anyone else is thinking of doing what I have done, I would say that you need lots of support from your family and you need to be organised. You have to be prepared to give up your holidays to play catch-up with assessments.



Tracy at work in the Student Support Unit

I never believed it before but you can be whatever you want to be, if you have a vision and a plan and you start the ball rolling – even if you don't know where it will end up.

I began my foundation degree as a personal challenge and it has brought me here, on the verge of being a qualified teacher, which I never thought I would be. If I can do it, anyone can do it. I am now doing what I probably always wanted to do."

Head Addresses National Conference

Headteacher Mrs Vivien Keller-Garnett shared her expertise with colleagues from around the world at one of the biggest educational events of the year.

Mrs Keller-Garnett was among a handful of school leaders invited to speak at the National College's annual conference 'Seizing Success 2011'. Delegates came from as far afield as the Far East, Australia and New Zealand.

More than 1,500 heads, deputies and other leaders from schools, academies, children's services and early years settings attended the conference at Birmingham's International Convention Centre in June. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, used the occasion to deliver a keynote address.

Mrs Keller-Garnett presented a workshop on 'Making the Most of your Budget'. The aim of the workshop was to identify ways of providing the best educational opportunities for young people at a time of financial cuts and constrained budgets.

Mrs Keller-Garnett said: "I was delighted to have this opportunity to share my experience to benefit the wider education system. It was a great privilege to speak at such a high profile event."

Steve Munby, Chief Executive of the National College, said: "With a rapidly changing education landscape, the quality of school leadership has never been more important. This event gave delegates an opportunity to hear from top class speakers from the world of education, business, sport and the arts and to take part in workshops showcasing successful approaches to real leadership challenges. It was a truly global event with school leaders taking part from as far afield as Norway, Romania, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and countries in the Far East."

English Joins Forces to Ease Transition

Teachers from Ashby School's English Faculty are working closely with others across North West Leicestershire to ease the transition for students moving from high school to upper school.

To prepare them for the move, Year 9 students are being set GCSE tasks while still at high school.

The Joint Project between schools is designed to make Year 9 students more familiar with the work they are expected to do when they move to upper school.

It will also give Ashby School teachers a better idea of what individual students are capable of, before they arrive in Year 10.



A visiting speaker addresses a GCSE English lesson

Inaayat Hashim, Head of English at Ashby School, said: "Communication between schools can only be a good thing.

"It encourages us, as teachers, to work together to get to know our students better so that we can spend less time finding out what they can do when they arrive.

"It allows teachers from high schools and upper schools to get a better idea of where the other is coming from."

Speaking about the GCSE-style assignments to be completed by Year 9 students, Mr Hashim added: "On the basis of these tasks, we will feel much more confident about the accuracy with which we can group students, according to their ability, when they arrive at Ashby.

"The project is going to be very influential. High school teachers are going to get a flavour of GCSE which will have an impact on their day-to-day practice.

"Upper school teachers are going to be aware of the good practice that is taking place in our feeder schools."

He added: "Transitions can be very tricky phases for students. Changing from one school to another is a massive thing.

"We want to ensure that every child is always being valued and pushed and encouraged, regardless of which school they are at."

Science Faculty Shares its Knowledge

Teachers from Ashby School will share their knowledge with colleagues from across the county and beyond at a regional conference for Science technicians.

Heather Pope and Suzanne Windridge will set up workshops for the delegates at the CPD conference in Leicester.

The event, which is aimed specifically at technicians, will include a series of hands-on sessions, covering a variety of skills encountered by technicians during their work in secondary schools.

Topics will include reactivity, acids and bases and energy changes during reactions.

Mrs Pope said: "The workshops will allow the delegates to have a go at some of the experiments that they frequently set but never have the chance to try themselves!"

This will be the fourth year that Ashby School has been involved in the conference.

Head of Science Adam Linnik said: "It is a real privilege for our staff to be involved in the conference, which will help to shape the future of Science teaching in the region."

It is hoped that the conference will help Science technicians to gain confidence in their skills, share good practice and network with other technicians from across the region.

The conference will be held at John Cleveland College on 22 June.

Parlez Vous Makaton?

When Sue English took up sign language lessons at Ashby School, she discovered a whole new world of learning.

Sue, who is Examinations Officer at Ashby School, enjoyed sign language so much that she enrolled on a course to learn Makaton, a similar system of signing for people with learning or communication difficulties.

Sue said: "I really enjoyed the sign language course so, when I came across Makaton, I decided to give it a go.

"I think it is important to keep learning, whatever your age. I like learning new things, and I like meeting new people."

Makaton uses signs, signals and speech to improve communication for people with learning or communication difficulties. Sue's course was held at the Derbyshire Adult Education Centre.

Sue added: "I haven't had a chance to use my Makaton yet although I did understand what was being said when it was used on TV the other day!"

"In the future, I like to think I will be able to use it, perhaps in a volunteering capacity."

Ashby School runs regular after-school sign language lessons for students, staff, parents and members of the local community. Classes are run by languages teacher Juliet Perfitt.



Geoff Has Designs on New Leadership Role

Geoff Staniforth's latest challenge is not a design project – it is a step towards re-shaping his own career by studying for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

Twenty-six years after arriving at Ashby School, Geoff Staniforth decided that he needed a new challenge - one that could eventually see him running his own school.

He has since embarked on the gruelling application process for the NPQH and has been forced to look carefully at his own leadership skills.

In a bumper 3,500-word application form, Geoff was asked to cite ways in which he had fulfilled these six key areas of leadership:

- » Shaping the future;
- » Leading, learning & teaching;
- » Developing self and working with others;
- » Managing the organisation;
- » Securing accountability;
- » Strengthening community.

As Head of the ADT Faculty and Director of Behaviour and Attendance at Ashby School, Geoff had lots of examples to draw upon.

He said: "I like a challenge. I always want to try to make things better be it at work, or in my house or garden. I have never really had a career plan; I got involved with things that I felt needed to improve like behaviour so my job has evolved over the years"

Geoff's successful application form earned him a place on a two-day assessment based on the six key areas.

Tasks included an exam-style written exercise in which candidates were given school scenarios and asked to say how they would handle them.

They were also asked to give a presentation on an aspect of their application and then quizzed by fellow candidates. This was a test of their presentation skills and their ability to challenge ideas.

The assessment concluded with an interview and a role play exercise, followed by a peer coaching session.

The two days helped candidates to identify the areas they needed to develop. Each candidate was then given a time frame to work on these areas.

As well as completing his NPQH targets, Geoff will be taking on new leadership responsibilities at Ashby School in September – although this will mean relinquishing his beloved ADT Faculty.

He said: "I love being Head of Faculty. I had a long term vision of where I wanted to take the Faculty and now we are pretty much there. We have got a fantastic staff team; the results are outstanding; the facilities are outstanding.

"There is very little we can't do in D&T at this school. Of course, there are still challenges in ADT but I need something new to get my teeth into. The biggest challenge is disaffected students and engaging them.



"Next year, I will be taking on some new roles including responsibility for the House system. That means I will be looking after everything relating to attendance, behaviour, disaffected students. I can bring the House system and Year team and pastoral system together as one unit."

With his NPQH under his belt, Geoff will be able to take on even bigger roles.

He added: "Ultimately, I would like to be in a position to influence how a whole school develops and runs. That really does appeal to me."

Local Schools to Train Middle Leaders

Tomorrow's middle leaders can now complete their training on their own doorstep, thanks to the introduction of local training courses.

The courses – which have previously been run centrally – are now being led by staff from local schools. Margaret Hawksworth, Head of CPD at Ashby School, is teaming up with colleagues from Ivanhoe and Ibstock High Schools to deliver courses in the Ashby area.

The 10-month course prepares teachers for middle leadership by covering issues such as teaching styles and closing the gap.

Margaret said: "Anyone who thinks they may be interested in middle leadership is welcome to talk to me about the course.

"One of the benefits of local courses is that they can address the needs of local schools, rather than looking solely at national issues."



House Managers are one group of middle leaders

The new locally-based approach also benefits the course leaders who must first complete their own rigorous training programme.

Headteacher Mrs Viv Keller-Garnett said: "The training really puts the facilitators through their paces but it adds another dimension to their skill set."

The next middle leadership course begins in April 2012. Anyone interested in signing up will need to express an interest after the Summer.

Courses are overseen by the National College (for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services).

The Middle Leadership Development Programme (MLDP) provides the opportunity for clusters of schools, academies and children's centres to deliver bespoke middle leadership development in a way that best suits their needs.