



Professional Development

Issue 5 - Summer 2012

Bespoke Learning Programme to be Launched



A new bespoke Professional Learning programme will be launched at Ashby School in September.

The programme will draw on the school's existing expertise and skills to deliver training events on a range of topics across the whole learning community.

It has been devised to reflect the needs of the school and its staff, following lengthy consultation.

Sheila Dennis, Head of Professional Development, said: "The new approach is inspired by a recognition of the expertise and skills that exist in school.

"In the past, people have gone out on courses. There will still be a need for that because we are an exam school and we need to keep abreast of what the exam boards are doing, but there will be a much greater focus on providing training in-house and working cooperatively with other schools."

Teaching staff will be asked to select one of three core programmes – or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) - and to attend three events on this in a term.

Brad Akrill will deliver part of the new Professional Learning programme

They will then be able to select topics from a range of other options. Support staff will choose from a separate list of options tailored to their needs.

Sheila added: "All members of the learning community are entitled to go along to any of the sessions.

School Welcomes New Staff

There will be lots of new faces – and expertise - in school from September.

New arrivals (at the time of going to press) include:

Punita Chandel (ICT), Louise Gungaram (Geography), Ewan Myles (English), Brooke Keating-Rogers (English), Louise Hewitt (Psychology), Raheel Mohammed (Business), Rowenna Wallis (English), Samuel Squire (History), Thomas Ellicock (Resistant Materials),

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"I am so grateful to all the staff who have offered to run sessions and share their experience and knowledge with colleagues. The programme could not exist without them."

For more details of the courses on offer, see page three.

Joanne Hicks and Jonathan Boden (School House houseparents).

The school is also bidding goodbye to a number of staff including John and Lynne Williams, Eleanor Wild, Millie Watts, Alison Cave, Rebecca Quinn, Tracy Filer, David Kelly and Karl Goodere.

Headteacher Eddie Green said: "We would like to thank all outgoing staff for their valued contribution to the school and wish them all the best in their future endeavours."

Introduction from the Head of Professional Development

I want to take a moment to thank you for all your contributions to the professional learning events that have taken place since the last issue: a legacy of hard work, dedication and commitment.

Our NQTs have worked extremely hard, with some showing leadership qualities already, having led twilight events on topics like Behaviour Management and Creativity in Form Time.

It comes as no surprise then to inform you that all our NQTs have now successfully completed their induction period. We welcome them to the profession and wish them well for their future career.

This year, you have gained better knowledge and insight as a result of colleagues' willingness to share their expertise and professional learning with you. In 2012 - 13, our newly devised Professional Learning Programme will build upon these developments and continue to promote collegiality, as we strive to encourage innovative practices

that improve teaching and learning even further. The programme embodies our aim to ensure that our whole workforce receives the highest possible quality professional and career development that is driven by individual and school needs. High quality professional learning will lead to improvements in teaching and learning so all our students and staff achieve their potential.

We have other exciting developments to look forward to, such as the establishment of a coaching group and a Professional Learning reading group. Both events are voluntary and will offer personalised approaches to your professional development.

We are also committed to working collaboratively with other schools and establishments in order to offer you opportunities for high quality professional development. If you are interested in any of these developments or want to meet to discuss your professional development then please contact me.



To those leaving us in the summer, you will certainly be missed; I wish you well with your new ventures. For those remaining, I very much look forward to working with you again next term.

Sheila Dennis
Head of Professional Development

Teaching Schools Alliance

Ashby School's involvement in the Teaching Schools Alliance is likely to have an impact on professional development.

The school was invited to join the Alliance which is based around Forest Way, a designated teaching school.

The Alliance brings together a large number of schools from nursery through to secondary.

Headteacher Eddie Green said: "The Government is giving increasing responsibility for the development of the workforce to teaching schools and therefore being part of an alliance will help us to shape the future of the teaching profession.

"It is simply about sharing best practice. There will be events that involve schools from different sectors and phases, learning from one another and sharing ideas that work well."

Ashby School has completed an audit to detail what it can contribute and what the school hopes to gain from the Alliance.

Why Tweet?

By Vanessa Dakin

Is Twitter the future? I don't know, I can't answer that. What I do know is that Twitter is now, right now. It's current; it's where it's at!

So, why Tweet? There are several reasons people Tweet. It's quick, easy (once you get the hang of it) and you can learn so much from others on Twitter. I see two main uses for us as teachers and educators. One is to communicate with the young people we teach and work with. We can stay in touch, pass on advice and information and put them in touch with subject related Tweets.

The other use is for our own CPD. Twitter has a wealth of professionals able and willing to share good practice of teaching and learning. It makes this process unbelievably quick and simple – it's there at your fingertips.



Here at Ashby, there are various levels of Twitter use. From those who have heard of it but nothing more, to those who are prolific Tweepers and have several hundred 'followers'. All this is about to change!

An introductory session to demystify Twitter and its quirky @, DM, # language was held in July. There is now a school policy on Twitter, with a view to staff setting up their own Ashby School Twitter accounts.

Ashby School has a main account and the Psychology department regularly tweets its students with info on everything from exams to relevant Psychological research. I'm sure the number of Ashby Twitter accounts will grow in the next few weeks.

Anything that improves communication between students and staff and between professionals within teaching has to be a good thing!

Faculty Heads Get Ahead

Changes are afoot across all Faculties, following in-house training for Heads of Faculty.

In the first session, Faculty Heads were encouraged to examine their role as leaders, and to recognise the important part they play in moving the school forward.

A second session in June looked at ways of developing leadership qualities in Heads' everyday work and meeting the school's expectations of them.

Dan Markham, who became Head of Design and Technology in 2011, said: "It has made us think about our personalities, the perceptions people have of us as leaders, and the different techniques we can use to create a positive atmosphere in the Faculty. It was really inspiring.

Teachers Embrace Lessons of Holocaust

Two teachers will be using the lessons of the holocaust to promote qualities such as tolerance and empathy to students, following a visit to Auschwitz.

Aimee Littler, who teaches Religious Studies, and Samantha Lucien, a languages teacher, travelled to Auschwitz, as part of a Holocaust Educational Trust initiative.

This year, Samantha has been running after-school history lessons for staff and students – all in French – and plans to use her experiences in Poland to help with future sessions.

Samantha said: "It has been a real challenge for Year 10 and 11 students



Dan Markham says leadership training has created a positive atmosphere in Faculties.

"It has made me feel that I am part of a Heads of Faculty team that is working together to raise attainment across the school."

By sharing ideas, it is hoped a greater degree of consistency can be achieved across the school.

Headteacher Eddie Green said: "My view is that middle leaders have an important role to play in raising standards and improving teaching and learning, yet we have not

invested enough time and energy in making sure they feel supported in the way they perform their role."

The June session was held at Ashfield in2 Focus, highlighting the strength of the partnership between the school and one of Ashby's largest local employers.



Samantha Lucien will be using the lessons of Auschwitz in her French history lessons

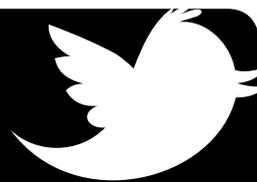
to work with complex topics, such as the French Revolution, and to deal with the linguistic side of it as well.

"Next year, my focus will be the Second World War so the trip to Poland was a wonderful opportunity to collect information and start planning my lessons. I have always been really interested in history so I could not turn down the chance to go to Auschwitz."

Aimee added: "This experience will help us to promote qualities such as compassion and empathy and tolerance within school, as well as supporting our own professional development."

UCAS Online
@ucas_online

"Can you honestly say getting an A in Film Studies is as hard as getting A* in Physics?" Our new blog on UCAS points <http://ow.ly/bBGx2>*



Professional Learning – All Under One Roof (Ours!)

Future training sessions for staff will be run in-house, tapping into the school's own reservoir of expertise.

Teachers must choose to join one of three Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) - Sixth Form, Vulnerable Students and New ICT Technologies. The remaining two will be covered at workshops on 8 January.

After covering the PLCs, teachers will be able to choose from a range of other options. These include:

- Engaging SEN students
- Managing a heavy workload
- Behaviour management
- Podcasts and blogs
- Excel in Excel
- Links with other schools
- The art of delegation
- Providing challenge

For support staff, options include the following:

- Using Word 2010
- Leading people
- Dealing with students
- Confidence/ team building
- Writing skills
- Health and safety
- The art of relaxation
- Mail merge

A full list of available options can be found in the Professional Learning Brochure 2012 – 13.

Graham Bett **@GrahamBett**

Clear, unambiguous & very true from @teseditor <http://bit.ly/LscFSW> "From the Editor - Bring back grammars? Don't be daft" Retweeted by Leon Spence



Keeping the House in Order

The role of House Manager is changing...Here's why.

House Managers are a bit like girders. Everyone knows they're there but perhaps does not appreciate how vital they are to the structure of the school.

In fact, the role of House Manager (HM) has become even more crucial, since HMs took on responsibility for core issues such as achievement, behaviour and attendance.

The HM's remit now involves monitoring the progress of all students in his or her House, across the whole curriculum, to help every child fulfil his or her full potential.

Geoff Staniforth, who has spearheaded the changes, said: "HMs now have a much higher profile; they have gone from being managers to being middle leaders, with their own vision for their Houses.

"They are learning to motivate others, to encourage people to share their vision, to delegate and to create an effective team."



HMs are expected to keep tabs on all their students, particularly those in target groups, who have been identified as needing extra support.

This includes students in receipt of free school meals and those involved in the C2S and Success to High Achievement schemes.

Each HM has between 14 – 20 Year 11 students in target groups and meets them twice a week after school to gauge their performance in each subject and to make sure they are achieving across the board.

Tutor Time

Tutors play a central part in the process.

Geoff explained: "The whole ethos is that the tutor is the main person in a child's life. They know them very well. My aim is for HMs to have an overview and to react to support the tutors."

The next step will be to widen the pool so that HMs and tutors are focusing equally on all students, rather than majoring on target groups.

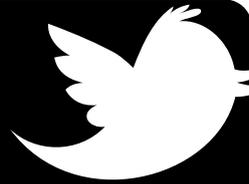
Geoff added: "At the moment, we are focusing on distinct groups of students. My next step is to ensure that all 60 Year 11 students in each House are involved. We have got data on all the students and we want to push them all as much as we can."

PsychCentral
@PsychCentral

*Heavy Cell Phone Use
Linked to Depression, Sleep
Problems in Young People*
<http://psych.ly/KLDT01>
#mhsm #mentalhealth
Retweeted by AshbyPsych

Sarah Middleton
@srhddd2

Rudolph cup cakes
<http://pic.twitter.com/lpDn0NuN>



Coach and Courses

A coaching group will replace the teaching and learning focus groups from September.

The new half-termly sessions will offer individual, personalised coaching for staff.

Coaching sessions will take place half termly.

New Teachers are sITTING Pretty

Stuart Hicks has been coordinating the ITT programme for a year. In that time, 19 PGCE students have passed through the school. But who has benefited most?

There have been PGCE students at Ashby School for as long as Stuart Hicks can remember.

Most come from Leicester and Loughborough Universities although the school has also had ITT PGCE students from Nottingham Trent and Warwick Universities this year.

Once they arrive, it is the school's responsibility to monitor their learning and progress.

Stuart said: "As well as giving them teaching experience, we aim to give them an experience that is beyond teaching their subject.

"Once a week, we run a professional studies workshop on an issue such as the role of Governors, applying for jobs, use of data, AfL, behaviour management... all sorts of generic issues that are applicable to all teachers whatever their discipline."

PGCE students are also allocated to a tutor group, usually in a different part of the school to their usual Faculty, to give them a broader perspective of school life.

Trainees do teacher support work outside of their Faculty and are encouraged to observe colleagues from different departments. All this takes place under the watchful eye of their co-tutor.

Stuart said: "My role is to ensure there is a consistency of approach. Personally, I have found it very interesting going round different Faculties being a magpie and taking ideas back to Humanities.

"The school definitely benefits because, when these people come from university, they come with fresh ideas and fresh insight and vigour. Their enthusiasm and ideas rub off on all of us."

Going by the Book

Since becoming involved in the school's teaching and learning programme, librarian Shelagh Settrington has become more determined than ever to encourage staff to exploit library resources in their lesson planning and professional development.

The Manic Street Preachers once said that 'Libraries give us power' – a view shared by Ashby School librarian Shelagh Settrington.



She believes that the library at Ashby School has a vital role to play in teaching and learning but that too few staff are taking advantage of the vast range of resources and services on offer.

Shelagh said: "I would like to see the use of the library included in curriculum planning and schemes of work. If teachers let me know what they are doing, I can support them in terms of resources. Our range of stock reflects the whole curriculum.

"What many of them may not realise is that we can also produce lists of resources, assemble topic boxes and even purchase new stock, if it is needed."

Shelagh's determination to embed the library in a joined-up approach to learning has been strengthened following her involvement in the school's teaching and learning programme.

She said: "I attended a teaching and learning INSET session after school.

The library can:

- Produce resource sheets for staff, on request;
- Compile lists of available resources;
- Purchase additional library stock, at request of Faculties;
- Assemble resource boxes, eg information on drugs topic for PSHE/ iconic designers for Art

It was only a small group but it was a useful opportunity to meet colleagues I did not normally meet.

"Groups like this encourage people to communicate and to try initiatives outside of their comfort zone. Crucially, these sessions highlight the fact that learning is a partnership - and I believe the library should be at the heart of that."

Technology has radically changed the face of libraries, and of information literacy.

Shelagh said: "In this age of information overload, students need to learn about skimming and scanning, how to find information and recognise bias.

"It is all about searching for and identifying the relevant information, selecting information that is relevant to the audience, and deciding which format to use. In the library, we can help with all that."

However, Shelagh believes there is still a place for books alongside the internet; that it is still often 'quicker to flick than click'.

"The library is a flexible space where teaching staff can encourage blended learning, combining the use of computers with a love of books. Some teachers bring classes in here but not enough."

Library stock has been completely revamped in the last 12 months. A new library management system, Eclipse.net, which is due to come on line shortly, will make the library even more user friendly.

The new system will give library users easy access to the entire catalogue, enable them to check the availability of items and view their own user accounts. The site will also suggest relevant weblinks in subject areas.

Shelagh added: "There is provision for everyone here from SEN students to members of gifted and talented groups like Literati. There is no reason why anyone should be left out."

Read All About it

The Teaching Resources section of the library is now called 'Professional Learning'.

This growing section offers an even wider spectrum of information for teaching staff, with more titles being added all the time.

Sheila Dennis said: "Professional reading is an important part of everyone's professional development. Reading about research and current debates in education helps to inform and challenge thinking and practice."

A catalogue of recently updated resources can be found in the Teaching and Learning file on the Intranet. Anyone who would like to request a particular book or resource for the 'Professional Learning' collection should contact Sheila Dennis.

Reading Group

The school is setting up its own Professional Learning Reading Group.

The group will meet half-termly to give staff an opportunity to read and discuss educational research and consider its implications for developing their own teaching practice.

It is well-documented that teachers' classroom practice is enhanced by reading and reflecting on published research and expertise.

The meetings will also help staff to keep up-to-date with current issues in education. The reading list will be guided by staff's personal interests and the collective interests of the group. Sheila Dennis has more information.

GTP? Get This Person

The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) is a fast track route into teaching. Rachael Morton-Riley explains why it was the right choice for her.

Tell us a bit about your route to Ashby School.

Before going to university, I worked for Youth Arts Leicestershire providing performing arts opportunities for young people aged five to 25. We took students from Ashby School to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for many years. I always found the attitude of staff and students from Ashby School to be exceptional.

Then I decided I wanted to go into formal teaching. I'd always loved literature so I decided to follow my passion and study English and Creative Arts at Derby University. Then I enrolled for the GTP.

GTP v PGCE

It is hard doing GTP because you are thrown in at the deep end.

If you speak to PGCE teachers, they say that their training is much more structured; it builds gradually, it is theoretical; they are



nurtured. With GTP, it is more a case of 'hit the ground running.'

GTP suits me. Financially, I needed to work. We are qualified after one year. I have done the hard bit.

What has been the hardest part?

Doing my degree was very, very difficult. I was still working part-time at Youth Arts and I had my family to look after. I did not have much of a work, life balance.

As a graduate teacher, it is difficult because there is so much information you have got to digest. Doing a degree does not prepare you at all.

What is the best thing about GTP?

As a GTP, my training is practical; it is hands-on. I attend university once a fortnight for one day and talk to other GTP students about their experiences.

I have my own classes. I do really enjoy it. Everything is falling into place; I am understanding more and more about teaching within a formal institution.

Any other hidden talents?

When I left school, I did YTS with a theatre company, first as a carpentress and later as a

fire eater and juggler, before becoming stage manager.

Where would you like to be in five years' time?

Employed! Next year, I will be teaching literacy, drama and English which is close to where I came from at Youth Arts, in terms of my interests and experience. I am so excited about next year.

Part of my role will be involved with disaffected students which is where my heart is.

Why Ashby School?

I have a history with Ashby School and I am delighted to be given the opportunity to stay here. I like the way Ashby School does things; I like the tradition of it and the fact that it is quite informal within the formal setting. There is a good mix of new and old, among the staff, too.

Staff in general have been amazingly helpful. When I applied to do GTP, I didn't have GCSE Maths; I only had an equivalent qualification which was no longer accepted. Julian Constable kindly sacrificed many evenings and weekends teaching me Maths so that I could sit the exam. Thanks to his patience (and great sense of humour) I passed!

Why Ashby School? Because it is an exceptional school, that's why!

Social Networking for Schools

Social networking is becoming an increasingly important tool in schools.

Yet limited training opportunities for teachers mean that social networks are rarely for educational purposes and that many students are self-taught in new technologies – and firmly ahead of their elders.

In fact, research has found that many teachers believe social networking is disruptive to learning.

70 per cent of parents of 12 - 15-year-olds thought their child knew more about the internet than they did. Ofcom, 2010

A new AQA course in 'The Effective Use of Social Networking in Teaching and Learning' aims to change all that.

As part of the course, Sheila Dennis, Julie Norley and Jo Marlow built and customised their own social networks and learned how these could be used to benefit learning.

They also explored the use of Web 2.0 technologies in the classroom.

The future of ICT in schools is up for discussion. Web 3.0 is around the corner and we have barely begun teaching Web 2.0 yet.

Sheila said: "A smartphone is essentially a mini computer in the classroom. It has internet access and can run affordable applications that can be invaluable learning tools.

"As schools, we have to embrace this technology, especially at a time of limited resources in education. There is no other way that we can get a computer and a camera for every child in every lesson."

The course also covered issues such as privacy, safety and concerns about the welfare of children online.

Useful further reading on this topic includes:

UK-based NING alternative for 5 – 19s
www.radiowaves.co.uk

Media creation, made easy
www.vuvox.com

Your Teacher has Now Joined Facebook
www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-12193773

A NING Social Network for those Interested in Social Media in Education
www.classroom20.com

Children's media literacy report
<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/media-lit11/childrens.pdf>

How Web 3.0 Will Work
<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/web-302.htm>

My First Year...by Vikki Rundle-Brown, Head of PE



Vikki, pictured with daughter Chloe, balances her new job with being a new mum

Vikki Rundle-Brown is coming to the end of her first year as Head of Faculty. Here she explains some of the challenges and rewards as Head of PE in a year of big changes.

Head of PE Vikki Rundle-Brown thrives under pressure. She admits it.

But this year, as a new mum and a new Head of Faculty, there has been a lot of pressure even for her. Yet, her love for both jobs is obvious.

Her first challenge has been to master a whole raft of new responsibilities that comes with being Head of Faculty.

Vikki said: "A lot of the initiatives this year have been brand new which means that it wasn't simply a case of carrying on with what had been done before.

"For me, the biggest challenge has been balancing all this extra work with being the best teacher I can be, and planning my lessons.

"I am a bit of a perfectionist which means that I am perhaps trying to do everything too well. "

Vikki's enthusiasm for her role has been bolstered further by the leadership training that has been delivered in-house.

As Erdington House Manager, Vikki got her first taste of leading a team and working closely with staff from across the school.

Typical Head of Faculty roles include:

- managing timetables;
- dealing with student behaviour issues;
- carrying out observations and learning walks;
- monitoring the work that staff are delivering to students;
- taking responsibility for GCSE and A level courses;
- meeting health and safety requirements;
- overseeing the extra curricular programme;
- looking after the budget;
- analysing data and looking at target grades;
- attending meetings and producing documents;
- performance managing Faculty staff and dealing with staffing issues

Now, as Head of Faculty, she is again learning from colleagues in other departments – an approach which she believes is invaluable.

"I have been inspired by Eddie and what he has said at Heads of Faculty meetings and training. We all came out feeling very positive.

"The fact that he is bringing in training which involves people from different areas of the school is really helpful. Otherwise, there is a temptation to stick to what you know. It encourages us to look at the bigger picture."

Since taking part in the leadership sessions, Vikki has run training for PE staff, looking at leadership, team strengths and where individuals should focus to allow themselves and the Faculty to progress.

Vikki added: "I have got a really good team; they have been so supportive of me in my new role. We are trying to make sure they are all playing to their strengths; this aids their own professional development and benefits the students.

"We want to move towards making PE an outstanding Faculty. More importantly, as a team, we want all the students to love PE."

Top Tips

Need Professional Development? Try This...

Professional development is not just about signing up for courses. There are, in fact, lots of other ways to pick up useful skills and ideas. Here are some of them.

Observing good practitioners
Shadowing a colleague
Observing other teachers teaching
Visiting and seeing another school in action
Extending professional experience
Leading and contributing to school-based Inset
Rotation of roles/ jobs
Coordinating/ managing a subject
Assuming the role of leader for a special initiative in school
Gaining experience of interviewing
Acting as a performance reviewer
Being reviewed
Working on extra curricular activities
Networking and sharing with a group of colleagues from another school
Team teaching
Peer mentoring, eg an NQT
Working with pupils
Taking responsibility for a group of pupils on an off-site visit
Developing teaching skills across a wide age and ability range
Working with pupils to present an assembly, musical performance or other event
Mentoring individual pupils
Taking time to evaluate your own practice
Inviting your peers to observe you
Getting feedback from your own pupils
Analysing class and examination work
Integrating the use of pupil websites and online communities into teaching
Reviewing your marking
Videoing yourself

Nic Raphael
@nicnacrph



*This week I found out what Year 12 think about learning. Here are my findings in my blog
<http://wp.me/p2jzE3-g>*

The Science of Success

Phil Newman started his career as a research scientist but turned his back on industry to educate the next generation of scientists. Here, he talks about how the school's middle leadership programme has helped him.

Phil Newman is named as the inventor on two patents, including one for Tencel, a manmade fabric widely used in today's fashion industry.

At Ashby School, he is better known as a Physics teacher, the school's Gifted and Talented coordinator and, from September, Second in Faculty in Science.

His rise from classroom teacher to middle leader has been dramatic in the last two years - a fact he attributes to the school's middle leadership programme.

Phil said: "I have been able to use a lot of what I have learnt to run the G & T programme, such as distributed management – empowering others to take the lead rather than being in control of everything myself.



"G & T has been a good experience of leading a school-wide project, working with target groups, and managing time and resources."

He is now preparing for his next big challenge as Second in Faculty in Science.

He added: "My dream jobs would be Faculty management and G & T so I am delighted that both opportunities have come up at Ashby."

In a former life, Phil worked in research and development at Courtaulds.

He started as a research scientist and worked his way up the ladder to become team leader, travelling to Austria, South Africa and the US (not forgetting the company's base in Grimsby).

Phil insists that the rewards of teaching are just as great.

"Moving into teaching is the best thing I have ever done. There is enormous job satisfaction in seeing Year 10s arrive and taking them through to Year 13 when they are better physicists than me."

He is now looking forward to playing an even greater part in students' development, as Second in Science.

He added: "My career has taken off very quickly since doing the Middle Leadership course. Without it, I would not have been in a position to grasp these opportunities.

"I can't wait to get going on the Science job. We are a good team and this is a fantastic place to work. Science is a great Faculty. In the next few years, I think we will become an outstanding Faculty. I hope I can play a part in that."



Do We Really Need School Governors?

Governor Daphne Hodkinson puts governors and their training under the spotlight.

A cynical Head teacher was once heard complaining "If you took away my P.A., my bursar, or the caretaker, it would have a huge impact on my school, but if you took the governors away! Would we even notice?"

I believe that the students and staff of Ashby School would notice because, as Ofsted inspectors recently noted, "The governing body is well informed, supportive and its members bring a good range of skills to its role. They already provide challenge to leaders and managers."

Governors are a real asset, if they are well-informed and really care about the students, the staff and the school. They need to feel confident to challenge decisions made by the senior leadership team and are appointed to be a 'critical friend' to the school.

They are not:

- A supporters club who chant "We are here to support the Head"
- Partners who share everything, good or bad.
- Abdicators who want to leave everything to the professionals.
- Adversaries who are there to keep a close eye on the staff.

A critical friend offers support, constructive advice, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed. They may also challenge, ask questions, improve proposals and seek to arrive at the best solution for all concerned.

Governors represent the wider community but, in order to understand some of the complexities of education, they need to be

willing to undertake relevant training and developmental opportunities.

The Governor Development Service (GDS) provides access to high quality training, advice and information to enable governors to offer effective leadership and direction to their school.

This service is offered in two ways. Firstly, a core programme of training is arranged throughout the county and advertised through EIS.

The second means of training is arranged by the Ashby Family of Schools and held at the Ivanhoe College. Each of the 17 schools has a Link governor who identifies the training needs of their own school and makes suggestions for the programme.

This year, 14 courses were arranged by the AFoS, ranging from the three session induction course for new governors to Performance Management. Ashby School governors were well represented on many of these courses, and continue to show enthusiasm and commitment to the students and staff at the school.