



Professional Development

Issue 6 - Spring 2013

New Faces

New staff have been appointed to Faculties and departments across the school.

Since the Summer, the school has welcomed Punita Chandel (ICT), Louise Gungaram (Geography), Ewan Myles (English), Brooke Keating-Rogers (English), Louise Hewitt (Psychology), Rowenna Wallis (English), Samuel Squire (History), Thomas Ellicock (Resistant Materials), Mel Somerville (Attendance Officer), Sheila Fletcher (LSA) and Katie Hawkins (LSA). More recent arrivals have included David Anslow (LSA), Claire Crew (catering assistant) and John Punter (crossing patrol).

All new staff have benefited from a bespoke induction programme designed to help them understand the school's practices and procedures and to settle into school quickly. Personal mentors assigned to each new staff member also play a significant role in this process.

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Punita Chandel



Louise Gungaram



Ewan Myles



Brooke Keating-Rogers



Louise Hewitt



Rowenna Wallis



Samuel Squire



Thomas Ellicock



Mel Somerville



Sheila Fletcher



Katie Hawkins

Ashby Leads the Way

Ashby School is helping to drive change at other schools.

Jo Grainger, a teacher from the Samworth Church Academy in Mansfield, who visited Ashby with colleagues, said:

"We all left with many inspirational ideas and had time to reflect on our own practice. We particularly enjoyed learning about how we can exploit the use of technology in our classrooms through Apps such as 'Socrative'.

"We will be trialling this with our Key Stage 4 and 5 classes. Also, the time and conversation surrounding CPD, Literacy and tracking achievement was particularly valuable."

Introduction from the Head of Professional Development

I want to start with a BIG thank you! Last year, with your help, we devised a new programme for your professional learning and this year we implemented it...what a success it has been!! You have all engaged fully with the programme and so many of you have given up your time to plan and lead quality training for your colleagues. The newly-devised Support Staff Professional Learning Programme courses have been well resourced, delivered and attended. THANK YOU. It is this cooperation and support, enthusiasm and commitment to sharing good practice that will help us to achieve our goal as we strive for outstanding teaching and learning across the school.

Our ASTs, Ali Jackson, Simon McCarron and Charlotte Lauder, continue to work hard to support our professional development through group work, individual coaching and, of course, the recently launched Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Your feedback suggests that participation in a PLC is a particularly effective way to develop teaching and learning skills...so watch this space for exciting news about next year's programme!

Congratulations go to Ed Cooper, Pete Hayes, Alison Cave and Phil Newman who successfully completed their Middle Leadership Development Programme training earlier this year. This course

challenged their concept of middle leadership and helped to develop new leadership skills. A big thank you to course facilitators, Margaret Hawksworth and Sarah Lane (Ivanhoe), who are looking forward to more success with this year's cohort: Andrew Plaskett, Rowenna Wallis, Pete Jones, Fiona McCafferty and Lee Shepherd. We wish them well.

This year has also seen the rebirth of the half-termly Coaching Breakfast meetings led by Ali Jackson and myself. Many of you have attended these sessions and through doing so have improved your knowledge and understanding of how to use coaching for your own personal and professional development. Coaching meetings are open to ALL staff so why don't you come along to the next session and see what it's all about?

Technology development for teaching and learning is a school priority area and, as such, a professional development priority for all of us. Geoff Staniforth, Simon McCarron and the ICT group have been researching different resources and approaches to using technology in the classroom and their research is making its way into our lessons, with some of you using Smart TVs, Ipads and Visualisers, for example, to enhance teaching and learning. Exciting times ahead, I feel!



We continue to forge strong links with other schools across the Teaching Alliance to develop teaching and learning, as sharing expertise across schools is good practice. If you are interested in getting involved with partnership projects or shadowing staff in another school, let me know.

So, as you can see, there are lots of professional development opportunities for you to get involved in....and remember, my door is always open if you need a little support and guidance along the way!

Sheila Dennis
Head of Professional Development

SEN Day

Forget Pancake Day and St George's Day – Ashby School has introduced SEN Day.

The first SEN Day in January brought together teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants for a day dedicated to their training needs.

Head of Advisory Judith Arnold said: "TAs and HLTAs are regularly involved in whole school training but find it is not always relevant to them. This time, we got together as a team to discuss SEN-specific issues."

Topics included making exam access arrangements for students with special needs to ensure that they are not disadvantaged due to special needs or disability.

Access arrangements may include help with reading, the use of a scribe or word processor, permission to sit the exam in a smaller room or with an extra time allowance.

In Years 10 – 13, about 100 students currently need special access arrangements. For every student, SEN staff must follow strict guidelines, gathering evidence, applying to exam boards and making sure that access arrangements are in place.

In-Class Support

SEN Day also focused on ways of increasing the effectiveness of in-class support.

SEN staff aim to work more closely with teachers to plan, identify and remove



SEN students have been using Kindles to help boost progress in lessons.

barriers to achievement, and help boost SEN students' progress in lessons.

A third session looked at English as an Additional Language (EAL), with a growing number of EAL students expected at the school in the coming years.

Staff Put on a Great Performance (but there's no form for this on Bluewave Swift)

The staff revue is not just a chance for staff to let their hair down (though they certainly do...)

The biennial celebration of staff's hidden (and often more unusual) talents is also a chance for staff from all Faculties and departments to come together for a common project.

Teachers and support staff join forces on stage and behind the scenes to produce an evening of unrivalled entertainment.

But, when the costumes have been packed away, the legacy of newfound friendships, cooperation and camaraderie lives on, benefiting the school and everyone in it.

Director Ali Jackson said: "The staff revue is great fun but it is also a fantastic opportunity for staff from all parts of the



school to get to know each other and to work together.

"Friendships formed during rehearsals will continue to benefit individuals and the school long after the revue is a distant and fond memory.

"More than 80 members of staff were involved in the production, on stage, backstage and front of house. Staff perfected their routines during hours of after-school rehearsals – and were even undeterred when the first scheduled performances were cancelled due to snow."

Research Addresses Attendance Issues

Research carried out by a teacher from Ashby School may help to change students' attitudes to PE nationwide.

PE teacher Roger Skervin chose to focus on participation rates in PE as part of his recently-completed MA in Education (Teaching and Learning).

He has now been asked to summarise his findings for a national journal.

Roger said: "I looked at an area I felt passionate about which was attendance in PE. I came across a lot of students who said – even before they got to the changing rooms – 'I'm not doing PE today'.

"So I looked at attitudes to PE and why some students don't want to do it. I found that a lot of the causes were deeply ingrained."

Pupils cited reasons such as a family history of disliking PE and doubts about their own competence, which led to a fear of failure in front of their peers.

Others were discouraged by changing facilities.

Roger concluded that one of the best ways to engage students was to work

with them from an earlier age, to foster an enjoyment of PE.

He said: "Ingrained attitudes can be established from an early age. A key way in which this can be changed is to work with younger students.

"The reason I entered the profession is because I like PE and I want to promote the benefits of an active lifestyle. We have a duty to our students to do this."

Ashby School already has close links with local primary schools and feeder high schools, and regularly organises sporting events and festivals for younger pupils.

As part of the research, Roger devised a departmental student questionnaire; students not participating in PE completed the form and then discussed their comments with PE staff. This together with frequent meetings between the Head of Faculty and Year Team is already yielding results.

He added: "Numbers in PE have improved. We are trying to work with



the students to see why they don't want to do PE. We are having more of a dialogue with them."

As part of his MA, Roger also looked at peer assessment in trampolining and the use of questioning as a formative assessment tool within the classroom.

He said: "Doing an MA makes you reflect on your teaching. I always tried to focus on aspects that would have a positive impact on student performance.

"As teachers, we should never lose sight of the students. That is what we are here for."

PLC. AOK.

Ashby School's newly-established Personal Learning Communities are now into their second cycle. Here we talk to staff members who have been involved in each of the PLCs: New Technologies, Sixth Form and Vulnerable Students.

'A personalised learning community is a group of professionals with a shared focus to research and trial initiatives.'

New Technologies. New Way of Teaching.

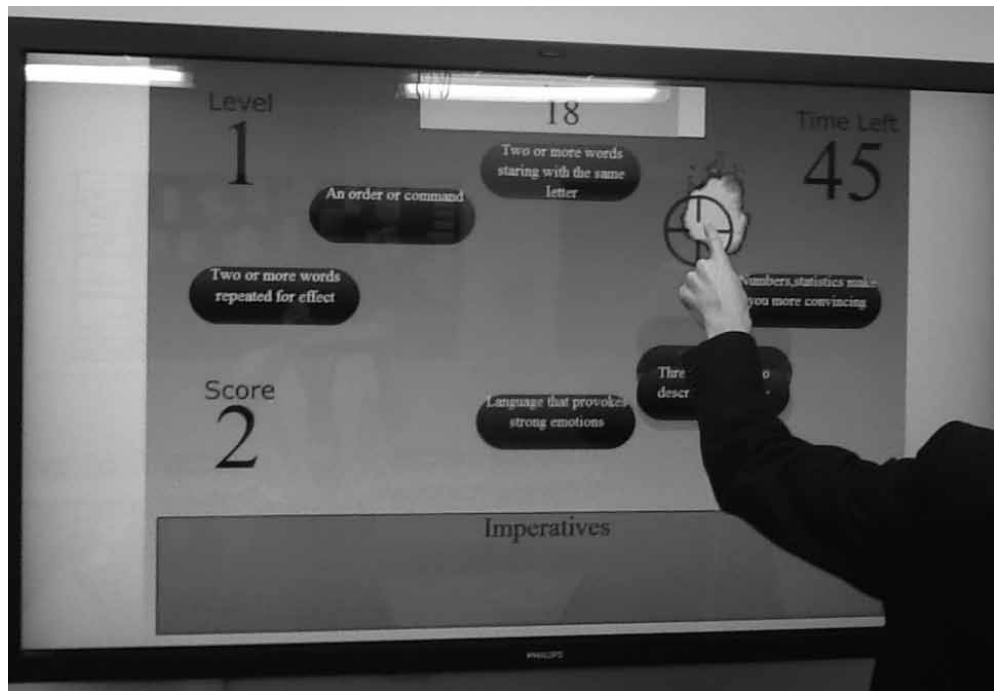
Teaching is changing. Not just because of linear exams or budget cuts or the introduction of academies. It is being swept along on a wave of new technology.

Ewan Myles is one of the teachers looking at how technology can be used to enhance learning, engage students and boost creativity.

He said: "The role of the PLC is to look at how technology can improve teaching and learning. We want to see how it can add to both the student and the teaching experience, to allow students to experience learning in a different way."

Technologies being trialled include touchscreen TVs, ipads and interactive pens. In some lessons, students are encouraged not to put away their smartphones but to use them as internet tools to help with their classwork.

Touchscreen TVs also make lessons more inclusive and hands-on by allowing students to take part in interactive exercises and learning games. Two of the TVs are already in school; one in Design and one in Ewan's English classroom.



The picture quality is better than on an interactive whiteboard.

The school is also trialling the use of ipads in some lessons. The immediacy of ipad technology means, for example, that the results of a student classroom poll can be translated instantly into a graph on screen.

Ewan said: "Ipads will never fully replace pen and paper but there is enormous potential. Ipads would remove a lot of barriers we face in teaching, for instance, students would be able to carry out research on the spot. At the moment, a lot of students can do that on their phones – but not all of them.

"Technology like this injects variety into lessons. Students can make films, blog their learning or tweet their responses to topics. These methods of recording information often appeal more to students than traditional methods."

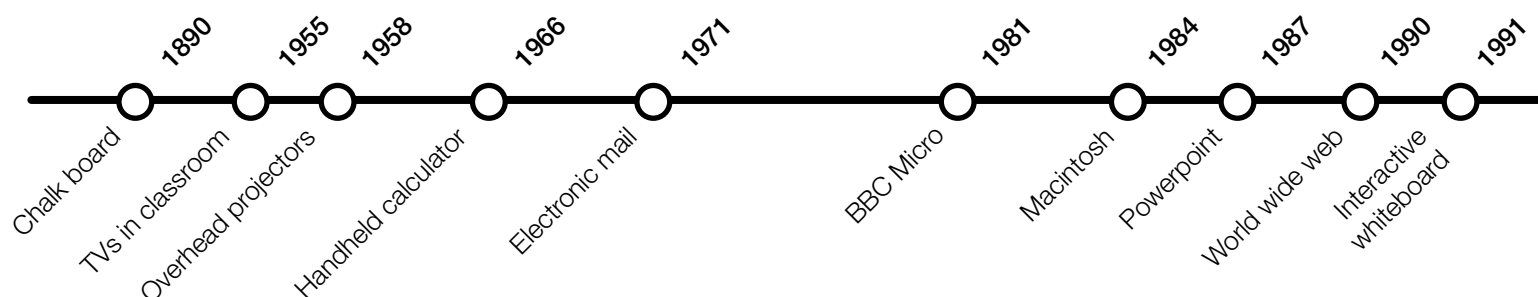
There are also useful learning apps to help with difficult topics, such as Shakespeare. Apps like these make topics more accessible to students who would otherwise struggle with more challenging texts.

Ewan said: "Our long term goal is to enhance the learning experience for students both inside and outside of school so that they can engage in learning outside of school more than they do at the moment. It will also help to motivate students who find it quite a challenge to be in school.

"If we can tap into what students enjoy using, they will enjoy the learning more. We are preparing students for the highly technological world they are entering."



Technology in Education



Charlotte Lauder Takes Lead on Vulnerable Students



Teachers and teaching assistants are adopting a new approach to the teaching of vulnerable students.

The Vulnerable Students PLC, led by Charlotte Lauder, united teachers and support staff in a quest to find the best ways to help these students in the classroom. The results were both surprising and effective.

Vulnerable students (including SEN, FSM and cared-for children) make up only seven per cent of the student population

at Ashby School but have some very real needs.

At the end of the first session – which identified vulnerable groups and strategies used in other schools – members of staff were given individual tasks to complete before the next session.

These included investigating the usefulness of homework and peer mentoring.

One teacher devised a system where students who failed to complete their homework finished it off in form time with the help of a peer mentor. Some students responded better to a peer mentor than to their teachers.

What Others Said...



"I learned so much about the students just by watching them. In a real life situation, it is difficult to observe because your instinct is to rush in and help. But I will certainly try to observe in future, where I can. Of course, this is not always possible where there is more than one SEN student in a class.

"The opportunity to chat to others about strategies and ideas to help more vulnerable students was brilliant. I really enjoyed it."

Leigh-ann Harris, teaching assistant.

No Desks? No Pens? No Boredom.

For a school with one of the largest Sixth Forms in Leicestershire, the importance of engaging post-16 students in lessons cannot be overlooked.

Staff used the Sixth Form PLC sessions as a springboard to experiment with new ideas and take risks with their teaching methods.

Ideas including removing desks from classrooms, limiting teachers to just 10 minutes of talking time per lesson, and taking away pens.

Gary White said: "The focus was on experimenting with ideas, trying different strategies, and then returning with our

feedback. A strategy might not work but we were encouraged to try it out, then come back and talk about it.

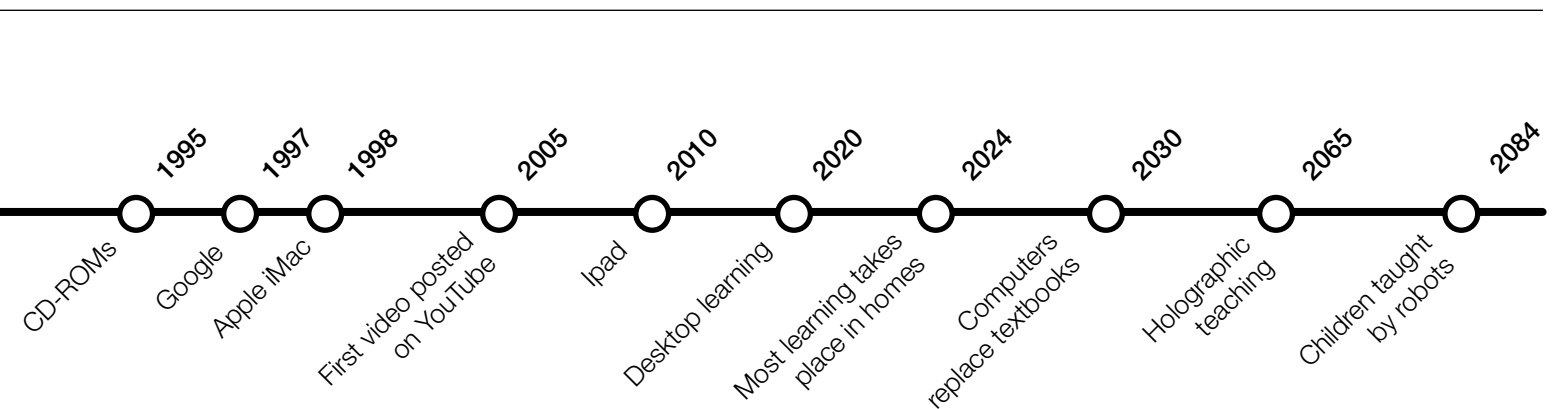
"I experimented with taking away desks. The students liked the freedom of it, the idea that the physical barriers had been taken away, but I am not sure that it works in every lesson."

For Emily Coulton, the school's gifted and talented coordinator, it was fascinating to see colleagues' tactics for inspiring demotivated students. Some asked students to act out scenarios; others encouraged students to complete tasks which involved greater use of classroom space.

In one textiles lesson, Emily asked students to write their findings on posters around the room.

Emily said: "The shock factor of using a different approach drew a better response from the students and helped that lesson to stand out for them, when we talked about it later.

"These sessions showed me that we need to give Sixth Formers a lot more freedom and independence but a structured independence so they know what to do."



Year Room and CPD

Disruptive students, pastoral care, bullying - these are just some of the issues that the Ashby School Year team is adept at handling.

The school's new CPD programme has given Year Room staff the chance to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues, and to help ensure that all staff work together to give troubled and disadvantaged students the best chance of success.

As well as leading a handful of sessions, Year Room staff have also benefitted from taking part in other CPD training opportunities.

Alan Demitriou, Lead Year Tutor, has been a member of PLCs on Vulnerable



Students and New Technologies. He has also led a session for support staff on 'Dealing with disruptive students'.

He said: "I think it is a great idea to have a CPD programme that draws on the experience and knowledge that we have in school. There are people here with real talent.

"A lot of the techniques that are used in the classroom are also useful

to us in isolation, particularly the use of technology such as webcams and Apple TV. It's all about keeping students engaged. Kids love technology – we have got to embrace that."

Meanwhile, Lyndsey Lane delivered a 40 minute session as part of the Aspirant Middle Leaders – Pastoral training.

Lyndsey talked to colleagues about real life case studies that had been dealt with by members of the Year team in recent months. Staff then worked together in small groups to decide how they would handle the same scenarios. At the end of the session, staff wrote a sensitively-worded letter home to parents of a troubled student.

In future CPD programmes, Alan believes Year Room staff could be well-placed to deliver sessions on issues such as behaviour and bullying.

He said: "Year Room staff are in an unusual position. We are not teachers but we are not regarded as support staff by the students. That gives us a unique perspective on lots of issues."

Ed Takes on Double Challenge

As a long standing House Manager, Ed Cooper was ready for a new challenge when two came along at once. Here he talks about how the Middle Leadership Development Programme (MLDP) and his revised House Manager role have reinvigorated his life at Ashby.

Career development can be a bit like waiting for a bus. While wondering where the next opportunity will come from, two arrive together.

This is what happened to Ed Cooper when the introduction of the new MLDP coincided with a massive overhaul of the House Manager role.

After seven years as Bullen House Manager, Ed was ready for the new responsibilities that came with the revised job spec. Under the new remit, House Managers oversee crucial issues such as behaviour and attendance.

This new level of responsibility has allowed Ed to apply the lessons of the MLDP almost immediately, including principles such as 'distributed leadership'.



Middle leaders (left to right) Pete Hayes, Phil Newman, Ed Cooper and Alison Cave are congratulated by Eddie Green on completing the MLDP programme.

He said: "The aim of the programme is to take us from middle managers to middle leaders. We involve others along the way, rather than dictating. In this way, I can provide opportunities for people to grow in their jobs.

"In the House system, we work as a unit – me, the form tutors, the Year Room team.

"Distributed leadership not only helps me; it ensures the students a better

educational experience and allows staff to try out new roles and skills, and think about their long term goals."

Individual members of staff in each House are responsible for monitoring different groups of students, including FSM, C2S, Sixth Formers and those with behavioural problems.

Ed heads up the team effort, drawing on the wisdom he has received through the MLDP. He and his MLDP colleagues have also shared their findings on leadership by delivering presentations to fellow teachers at feeder high schools

House Managers meet regularly with Deputy Head Geoff Staniforth to review progress and compare notes.

Ed added: "Our work with low level behavioural problems is ongoing but now we only have two students in Bullen who consistently present a problem. In this job, I can make a genuine difference to students' attitudes and outcomes."

My First Year...Punita Chandel

Punita Chandel is a one-woman department. Here she talks about her plans for Computing and why she wants to see more girls in her classroom.

Ashby School is a very different school to the one that Punita Chandel left in Hertfordshire.

Her teaching career began at Marriott's School in Stevenage - a town with one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the country - where her energies were focused as much on behaviour management as on teaching.

Refreshingly, she now has the opportunity to concentrate on her teaching at Ashby School.

One of Punita's first goals is to make computing accessible and relevant – not just to the scores of boys who routinely sign up, but to girls, too.

Punita said: "Girls tend to be scared of computing. By delivering some good quality lessons and helping them to understand the logic behind what they are learning, I am confident I can get more girls on board. It is only a matter of time."

Punita is considering running lunchtime taster sessions to give girls a flavour of computing, and to encourage them to ditch their preconceptions.

The introduction of GCSE Computing from next year should also help to attract more girls.

Computing is now at the centre of numerous professions from entertainment and communications to health care and retail. People working in all of these fields need to understand computing to be globally competitive in their chosen careers.

While ICT is about the use and application of computers, computing centres on design and implementation.

This enables students not only to be educated users of technology but to become innovators capable of designing new computers and programs to improve the quality of life for others.

Punita added: "The opportunities for computing students are boundless, especially given the current skills shortage.

"Students can go into project management, software engineering, games testing, programming, networking and much more. It is very broad."

Punita has another area of interest which she hopes may prove beneficial to students at Ashby School.

Her MA in Geographic Information Management gave her an insight into how geographical land data is incorporated into information systems.

She said: "I have always been interested in Geography and I would like to do more of it. There might be a few modules that I could teach in Geography department."



'The vast majority of careers in the 21st century will require an understanding of computing. Many jobs that today's students will have in 10 to 20 years haven't been invented yet.' – Computing for the Next Generation group

'Progress on understanding the genetics of disease or of creating an AIDS vaccine requires professionals to think in terms of computing—because the problems are unsolvable without it.' – Computing for the Next Generation group

Back in computing, Punita is looking to develop the department with help of guest speakers and external links with colleges, schools and local companies.

She also has ambitions to expand the department, including the recruitment of additional teachers, to enable her to reach more students.

Inevitably, Punita is taking a keen interest in the growing use of technology in teaching and learning, too.

"There is lots of interactive technology that the school could be using, such as ipads and interactive displays. There are lots of things we can do. These are exciting times for technology in schools."

Top Tips

...Blogs for CPD in Education

One trainee teacher has found so much inspiration online that he has created a list of his favourite blogs on his own website.

Ross Wickens, a trainee PE teacher at Loughborough University, has compiled the list to share with fellow teachers.

He said: "Since joining Twitter, I have come across so many outstanding

blogs to read that my Pocket 'queue' is overloaded with great articles to catch up on all the time. As I type, I have seven blogs to read in my 'queue', and that is after already reading six this evening.

"I want to share with other teachers some of the blogs I regularly check and receive notifications on new posts to expand the 'Recommended blogs' section of my website. It is these colleagues who share their own good practice and research that allows me to grow as a teacher and I thank you all for that."

A selection of Mr Wicken's recommended general/ innovative education blogs appear below. Others can be found at <http://mrwickenspe.wordpress.com/2012/10/23/top-blogswebsites-for-cpd-in-education/> or Twitter @MrWickensPE

Edutait
<http://www.woodham.org.uk/edutait/>

Mcintosh8's
<http://mcintosh8.wordpress.com/>

Mishmashlearning
<http://mishmashlearning.wordpress.com/>

My Learning Journey
<http://reflectionsofmyteaching.blogspot.co.uk/>

Teaching Alliance Helps to Forge New Leaders

One of the Teaching Alliance's five aims is to support leadership development.

This includes twilight training sessions aimed at 'aspirant leaders in education', such as 'Get That Job!' in January 2013, which was free of charge to Alliance members. The session included tips on producing the best application, interviewing skills, presentations and more.

When Mat Anwyll applied for the post of House Manager, he was identified as an aspirant leader. He is now being mentored by Mike Gamble, Vice Principal at Castle Rock High School, as part of the Forest Way Teaching Alliance leadership development programme.

"The first thing I want to say is that I have no ambition to leave Ashby School! I don't believe I could work for a better school in the area.

"But I do want to progress and that is why the Teaching Alliance mentor scheme is so good."

Mat Anwyll had been Head of Graphics for five years when he applied to become a House Manager.

The role of House Manager had recently been overhauled: it was no longer restricted to House charity and social activities. There was a new responsibility for student performance and success, which called for genuine leadership qualities.

As well as mentoring and coaching from his colleagues at Ashby, Mat is now

developing these skills in partnership with Mike Gamble and the Teaching Alliance.

Mat's involvement in the scheme includes visits to other Alliance schools, including a half day with a Vice Principal at King Edward VII at Coalville and a half-day looking at leadership roles at Castle Rock.

One of the focal points is the use of presentations – how to make them better, slicker and more professional.

Mat will be delivering his own presentations to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and other management teams at Ashby School outlining his visions and ambitions, and to other schools about the success of Ashby's House system. He will also sit in on others' presentations.

Mat said: "I am really looking forward to observing SLT members of staff at other schools in areas that are interesting to me. I wanted to take my career up a notch, to be challenged and stretched.

"As Head of Graphics, I was not using my whole skills set. Now I am House Manager and I am loving it!"

In spite of his new role at the helm of Hastings, Mat remains committed to his first love and vocation.

He added: "I don't ever want to stop teaching because that is the whole point of why I'm here. But I am in a position where there is support to progress.



The Forest Way Teaching Alliance aims 'to ensure excellence for all pupils across the Alliance'

"Being Head of Graphics is about 100 students doing as well as they possible can in a subject that is my passion. But, in a way, that was like having all my eggs in one basket.

"It is a big school. So to go out there as House Manager and to have a hand in something that is 'whole school' and involves proper leadership and management, dealing with staff problems and student issues and overall wellbeing, is a really nice feeling."

The Teaching Alliance offers a cross-school approach to leadership development.

Mat said: "Mike wanted to find out what my ambitions were. I am absolutely open to support and guidance on anything that supports my professional career.

"It is not just about this school. We are part of the Teaching Alliance; we are part of a bigger thing."

Ashby School is not only investing in its own aspirant leaders – it is helping aspirant leaders from other schools to realise their ambitions, too.

During the Summer term, two members of staff from Castle Rock High School will spend time at Ashby School, shadowing members of staff.

One, who is interested in assistant headship, will shadow Assistant

Headteacher Paddy O'Brien. Another will shadow middle leader Nicola Raphael.

There are also plans for a visit by a teacher from Ivanhoe College and King Edward VII.

All are interested in looking at life inside a Key Stage 4 school.

Sheila Dennis said: "Initiatives like this give staff experiences outside their

own schools. These staff, in particular, are all in Key Stage 3 schools. It helps to develop their understanding of leadership within a Key Stage 4/ 5 environment."

"Shadowing a member of staff from another school can help your professional development at any level of your career. If you feel that this approach could benefit you, pop along to see me for a chat!"