



Ashton Sixth Form College

NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION





WELCOME

Welcome to our end of spring term newsletter. Thankfully, the days are now getting lighter and brighter and it is lovely to see students finally being able to make good use of the outside space around the campus. Long may the good weather continue as we move into the summer term.

The 12 week spring term has been a busy and vibrant one, as always. We have seen a range of trips and visits take place, including the Royal Exchange Theatre, the Lake District, The Supreme Court in London and even a quick hop over 'the pond' to New York! Visiting speakers have included psychologists, business leaders, elite athletes and several alumni, including Victoria Greenhalgh who is now a successful lawyer and spoke to our students about her journey; both the successes and the bumps in the road. It is so important for our students to hear from a range of speakers and hear of their personal journeys, so I would like to thank all our partners who give of their time to come into college to inspire and support our students. Their talks, advice and mentoring are vital and really do make a difference.

In February, we held our third annual Culture Day. This is a student-led event, and our current student council did a phenomenal job in putting together the displays and activities, including singing, dancing, art and a fashion show. Students and staff looked amazing in their cultural dress and we all enjoyed food from around the world. Well done to all involved!

We now have almost 200 EPQ students (this just grows each year), and they have just given their academic poster presentations to staff, students and parents. The wide range of topics is always astounding, and yet again, we have no two students doing the same research. Topics include a delve into space to find out the nature of 'dark matter', research into lung disease and its treatment, the current crisis in SEND education and a look into religious cults. The presentations were fantastic and innovative; again, a huge well done!

I'd like to take this opportunity to say a massive congratulations to our recently retired governor, Christine (Chris) Lyness who has been awarded an MBE for services to education. Chris has notched up over 50 years in education, including working as a teacher and senior leader, governor and trustee in several schools/colleges, as well as being a member of several local committees and boards of charities in Mossley where she lives. Well done Chris, this award is much deserved.

The spring term is where the university, apprenticeship and employment offers flood in for our A2 students, and what a collection of offers we have. Our university hopefuls have secured offers from over 80 HE institutions to study a wide range of subject, and those looking to progress onto high quality apprenticeships have secured offers from KPMG, Network Rail and Greater Manchester Police amongst others. All they now need to do is secure those grades...

Speaking of exams and grades, life is now very serious and very busy for our A2 students who have just sat their third set of mocks, as well as working hard to complete their coursework and assignments. I am very proud of the diligence they are showing, and it will all be worth it in the end. I recognise the intensity of it all, and we are all here to support in whatever way we can. We have a wide range of services to support with academic or personal matters; students (or parents on their behalf) just need to chat to a member of staff.

Wishing all our staff and students a lovely Easter break when it comes, and Eid Mubarak to our Muslim students, colleagues and friends.

With my very best wishes

Lisa



Part of  **STAMFORD
PARK TRUST**



STUDENTS TERM DATES 2025-2026

Autumn Term 2025

(Welcome days for new students 2nd or 3rd September)

Thursday & Friday	21 & 22 August 2025	Enrolment - New Students
Thursday	04 September 2025	Teaching Begins
Friday	17 October 2025	First Half Term Ends
Half-Term (2weeks)	20 October – 24 October 2025 27 October – 31 October 2025	HALF TERM HOLIDAY
Monday	03 November 2025	Second Half Term Begins
Friday	19 December 2025	Term Ends

Spring Term 2026

Tuesday	06 January 2026	Term Begins
Friday	13 February 2026	First Half Term Ends
Monday - Friday	16 February – 20 February 2026	HALF TERM HOLIDAY
Monday	23 February 2026	Second Half Term Begins
Friday	27 March 2026	Term Ends

Summer Term 2026

Monday	13 April 2026	Term Begins
<i>Monday</i>	<i>4 May 2026</i>	<i>MAY BANK HOLIDAY</i>
Friday	22 May 2026	First Half Term Ends
Monday - Friday	25 May – 29 May 2026	HALF TERM HOLIDAY (Bank Holiday 25th)
Monday	01 June 2026	Second Half Term Begins
Friday	03 July 2026	Term Ends

FOCUS ON: ASHTON EXPLORE

This term, enrichment has been thriving, and it's been wonderful to see so many of our students getting involved!

Many students took part in the 'Have your Say - Enrichment Survey', and we have been trying our best to implement their suggestions across college. For example, we have rolled out a certified Mental Health First Aid training course, as many students were keen to further their understanding of the issues facing young people in today's society. It's brilliant that ASFC students are wanting to enhance their knowledge in order to contribute to the world outside of college - a shining example of what enrichment is for! Both A1s and A2s had the opportunity to partake in the course and 21 students are now certified Mental Health First Aiders!

Moreover, another batch of students have completed a six-week introductory course to British Sign Language. These students have learnt how to sign their name, age, details about their family, their pets, their favourite food and drinks, and lots more, including how to offer help to a deaf person as well as gaining an understanding of the difficulties and discriminations they face.

Finally, we have introduced a variety of new clubs to try and enhance students' time at college. We have rolled out student-led clubs for the first time! An exciting opportunity for like-minded students to come together and run a club in the way they wish,



with the college providing space, time and equipment to indulge their hobbies and interests. Other new clubs include Darts, Games Hub, BookWorms, and the Writing Café just to mention a few! There's still plenty of time to get involved and as always, there are more exciting things in the works, including preparing for our first ever Leaver's Ball!

Lara Teksen, Enrichment & Opportunities Officer



ASHTON APPRECIATES



Barbara Ashby

Nominated by Caro Caso

If I was asked to describe the Business Support Team, a true reflection would be. a real sense of 'pulling together', supportive of one another and will always find a way to get the job done and done well. I appreciate each and every one of you.



Leanne Ashworth

Nominated by Caro Caso

If I was asked to describe the Business Support Team, a true reflection would be. a real sense of 'pulling together', supportive of one another and will always find a way to get the job done and done well. I appreciate each and every one of you.



Julia Benning

Nominated by Natalie Jones

I'd like to nominate Julia Benning. She has worked closely with me on campaigns this year, providing invaluable support and always being available for a chat. Julia is incredibly helpful, approachable, and easy to talk to, and I truly appreciate everything she has done.



Jess Bulman

Nominated by Sophie Sparke

I'd like to nominate Jess for Ashton Appreciates. I don't know how I would have got through my 3 years at Ashton without Jess, both in and out of work. She is an incredible colleague who I've learnt so much from, as well as an amazing friend. Jess continuously goes above and beyond and really cares about her role at the college and across the Trust. There is truly no one else I'd rather share a brain with.



Marie Chesney

Nominated by Jess Bulman

You can tell Marie is really passionate about making a difference in college. When planning our event, we had a speaker drop out and she moved heaven and earth to arrange her daughter to do a talk for us about being a woman in the RAF. You could tell Marie did this because she was genuinely passionate about educating students across the Trust about getting into this field. The session was really impactful, and students went away talking about it and feeling very inspired. We would have been absolutely lost without her and can't thank her enough.



Carol Darwin

Nominated by Natalie Jones

From day one, Carol has been a great friend and colleague. She works exceptionally hard, and it's clear her students greatly value her teaching—I've seen and heard fantastic feedback from them. She's always the first to offer help, whether it's putting up banners, delivering leaflets, or lending a hand wherever needed. I genuinely couldn't do some things without her.



Russell Fryer

Nominated by Jess Bulman

I'd like to nominate Russell for being an all-round good sport (no pun intended). Despite his busy schedule, he went out of his way to assist us during an event, ensuring a school could attend at very short notice. His willingness to help, no matter the situation, truly stands out, he's always ready to lend a hand with a smile. Thank you, Russell - we really appreciate everything you do!



Chris Hanlon

Nominated by Susanna Meese-Simpson

Chris has given me moral support as I have faced both health and family issues this term and they have stepped up to support the students. He is a superb colleague, and I am very grateful.



Alison Isaac

Nominated by Andrew Gilday

I'd like to nominate Alison for her excellent help and support with the Forensic Science unit for our BTEC Applied Science students, and for her imaginative lesson ideas to help with my chemistry lessons! Thank you!



Michelle Jump

Nominated by Cara Caso

If I was asked to describe the Business Support Team, a true reflection would be. a real sense of 'pulling together', supportive of one another and will always find a way to get the job done and done well. I appreciate each and every one of you.



Andy Leech

Nominated by Graham Saffery

Andy has really supported all coaching students with their placements in terms of ensuring they are ready for them as coaches but also ensuring they develop their employability skills. Andy has certainly gone the extra mile and continues to make sure that students are challenged on their placements but also, they add value to their local communities. Thanks Andy!



Kirstine McClure

Nominated by Amanda Booth

She joined our department in January 2025 and has made a really positive impact on the department, students and has been a real support for me. She has been able to support new systems being developed and implemented as well as having a 'nothing is too much trouble' attitude. We have adopted the saying 'it will all be alright', so I just want to say thank you!



David Morris

Nominated by Jonathan Williams

I would like to nominate David Morris for his work in creating the resources for Sociology. As I'm not a specialist in Sociology, it's been an invaluable contribution to me.



Tony Payne

Nominated by Jess Bulman

Tony used his extensive knowledge to deliver a powerful and insightful session for our International Women's Day event, focusing on the key areas our young women need to consider as they take their next steps. His deep understanding of careers and skills, combined with his ability to engage and connect with the audience, made his session both informative and inspiring. He helped ensure that students left feeling more confident and prepared for their future pathways. He also brings a fun and positive atmosphere to everything he does and is a joy to have around!



Rachel Smirke

Nominated by Jess Bulman

When organising an event for International Women's Day, we were trying to think of someone to deliver something with maximum impact to our young women across the Trust and Rachel did not disappoint! She led an engaging and thought-provoking activity that encouraged open discussions about the challenges women face and how they can overcome them. She helped make the event meaningful and memorable and we are so grateful for her time, energy, and willingness.



Kerry Thompson

Nominated by Cara Caso

If I was asked to describe the Business Support Team, a true reflection would be a real sense of 'pulling together', supportive of one another and will always find a way to get the job done, and done well. I appreciate each and every one of you.



Luke Warren

Nominated by Susanna Meese-Simpson

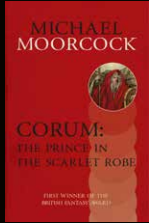
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ASHTON APPRECIATES



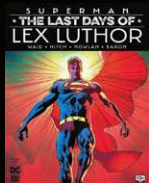
BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Andrew Szteblo, Learning Resources Manager, gives us some book recommendations. All of these books are available from the college library, so stop by and borrow one of these fantastic books!



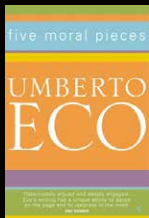
Corum: The Prince in the Silver Robe (1971-74) *Michael Moorcock*

Michael Moorcock, one of Britain's greatest fantasy writers, is hugely influential—second only to Tolkien. Unlike Tolkien, he wrote fantasy that tackled science, civil rights, existentialism, and the evils of imperialism and capitalism. His 100+ novels explore the multiverse (a term he coined!) and the Eternal Champion, a warrior balancing the forces of Law and Chaos. Best known for Elric of Melniboné, his Corum trilogy is a stronger entry point. It follows Prince Corum, the last of the Vadagh, on a revenge quest against the Mabden hordes, leading to a showdown with the Gods of Chaos. At just 450 pages, it's a fast, action-packed epic with a likeable protagonist.



Superman: The Last Days of Lex Luthor (2025) *Mark Waid, Bryan Hitch*

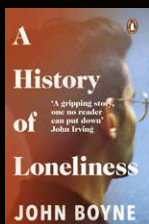
I wasn't ready for The Last Days of Lex Luthor. If its final part delivers, this could be one of the greatest Superman stories ever. Written by Mark Waid (Kingdom Come) and drawn by Bryan Hitch (The Ultimates), it explores Superman and Lex's defining rivalry. Lex is dying and asks Superman for help. The world would let him perish, but Superman won't abandon someone in need. Their journey spans the universe, raising the question: why save his greatest enemy—and can he? So far, it's a moving tribute to Superman's role as a symbol of hope. If you're feeling pessimistic, this might be the book to restore some faith.



Five Moral Pieces (1997) *Umberto Eco*

This essay collection by renowned Italian thinker Umberto Eco is essential reading for today. In an age of multiculturalism, Eco argues that tolerance is now our most vital value. Through various lenses, he explores war's purpose in a resource-rich world, the media's role in truth and unrest, and, in Ur-Fascism, his defining essay, he reflects on growing up under fascism and its lasting dangers. A must-read for understanding fascism—how it endures and how to dismantle it.

Recommended by Jess Bulman



A History of Loneliness *John Boyne*

John Boyne's A History of Loneliness is a quietly powerful and deeply affecting novel that explores the Irish Catholic Church's abuse scandal through the eyes of Father Odran Yates, a well-meaning but passive priest caught in the shifting tides of institutional betrayal.

Set over several decades, the story moves between Odran's youth, seminary days, and the present, as he confronts the uncomfortable truth about the Church he devoted his life to. Boyne masterfully depicts the personal and public consequences of silence, complicity, and the loneliness that stems from moral inertia. It's such a good and important read and one that will stick with me for a very long time.



ASHTON NEWS

Oxbridge success for Ashton Sixth Form College

This year, seven outstanding students from Ashton Sixth Form College have received offers to study at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge.

The students with offers are all part of The XL Academy, an initiative designed to challenge and support high-achieving students. Through dedicated tutor groups, opportunities for further study, specialised trips, and regular guest speakers, the programme provides tailored guidance to help students achieve their ambitions. This year, students also benefited from the newly launched Oxbridge Scholars Programme, which connects them with expert mentors who offer valuable insight and preparation for the competitive Oxbridge application and interview process.

Dr. Damian Windle, Head of The XL Academy, praised the students' dedication:

"Oxford and Cambridge Universities remain some of the best institutions in the world, and for these students to gain an offer is a tremendous achievement. These offers are the culmination of intense work and preparation on personal statements, extra exams, and a grueling set of interviews. I am so

proud of the hard work that these students have put in, as well as the tireless effort from The XL Academy staff and ASFC teachers. Well done to everyone involved!"

Ashton Sixth Form College has also been a host of The Goldsmiths' Sutherland Centre for Philosophy and World Religions in partnership with Pembroke College, University of Oxford, for over ten years. This long-standing collaboration provides incredible opportunities for students, including participation in the OxNet Access Programme, which further enhances their academic development.

As they prepare for their next steps, the successful students will continue to receive support from The XL Academy, ensuring they are fully equipped for the transition to university life. Their success is a testament to their talent, resilience, and determination, while also reinforcing Ashton Sixth Form College's reputation for nurturing academic excellence.

Congratulations to all the students on this outstanding achievement - we look forward to seeing all that they accomplish in the future!

Textiles students take on industry-inspired design challenge

Textiles students have recently completed an exciting industry-focused project, developing bespoke print designs tailored to specific target customers and fashion brands. Taking inspiration from real-world fashion branding and product development processes, students applied their research to create commercially viable textile outcomes, which were then showcased across a range of professionally presented products.

The project produced a diverse range of design ideas, from footwear and ballet-inspired fashion to resort and holiday wear, and even the rebranding of hiking gear - demonstrating the students' creativity and versatility when responding to different markets and brand identities.

This project is part of the employability pathway embedded within the Textiles course, designed to give students a deeper understanding of how design functions within creative industries. The brief mirrors industry practice, encouraging students to develop their work in response to customer needs, refine ideas based on feedback and think critically about commercial and aesthetic decisions in a design context.

The work was assessed by Jessica Banks, a former Ashton Art student who has gone on to forge a diverse and successful creative career. Jessica is a multidisciplinary practitioner. Her career highlights

include working as a Studio and Technical Assistant at Big Sky Studios, contributing to promotional campaigns for major brands like Love Island. She is an award-winning photographer, recognized for her work in Eizo Colour. As the director, stylist, and costume designer for the independent film Toula Gallery, she created costumes from scratch. Additionally, as a Fine Art Framer at Sully's, she has prepared artworks for Tate exhibitions—including pieces by Van Gogh, Quentin Blake, Beatrix Potter, and Tim Shaw—while liaising directly with Tate curators.

As part of the event, prizes were awarded to the most outstanding final designs:

Verity Woodward was recognised for her beautifully considered print concepts for Toast and Karst, capturing the subtle elegance and tactile quality of those brands.



ASFC Annual Awards Evening 2024

Before the Christmas break, we celebrated our annual Awards Evening. Students, staff, and families gathered together on the evening to recognise and celebrate nominated students from the Class of 2024. Our college band, 'Caught in the North,' performed for families and guests on arrival, setting a wonderful tone for the event.

Centre Principal Lisa Richards began the evening with a warm welcome and heartfelt congratulations to the students receiving awards, including a review of Class of 2024's time at college. Lisa was followed by our guest of honour, Tameside MP Andrew McLaren, who shared inspiring words with the audience. Andrew spoke about the importance of supporting young people in Tameside and also offered encouragement to students as they look forward to the next stage of their lives.

We were also joined by The Worshipful Civic Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Betty Affleck, who congratulated and awarded certificates to the students, acknowledging their outstanding accomplishments.

To conclude the evening, Student Council president Freddie Ives delivered a vote of thanks to our staff and special guests and extended his congratulations to all students who received an award.

A huge well done to all the students who were recognised at this year's Awards Evening, and thank you to Andrew McLaren for being our inspiring guest of honour!



12 Ashton Sixth Form College Students matched with Arts Emergency Mentors

12 students have been matched with Arts Emergency Mentors from across Greater Manchester. Arts Emergency "is an award-winning mentoring charity" that supports students from underrepresented backgrounds wanting to get into the creative sector.

The mentoring scheme supports Year 12 and 13 students aspiring to various careers in the arts industry and helps to develop their professional networks. This year, students have been matched to mentors with experience in a variety of roles including: Composer & Theatre Music Director, Freelance Writer, Radio Reporter, Cultural and Creative Producer, Theatre Writer & Performer, Marketing and Communications Consultant, TV Writer and many more.

"It is a fantastic experience for students as not only do they develop valuable transferable skills for the future, but the scheme builds their confidence and independence. Mentoring allows our students to gain an insight into a career they want to explore further and potentially find other opportunities they did not know existed. Speaking with other students from previous years, Arts Emergency has enabled them to gain top tips and practice for interviews, visit exhibitions and shows, undertake work experience and more."

Alex Noble, Realising Aspirations Coordinator.

Ashton Sixth Form College has collaborated with Arts Emergency for many years and looks forward to continuing to work closely with the scheme.

ARTS EMERGENCY

Ashton Sixth Form College celebrates inclusivity and diversity at annual Culture Day event

Students and staff at Ashton Sixth Form College came together for a vibrant and inspiring celebration of culture, creativity, and community at the college's third Culture Day. The event, which has now become an annual event in the college calendar, showcased the rich diversity within the student body through music, dance, art, fashion, and cuisine from around the world.

The event was entirely student-led, with the Student Council playing a pivotal role in planning and delivering an unforgettable day. Attendees enjoyed a range of activities that celebrated the different backgrounds and traditions represented within the college. From dazzling cultural performances to an exciting fashion show highlighting traditional attire, the event fostered unity and appreciation for the richness of global heritage.

Favour Otabor, member of the Student Council commented:

"Culture Day was fantastic as it highlighted the importance of people's different cultures and backgrounds. Furthermore, having Culture Day also educated me about the different materials people wear to showcase their culture and backgrounds, the languages they speak to each other, and the foods they eat."

Performances including traditional Indian and Afro-Caribbean dancing took place, with all students encouraged to participate and dance along. Everyone was encouraged to dress to represent their culture, filling the college full of colour and demonstrating tradition from all around the world. The food was a great hit with everything to taste from Indian, Caribbean and Italian, with the college's canteen providing a bespoke menu offering a range of cuisines.

Reflecting on the success of the event, Centre Principal Lisa Richards said:

"What a fabulous day! This was the college's third Culture Day, and I think it is safe to say that it is now an established feature of our annual calendar. It is so important for us to celebrate our diversity and the rich cultural heritage that makes up our college community. Aside from the amazing world foods, we were treated to dancing, singing, art, and a fashion show in which students were able to show off their gorgeous cultural dress. This is a student-led event, so I want to say a huge well done and thank you to our wonderful Student Council, and the staff who supported them, for their creativity and hard work. Well done all; a great success!"

This event is part of the college's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The college are passionate about ensuring every student thrives, welcoming diversity and embracing difference.

A huge well done to the staff and students at Ashton Sixth Form College for organising such a great event.







Christine Lyness honoured with MBE for her exceptional service to education and community

Ashton Sixth Form College was proud to celebrate the incredible achievements of Christine Lyness, who was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List for 2025. This prestigious recognition honours her exceptional contributions to education and the Tameside community over more than five decades.

Christine has been a cornerstone of Ashton Sixth Form College's history and success. Beginning her career at Ashton Grammar School, Christine dedicated her life to education. She became Deputy Principal, overseeing the expansion of the curriculum from 18 to over 60 subjects and significantly increasing student enrolment. Her visionary leadership made further education accessible to a wider range of students, leaving a lasting legacy of inclusivity and opportunity.

After retiring in 2007, Christine remained an integral part of the college as a Governor, becoming Ashton Sixth Form College's longest-serving governor. Her unwavering commitment to student welfare was evident in her regular visits to the college, where she engaged directly with students and staff. Christine's leadership was instrumental in initiatives such as Safeguarding reviews and cultural celebrations, including the acclaimed Culture Day, which

highlighted the richness of Tameside's diversity.

Christine's contributions extended beyond Ashton Sixth Form College. She served as a governor at Mossley Hollins High School and Micklehurst All Saints CE Primary School, impacting students at every stage of their education. Additionally, as a founding member and Trustee of Stamford Park Trust, she played a pivotal role in establishing a collaborative framework that has driven excellence across the Trust's schools and colleges.

Her dedication to the wider community is equally impressive. Christine served as Mayor of Mossley and has been an active member of organisations such as Emmaus Mossley and the Mossley Fairtrade Committee. Her efforts have enriched the lives of many, from students to local residents, making her a true beacon of service.

Reflecting on her achievements, Lisa Richards, Centre Principal of Ashton Sixth Form College, said:

"This award to Chris Lyness is so richly deserved. Chris has dedicated 52 years of service to the borough of Tameside as a teacher, senior manager, governor, and civic leader.

At Ashton Sixth Form College alone, she has positively impacted the lives of thousands of students through her drive, care, and determination to make a real difference. Most recently, as a valued Trustee of Stamford Park Trust, she has supported both the college and our other academies within Tameside, as well as numerous others.

There are few who, like Chris, have made such a sustained and impactful contribution across three phases of education – primary, secondary, and post-16.

On behalf of everyone at the college, our Trust, and the other schools where Chris has served as a governor, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you and offer our warmest congratulations to Chris.”

Christine, who retired as a Governor in September 2024, continues to be active in her community, mentoring young leaders and championing causes close to her heart. Her remarkable career and volunteer work embody the essence of public service.

Ashton Sixth Form College congratulates Christine on this well-earned recognition and thanks her for her enduring contributions to education and the wider community.

Oxnet Philosophy & World Religious Study Skills Day 2025

For a second year, Ashton Sixth Form College hosted OxNet’s Study Skills Day for Philosophy & World Religions students. 13 students from across the North West and London visited the college to participate in a variety of activities to introduce them to the OxNet programme.

The day involved an academic study skills session with Dr Peter Claus (Access Fellow, Pembroke College, Oxford), a taster lecture on ‘Global Christianity: Mission, Politics and Intercultural Challenges’ with Dr Christopher Wadibia and advice on how to make the most of the upcoming OxNet Seminar Series. During the event, students have the opportunity to meet others on the programme and develop their subject knowledge further.

“This year’s Philosophy & World Religions students thoroughly made the most of the day. They were extremely engaged and asked some brilliant questions to visiting academics. We are so proud of the students from ASFC who are enrolled on to one of six academically-intense OxNet programmes this year.”

Alex Noble, Realising Aspirations & OxNet Coordinator

14 students from Ashton Sixth Form College have successfully gained places on the OxNet programmes (English, Languages, Science, Humanities, Social Sciences and Philosophy & World Religions).



A2 Students visit New York City

Second-year Music, Photography, Drama, and Art students recently experienced an unforgettable trip to New York City!

Over four days, the students explored some of the city’s most iconic landmarks, such as the Empire State Building, The Metropolitan Art Museum, and Broadway where they watched Hamilton! They also visited the 9/11 Memorial, gaining understanding of the events that shaped modern history.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience provided students with artistic and cultural enrichment, offering fresh perspectives to fuel their creative journeys. Whether through music, photography, drama, or art, the inspiration drawn from New York will undoubtedly influence their future projects and studies.

To close the Study Skills Day, students were given their ‘Course Reader’ to prepare them for the upcoming Seminar Series. The programme is delivered by academics from Pembroke College, Oxford and works in close collaboration with Ashton Sixth Form College; the Seminar Series continues to focus on the theme of ‘The Challenge of Religion: Problems and Solutions in a Time of Global Crisis’ examining the challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective.



Students attend GM Business Growth Hub's 2025 International Women's Day event

Ashton Sixth Form College students were invited to attend Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub's annual 'International Women's Day Event' for 2025. The conference consisted of talks from two guest speakers, followed by two engaging panel events with a range of inspirational speakers from a variety of sectors.

This year's theme 'Acceleration Action' was central to discussions. Many speakers shared their personal and professional experiences; there were lots of thought-provoking reflections to highlight awareness regarding women's equality, especially in the workplace. However, there was also emphasis on celebrating people's achievement and the challenges they have overcome.

At the end of the event, students had the opportunity to ask questions to several of the speakers including former CEO of IKEA UK & Ireland and China, Gillian Drakeford MBE. Students talked about their career aspirations, next steps and takeaways from the morning.

The event also fitted with National Careers Week. One

guest speaker, Susanna Lawson, Co-founder of Circle of Trust and OneFile, discussed the importance of work experience for students and identifying different roles within a sector.

"I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend the GM Growth Business Hub's International Women's Day 2025. I have gained many insights on how despite being a woman, I am still able to achieve a lot within male dominated fields. Not only that, but the importance of speaking up to ensure my ideas and opinions are heard. I was also able to speak with women from successful backgrounds and gain advice from their many years of experience"

Khadija, Ashton Sixth Form College student



EPQ Presentations

This term, we celebrated yet another year of hard work from the 170 A2 students taking their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) alongside their other studies.

The two and a half hours showcase open to students, staff, and parents was once again an incredible show of the diverse range of niche and interesting topic areas of the students, covering topics such as:

- Parasocial relationships.
- Is 3d printing taking flight?
- Meet Magnus Maximus... no not the guy from 'gladiator': this one was much cooler!
- Grenfell tower: a catalyst for change in the construction industry.
- Is the involvement of competition in the British chocolate industry the main cause of the destruction of an "ethical market" or is it attributed to religious decline and societal pressure?
- To what extent is our perception of sharks a reflection of human nature?

- Struggles of the Asian British identity formation.
- To what extent have the royal Marines successfully adapted to the changing nature welfare form?
- Can the zombie-ant fungus adapt to control humans?

As well as many more!

EPQ Co-Ordinator Dr Rachel Allen said:

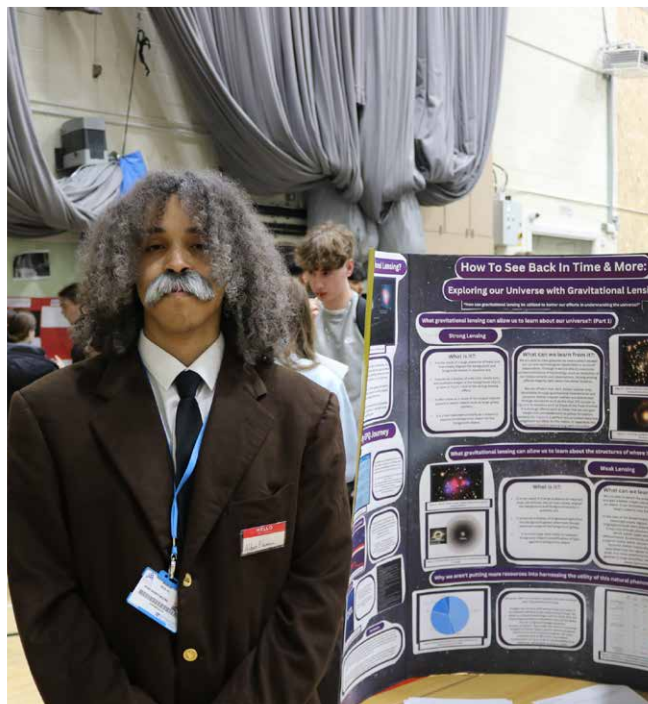
"This is an exciting presentation event for the students and forms a crucial aspect of their EPQ qualification. With 170 students presenting this year, the atmosphere was just incredible! The students really showcased their research and findings, using this opportunity to demonstrate the effort and hard work they have put into research, academic writing, time management, and referencing. The development of these skills not only demonstrates what they are truly capable of but also provides them with essential skills to support their transition to university and the workplace. A huge, huge WELL DONE to all the

students, you were just amazing!”

Speaking passionately about the EPQ programme, Dr Damian Windle, Head of the XL Academy at ASFC said:

“The EPQ Presentation Event is one of the highlights of the college calendar, and yet again the sheer range and depth of knowledge on display was simply phenomenal. The presentations were of the highest quality and to be able to celebrate this with staff, students and parents was a real joy. Dr Rachel Allen and her wonderful EPQ team have yet again supported and delivered an incredible event, showcasing the many opportunities on offer when embarking on a programme of study at ASFC.”

A huge well done to all students who participated!



Principal's Recognition Lunch April 2025

This term, our Centre Principal Lisa Richards held the termly recognition lunch to celebrate students who have demonstrated leadership skills and qualities in college and outside of their studies. Centre Principal, Lisa commented: “Our student leaders this year have been exceptional. Whether they have been members of the Student Council, part of the ambassador team, sports leaders or academic mentors, they are excellent role models and set the standard for other students across college. It is important to acknowledge and celebrate their hard work, creativity and service to the college, so today's event was very special. “

A huge well done to all nominated students:

2024/25 Student Council

- Victory Iserhienrhien
- Julita Joshy
- Anish Lad
- Freddie Ives
- Yana Macrii
- Favour Otobur
- Darllingting Uhunoma
- Khadeejah Rafiq
- Phillip Yang
- Brogan Freeman
- Minal Mahmood
- Suhabia Anjun
- Nabeela Begum
- Taseen Tabrez
- Sumaya Riaz
- Mohin Patel
- Neima Dos Reis Ferreira

"The Student Council this year has been absolutely amazing! They all have all worked extremely well together from their initial first meeting and each week they developed into an excellent team who work hard in planning and organising a number of events in college, coming up with creative ideas to boost the student's morale and overall college experience. Each event was fun and interactive but also ensuring they listen to the voice of the student body.

Each and every one of them has shown excellent leadership skills but have also worked exceptionally well as a team, supporting each other as well as supporting the college community. In addition to this, each member of the Student Council visit SLT each week to represent the student voice. They have done this with pride, positivity and professionalism, sharing ideas they are passionate about.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with this year's student council - they make me so proud." Bobbie Johnson, Senior Tutor

Academic Mentors

- Isabella Gardiner
- Alimah Rahman
- Parul Randev
- Chloe Nyland
- Lola Maleque
- Courtney Callan
- Rija Zaidi
- Araj Zaidi
- Max Pattison
- Faye Topham
- Khadija Elkheder
- Holly Diver
- Tayler Holmes

"These students volunteered to take part in the Stamford Park Trust Academic Mentoring Scheme. This scheme is designed to support students at Rayner Stephens, Longdendale High School, and Fairfield High School to make improvements to their achievement in the core subject areas of English, Maths and the Sciences, and optional subjects such as Geography, History and MFL. They have been dedicated to supporting other students but at the same time ensuring that their studies take priority. College has received really positive feedback from teachers and staff at both schools, they have conducted themselves in a professional, polite manner. Well done to you all." Kim Greeves, PA to Principal and Trust CEO

Student Ambassadors

- Sadia Begum
- Raisa Abdullah
- Sanamdeep Kaur
- Mata Diallo
- Tirenoluwa Ayo-Otaiku
- Lily Aldred
- Avadhi Vaid
- Charlotte Leishman
- Tom Dodd
- Afsana Siddiq
- Zeeyadat Agboluaje
- Elizabeth Kerr
- Sherleen Kaur
- Hiba Ahmed
- Nimira Qadar
- Toyosi Daniel
- Abiha Khan Farheen
- Emily Smith
- Laiba Raza Bano
- Prince McKing Onyemesim
- Emma McDermott
- Artelia Saliasi
- Logan Cullen-Shaw
- Mayesha Tasnim

"Our Student Ambassadors are at the heart of our college community. They are seen as the most important people by prospective students and parents and are the 'face' of ASFC at our events. Being a team of current students who volunteer their time to help support college events, they share their experiences and do a fabulous job representing us. We are very grateful for their constant positive attitude and hard work." Rebecca Cullen, School Liaison and Events Officer

Sports Captains – All nominated by Russell Fryer (Sports Coordinator)

Ella Whitwam (Netball)

Ella has been an exceptional student first and foremost and is projected a distinction in BTEC Extended Certificate in Sport & Exercise Science. But in Netball, she is a natural leader both on the court and off the court, organising girls in her own WhatsApp group to ensure we get fixtures played and reporting back to me regularly with updates. She has led the group to the point where they are in a position to win the league title in a one-match shoot-out between them and Sir John Deane on 19th March, cWe wish them all the luck and congratulate them on an amazing season. Ella has also represented the College in the AOC England National Squad at U18. Ella also plays for Leeds Rhinos and is on our Ashton Elite Programme.

Jonathan Thompson (Rugby)

Jonathan is a great leader, leading by example. He will be the first to offer to carry kit and equipment, will organise the players when requested and will be the first to check on the next fixture. Jonathan has cemented a good relationship with the Sale Sharks coach now. who trust him implicitly. on the pitch Jonathan gives everything, and his communication skills are exceptional out there. In the classroom Jonathan is doing well too on his BTEC National Extended Diploma for IT and is predicted DMM.

Ismaeel Ali (Basketball)

Ismaeel stepped up as a temporary coach when our Tameside Vikings coaches have been unavailable. He has organised the team and strategies for defending against specific opposition players. He has organised the timeout chats, and when they were needed. He has been a consistent starter for the team throughout his 2 years at college and has shown great maturity and resilience when we have not been winning, has kept his head up and supporting other players, has helped carry kit needed as well.

Luciano Hunt (Basketball)

Luciano has been the captain of the team, showing leadership throughout the 2 years at college. He has organised aspects of training sessions and helped new squad members settle in. He has spoken well to players about tactics along with Ismaeel, and led on the floor during games. He has ran plays and communicated with players about what to do and when.

Grace Hughes (Women's Football)

Grace is a model student, who is on target for a distinction in BTEC Extended Certificate in Sport & Exercise Science. Grace is constantly trying to better herself both as a player and as a person and has a very positive disposition. On the field her positivity shines through to the other players and her attitude is exemplary.

Cole Parkinson (Men's Football First Team)

Cole is the men's first team captain and guides the team with a calm leadership style, which remains despite some difficult games this season in terms of results. Cole is there for every game and leads the team by example, showing determination and passion for the team. Cole is studying a BTEC Extended Certificate in Sport & Exercise Science and is predicted D in this.*

Devon Hewitt

Devon is a ferocious competitor, giving 100% in every game he plays. He never misses games and is always the one offering to get the kit together, load the bus and ensure everyone is there. He talks throughout the game and takes captaincy very seriously. Devon has a fantastic attitude to football and to college in general. Devon is studying Extended Diploma for Uniformed Services and is predicted D in this.*

Speaker of the Month - January 2025

This term, we were thrilled to welcome back former student Victoria Greenhalgh to Ashton Sixth Form College as part of our Speaker of the Month programme!

Victoria studied Law, Drama & Theatre, and English Language at ASFC from 2015 to 2017 before embarking on an impressive academic journey. She went on to earn a First-Class Law degree at Leeds Beckett University, followed by the prestigious Barrister Training Course and LLM Masters at Cambridge.

During her visit, Victoria shared her experiences of studying Law, the challenges and rewards of higher education, and her pathway to becoming a Barrister. Her story was truly inspiring, offering our Law students a valuable insight into the legal profession and what it takes to succeed in the field.

A huge thank you to Victoria for taking the time to return to ASFC and inspire the next generation of legal professionals!



'Brand New Legs' Gig Review - Mateo Huxley-Fradkin

Brand New legs are Manchester band formed in 2021 with an exciting reputation for indie/alternative music.

I went to see them on a very wet Sunday evening in a very crowded Deaf Institute. They have only been on the Manchester music scene for a few years, but this eclectic group are already making a name for themselves. With Jen Perry on Vocals, Rory Cracroft on Guitar, Lucas Tams on Drums, and Ethan Scott on Bass and Guitar; achieving on average 18,900+ streams on Spotify every month.

The band came on to their song *Pleasure* an energetic indie song with the distinctive vocals of Jen Perry.

My standout tracks are: *It's worth it this time (isn't it)?* with its propulsive guitars, *Shade*, and my personal favourite *Sick*.

Jen and the band were firing up the crowd and getting everyone moving, creating a beautiful atmosphere in the venue.

The band are friendly bunch of people. Who make time to have a chat with you after the gig. Keep an eye out for their new music and tour dates, they have recently released their 2025 single *Chamomile*.





RESOURCES

For those who require support from external agencies or out of college hours, the following support is available:

- Your GP
- kooth.com - free online counselling service 12-10pm weekdays and 6-10pm weekends
- Off the Record Young Peoples Counselling, Clarendon Square, Hyde - drop in Wednesday 3-6pm (just drop in for a chat) or phone 0161 355 3553 (self referral)
- The Hive, Katherine St, Ashton-under-Lyne, 0161 330 9223 - drop in 4-8pm every Wednesday
- Anthony Seddon Fund, 12 George Street, Ashton-under-Lyne - 0161376 4439 or Thursday 4-7pm drop-in, including refreshments
- 42nd Street, Manchester - 0161 228 1888 (can self refer)
- CALM - Campaign Against Living Miserably for males experiencing mental health issues
- Freephone 0800 585 858, www.thecalmzone.net
- Themix.org.uk - chat/text support and helpline number on website
- Brook (confidential sexual health advice/treatment) - Manchester branch, 81 Lever St, Manchester, M1 1FL, 0161 237 3001

If you are in a crisis, feeling suicidal, experiencing any distressful/uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, try and confide in a friend or relative or seek help from any of the below crisis services. Most are freephone:

- In an emergency the hospital is your first port for help - present yourself at the A&E Dept anytime or contact Tameside Hospital on 0161 922 6000 for telephone advice and support
- Telephone advice and support for people who are having a mental health crisis and/or feel suicidal is available:
- Samaritans - freephone 116 123, email jo@samaritans.org, 24 hours everyday
- Papyrus - papyrus-uk.org
- HOPEline UK - 0800 068 41 41 for support

If you're worried about being lonely this term there are tips, advice and support available



YOUR GUIDE TO CEDAR



Cedar for parents is an online portal allowing you to become more involved in your child's performance in a way that suits you. It allows you to be engaged in their learning and performance at all times, and helps you to provide the support and motivation that may be needed.

BURSARY & FREE COLLEGE MEALS

The college bursary could provide you with financial support during your time at Ashton Sixth Form College. To check if you are eligible and to download the bursary information pack, please visit www.asfc.ac.uk/bursary