



SPRING NEWSLETTER

ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE





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. I have my fingers crossed for some nice weather over the Easter break and into the early summer.

The spring term has been a busy and vibrant one, as always. We have seen a range of trips and visits take place, including theatre trips, a trip to London to see the Supreme Court, Parliament and Westminster Abbey a hop across the pond to New York and visits to over 20 universities! Visiting speakers have included psychologists, business leaders, sportspeople and media professionals. 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, students put on our fourth annual Culture Day. This year, we moved it to the bigger venue of the Sports Hall and students did a phenomenal job in putting together the displays and activities, including singing, dancing, art, mehndi and a fashion show. For those less inclined towards the artistic activities, there was table football and darts. Students and staff looked amazing in their cultural dress and we all enjoyed food from around the world. Well done to all involved!

Also in February, our EPQ students gave 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 included an examination of Orientalism in western culture, a look at the effect of iconic buildings on local communities and a discussion of the origins and spread of conspiracy theories! EPQ is a chance to for a student to delve into topics outside of their courses and even choose something very niche, as reflected by the fact that yet again, no two projects are on the same topic. A fabulous afternoon – well done to all!

We have broken our own all-time record this year for the most UCAS applications submitted by the January deadline. Over 900 of our second year students have applied to universities the length and breadth of the country, and for a wide range of courses. They are seeing huge success with the offers flooding in and decisions to be made. Other students are busy crafting and submitting their applications for apprenticeships and skills employment –I can't wait to see the range of offers they receive over the coming weeks and months. Well done to our fabulous students on the high quality of their applications, and a big thank you to the senior tutor team, careers department and curriculum staff who have supported them so well.

So, while our A1 students focus on preparing for mocks 1 in April, vocational assessments and planning their Be Ambitious Week activities, it's now time for our A2 students to enter their final phase and to aim for the best possible grades. While we do push our students to do as well as they can, we also recognise the intensity of it all and we are all here to support in whatever way we can. There is a wide range of services in college to support with academic or personal matters; students (or parents on their behalf) just need to chat to a member of staff.

Best wishes

Lisa



FOCUS ON: SPORT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The Sports Department is celebrating an exciting term of student success with achievements across a range of disciplines highlighting both individual talent and the strength of the college's performance programmes.

Among the standout accomplishments Ashton Elite student Oscar Knox has signed a professional contract with St Helens Rugby League and is now training with the club's first team squad, a significant milestone in his sporting career.

International honours have also been achieved by Liam Keddy who represented Ireland at U19 level competing against England and South Africa on the international stage.

In cricket Jack Radford has secured a two-year scholarship in Australia following his time at college where he will continue his development playing at a high level of club cricket.

Meanwhile Ashton Elite athlete Autumn Marland is preparing to compete at national standard in synchronised swimming next month reflecting the breadth of sporting excellence across the department.

There has also been success in coaching with all 13 students who completed the Level 1 and Level 2 Dodgeball Coaching qualifications passing with flying colours.

Alongside these individual achievements the department has seen strong engagement across teams and fixtures this term with excellent student participation and representation in a wide range of competitions. The continued growth of the Ashton Elite programme remains a key strength supporting students to successfully balance academic study with high-level sport.



ASHTON APPRECIATES



Ahad Bari

Nominated by Natalie Flanders

Ahad goes above and beyond for our students, adapting to differing situations in their best interests and running additional sessions to support progress. Ahad has been a great support to me since I started at Ashton and I am grateful of having such a helpful and supportive colleague.



Dave Bridle

Nominated by The Printroom Team

We would like to nominate Dave Bridle for his unwavering availability, positive attitude, and exceptional work ethic. He consistently goes above and beyond to provide excellent care, even when working alone and under pressure. His dedication and reliability make a real difference every day.



Chris Burke

Nominated by The Exams Team

We would like to nominate Chris Burke for Ashton Appreciates. We appreciate that Chris frequently drops what he is doing to assist with computer and/or telephone issues in Exams. He resolves our problems promptly and is usually able to provide an explanation for what has caused the problem...and always with a smile. Thank you to Chris and all of IT staff for their ongoing support.



Danielle Heathcote

Nominated by Sophie Stone

I would like to nominate Danielle Heathcote. It has been a tricky half term and Danielle has gone above and beyond ensuring that the running of the new system and changeover goes smoothly and making sure that we are all supported throughout. She has been so kind and patient and has kept us all grounded

Ash Jones *Nominated by The Library Team*

The Library Team would like to nominate Ash Jones please for her patience and hard work in helping us to set up the new library system. She has been amazing, as always, and we appreciate her support and willingness to help



Geraldine Kirkup

Nominated by Claire Morley

Geraldine has welcomed me to ASFC with open arms and an open mind! We have worked side-by-side for almost a whole year and she has brought positivity, joy and endless energy to even the most challenging of days. Geraldine always has the best interests of her students in mind, going the extra mile to offer help; she always has time for each individual and sees the absolute best in everyone. I would like to thank her for all of her hard work, support and kindness this year.



Claire Morley

Nominated by Danielle Brockley & Jonathan Williams

Danielle Brockley:

I am nominating Claire as I started in January and needed to learn fast to help my students for the criminology mock exam. Claire met with me on numerous occasions and was kind, open and patient. Further to this, when I query anything she will always reply in detail and quickly. I now feel very confident in the AA procedure and managed to get my students sorted in time for their mocks and we will ensure they are all accommodated in their main exams.

Jonathan Williams:

I'd like to nominate Claire Morley for making the EAA process much simpler and teacher accessible as well as her friendly help always in answering any questions with the process.



Alex Mort

Nominated by The Reception Team

Thank you Alex for the guidance information and time that you gave us for the intro into Excel and Timetables, it was very informative and we appreciate the time you shared with us.



Dawn Nightingale

Nominated by Abbey Sykes

I would like to nominate Dawn Nightingale for the great support she has given students in Maths. Dawn has given her time generously and offered guidance far beyond what is expected. Dawn has made a really positive difference to the students she works with.



Shona Noden

Nominated by James Chadderton

Shona has carried a dual role and both a PGCE teacher and a technician and has excelled in both. Her commitment to the department and helping students is second to none. Thank you Shona.



Charlene Page

Nominated by Steve O'Neill

Charlene has been fantastic in helping the English department this year. She stepped in as our acting Head of Department and has guided us through the year. Her calm, thoughtful, organised and friendly attitude was fantastic. We all felt supported and helped in doing our work through tricky times. Thanks for everything Char. You are a star!



Will Sanders

Nominated by Graham Saffery

Will Sanders has gone above and beyond in supporting the department by taking on a significant amount of additional marking due to staff absence. His willingness to step in has ensured that our sport students continue to receive timely feedback and support, which has been greatly valued by both the team and the students.



Kerry Thompson

Nominated by Matt Perriss

I nominate Kerry from reception who gave up a sunny afternoon to go to Rochdale SFC at short notice of less than 3 hours to ensure that students from ASFC go to undertake their HE+ trip which opens doors to the very best Universities in the world. Pure team player. Much Appreciated.



Kirsty Wallace

Nominated by Danielle Heathcote

I nominate Kirsty Wallace, she has worked closely with myself in the library, referring students for study skills support so they are able to get the best outcomes they possibly can, I hear nothing but positive things about her from students that attend my sessions and she has been amazing bringing new ideas and working collaboratively with the library team. She is also just a warm and kind person who brings so much joy to all of us!



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

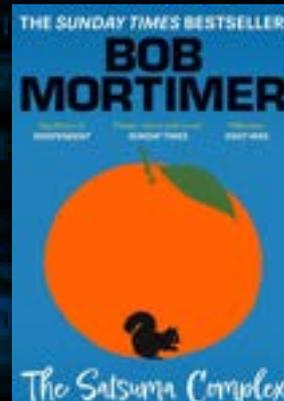
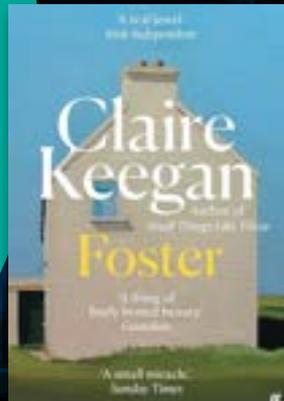
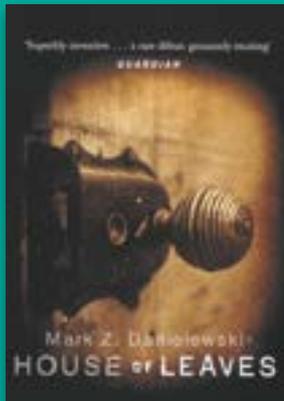
Spring Term 2026

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>	MAY BANK HOLIDAY
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
Tuesday	30 June 2026	Term Ends

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



House of Leaves - Mark Z. Danielewski

House of Leaves is the kind of book you don't just read, you navigate. The text goes sideways, upside down, and breaks all the usual rules of writing, so it feels more like going through a maze and solving a puzzle than reading a traditional story. That's why so many people online love picking it apart and sharing their own theories. There's always something new to notice, whether it's a word in italics or there's a slight misspelling, everything is intentional. Nothing is explained for you, so a big part of the experience is deciding for yourself what you think is really happening. It's strange, clever, and perfect if you like books that make you think as much as they entertain.

Foster - Claire Keegan

Within the short space of 90 pages Claire Keegan manages to create a story that has a permanent effect on the reader, the real and raw emotions of the characters make for such a subtle but moving story. A young girl from rural Ireland is sent to live on a farm with distant relatives for the summer, whilst her struggling family prepare the arrival of another child. Whilst away for the summer she experiences a life that is completely unknown to her, she is encouraged and taken care of in a way that she has never experienced before. Keegan creates a short piece of literature that leaves the reader somewhat heartbroken by the bittersweet but inevitable ending.

The Satsuma Complex - Bob Mortimer

A wonderful, light hearted read for over the Easter break. Bob Mortimer manages to create a warm and hilarious atmosphere whilst also producing enough drama to keep the reader involved. The characters involved in the book are a fantastic insight to real life whilst also carrying the Mortimer humour and flare, keeping the reader entertained. The book is a crime novel, but has so much more to it. I am usually not a crime reader, but after reading The Satsuma Complex, I couldn't resist picking up the next in the series, The Hotel Avocado.

UPCOMING PERFORMING ARTS SHOWS

THURSDAY 23RD APRIL | 19:00PM

COLLECTIONS 26 - A DANCE SHOWCASE

Our 1st and Second Year dancers proudly present a presentation of this years work. This year's performance will also include a special performance by Fairfield High School.

WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY | 18:00PM

GENRES - A MUSIC PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION

Our Music performance students present 'Genres' - a music concert filled with huge hits from multiple genres over the years.

WEDNESDAY 24TH & THURSDAY 25TH JUNE
19:00PM

QUEEN MUSICAL SENSATION

Ashton Sixth Form College proudly present the Queen Musical Sensation - filled with all the hits from one of the greatest ever bands.



GIG REVIEW BY MATEO HUXLEY-FRADKIN (A2 STUDENT

It is not often you get the chance to see stadium level musicians perform in an intimate arts venue, but Sea Fever delivered exactly that at their warm up show at the Foxlowe Arts Centre in Leek, Staffordshire. Featuring Phil Cunningham and Tom Chapman of New Order, Iwan Gronow from Johnny Marr's band, Beth Cassidy of Section 25, and Elliot Barlow of Brix and The Extricated, the group brought serious Manchester pedigree to a venue perfectly suited for a focused and atmospheric performance.

Sea Fever performed a set drawn from their two albums, Folding Lines and Surface Sound, showcasing a night of shimmering synth driven tracks and impressive dual vocals from Iwan and Beth. Songs from their latest release, Surface Sound, came across with real power on stage. Despite their experience performing at major festivals, arenas, and world renowned venues such as the Sydney Opera House, the band approached the evening with full commitment, energy, and enthusiasm.

Highlights included Able Eyes, Loose Cut, and a moving rendition of Explanation. Although the album version features the late Denise Johnson, the performance was delivered by Beth Cassidy as a heartfelt homage that resonated with the audience. The night concluded with a dynamic performance of De facto, closing the set with impact and precision.

Sea Fever will next perform in Macclesfield on 30 May, the hometown of Joy Division. Do not miss it. And as the legendary Manchester music legend Tony Wilson once said: This is Manchester. We do things differently here. Sea Fever are a testament to this Manchester spirit.

HIGHLIGHTS THIS TERM

POLITICS STUDENTS VISIT THE CAPITAL



A Level Politics students took an exciting trip to London this term! This annual visit gives students the opportunity to explore key locations they study, helping to bring their learning to life.

Highlights included visits to the Supreme Court, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and even No. 10 - inspiring our future generation of politicians!

JANUARY SPEAKER OF THE MONTH



In January, former student Corey Leech returned to deliver an engaging session on careers in Cyber Security. He highlighted the key skills employers are looking for and explored the different routes into this fast-growing industry.

MARCH SPEAKER OF THE MONTH



In March, we were pleased to welcome Lucy Healey, who went on to study History at King's College London and has since built a career in Politics. Now working as a Parliamentary Researcher for a local MP, Lucy shared her journey from college to her current role, including the opportunities she embraced along the way.

PUBLIC SERVICES RIOT TRAINING EXPERIENCE



A2 Public Services students recently took part in a Riot Training workshop delivered by Greater Manchester Police. The session offered a practical insight into public order policing, giving students the chance to explore real-world tactics and teamwork in action.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK



To mark National Apprenticeship Week 2026, our Careers and Employability Team hosted a range of activities for students interested in pursuing apprenticeships after college.

The week began with a full-day careers event, giving students the chance to hear first-hand about apprenticeships and develop key transferable skills.

Students took part in workshops with Matt from Loud Speaker and Ed Darling, focusing on public speaking and confidence, as well as hearing from former Ashton students Alfie, Zain and Luke, who have gone on to successful apprenticeships.

Throughout the week, students also attended a 'CV Clinic' drop-in for tailored advice, and sessions with The Apprenticeship Academy and MAP, gaining valuable insight into the application process and what employers are looking for.

PRINCIPAL'S RECOGNITION LUNCH



This term, our Centre Principal, Lisa Richards, has hosted two Recognition Lunches celebrating student achievement. The first, held in January, recognised A2 students who have demonstrated outstanding participation, engagement and commitment throughout their time at college. The second, held in March, celebrated A1 students who have made significant progress in their journey so far.

These lunches are an opportunity to acknowledge and commend students for their positive contributions, efforts and impact within the college community. We are incredibly proud of all the students recognised and look forward to celebrating many more successes in the future.

YOUNG ENTERPRISE SUCCESS AT TRADE FAIR



Our Young Enterprise group attended another successful trade fair recently, hosted at the Trafford Palazzo, where they sold 7 of their product - Little Citizens. The product is designed to help young children explore important topics in a fun and accessible way and the positive response at the event has given the team plenty of ideas for future development.

ASHTON NEWS

ANOTHER YEAR OF OXBRIDGE SUCCESS

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

All eight students are members of The XL Academy Programme, an initiative designed to challenge, support and stretch high-achieving learners. Through dedicated tutor groups, opportunities for wider academic study, specialist trips and regular guest speakers, students receive tailored guidance to help them achieve their ambitions.

Students also benefit from the Oxbridge Scholars Programme, launched in 2024 as part of The XL Academy. This programme connects students with expert mentors, offering invaluable insight and focused preparation for the highly competitive Oxbridge application and interview process.

The courses students have secured offers for this year

reflect a wide range of interests, from History, English and Law to more specialist subjects such as Materials Science and Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic.

Hanna Jadzinska, who studied at Fairfield High School, is one of two Ashton Sixth Form College students to receive an offer in Geography this year. She is the first person in her family to go to university and a first-generation immigrant. Hanna credits The XL Academy with playing a vital role in preparing her for the Oxbridge application and interview process.

Hanna said: "The XL Academy staged mock interviews, which were very helpful. I had no clue how I'd react under that sort of pressure, so getting a trial run eased my nerves. I'm the first in my family to go to university and a first-generation immigrant, so I didn't really have anyone outside college to ask for support. My parents moved here so that my brothers and I could have better opportunities than they had and the college has been very supportive in this process. The Oxbridge Scholars scheme has been extremely supportive and some of the concepts we learned there I was asked to

apply in my interview."

Ashton Sixth Form College has also hosted 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 students with exceptional enrichment opportunities, including participation in the OxNet Access Programme, further enhancing their academic development.

Robert Murray-Green, Head of The XL Academy, commented: "Our eight offer-holders for Oxford and Cambridge have demonstrated exceptional dedication, resilience and ambition throughout their academic journeys. Their success reflects consistent hard work, intellectual curiosity and a commitment to pushing beyond expectations. Each student has balanced demanding study with wider academic enrichment, showing maturity and discipline of the highest level. We are immensely proud of everything they have achieved and the example they set for our college community."

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

Centre Principal, Lisa Richards also praised the students' offers: "A huge well done to all of our students who have been through the rigorous Oxbridge admissions process; they did themselves and the college very proud! I am so pleased for our 8 students who have received offers; they are set to join over 30 ex ASFC students already studying at Oxford and Cambridge and I know they will thrive on their respective courses.

Across college, hundreds of offers are flooding in for our A2 students from universities the length and breadth of the country, as well as some fantastic apprenticeships being secured at this early stage. Whatever their ambitions, our students are paving their way and standing out in competitive environments. Well done to all - we are very proud of you."

Alongside these eight outstanding Oxbridge offers, a record number of Ashton Sixth Form College students have submitted university applications this year. A total of 52 students have already received offers from Russell Group universities nationwide, with more offers continuing to come in. Many students have also secured apprenticeship offers across a wide range of sectors.

Ashton Sixth Form College is proud to support these students as they take the next steps in their academic journeys and looks forward to seeing all they achieve.





Boothindustries

ASHTON STUDENTS WIN SCIENCE HACKATHON

Computer Science students from Ashton Sixth Form College recently took part in an exciting 12-hour hackathon hosted by Hulme Grammar School and its specialist innovation hub, the Brenda Mills Institute of Innovation and Technology (BMIT).

The event brought together 100 students, challenging them to create "AI-native" solutions to real educational and community issues. Throughout the day, teams designed and built working prototypes using tools such as Google AI Studio and Lovable.dev, turning their ideas into something real in just 12 hours. They were supported along the way by a panel of academic and industry mentors who offered guidance, feedback and encouragement.

Representing Ashton was Lily Brown, Oscar Young, Owen Sidebottom and Edward Thomas, who developed 'Exam Nest', a revision hub that brings study materials together in one place and uses gamification to help students spot and improve on their strengths and weaknesses.

The team impressed the judges with both their idea and their pitch, with Lily Brown also winning the Best Speaker prize.

A fantastic achievement and a brilliant example of our students putting their skills into action.

BUSINESS STUDENT EXCELS ON WORK PLACEMENT

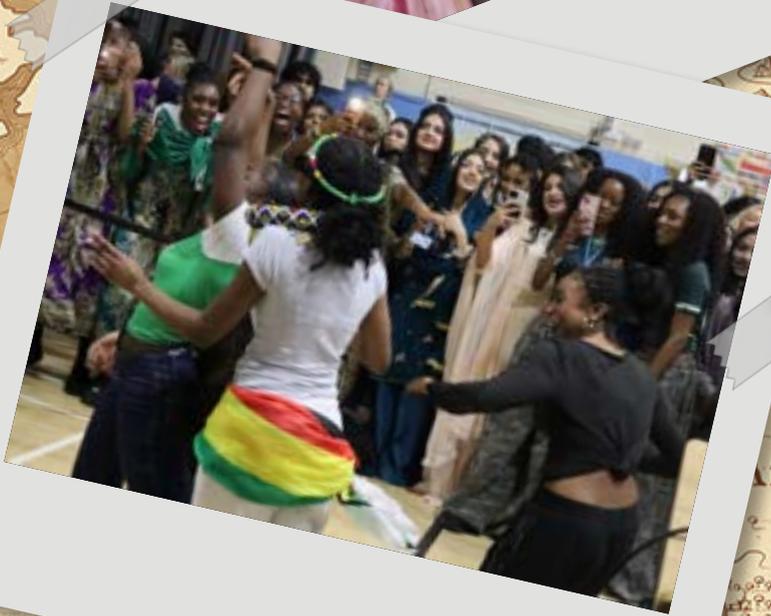
Recently, Business student Prince Kondo completed a placement with Booth Industries, where he gained a fantastic insight into how a global manufacturing business operates. During his time there, Prince explored a wide range of processes, from design and procurement through to production, testing and certification, as well as developing his understanding of the commercial side of the business.

At Ashton Sixth Form College, our dedicated Work Placement Coordinators — part of our Careers and Employability team — work closely with employers to secure high-quality, meaningful placements that support our students' ambitions and future career goals.

Reflecting on his experience, Prince said: "I've really enjoyed my time here and learnt a lot. It's been interesting to see how closely different departments work together and how much support there is across the business."

We'd like to thank Booth Industries for supporting Prince during his placement and giving him such a valuable insight into the world of work.





South America



ANNUAL CULTURE DAY RETURNS - CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Students and staff at Ashton Sixth Form College came together this term to celebrate culture and community at the college's fourth annual Culture Day.

The event highlights the rich diversity within the college community through music, dance, fashion and food from around the world. The day was entirely planned and delivered by the college's Student Council, with the aim of creating a vibrant and inclusive experience for all.

The college was also honoured to welcome The Worshipful Civic Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Shibley Alam, and her Consort, Mohammed Khairul Alam. The Mayor and Consort took time to meet students and staff and joined in with the celebrations.

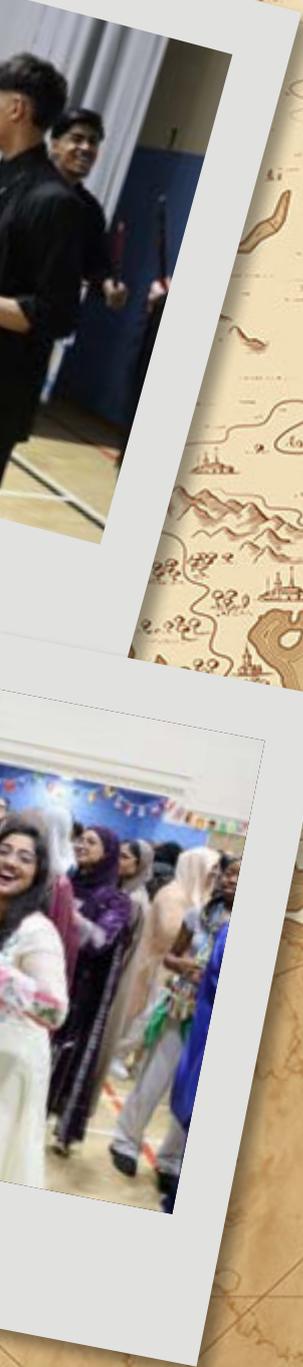
Performances included traditional dances, with students encouraged to participate. Many attendees dressed to represent their heritage, filling the college with colour and showcasing traditions from across the globe. A range of international dishes, including Indian, Caribbean and Italian cuisine, proved popular throughout the day.

Centre Principal, Lisa Richards commented:

"Our fourth annual Culture Day and this event just gets better and better! ASFC is diverse in every way it is possible to be diverse, and we are immensely proud of this. Culture Day is a chance to celebrate the rich cultural heritage that makes up our college community. Aside from the amazing world foods, there was dancing, singing, art and a fashion show in which students were able to show off their fabulous cultural dress. Students could even try their hand at darts and table football. Culture Day 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."

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

The success of the event reflects the dedication and creativity of the students and staff involved in its organisation.



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

For the second year running, Stamford Park Trust was proud to host the Empower Futures International Women's Day event in conjunction with National Careers Week.

Students from Ashton Sixth Form College, alongside students from Rayner Stephens, Longdendale and Fairfield High School for Girls, came together for the event to hear from a range of inspiring women and take part in themed activities celebrating women's achievements.

The event featured a fantastic line-up of guest speakers, including Reyana Page, a Managing Consultant in the cyber security sector, Mel Burgin, a professional referee who works with FIFA, Katherine Conroy, a University of Cambridge graduate and current ENT Consultant and Lucia Albanese, part of the pastoral team at Fairfield, and founder of EmpowerHER, an organisation focused on helping young women find their inner empowerment.

These incredible speakers shared their professional journeys, challenges, and successes, providing invaluable insights and practical advice. Their stories offered students an honest look at the different paths



a career can take, while encouraging them to think confidently about their own futures. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions, opening up wider discussions about careers and the experiences of women in different industries.

Alongside the talks, students took part in a variety of activities, including exploring influential women - from the women who inspire them in their everyday lives to those who have made a lasting impact on the world, ran by Sheridan Lewis, Assistant Principal at Ashton.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for students across the Trust to come together, celebrate International Women's Day and National Careers Week, and feel inspired about the many possibilities open to them in the future.





EPQ PRESENTATIONS 2026

This term, A2 students taking the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) presented their projects to fellow students, staff and families!

The EPQ is an additional qualification that students can take alongside their studies. It is worth half an A-Level and allows students to develop their personal interests and create a project around a particular topic. Through taking part in the EPQ, students have gained skills in time management, academic writing, researching and presenting. These skills can be transferred through their life post college.

A wide range of niche and interesting topic areas were explored by students, including:

- What led to the catastrophic events of the Titanic?
- What impact did the Kelmscott Press have upon fine printing in England?
- Is dystopia real?
- Capitalism vs socialism
- How does cabaret relate to American politics?
- Does feminism come in waves?

And lots more!

Over 125 students are taking the EPQ this year, showing the continuous popularity of the additional qualification.

Dr Rachel Allen, EPQ Co-ordinator and XL Academy Senior Tutor, said: "The students truly demonstrated what they are capable of - showcasing research, academic writing, time management and referencing skills that will carry them into university and the workplace."

Head of The XL Academy, Rob Murray-Green also said:

"The EPQ Presentation Event is always a shining moment in our college year, and this year's celebration once again reminded us of the extraordinary potential our students possess. The depth, ambition, and intellectual curiosity on display were nothing short of inspiring. These presentations not only showcased exceptional academic quality, but also demonstrated the confidence, independence, and critical thinking skills that make the EPQ such a powerful asset for our learners.

It was a privilege to share this experience with staff, students, and families, celebrating achievements that will stay with our young people long beyond their time at ASFC. My heartfelt thanks go to Dr Rachel Allen and her outstanding EPQ team, whose dedication continues to open doors, broaden horizons, and create life-changing opportunities for every student who embarks on this remarkable programme."

A huge well done to all the EPQ students this year!





ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE WELCOMES ANGELA RAYNER MP

We were delighted to welcome The Right Honourable, Angela Rayner MP, into college to meet with our A Level Politics students. As the MP for Ashton-under-Lyne since 2015, Angela returned to her roots to speak to students about her career and experience in politics.

During her visit, students had the opportunity to ask thoughtful questions, covering topics such as social mobility and current affairs. Angela spoke open and honestly, sharing with students about her personal journey and the realities of working in politics today.

Angela shared her experience of growing up in the local area and coming from a working-class background, and how this has shaped her beliefs and determination through her career. She highlighted the importance of resilience, education, and believing that opportunities in politics and life should be open to everyone, regardless of background.

The visit offered an inspiring and engaging experience, bringing students' studies to life and giving them valuable first-hand insight into the world of politics.

We would like to thank Angela Rayner MP for taking the time to visit and for inspiring the next generation of young people.

A TRIP TO THE BIG APPLE

Twenty-six students from Ashton Sixth Form College travelled to New York City in February for an unforgettable trip to the Big Apple. During their visit, they explored some of the city's most iconic landmarks, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Empire State Building and Central Park.

Students also experienced the magic of Broadway, watching *Death Becomes Her*, and visited the powerful 9/11 Memorial & Museum. The trip included walks through Times Square and along the High Line, alongside many other highlights across the city.



HIGHER EDUCATION UPDATES

Enhancing SEND Practice: PGCE Primary Trainees Learn from Specialist Experts

As part of their Meeting Needs Intensive Practice Week, PGCE Primary trainees took part in specialist training delivered by Chloe and Karen from Lisburne Primary School. The session focused on 'Food Strategy', helping trainees better understand and support sensory and anxiety-related eating challenges in children with SEND. a career can take, while encouraging them to think confidently about their own futures. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions, opening up wider discussions about careers and the experiences of women in different industries.

Alongside the talks, students took part in a variety of activities, including exploring influential women – from the women who inspire them in their everyday lives to those who have made a lasting impact on the world, ran by Sheridan Lewis, Assistant Principal at Ashton.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for students across the Trust to come together, celebrate International Women's Day and National Careers Week, and feel inspired about the many possibilities open to them in the future.



Students celebrate world book day!

Our adult learners brought the spirit of World Book Day into the classroom, celebrating with creativity and enthusiasm. Having spent time working in schools, they embraced the occasion with the same energy they inspire in younger

learners—sharing costumes, favourite characters, and a passion for reading. It was fantastic to see their confidence shine through, reminding us that a love of books can be celebrated at any age.

PGCE Visitor

Our PGCE Post 16 trainees had a fantastic workshop with Lucia Albanese (EmpowerHER) on Positive Bystander Action. The trainee teachers left with an actionable toolkit to handle sensitive, challenging and sometimes difficult situations.



Growing in Confidence: PGCE Post-16 Trainees Thrive in the Classroom

Our PGCE Post-16 trainees have been fully immersing themselves in their courses, delivering lessons to 16-18 learners within their specialist subjects. It's been fantastic to see their confidence grow as they develop their teaching practice and building a strong classroom presence.

RESOURCES

MENTAL HEALTH USEFUL CONTACTS:

- **College Counsellors**
counsellors@asfc.ac.uk
- **42nd Street Counselling Service**
Manchester. Phone lines: Monday/Wednesday & Friday 1-5pm
0161 228 7321. Can refer online and email any time:
theteam@42ndstreet.org.uk
- **NHS ToG Talking Therapies (Previously Healthy Minds)**
CBT based therapy sessions. Self refer.
<https://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/tamesidetalk>
- **Contact your GP**
Either by telephone or in person
- **CALM**
Free, anonymous & confidential. For males experiencing mental health issues.
www.thecalzone.net 0800 585 858 (everyday 5pm - 12am)
- **Branching Out**
Ashton. Drugs & Alcohol support:
0161 672 9420 - branchingout@cgl.org.uk
Online referrals - <https://www.change-growlive.org/service/tameside-branching-out/contact>
Mon-fri 9am-5pm. Tues 9am-8pm
- **Kooth**
Free, confidential, online counselling.
www.kooth.com Mon - Fri 12pm - 10pm/Sat & Sun 6pm - 10pm
- **Hub of Hope: online mental health directory - hubofhope.co.uk**

IF YOU ARE IN A CRISIS:

- **Accident and Emergency**
Attend in person (24 hours a day, everyday)
- **Emergency Social Services**
Call in the vent of an unexpected major problem within the home or family. 0161 342 2222 (7 days a week. 6:30pm - 9am)
- **The Samaritans**
Talk to them any time you like about whatever is getting to you. Freephone 116 123 (24/7 service)
Email: jo@samaritans.org
- **Crisis Point**
Freephone 0161 238 5249 (Everyday 4pm - 11pm) [aged 18+]
- **Papyrus**
Suicidal thinking help & support.
www.papyrus-uk.org
- **HOPEline 247**
0800 068 41 41. Open everyday 24/7.
Text 88247.
- **Themix.org.uk**
1-1 chat, text THEMIX to 85258.
Freephone 0808 808 4994

NHS 111: call 111 and select the mental health option 2

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