



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE





WELCOME

Welcome to our final newsletter of the academic year. Another vibrant and busy year in which both staff and students have worked flat-out to produce enormous successes. The summer holidays will be much deserved!

Firstly, a huge **well done** to all our year 13 and adult students who have completed their courses this summer. You have pulled out all the stops to submit final pieces of work to the highest standard and prepare for the summer series of examinations. You have shown such determination and resilience in the stressful months leading to final assessments and your conduct in the examinations has been absolutely impeccable. It's been a fantastic journey with you and you have been an asset to the ASFC community. Thank you and well done – I am very excited to see you in August for results.

It has been a fantastic year in terms of students participating in additional activities including Speaker of the Month, trips and visits, Duke of Edinburgh, enrichment and taking on leadership roles. We remind students constantly that these opportunities are there for them and that they should squeeze every bit of value out of their time here, and I am very pleased that they are doing so. 20 students have just returned from a two week trip to Thailand where they have been completely immersed in another culture; experiencing sights, sounds, activities and food they have never experienced before as well as bonding as a group and making a positive impact on the local community they have been part of. This trip will have changed them, even if in a small way, and it will live in their memories for a very long time.

As we have just two years with our students, there is no winding down in the summer. Instead, the activities seem to ramp up even further. Our year 12 students undertook either a week's work placement or an employer set project in our flagship Be Ambitious Week. You may have seen some of the pictures of this on our social media, but I want to commend them for their engagement with this initiative and for representing themselves and college so well. Our Annual Art and Design exhibition never fails to blow me away – our students are immensely creative, and when this is combined with the relentless energy of their teachers and technicians, we see the magic happen. Brilliance also happened in our theatre in June with two evenings of 'We Will Rock You'. Those performing shone brightly while those students assisting behind the scenes made everything seem effortless. A wide range of other performances – drama, music and dance – have taken place throughout the year. A huge well done and thank you to the staff involved for creating these life-enhancing events for our young people.

In June, we also held our A1 Awards Ceremony where 140 students were recognised for their academic progress, engagement and contributions to college life, and we finished off their academic year with an afternoon of fun on the back field with games, inflatables and ice creams! Our HE and Adult Evening of Celebration was another heart-warming event where we commended our adult students for the bravery and commitment they have shown in returning to education and the balancing act this involves; this is just the start of their success.

I'll sign off with some thanks. Firstly, a big well done and thank you to all our students. They form the biggest part of our community and are the reason we're all here. They all deserve a wonderful summer. I also want to thank all college staff for another year's hard work, commitment and professionalism. As if their day-to-day work wasn't enough, our staff go the extra mile to create additional opportunities for our students and to make sure that the college is better every year than the last year. I am very lucky to work alongside such a talented bunch of people. Lastly, thank you to parents and carers for their continued support of the college.

With my very best wishes for a safe and happy summer

Lisa





STUDENTS TERM DATES 2026-2027

Autumn Term 2026

(Welcome days for new students 1st or 2nd September)

Thursday & Friday	20 & 21 August 2026	Enrolment - New Students
Thursday	03 September 2026	Teaching Begins
Friday	16 October 2026	First Half Term Ends
Half-Term (2weeks)	19 October – 23 October 2026 26 October – 30 October 2026	HALF TERM HOLIDAY
Monday	02 November 2026	Second Half Term Begins
Friday	18 December 2026	Term Ends

Spring Term 2027

Monday	04 January 2027	Term Begins
Friday	12 February 2027	First Half Term Ends
Monday - Friday	15 February – 19 February 2027	HALF TERM HOLIDAY
Monday	22 February 2027	Second Half Term Begins
Thursday	25 March 2027	Term Ends (Bank Holiday 26 th)

Summer Term 2027

Monday	12 April 2027	Term Begins
Monday	03 May 2027	MAY BANK HOLIDAY
Friday	28 May 2027	First Half Term Ends
Monday - Friday	31 May – 04 June 2027	HALF TERM HOLIDAY (Bank Holiday 31st)
Monday	07 June 2027	Second Half Term Begins
Tuesday	29 June 2027	Term Ends



FOCUS ON: ENRICHMENT



STUDENTS EXPERIENCE A TRIP OF A LIFETIME TO THAILAND

Twenty students from Ashton Sixth Form College have returned from an unforgettable two-week trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand, where they immersed themselves in a new culture while developing confidence, independence and a greater understanding of the world around them.

Delivered in partnership with Think Pacific and largely funded by the Department for Education's Turing Scheme, the project's aims were to increase global citizenship through cultural immersion, while learning about sustainable projects through team-based excursions. The visit provided students with the opportunity to experience life in Thailand through a packed itinerary of cultural, environmental and community-based activities, all while advancing social justice.

After arriving in Chiang Mai, students were introduced to the local area before enjoying a traditional Khum Khan Toke dinner and cultural performance. Over the following two weeks, they embraced every aspect of Thai life from learning the art of Muay Thai boxing and taking part in authentic Thai cooking classes to visiting historic temples, exploring bustling markets and hiking through Doi Inthanon National Park to Thailand's highest point.

A key part of the experience involved working alongside local organisations and communities. Students took part in a variety of hands-on workshops including pottery, textile making, tie-dyeing and weaving, explored sustainable farming and environmental practices and visited local businesses to learn more about ethical production and community development.

The group also experienced traditional crafts at the Umbrella Making Centre, created handmade paper at the Elephant PooPoo Paper Park and enjoyed dedicated reflection sessions, encouraging them to think about the impact of the experience and everything they had learnt throughout the trip.

Alongside the organised activities, students embraced Thai culture by sampling authentic cuisine, visiting local night markets, meeting members of

the local community and experiencing a way of life very different from their own. A highlight amongst the group was a visit to the Chang Chill Elephant Sanctuary, which allowed students to get close to rescued elephants, preparing their lunch and watching them enjoy their feast.

Lisa Richards, Centre Principal at Ashton Sixth Form College, said:

"This trip has been truly life-changing for the 20 students who participated. They have been completely immersed in another culture; experiencing sights, sounds, activities and food they have never experienced before as well as bonding as a group and making a positive impact on the local community they have been part of. This trip will have changed them, even if in a small way, and it will live in their memories for a very long time.

"Trips and visits are so important in bringing the curriculum to life and enriching our students' experience by exposure to the wider world outside of education. Over 200 trips and visits have taken place this year across the college, both in the UK and abroad. Of course, college is about gaining important qualifications, but also developing as a person and so we will continue to jump on opportunities like this that come our way!"

Nathan, one of the students who took part in the trip, said:

"Going to Thailand has been an unforgettable experience that has given me experiences with a new culture and new friends that I will treasure for the rest of my life."

The Thailand trip reflects Ashton Sixth Form College's commitment to providing students with opportunities beyond the classroom, enabling them to develop new skills, gain a global perspective and grow in confidence through real-world experiences, all while broadening their horizons and creating memories to last a lifetime.



ENRICHMENT HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS

This year has been a fantastic year for enrichment with many new courses and clubs on offer. We were lucky enough to introduce Vinyl Society, a Pop Vocal Group, and Young Enterprise to our roster of activities. Our Young Enterprise group saw particular success, becoming Young Enterprise North West Finalists, showcasing their business, Little Citizens. They were also invited to the UK final, held at the University of Cardiff, with a special recognition for their social impact. As always, many students have become qualified first aiders, thanks to our one-day first aid course. What's more, the addition of our mental health first aid course has been equally as successful as its launch last year, meaning that many of our students are equipped to deliver first aid. Finally, our extremely popular Introduction to British Sign Language Course ran twice this year, empowering our students to communicate confidently with members of the deaf community.

Our DofE Gold Award runs continuously throughout the academic year, and this year, we have been recognised by the Duke of Edinburgh Award for spending a collective 2626 hours volunteering between April 2025 and March 2026, amounting in a social value of £19825 - an incredible contribution to society.

Finally, 20 lucky students had the incredible opportunity to attend a largely funded trip to Thailand for two weeks this June. Students were immersed in Thai culture and local communities, all while learning about sustainable projects and taking in the breath-taking sights of Thailand.





STUDENTS THRIVE DURING BE AMBITIOUS WEEK 2026

For the fourth consecutive year, our first-year students have taken part in Be Ambitious Week, an initiative that continues to grow year on year and forms a key part of our Careers and Employability Offer.

First launched in 2023, Be Ambitious Week gives students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the world of work alongside their studies. Through hands-on work placements and employer-led projects, students develop essential skills, build confidence and prepare for their next steps after college.

Throughout the week, students either complete external work placements with a range of organisations, including Sephora Headquarters, Not Really Here Group, Greater Manchester Police and the NHS, or take part in employer-led projects, where they are set real-world briefs and present their ideas and solutions at the end of the week.

This year, we once again partnered with organisations such as Tameside Council, the BBC and United Utilities, who provided projects for students to work on throughout the week. Students stepped out of their comfort zones, collaborated in teams and produced industry-standard work, all while being mentored by professionals who provided expert advice and guidance.

The opportunities available through Be Ambitious Week continue to expand, with students now completing placements overseas. Harrison, who studies on our Football Coaching and Development course in partnership with City in the Community, spent his placement in Memphis, Tennessee, with Lobos Rush Soccer Club.

Working alongside experienced coaches, Harrison helped deliver a soccer camp for players aged 7-14 and led sessions on a variety of topics. Throughout the week, he also worked with older age groups as they prepared for a National Playoff event in San Diego, California.

Paul from Lobos Rush Soccer Club praised Harrison's contribution, saying: "Harrison has been really engaged and a great addition to the team for the week."

The quality of work produced through external placements and employer-led projects has also been highly praised by employers. One student, Isobel, completed her placement at The Royal Oldham Hospital with the Allied Health Professionals Department. The staff praised Isobel's hard work: "Isobel was professional, enthusiastic and keen to learn throughout her placement with our Allied Health Professions team. She showed initiative, asked thoughtful questions and gained valuable insight





into a range of healthcare roles, making a positive impression throughout her time with us."

Students have fully embraced the opportunities provided through Be Ambitious Week and made the most of the experience. Nathan, who was tasked with producing a documentary-style video about the week, said:

"Be Ambitious Week has given me the chance to live a part of my dream, being a director and filmmaker for the college's employer-led programme, filming a documentary on the week itself."

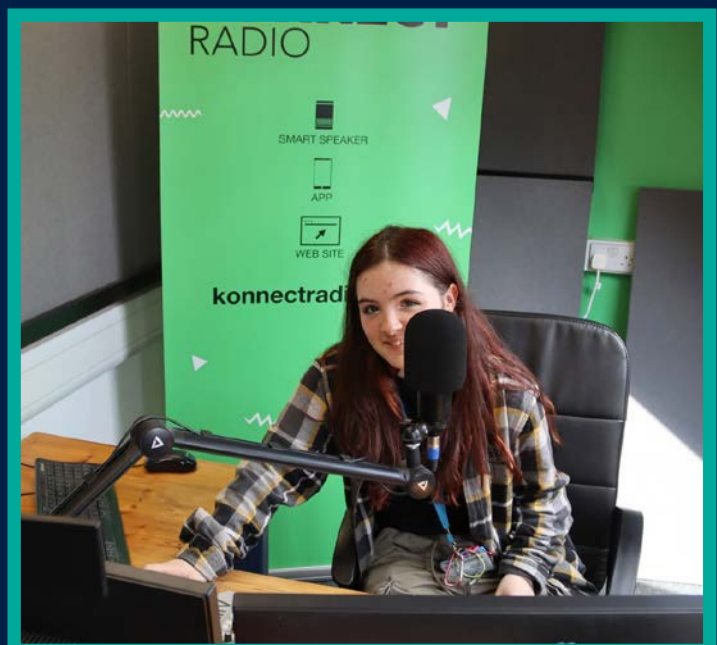
Rachel Smirke, Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Progression, said:

"Four years into Be Ambitious, I couldn't be prouder of our students and the maturity they bring to the week. With 50% of students out on work placements and the remainder fully engaged in employer-led projects, they are immersing themselves in developing essential soft skills, building professional contacts and experiencing real workplace environments. These experiences will serve them incredibly well as they move into the job market, whether that's straight after college or following university.

Be Ambitious Week is genuinely transformative, and we are continually impressed by how seriously students take the tasks set by employers. The value of this week grows year on year, and our students

rise to the challenge every time."

We are incredibly proud of all our students for fully immersing themselves in the opportunities and experiences available throughout Be Ambitious Week. We would also like to thank all of the employers and organisations who have supported our students and helped make this year's programme such a success. We look forward to building on that success with another fantastic Be Ambitious Week in 2027.



ASHTON APPRECIATES



Ketan Alder

Nominated by The Library Team

Ketan has been running academic workshops this year to support the student's writing and revision and has made some amazing accessible resources. He has gone above and beyond to provide students with the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. Even with an injury, this didn't deter him from coming back and immediately jumping back in, continuing to provide that support, we really appreciate and value all of his hard work!



Anita Blank

Nominated by Rick Allanson

I would like to nominate Anita Blank, my line manager, for her exceptional support, guidance, and encouragement. During a challenging period in my personal life, she has been a constant source of advice and understanding. Anita has also inspired me to maintain high professional standards and continue developing in my role. Her kindness and leadership are truly appreciated. Thank you, Anita.



Scott Clarke

Nominated by Tony Payne and The MIS Team

Scott is always available to help. He is approachable, supportive, and consistently goes out of his way to help the team whenever they need advice or support. He clearly explains things in layman's terms and his 'can do' attitude makes a real difference to us and his reliability is greatly appreciated. Thank you, Scott, for your continued support and commitment to helping. - Tony Payne

Scott has been an excellent addition to the IT Team and College. He always goes above and beyond to help, with a friendly, charismatic approach. With his help, we have been able to update and create a number of new functions and systems for the College. The team greatly appreciates all the hard work he has put in, and the team couldn't have done this without his expertise. - The MIS Team



Marie Crompton

Nominated by Angela McGibbon and The Law and Philosophy Department

I'd like to nominate Marie. One evening my students had filled up all the bins as they were coming straight from work and needed to have some food before the start of the evening class. Marie had already emptied the bins and cleaned the classroom but she quickly emptied them again so they were not overflowing. Always smiling, always cheeky - she always brings the joy! - Angela McGibbon

We would like to recognise Marie for the wonderful contribution she makes to our college community. Marie is always friendly, approachable and willing to help, no matter how busy she is- even though our office is not in her designated area! Her kindness and positive attitude never go unnoticed, and she has a remarkable ability to brighten people's day with a smile and a warm greeting. Marie consistently goes above and beyond in her role, showing genuine care and dedication in everything she does. Thank you! - The Law & Philosophy Department



Tracey Cross

Nominated by Jonathan Williams

I'd like to nominate Tracey from Costa. She brightens up the start of my day with a lovely conversation and excellent coffee!



Rebecca Cullen

Nominated by Kirsty Wallace

I would like to nominate Rebecca Cullen. Sitting next to her throughout the last academic year has given me a clear view of how much effort she puts in to ensure open days, guidance meetings, taster days, and so much more run smoothly. Rebecca consistently goes out of her way to support her colleagues wherever she can, most recently taking on setting up for the A2 Leavers Prom, which was great success.



Carol Darwin

Nominated by Danielle Proverbs-Brown

I would like to nominate Carol Darwin for being my "unofficial" mentor for my new role. She went above and beyond to support me, meeting with me time and time again to ensure I felt supported! Not only was she there to support me but also the students on the course. Thank you so much Carol, you've been amazing!



Pauline Fielden

Nominated by Jonathan Williams

I'd like to nominate Pauline from Costa. She brightens up the start of my day with a lovely conversation and excellent coffee!



Flavour Iguodala

Nominated by Sophie Stone

I'd like to nominate Flavour in HR for helping me to navigate through a difficult time and being so supportive throughout. She has helped our team tremendously this academic year and we all really appreciate her ongoing support.



Joyce McClure

Nominated by The Law and Philosophy Department

We would like to recognise Joyce McClure for the exceptional difference she makes every day. Joyce consistently goes above and beyond, regularly helping to keep our office spotless even though it is outside of her designated area. Her kindness, positivity and ever-present smile brighten our day and never go unnoticed.

Joyce takes tremendous pride in her work and brings warmth and professionalism to everything she does. She is a real asset to the college community and an invaluable member of the cleaning team. We are incredibly grateful for her dedication, hard work and the positive impact she has.



Sue Moloney

Nominated by The Inclusive Learning Team

Sue is so supportive and accommodating with all the students. 'Firm but fair' totally sums her up, and she gains much respect from the students with a positive presence around college. She's also been incredibly welcoming with the new students that have come in for extra transition visits. Thanks for everything you do, Sue!



Sarah Nolan

Nominated by Louise Arbuckle

Sarah puts the college first in everything she does, and as a manager, when we have had extra heavy workloads, she has been very 'hands on' to support her team and make sure everything is right for the College.

She has recently been a massive advocate for setting up and trialing the new online Cedar applications and new portal systems, as well as going above and beyond in setting up and managing events and offering advice when anyone has any queries. Sarah is always more than happy to help anyone, and she is an all-round great person, excellent manager, and generally a likeable and helpful person.



Charlene Page

Nominated by The Psychology and Criminology Department

Charlene has gone above and beyond to make sure every member of the team has been supported. On her 1st day with us, she was teaching a psychology lesson. There are so many memorable moments where Charlene has really supported us, and we are all so very grateful.



Kerry Thompson

Nominated by Dawn Warren

I would like to nominate Kerry Thompson for her significant contribution to the organisation of the Higher and Adult Education Awards Evening in July, helping to create a memorable event for our students. Kerry's willingness to turn her hand to whatever was needed was greatly appreciated.



Kirsty Wallace

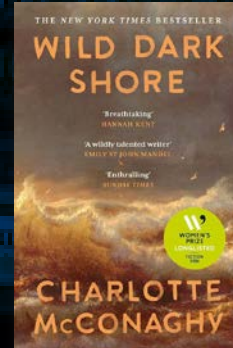
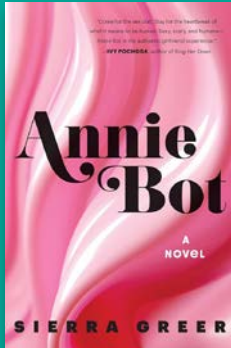
Nominated by Anita Blank

I would like to nominate Kirsty Wallace for taking on board one of my most hated tasks: the dreaded stock order! This order was a woolly mammoth and she even put it all away in an orderly fashion I can only dream of. I can't tell you Kirsty how much I appreciated this.

ASHTON APPRECIATES



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Annie Bot - Sierra Greer

Annie Bot by Sierra Greer is a smart, funny and surprisingly emotional read about an AI companion who gets tired of being exactly what everyone else wants her to be. Blending sci-fi with relatable questions about identity, independence and autonomy, it's a fascinating read that explores what it really means to have control over your own life. Thought-provoking, original and hard to put down, Annie Bot is perfect for anyone who enjoys stories that spark conversation long after the final chapter.

The Shepard King Series (One Dark Window & Two Twisted Crowns)

I read One Dark Window by Rachel Gillig on the recommendation of the Library Team, and it did not disappoint! I love the unique magic system and the gothic elements in the book. I flew through this book and immediately had to pick up the second book, Two Twisted Crowns in this duology. Thanks, Library, for a brilliant 5 star read! - Lydia Pratt

Wild Dark Shore - Charlotte McConagh

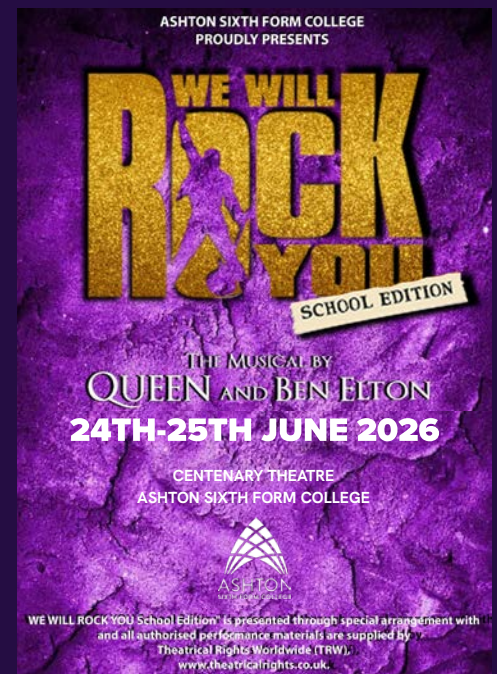
Wild Dark Shore is an immersive and thought-provoking novel that combines suspense, family drama and environmental themes. Charlotte McConagh makes the reader reflect on the wildness of nature, the impact of climate change, the instinct to survive, the future of humanity, grief and loss of a partner and mother, sacrifice and love, all whilst still giving the reader a glimmer of hope. With a remote island as the book's setting, the feeling of being trapped is very prevalent throughout the story, mirroring the vulnerability of both people and the natural world in the face of environmental change. A compelling choice for readers who enjoy atmospheric fiction with strong characters and a touch of mystery. - Giorgia Kerr

WE WILL ROCK YOU MUSICAL 2026

After months of preparation and rehearsals, students from across our Performing Arts Department brought the hit musical *We Will Rock You* to Ashton Sixth Form College this term!

For two nights only, they wowed audiences with the popular musical, packed with iconic Queen songs.

A huge well done to all of our students and staff, both on stage and behind the scenes!



What you are about to see is the culmination of 4 months of hard work by cast, crew and staff. Everyone involved has shown incredible dedication, giving up countless hours of their own time at lunchtime, throughout the college day and in the evenings. It is very difficult to understand the enormous level of commitment required in a project this big unless you have been involved in something similar. I have been absolutely delighted with the energy, enthusiasm, sense of humour and professionalism of the students and staff. I hope they have all enjoyed it, whilst also being challenged to stretch themselves, learn new skills and understand the importance of commitment to a team. I'm sure we will have a show we can all be very proud of and remember for many, many years to come. Huge thanks from me to everyone involved.

Sheridan Lewis

CAST

Galileo Figaro - Fin Hibbert
Scaramouche - Kit Bell
Killer Queen - Latitia Kotzen
Khashoggi - Alex Baker
Buddy - Nat Parkin
Brit - Lorien Brennan-Holmes
Oz - Izzy Cutler

Bohemians/Gaga Kids/Police:

Lexie Dunbar
Matthew Wetham
Jacob Dennerly
Hayden Yin
Ruby Thornes
Liz Kerr

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director - Sheridan Lewis
Musical Director - Olly Kraweckyj

Gaga Girls

Ruby Thornes
Liz Kerr
Izzy Cutler
Lorien Brennan-Holmes

TECHNICAL TEAM

Technical Supervisors - Chris Hanlon & Michael Ford
Stage Manager - Ruby Thornes
Assistant Stage Manager - Liz Kerr
Set Design - Chris Hanlon
Assisted by Tom Dodd, Liz Kerr, Ruby Thornes, Lucy Priest
Lighting Design - Chris Hanlon
Assisted by Lucy Priest
Sound Design - Michael Ford
Assisted by Emily Ward, Wren Weaver & Casey Harrop
Choreographer - Anu Akin-Omotunde
Stage Crew - Tom Dodd, Oliver Dent and Oliver Wilde
Front of House Manager - Claire Crichton

THE BAND

Drums: Bobby James
Bass: Daisy Jackson
Piano/Synths: Olly Kraweckyj
Guitar 1: James Sharkey
Guitar 2: Millie Embrey-Clayton

"WE WILL ROCK YOU School Edition" is presented through special arrangement with
and all authorised performance materials are supplied by
Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW)
www.theatricalrights.co.uk



ASHTON NEWS

CELEBRATING OUR A1 STUDENTS

Students from across the college came together to celebrate a fantastic year of achievement at our A1 Award Ceremony, recognising those who have gone above and beyond during their first year of study.

The awards recognise students who have demonstrated outstanding dedication, progress, resilience and commitment throughout the academic year, both in their studies and through their contribution to college life.

Staff were delighted to celebrate this year's winners, who have consistently shown commitment to their learning, embraced new opportunities and made a positive contribution to college life.

Following the awards ceremony, students enjoyed an afternoon of celebration packed with fun activities to mark the end of the academic year. From inflatable games, football and a photo booth to hair braiding, face painting and an ice cream van, there was something for everyone to enjoy. It was a fantastic opportunity for students to celebrate their achievements together before heading off for a well-earned summer break.

Congratulations to all of our A1 Award winners. We hope you are incredibly proud of everything you have achieved during your first year, and we wish you a relaxing summer as you look ahead to your second year at college.





LEAVERS' BALL 2026

Our departing A2 students marked the end of their college journey in style at our second annual Leavers' Ball, enjoying a memorable evening of celebration with friends and staff.

The event provided the perfect opportunity for students to reflect on their time at Ashton, celebrate their achievements and look ahead to the exciting opportunities that await them after college.

Students arrived dressed to impress, creating a fantastic atmosphere as they enjoyed an evening filled with celebrations, laughter and lasting memories. The Leavers' Ball has quickly become a much-loved tradition, giving students the chance to come together one final time before beginning the next chapter of their lives.

We are incredibly proud of everything our A2 students have achieved during their time at Ashton and wish them every success in their future studies, apprenticeships, careers and beyond. Congratulations to our Class of 2026 – we can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.







A LEVEL MEDIA STUDENTS PRODUCE INSPIRING HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER RADIO FEATURE

Our A1 Media Studies students have partnered with Tameside Hospital and Tameside Radio to create a radio broadcast. The student-led programme highlights the vital work of the hospital's "Patient Experience Volunteers" and their daily efforts to support local patients.

The dedicated student production team spent weeks interviewing participants, recording audio, and editing the final programme. Their work has now been delivered to Tameside Radio, with the feature officially airing during 'The Hour' Community on Thursday 11th June between 7-8pm.

The students collaborated directly with Heather Swirles and the Quality and Patient Experience Team at Tameside Hospital to gather stories from the frontline of patient care. After finalising the edit, the students handed the completed project over to Mark Andrews, Community Content Reporter & Presenter



at Tameside Radio, for its upcoming transmission.

The talented team responsible for the entire production includes:

- Elina Knighton-Adele
- Ella Kenneth-Olubor
- Dylan Hyde
- Maddie McGivern
- Ayisha Jamal
- Lucie Haynes
- Jaimie Wong

A huge well done to all involved!



END OF YEAR ART SHOW: 'ON FIRE'

Our talented A Level Art students proudly showcased their creativity and hard work at this year's End of Year Art Show, celebrating the incredible work produced throughout the academic year.

The exhibition featured an impressive range of artwork from students studying Fine Art, Photography, Graphic Design, 3D Design & Technology, and Textiles. From striking photography and innovative graphic design to detailed sculptures, textiles and fine art pieces, the exhibition highlighted the creativity, technical skill and individuality of each student.

The End of Year Art Show provided family, friends, staff and visitors with the opportunity to explore the exhibition and celebrate the achievements of our talented students as they completed another successful year of study.

Congratulations to all of our exhibiting students on producing such an inspiring collection of work. We look forward to seeing where your creativity takes you next.



PUBLIC SERVICES & SPORTS STUDENTS VISIT CONDOVER HALL

Sport and Public Services A1 students recently enjoyed an action-packed trip to Condoover Hall, where they took part in a range of outdoor activities designed to develop teamwork and leadership skills.

Throughout the visit, students challenged themselves with axe throwing, archery, trapeze, rock climbing, raft building and abseiling. They also enjoyed some downtime with a campfire and movie night.

It was fantastic to see everyone getting involved, trying new experiences and supporting one another throughout the trip.



ELITE STUDENTS COME 5TH IN DANCE WORLD CHAMPS!

A1 students Macy Bonnar and Melissa Charlesworth have recently returned from an exciting trip to Orlando, Florida, after competing in the Allstar Dance World Championships!

Macy and Melissa have both been dancing from a young age and are members of the hip hop team, 'Missiles'. Their team secured their place at the World Championships after winning a bid in the Senior Hip Hop category at a competition last May and have been training tirelessly ever since to create the best performance possible.

At the World Championships, they competed against 16 teams in the semi-finals, with only eight teams progressing to the final — including their team!

They finished the competition 5th in the world and 1st in Europe — an incredible achievement.

The college is proud to support students like Macy and Melissa through the Ashton Elite programme. Ashton Elite supports students competing in sport through coaching and mentoring, timetable flexibility and financial support.

A huge congratulations to Macy, Melissa and their team!



AMBITIOUS TWINS PREPARE FOR NEXT CHAPTER

A2 students Thandolwethu and Buhlebethu Ndiweni are preparing for the next stage of their journeys after excelling during their time at Ashton Sixth Form College and setting their sights on careers in law and psychology.

Originally from South Africa, the sisters moved to the UK in 2023 and adapted quickly to a completely different education system. Since joining Ashton, they have continued to build on their strong academic foundations and pursue their ambitions.

Thandolwethu studies Law, History and English Literature and achieved an A grade in Core Maths during her first year. Alongside her A Levels, she has also completed an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and is currently predicted A*AA. She hopes to progress to university to study Law (LLB) before pursuing a career in Corporate Law.

Meanwhile, Buhlebethu studies Biology, Mathematics and Psychology and is also predicted A*AA. Having

completed an EPQ, she plans to study Psychology at university with ambitions of becoming a Neuropsychologist.

Before joining college, the twins achieved nine GCSEs each with high grades after relocating from South Africa and successfully adapting to the British education system. Their achievements earned them recognition in the Tameside Correspondent on Results Day. Prior to moving to the UK, the sisters consistently ranked among the top students in their year group in South Africa and enjoyed success in a range of sporting competitions, experiences they say helped shape the discipline and ambition they have today.

Speaking about their time at Ashton Sixth Form College, the sisters said:

"Being in a college like this has been such a great part of our lives. From the university trips we took with XL in Year 1 to the teaching standards displayed, along with the people we have met through college, our time here has been worth everything.

"We chose this college for its reputation, and we could not be more pleased with the outcome of our two years. We have always strived to be in an environment that helps feed our ambitious and competitive drive and this college really did that for us."

Everyone at Ashton Sixth Form College wishes Thandolwethu and Buhlebethu every success as they look ahead to Results Day and the exciting opportunities that await them at university and beyond.

MUSIC PERFORMANCE STUDENTS CELEBRATE SUCCESS WITH LIVE SHOW

Our Music Performance students celebrated the completion of their final exams with a fantastic sold-out live performance, showcasing their talent, creativity and hard work.

As part of the show, students took on the challenge of completely transforming popular songs into different musical genres, delivering creative and entertaining performances that impressed the audience from start to finish.

Congratulations to everyone involved for putting on such an outstanding show and successfully completing their exams.





NEW GYM COMING IN SEPTEMBER!

We are excited to excited to share that a brand-new exercise gym will be ready over the summer and open in September.

The gym will be a great addition for Sports students, but it will also be available for other students and staff to use. In the evenings, it will be open to the local community too, giving even more people the chance to make use of a high-quality fitness space.

This has been a long time in the making, with lots of planning and preparation behind the scenes. The college has worked closely with staff in the Sports department to make the project happen.

Sheridan Lewis, Vice Principal – Curriculum and Planning, said:

“After many years of planning and preparation, I’m absolutely delighted to say we now have the exercise gym being sorted out at Ashton Sixth Form College.

This will be a superb resource for our Sports students and, of course, for other students who want to use it. Staff will also have access and there will be community usage in the evenings. Having worked closely with Mark Storrie and our Sports staff, we are looking forward to opening this facility in September.”

The new gym is a fantastic addition to the college and another example of Ashton Sixth Form College investing in opportunities for students. We’re looking forward to opening the doors in September and welcoming students, staff and the local community.



HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

CELEBRATING OUR HIGHER EDUCATION & ADULT LEARNERS

Congratulations to all of our Higher Education and Adult learners who were recognised at this year's HE and Adult Award Evening! The evening celebrated the hard work, resilience and achievements of students across a wide range of courses, with Excellence Awards presented in subjects including Maths, Biology, English, Education, Health Sciences, Teacher Education and more.

A special congratulations goes to Elaine Dodge, who received the Volunteering Award in recognition of more than a decade of dedicated service as a volunteer maths support tutor.

Hosted by Jo Fetcher-Saxon, the evening brought together students, their families and friends to celebrate the incredible achievements of our adult learning community. Principal Lisa Richards also reflected on the life-changing impact of adult education and congratulated every award winner.

Well done to everyone recognised – we're incredibly proud of all you have achieved!



PGCE TRAINEE TEACHERS COMPLETE FIRST YEAR

Our eight PGCE trainee teachers have reached the end of Year 1 of their two-year, part-time teacher training programme.

Alongside postgraduate study, they have balanced home life, work commitments, and teaching practice with real dedication. Throughout the year, they have taught across departments, developing their professional skills and making a meaningful contribution to our students' learning.

We're proud of the commitment they've shown and look forward to supporting them as they continue their training journey.





PARENT/CARER SURVEY



2025/2026

Many thanks to all of the parents/carers who responded to our survey.

The comments and statistics were overwhelmingly positive, and we really value your responses, with 95% of parents/carers saying College has high expectations for students, 92% saying their child is well taught and 92% saying they would recommend Ashton Sixth Form College to other parents/carers. We are very proud of the work we do with our students, and it is lovely to hear your feedback. Attached are a small sample of those lovely comments, thank you to everyone who sent in comments.

The two main themes that require feedback from us related to parents/carers wanting more communication from College and help with access to Cedar. We often speak about College being the bridge between school and University, higher-

level apprenticeships or the world of work, but we appreciate that parents/carers still want as much information as possible. On the back of this we will be initiating a monthly update to support the information already going out via the website, social media and the termly Newsletter, so all parents/carers know what key events and deadlines are coming up for students. We will also be setting up more support for any parents/carers experiencing issues accessing Cedar, to ensure you can find all the information you need. There were some comments or concerns raised about individual student concerns or issues, if you have any individual concerns please contact your child's Senior Tutor and they will be more than happy to discuss them with you and hopefully resolve any issues.

Thank you again for the incredibly positive feedback on the survey and thank you for the time taken to respond, it is appreciated.

"Caring staff, prepare students well for their next steps and university."

"All the teaching staff are passionate about the subjects they teach, which has a huge impact on their students' willingness to learn. Staff care for the students they teach and have amazing relationships with them- professional and friendly."

"The tutors are very dedicated and look to support the students above and beyond. Parents Evenings online are very helpful and convenient. My son feels that the tutors are available when he needs them and offer good advice. He enjoys the lessons and finds them interesting."

"All the information on Cedar is great - attendance, timetables, results, we have been very happy with the extra support our daughter has been given when struggling with certain aspects of college life."

"My child is very happy at college and feels valued by her teachers. The teachers are happy to help and deliver excellent lessons. My daughter has built a good relationship with all her teachers and feels eager to attend lessons."

"Supports and encourages students in a tailored way. Picks up on areas that need development straightaway and acts on this with extra lessons."

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.thecalmzone.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 event 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