

The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools

Issue no.5 March 2016

Connected



Shakespeare

7 plays in 48 hours

Sixth-form Prizes

Guest panellist Ekow Eshun

Space to Learn

New school architecture and landscape



Landscape & leadership



In this issue we review highlights of the autumn term, which gathered momentum in November with the finals of our second annual sixth-form competitions, the essay prize and the public speaking prize, both excerpted in the following pages.

A double day of performance on 3 and 4 December heralded the festive season: seven Shakespeare plays performed in 48 hours by 128 student performers and designed by 83 production team members.

This *Connected* gives a glimpse of the (literally) changing landscapes of education under way at Ash Green and Rugeley: wonderful design projects about to transform the environment before students' eyes.

Our main feature interviews five staff in the Trust's Teaching Leaders programme about their journeys from the front of the classroom to the frontline of leadership.

Emily Campbell
Director of Programmes

It was Year 7 pupil **Jamekia Palmer** who "stole the show", in Jonathan Dimbleby's words, when the BBC Radio current affairs flagship programme *Any Questions* came to Thistley Hough. From a packed audience in the theatre, Jamekia asked "Does the panel think that I as a student at **Thistley Hough** will have the same opportunities as a child in private education?" One of five audience questions aired, hers was chosen from over 200 submitted before the programme.



Cross-Trust events

15 March CET Sicilian Avenue
Secondary Principals' meeting

16 March
Teaching Leaders' cross-Trust conference

17 March Abbeyfield
Year 7 Day of Performance: We'll Meet Again

11 May CET Sicilian Avenue
Secondary Principals' meeting

17 June
Design Faculties' meeting

21 June Weavers
Heads of sixth form meeting

22 June Woodlands
Primary Headteachers' meeting

22-23 June Woodlands
Primarys' overnight camp and sports day

24 June Rugeley
2017 Sixth-form Prize launch

1 July Loughborough Design Centre
Annual staff awayday

7 July Caister beach
Secondary Principals' meeting

7-8 July Caister Academy and beach
Secondarys' overnight stay and sports day

HOT-A-TWEET

140 characters from the Chief Executive

Congratulations to Danielle Groves, Sharon Lassen and Isabel Martin-Lyons of Abbeyfield for their Oxbridge offers to read chemistry, biomedical sciences and mathematics.

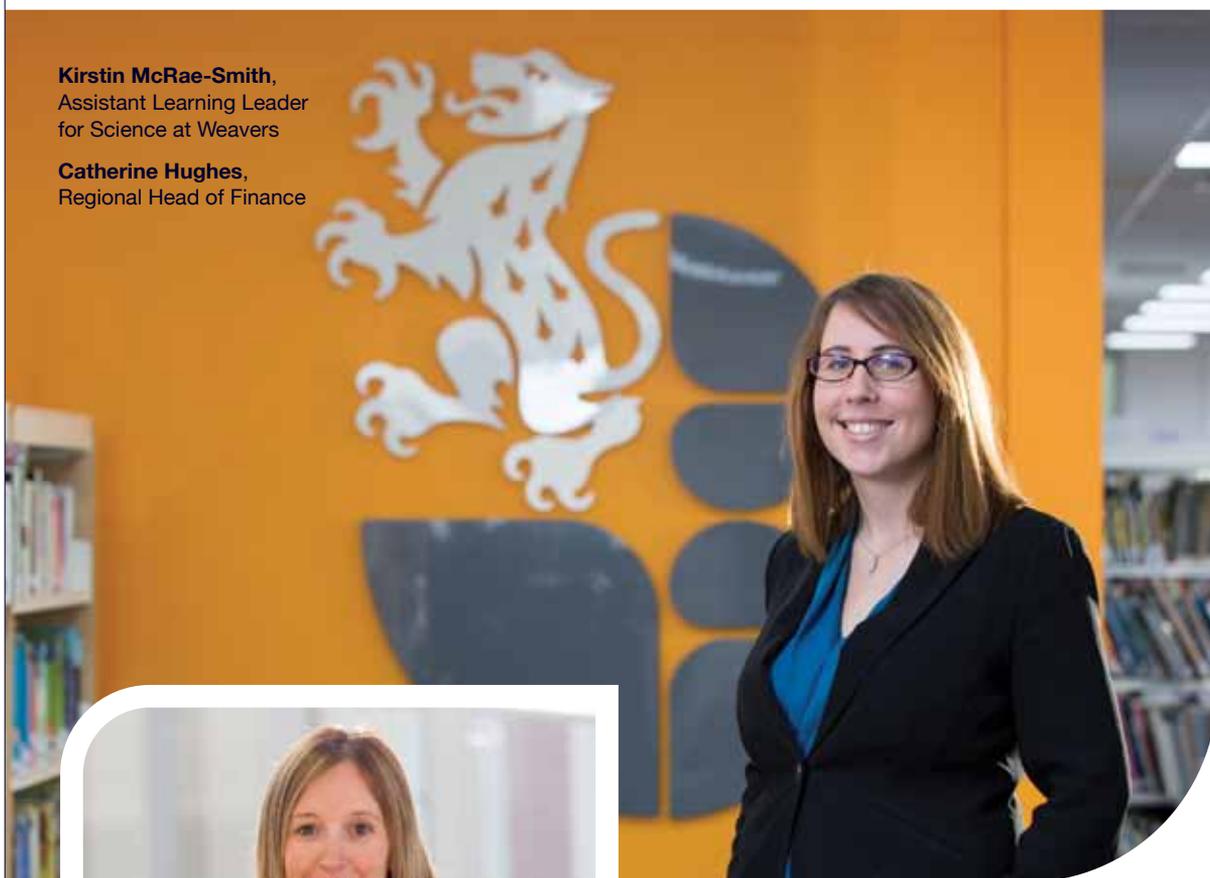


Lead on!

As institutions have become bigger and more complex, and as the theory and practice of leadership has advanced and become expected across virtually all public and commercial contexts, schools too have recognised the explicit need to nurture leaders. University education departments offer scores of qualifications in leadership. But when leadership beckons, what happens to the teacher you once were? *Connected* interviewed five of the Trust's current and future leaders.

Kirstin McRae-Smith,
Assistant Learning Leader
for Science at Weavers

Catherine Hughes,
Regional Head of Finance



Kirstin McRae-Smith, Assistant Learning Leader for Science at Weavers entered the profession as a “self-proclaimed geek” five years ago. Then, it was “all about science”, she says. But even in her newly qualified teacher (NQT) year she started to get involved in School Centred Teacher Training; her passion for teaching and learning in science already motivating her to lead. Chris Dillon, second in the maths department at Thistley Hough, sees his subject requiring leadership as much as any wider management issue does: “The state has opened up a vacuum by redefining the expectations of student performance in mathematics;

teachers have to step up and fill it. Maths teachers now have a prime opportunity to lead". Claudio Gissendorf, curriculum leader for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at Caister and in an accelerated programme towards headship, cannot imagine ever leaving the classroom behind. For credibility with respect to teaching and learning, the core purpose of education, it would be meaningless for school leaders to relinquish teaching: to this extent, once a teacher; always a teacher.

The accelerated programme, Future Leaders, is offered by the Future Leaders Trust, alongside Talented Leaders, which prioritises the recruitment of heads into challenging positions in inner city and coastal schools. Michelle Strong, Principal of Caister, came to CET via Talented Leaders and believes that that interview process, which "dug deep into my experience", identified her as the "person with a moral purpose" that Future Leaders were seeking. She and others didn't think of themselves as leaders growing up. School reports repeatedly told her to "join in more" and "be more assertive". Similarly, Kirstin McRae-Smith describes her schoolgirl condition as the "ignored middle"; hard working but staying within a comfort zone; "quite shy". Shy too, is how Catherine Hughes, Regional Head of Finance in the northwest Midlands, remembers herself at school. How did they find their inner leader?

While teaching languages in a Sheffield school, the head told Michelle Strong she should aim for headship, recognising her emotional intelligence and empathy, and her ability to understand people's resistance. "And I do listen" says Mrs Strong. "My grandmother liked to remind me that I had two ears and one mouth for a reason; she meant listen at least as much as you speak."

Communication skills such as hers are essential to today's

My grandmother liked to remind me I had two ears and one mouth for a reason; she meant listen at least as much as you speak.

Michelle Strong

leaders. Kirstin McRae-Smith's first job, in customer services for Royal Mail, stands her in good stead as she learnt "how to manage conflict and talk people in a negative place around to a more positive view". In her first job, Catherine Hughes started to see herself moving ahead of people who'd been there longer; taking responsibility without being asked and voicing ideas, shyness notwithstanding.

Chris Dillon observes that "everyone in front of a class is a leader",

Michelle Strong, Principal, and **Claudio Gissendorf**, MFL Curriculum Leader, Caister Academy



and that this condition puts everyone one in schools “close to leadership at all levels”. His own ambition to lead is emphatic – in his first NQT interview he announced that he wanted to be a head, and he might be described as a leader born, rather than made. Not a traditional 1950s corporate type of leader, he assures, but “a democratic one who believes that everyone has a voice and needs to share the vision”. Claudio Gissendorf speaks of “distributed leadership” which draws strength from all around. His example is attendance, which Caister have pushed up by two percentage points in a term and a half. Instead of contacting parents being someone’s designated job, it falls – in a distributed way – on those staff with the closest relationships with the families and students.

Philip Cantwell, Director of Education for the Trust, the “heads’ boss”, as he puts it, has a wide perspective on leadership. He invokes the theory of ‘followership’ – leadership’s reciprocal partner; the ability to take direction well, lend your weight to a programme or an idea, and to deliver what is expected of you as part of a team. Philip Cantwell cannot remember the last time he raised his voice, and is convinced that his role is coaching, rather than directing i.e. “getting people to follow you because it’s what they want to do.”

Empathy, sharing, distribution and collaboration are the motifs. Chris Dillon is working with colleagues from across the Trust and across Stoke-on-Trent to improve standards in maths. The next 12 months, driven by curriculum change, will make it imperative to share consistent values. “These are our students, not yours and mine separately,” he says. Kirstin McRae-Smith tries to infect the whole department with her ‘geekiness’. “It’s a creative department; there’s always more to learn about science because it progresses so rapidly.”

And what about developing others – not so much the skills of collaboration as a careful sense of human interaction? Chris Dillon admits to having been less firm than necessary and also less clear than his trainees perhaps needed at first; while Kirstin McRae-Smith notes that the challenge to give meaningful feedback without knocking the person back never goes away. Catherine Hughes’s insight into her teams at Rugeley and Thistley Hough is probably common; that staff often feel held back and are pleased to take on more. Along with high-level financial strategy, her role is to be open to questions, offer support, review the work and “show the team members what they’re capable of.”

Why is change management a module in all education leadership programmes? Answers to this question varied from Kirstin McRae-Smith’s description of the essential character of teaching: “it changes so fast: new subject specifications, new staff, the changing needs of students”, to Michelle Strong and Chris Dillon’s preoccupation with bringing people onside with the vision. Chris Dillon identifies change management as the hardest thing of all in leadership, “making people understand why”; and Michelle Strong concurs: “Leading change is so difficult: first you need the vision, then you need the ability to share it”. Laden with challenges on which she



Chris Dillon,
maths teacher
at Thistley Hough

Everyone in front of a class is a leader

Chris Dillon

must personally make decisions about change – attainment, attendance, finance, health and safety, facilities and ensuring consistency – her golden rule is “always try to give a reason”.

Influencing the wider ethos and culture of a school is one of the subtler aspects of leadership. Standing at the school gates at the beginning and end of the day is, for Mrs Strong, about welcoming and valuing students, not about checking their attendance.

Catherine Hughes had a particularly fresh perspective on the culture of schools when she first moved into education. She found herself surprised by a deep-rooted perception that the workforce is “hard done by” vis-à-vis the advantages and better financial rewards of the private sector. She came from a private sector background where the expectations of staff were high, and the hours long, for a low starting pay. Starting pay for teachers is commonly higher than in private sector jobs, the holiday allowance generous in comparison and the terms and conditions of employment sternly protected. However, Catherine has been able to learn rapidly about the challenges staff overcome every day in a school and to understand why staff often feel their remuneration is not commensurate with the role they carry out.

Balancing the operational with the educational is a live learning curve for Catherine Hughes – the inverse curve of teachers on track to becoming great leaders. Striving to become expert herself in this balance is a strong motivator, along with the opportunity to work across multiple schools in a shared regional role. CET aims to extend this opportunity by creating pathways to leadership within the Trust for our most talented teachers.

The inaugural meeting of CET’s Future Leaders on 16 March will be led by Richard Kimble, Professor Emeritus of Technology Education at Goldsmiths University of London and a member of CET’s Education Advisory Board.

6th Form Prizes

The second round of CET sixth-form prizes – one for an essay, the other for public speaking – attracted twice the number of entries as the inaugural competitions in April 2015. Six speaking finalists took the podium at Conway Hall, the London headquarters of the British Ethical Society, for ten minutes each to address the theme ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’. By turns comic, grave, passionate, ironic, poised, thoughtful – and all well-rehearsed without being slick – our young orators gave plenty to consider.

Among the dangers of superficial judgement they listed intolerance of teenage, gay or mentally ill people, the scorn of unconventional beauty rife in social media, and society’s failure to recognise

Fiction and Reality

(excerpt from Nia Rees’s essay)

Everyone alters and imagines scenarios or people in their minds; doing this can create a fantasy world where we store interpretations of how we wish these scenarios or people could be. These thoughts can cloud true judgements.

When thinking about someone or something we can create a positive ‘ideal’ or a negative ‘worst case’ – something we wish or believe they can be or are. Although this may be based on real exteriors or traits, the creation and reality often do not meet. Our ideal or worst case is simply imagined; we may believe we are in the presence of it, but in actual fact we are not. We tend to see people and things the way we want them to be, therefore an outsider’s view is useful in most situations. We also often feel more able to judge a situation fairly when we are not part of it, unaffected by the fantasy we have created within our minds that causes an attachment. The metaphor of rose-tinted spectacles is a representation of this attachment. If we want things to go well, we subconsciously alter the way we see something so that it does. For example, if you want to be in a relationship you may be more likely to go out of your way to search for someone suitable; or you may be more willing to see someone in a certain light than you would be if you were meeting them under any other pretext. On the other hand if someone provoked a dislike, you might exaggerate elements of their personality in your mind to justify a hatred for them.

This poses the question of how much of our lives are actually real, rather than based on fictions that we have unintentionally created. Do our ideals and worst cases generate expectations for other people to live up to – and for ourselves to live up to as well? Have all of the media influences we’re subjected to made us even less able to distinguish what is real from what is fictitious? Facebook and Twitter allow us to contribute to media fiction ourselves as we create a profile for however we wish to be seen. If we strive to match the fictions in our head (or the fictions in the media) then are we destined only to fail, because fiction is unable to become a reality in the world.





Don't judge a book by its cover

(excerpt from Georgina Robinson's speech)

Many people have encountered a series of videos on Facebook labelled 'Don't Judge Challenge'. These are short clips of young people creating a fake 'ugly' persona, often with spots, big eyebrows, glasses, messy hair and freckles. The videos cut to another clip of the person without the false persona, and making reference to themselves as 'beautiful'. The original, genuine idea of the videos was to put a stop to body-shaming. When vlogger Em Ford posted a video of herself wiping away her make-up to reveal her acne and other perceived 'flaws', her aim was to help people accept themselves for who they are, instead of what society believes they should be. Yet the good intention of the videos was quickly tarnished by the ways of social media. Ironically, rather than showing teens how to accept themselves, the Don't Judge Challenges ended up coming across as self-pretentious and arrogant: another way of getting the most amount of likes, rather than thoughtful videos about acceptance. The people in the videos took it on themselves to decide what society should see as 'ugly' and 'flawed'. Instead of putting a stop to body-shaming, it caused young people to become more self-conscious about their visual flaws, published for the world to see. And the world carried on sharing and liking the trend. What started as a simple way to try and stop isolating people for the way they look ended up causing new blows to their confidence.

But before we can change the world, we have to start at home. So next time you are having a bad day, go look in the mirror, remind yourself of your own definition of beautiful and believe it. Accept yourself for who you are. Then when your friend, or family member is having a bad day, remind them to create their own definition of beautiful. The film *Pay It Forward* told viewers: be nice to three people, then they'll be nice to another three people, and so on. This is how we should spread the message of acceptance – we need to accept ourselves and then help others accept themselves. Working together we can change the word beautiful, and we can put a stop to the judging of a book by its cover.

non-binary gender. The writer and broadcaster Ekow Eshun, our guest panellist, treated the audience to a ten-minute address of his own, inviting us to consider that language is wealth – both a form of exchange and a route to remuneration.

Georgina Robinson of Weavers took the public-speaking prize for a well-structured speech with a clever opening, leading to an examination of the 'Don't Judge Challenge' on Facebook. Her analysis of this acutely topical invitation to judge by appearances turned, in conclusion, to an invitation to all of us to define beauty for ourselves. Nia Rees, also of Weavers, won the essay prize for her 1,500 words on *Fiction and Reality*, appraised by our guest panellists, Dr Jonathan Katz and Hugh Aldersey-Williams, as "an articulate and ambitious argument made in steps, lucidly, and in a sustained direction".



Ekow Eshun,
guest panellist

DAY OF PERFORMANCE 2015

Main picture:

Elle Laird as Macbeth surrounded by **James Pocock**, **Tiegan Flint**, **Cameron Mortiboys**, **Daisie-Mai Fulton**, **Nathan Harrison** and **Kori Mullin** as Lady Macbeth, (Rugeley)

The **CET Day of Performance** expanded in 2015 to East and West days of Shakespeare over 48 hours: seven plays in total, each in an expertly edited half-hour version, featuring 128 student performers and 83 production design team members.

Ash Green's *Romeo and Juliet* opened the event, followed by Rugeley's *Macbeth* and Thistley Hough's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The second day opened with Lynn Grove's *The Merchant of Venice*, followed by another *Dream* by Caister, Weavers' *Othello* and Abbeyfield's *Hamlet*.

Our festival uncovered talent of all ages, from Year 7's new-to-the-stage at Lynn Grove to accomplished sixth-form drama students at Abbeyfield; from the comic verve of both Bottoms, Jessica Conde (Thistley

Hough) and Daniel Guilemette-Smith (Caister), to the tragic, winsome fretting and singing of Ophelia, Libby Stanton (Abbeyfield); from the racy, graffitied skateboard park in which Weavers set *Othello* to the black humour of a *Macbeth* recast against a 1940s radio soundtrack with glamorous witches modelled on the Andrews Sisters. Director Emily Askey (teacher of English at the Rugeley Academies) used the cast ingeniously throughout, but perhaps most memorably in the scene in which Macbeth receives the murdered King Duncan's crown to the tune of *The Sun Has Got His Hat On*.

Bravo to all the performers, congratulations to all the designers and compliments to all the staff who made it a success.

Top row left to right:
Jordan McColgan, Callum Walker, Megan Mathieson and Matthew Mullam as Antonio, Bassanio, Shylock and Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice* (Lynn Grove Academy)
Brian Bususu and Ellie Major as Hamlet and Laertes (Abbeyfield School)

Middle row left to right:
Grace Kelsall and Jessica Conde as Titania and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Thistley Hough Academy)
Daniel Guilemette-Smith and Maitana Fernandes Sa as Bottom and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Caister Academy)

Bottom row left to right:
Thomas Lewis as Benvolio, **Jaime Calcutt** as Mercutio and **Cole Reid** as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (Ash Green School)
Alexis Spillane, Evan Queeley, Kezia Welsh and Cory Bollen as Desdemona, Othello, Emilia and Iago (Weavers Academy)



Successes and special commendations

Students

Lynn Grove's 7XWF raised £200 for palliative care at the James Paget Hospital and presented the cheque to Maxine Taylor from the Louise Hamilton Centre.



Liam Tiesteel and **Kevine Kapend** have achieved Thistley Hough Academy's full school colours for their outstanding performance in the Arts.



Georgina Baxter from Lynn Grove stays in regular touch with a senior resident she met during Christmas hamper presentations in December.



William Trueman of Lynn Grove Academy represented the Scouts during a trip to Japan and is well on the way to qualifying as a Young Leader in the Scouts.



Four students from Thistley Hough have applied to the Yale Young Global Scholars programme, an incredible opportunity to attend a summer school at one of the world's great universities. **Natasha Hill**, **Anantha Aji Rag** and **Ambaar Saeed** are applying for Biological and Biomedical Sciences, while **Bryony Kelsall** (not pictured) is applying for Politics, Law and Economics.



Renee Davies, **Lauren Newman** and **Ellie Boulton** ran the 'Race for Life' at Abbeyfield and raised nearly £500 for Cancer Research UK





Amanda Hampton, SENCo at Lynn Grove, continues superb outreach work supporting Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils and their families, while also arranging holiday bake-offs and regularly attending the staff aerobics class.

and staff



Katie Pointon, a driving force in the development of the English department at Thistley Hough, has been promoted to the role of Director.



Tiffany Watson, a Young Carer from Lynn Grove Academy, presented Terry Woods from Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Young Carers with a cheque for £71 donated by staff from Lynn Grove in lieu of Christmas wishes to one another.



The Year 7 team (above) reached the last 16 of the U-12 9-a-side English Schools' Football Association (ESFA) Schools' Cup, cheered on by their manager, **Steve Goddard**, Year 10 Progress Leader, recuperating from a broken foot.

Having lost in the first round last year, Lynn Grove's Year 9 football team (right) reached the last 16 of 350 schools who entered the ESFA U-14 Schools' Cup.



Bev Edwards, Lynn Grove Cluster's Family Support Worker, works tirelessly with Year 7 newcomers and transition pupils to ensure they settle in at Lynn Grove.



SPACE TO LEARN

The built environment exerts a powerful influence over our behaviour, performance and feelings. This makes the design of schools very important. While public money for capital projects is extremely limited, CET wants to help its member schools balance design quality and value for money so that buildings, learning spaces and external landscapes contribute positively to educational outcomes and to students' appreciation for the built and natural environments.

Here we introduce two exciting CET Estates & Property developments: a new 4-classroom block at Ash Green to accommodate growing numbers of students, and a pedestrian pathway and landscape between the former Hagley Park and Fair Oak Academies, signifying their union as the upper and lower departments of The Hart School, from September 2016.



New Classrooms for Ash Green

Matthew Richards, Senior Architect at Ridge & Partners, spoke to *Connected*:

"Ash Green is typical of schools that need to adapt to a changing curriculum

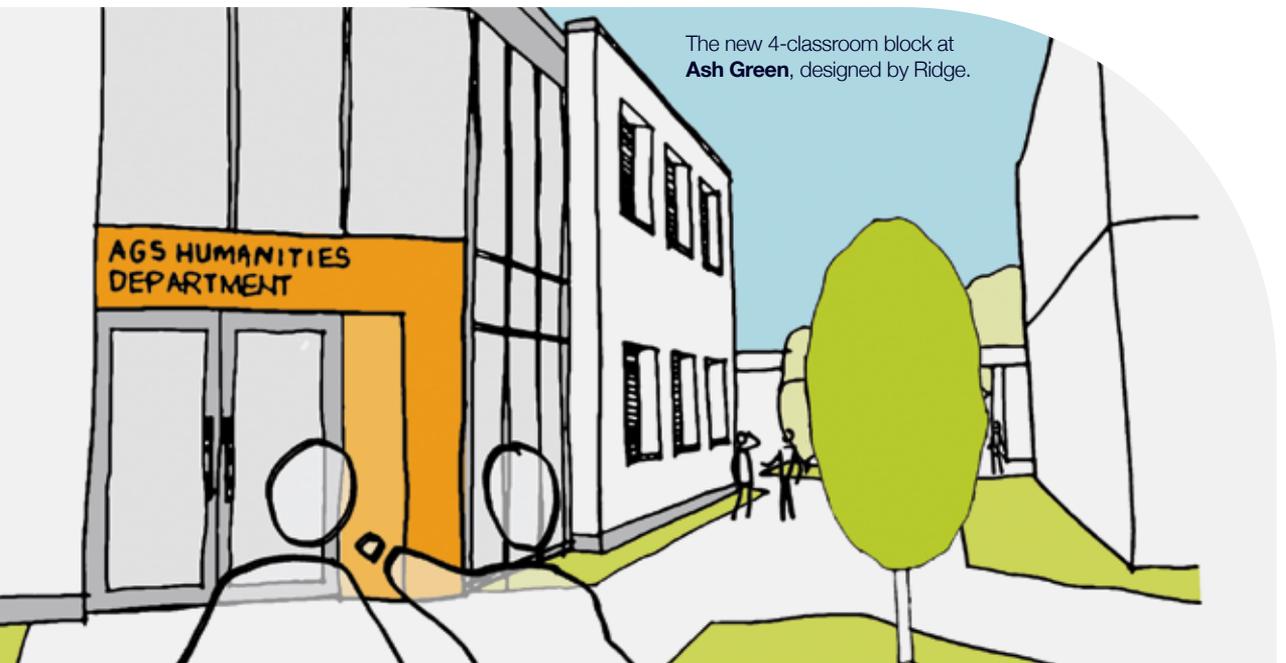
and/or expand to accommodate increasing pupil numbers. New accommodation needs to be incorporated into the wider school so that it is not isolated or difficult to manage. It's also normal to work on a live school site, in very close proximity to other buildings that continue to be used through the building works! But Ash Green stands out from others schools in having been able to invest in a master plan to structure the future development of the site. The thinking had been done, so the proposed location of the new teaching spaces was simple to establish and will not hinder any further projects that Ash Green may want to consider.

Design quality is not always high on the agenda: many clients simply require the spaces in the most economical form. It's refreshing to work with a client that engages with the design process and seeks not only a functional building, but one with aesthetic and environmental qualities that will really enhance the school.

There are challenges to the site. It's on a slope, with ornamental trees that will require removal. The proposed building will adjoin two existing ones, temporarily removing a key external circulation route and putting pressure on other parts of the school during the building works. But it also has advantages: it can accommodate the building without losing key outdoor play or social spaces; and a relatively simple access arrangement will make the construction phases more manageable.

Ash Green students can look forward to purpose-built, modern classrooms that support their productivity and attentiveness. We and the Trust also hope it to be a learning tool for pupils to understand how well-designed buildings can have quality internal environments whilst minimising their impact on the environment. The quality of the design will improve the feel of the whole campus and act as the standard for later phases".

The new 4-classroom block at **Ash Green**, designed by Ridge.



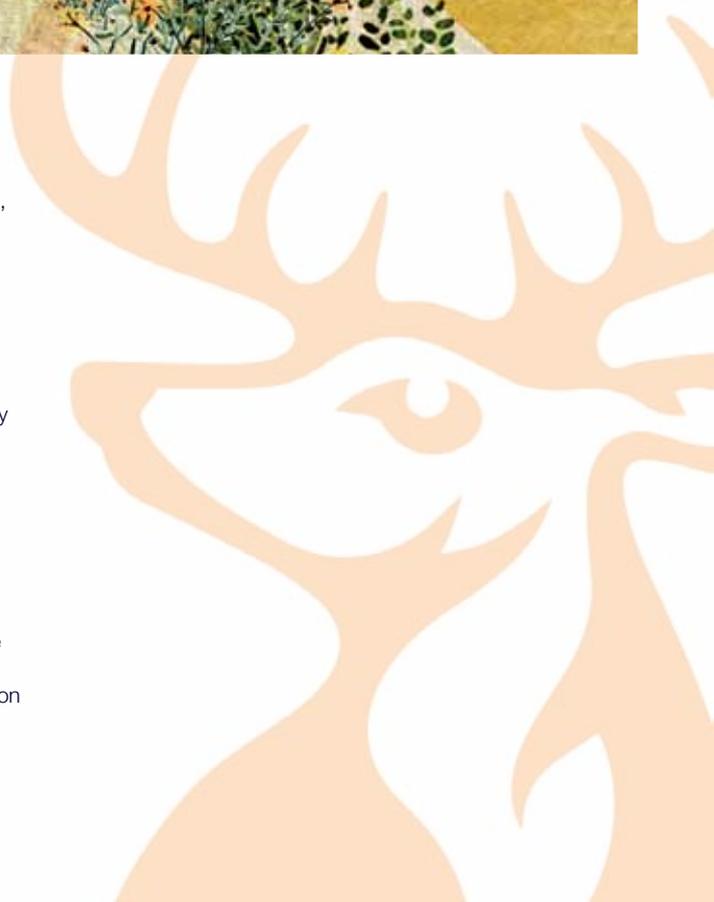
'Garden room' concept presented by DK-CM, an outdoor learning space at the centre of the pedestrian pathway between the upper and lower departments of the **Hart School**.



A New Campus for The Hart School

The Rugeley Academies, soon to be united as The Hart School, together occupy approximately 40 acres and are currently linked by a pedestrian pathway across two fields and a brook. The merger of the two schools and their conversion into a lower and upper school site necessitates the refurbishment of this pathway which will be used by up to 450 students a day. This refurbishment is important not only for practical, safety and access reasons, but because of the potential of a new, considered and landscaped thoroughfare and campus to signify the union of the two schools and the beginning of a new era for education in Rugeley.

Three landscape design companies were invited to present designs for The Hart School: Greysmith Associates, MRG Studio and DK-CM. The panel, Executive Principal Chris Keen, Governors Andy Drake and Joanna Jenkins, CET Directors Marc Jordan and Emily Campbell, and Michael Dickson, Chair of the Creative Education Trust's Estates & Property Committee having reviewed three outstanding and very different proposals, will announce the appointed designer shortly. A significant portion of the landscape is expected to be completed in time for the single school's opening date of Monday 5th September 2016.



Round-up

Higher and faster at Shugborough

The Rugeley Academies take maximum advantage of the local outdoor education centre at neighbouring Shugborough. The most recent expedition focused on rock climbing and mountain biking, making use of both indoor and outdoor rock climbing walls, an old quarry, and the fantastic grounds of Shugborough Hall (a stately home and estate on the edge of Cannock Chase) with all its different types of terrain. Level 3 BTEC Sport students learn the four outdoor activities of skiing, mountain biking, kayaking and rock climbing which constitute the Outdoor Education unit and are intended to develop confidence, build self-esteem and develop new skills, techniques and tactics. Although mostly apprehensive about the climbing heights and biking speeds, the Year 13 group supported and challenged each other, leading their peers through a series of problem-solving challenges.



International Space Challenge

A Year 11 team From Abbeyfield has won the international space challenge competition run by the National Space Centre and Business Language Champions (BLC).

The students' video, *Journey to Mars*, was deemed outstanding by the judges. It qualified them for the semi-finals and is soon to be viewed on the BLC and National Space Academy websites.

The semi-final challenge was to design a space hotel, considering functions, temperature control, energy requirements, guest accommodation and construction materials. A model was built and presented to the judges in English and French alongside other contenders for the prize. The final competition at the National Space Centre included the design, building and launching of a rocket, calculating the dimensions and metrics for their hotel, producing a marketing leaflet in French for it, and presenting their engineering and marketing ideas in French.

Our students won every round. We will return to the National Space Centre for a master class and look forward to putting the first Abbeyfield graduate in space.



Primary Parliamentary Insight

In November 2015, Queen Eleanor's student council was lucky enough to visit one of the most famous landmarks in the world – London's Houses of Parliament! We got our lunches and found our partners, and everyone felt a tingle of excitement as they followed Mrs Cox and Mr McLoughlin to the minibus. After an hour or two, we arrived at the Houses of Parliament. By this time, everybody was very hungry! After we had eaten, we walked to the Education Centre and checked-in. A helpful young man and lady greeted us and guided us to Queen Victoria's golden throne and the supremely beautiful Royal family portraits.

Towards the end of our visit we went into a special room where we split into two groups and made arguments for and against current political issues, such as smoking laws. This was our favourite part – sharing our ideas and hearing each other's views – and the most amusing part came next. Three children were chosen to wear a big, colourful banner each and pretend to represent a variety of viewpoints: the Lords, the government and the general public. Then they got to make different decisions about a campaign put forward by each group. After that, our local MP (Mr David Mackintosh, Conservative) paid us a visit. We were able to quiz Mr Mackintosh about what it was like to be an MP and to make important decisions that affect others. Time flew and before we knew it, it was time to go. We waved goodbye, enthralled by the possibility of returning – not as a special visitor but as a future member of parliament!

By Khayrat Khamis and Iqra Hussain, Year 6.

We'll Meet Again

By popular demand, CET has initiated a cross-Trust Year 7 Day of Performance. *We'll Meet Again*, produced for CET by HMDT Music, creative partners in the Benjamin Britten centenary project and recent days of performance featuring Shakespeare, commemorates the Second World War. The show is a series of contemporary musical theatre pieces inspired by the writings and experiences of young people in wartime: the Blitz and bombings, the Home Front and the Holocaust. Brand new commissions about the Dunkirk evacuation and the experience of refugees in exile will be performed by Caister, Lynn Grove and Thistley Hough. While there will be opportunities to see each school's piece at home, the parents of performing children from all the secondary schools are warmly invited to attend the performance at Abbeyfield School on Thursday 17 March at 2.00pm.



Egyptian Day at Three Peaks

We have Egyptian clothes on in this picture because our topic this half term was the Ancient Egyptians. We have been looking at mummification, Egyptian life, Egyptian gods and pyramids. Did you know Ancient Egyptians had no electricity? On Egyptian day, Cleopatra came in to tell us about Ancient Egypt and we helped her make a mummy; that was fun! Egyptian kids played with spinning tops, leapfrog and a board game called mancala. We made clay charms out of air-drying clay. We built a pyramid out of wooden blocks and buried a wooden mummy inside. Our Egyptian day ended with Cleopatra telling us Egyptian stories about gods and goddesses and pharaohs. By Miriam Dixon and Remi Iommi, Year 3



Creativity is the ability to recognise or make new connections between the things we know. Connecting knowledge is at the heart of an effective education. It is vital to improving standards, and it will make young people resourceful and employable in the world of tomorrow.

This page:

Ekow Eshun flanked by finalists in the sixth-form speaking competition; left to right: **Courtney Sharpe** (Abbeyfield), **Maria Popescu** and **Georgina Robinson** (Weavers), **Scarlett Robinson** (Ash Green), **Jade Windley** (Rugeley) and **Ethan Willis** (Abbeyfield).

Front cover image:

Tiegan Flint, **Daisie-Mai Fulton** and **Jade Short** as the three witches in the Rugeley Academies' *Macbeth*.

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