

ASHLAWN

SPRING NEWS 2026



ASHLAWN
SCHOOL

Our best, always



Welcome from the Executive Principal

As this very short half term draws to a close, it is hard to believe how quickly the weeks have passed by. There is so much for us to reflect on.

I would like to begin by thanking you all for your kindness and support during what has been an incredibly difficult time for our whole school community, as we have dealt with the shock of the sudden loss of Mr Phillips and Miss Ravindran just a few weeks apart.

Although it has been a time of great sadness, it has been heartening to see our wonderful Ashlawn community coming together to be there for each other and support one another.

We have stood by our promise to give 'our best, always' in all that we do, this term that has meant being compassionate, kind and caring in abundance as we have mourned this incredible loss together.

So, in honour of Mr Phillips and Miss Ravindran, and their love for Ashlawn, we have also been ensuring that we continue to give our very best for our students.

Throughout this half term, students have immersed themselves in a rich variety of experiences.

Alongside their day-to-day learning, many have taken part in outstanding stage productions, careers workshops and enrichment activities that have inspired them.

I am consistently impressed by the character our students show. Their determination, positivity and willingness to challenge themselves really do embody the values that make Ashlawn such a special place.

In particular, our Year 11 and Year 13 students deserve special recognition. As they approach their forthcoming exams, they are navigating a demanding and important stage of their education.

Their focus, resilience and commitment have been exemplary, and they continue to make us all proud every day.

Paul Brockwell
Executive Principal



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

While this half term has been a challenging one for many reasons, I have been really pleased with the positive and focused approach students have shown across the school.

This part of the year is significant as we reach the halfway mark of the academic year, and it has been encouraging to see students settling into their learning, building confidence, and engaging thoughtfully with their studies.

In lessons, students have been working hard, strengthening their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

As the exam season approaches, for our Year 11s and Year 13s in particular, we've also been focusing on developing revision routines, exploring different techniques and ensuring that students feel prepared and confident as they move forward.

Our programme of Academic Review Evenings is now well underway, and it has been a pleasure to welcome parents and carers into school to talk about your children's learning and progress.

These conversations are always valuable in strengthening the partnership between home and school and provide the chance to discuss any queries you may have. So far, we have met with a number of year groups, and we look forward to hosting the remaining Academic Reviews over the course of the coming months.

Alongside their academic efforts, this term it has also been wonderful to see so many students taking part in enrichment activities, trips and wider school experiences.

These opportunities are such an important part of school life - allowing students to discover new interests, develop independence, and enjoy learning in different contexts.

Looking ahead to next term, there is lots to look forward to with highlights including British Science Week, World Book Day, TLET's Got Talent, DofE training and so much more!

Stephen Darby
Head of School



AN UPDATE FROM TLET'S CEO

I am writing to share an update with you regarding leadership arrangements at Ashlawn School.

As you will know, Paul Brockwell and Stephen Darby have been leading the school as Interim Executive Principal and Interim Head of School (respectively) over recent months. This has allowed Mr Brockwell to focus on delivering the highest standards and opening opportunities for greater collaboration between Ashlawn and Houlton Schools, while Mr Darby has been leading on the day-to-day operations at Ashlawn.

We feel this arrangement has been working really well, and we have already seen many benefits for both school communities. I am, therefore, delighted to confirm that we have asked Mr Brockwell and Mr Darby to continue in these roles on a permanent basis.

I also wanted to update you on some wider leadership arrangements at Ashlawn, following the very sad passing of Aaron Phillips, Vice Principal, during the Christmas break.

As a school and Trust community, we wanted to take time to mourn the great loss we all feel as a result of this tragic news.

Professionally, there was also so much that Mr Phillips took care of at Ashlawn, and I'd like to thank Ashlawn colleagues who took on some of that work during such a difficult time.

To provide some additional leadership capacity under these sad circumstances, we recently welcomed Mr Chris Quinney to the Ashlawn team and I am pleased to confirm that he will continue to support the school until the end of the academic year.

Over the coming months, you may also see some other new faces at Ashlawn as we are currently in the process of recruiting for two TLET Vice Principals, who will work across our secondaries to lead on various areas of our provision.

Thank you for your continued support.

Helen Stevenson
TLET CEO

 **Transforming Lives**
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

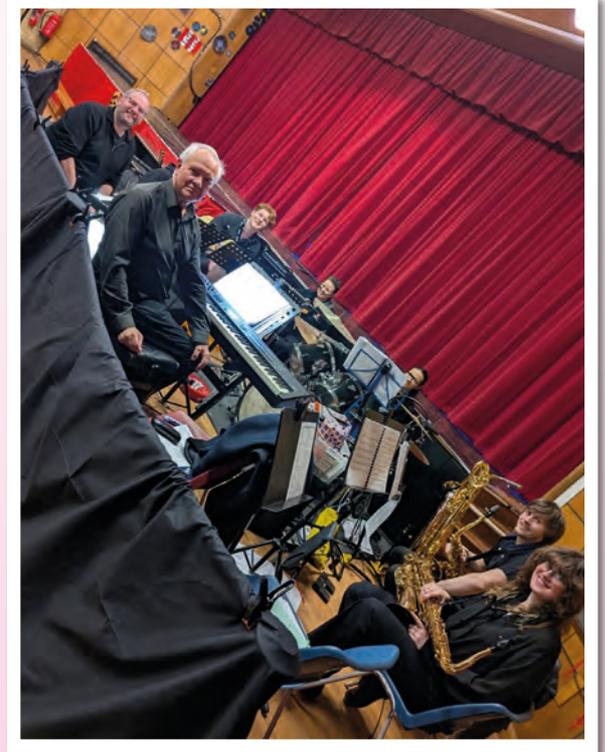


GREASE IS THE WORD

Grease was well and truly the word at Ashlawn School as our annual production took to the stage - and what a spectacular run it was. Playing to the most packed-out opening night we've seen, the show launched with an electric atmosphere that set the tone for the entire week.

Across three evenings, featuring three different casts, our students delivered star performances supported by a superb live band, a professional technical team, and beautifully designed sets. Each night was met with fantastic audiences and an abundance of classic Grease hits.

The teamwork shown by the cast, band, technical crew, set designers and staff was outstanding, and we couldn't be prouder of everyone involved. To all those who came along to cheer and support our students, thank you!



GREASE



NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

We marked this year's National Apprenticeship Week (9-15 February 2026) with a series of engaging activities designed to broaden students' understanding of future career pathways.

During the week, our Year 7 and Year 8 students took part in dedicated assemblies exploring the world of apprenticeships. Students learned that apprenticeships offer a unique opportunity to earn while you learn, combining paid employment with training and recognised qualifications.

They also discovered that apprenticeships can be pursued after GCSEs or sixth form and are available across a wide range of industries, including healthcare, engineering, media, IT and construction.

The assemblies highlighted how the subjects that our students are studying today connect directly to future careers, as well as the key skills employers value most. With the world of work evolving rapidly, apprenticeships can provide a flexible and valuable route that can help young people adapt to careers that may not even exist yet.



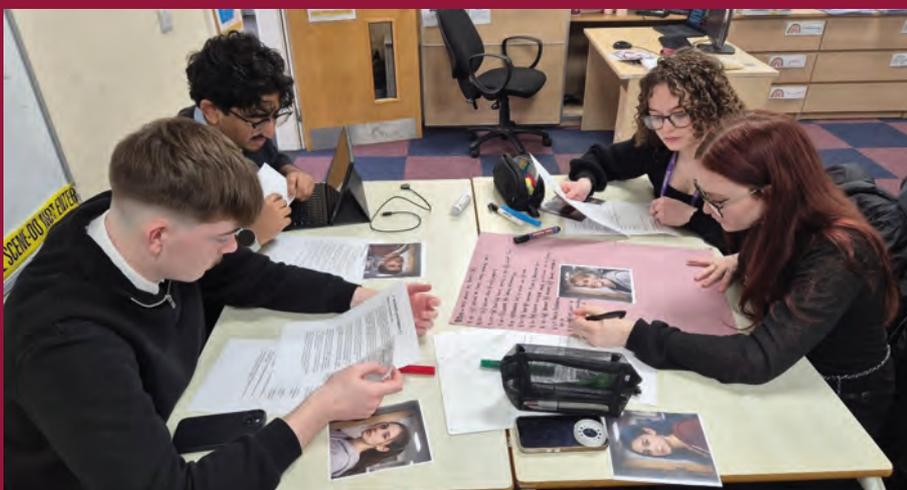
EXPLORING APPRENTICESHIPS IN CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Our Year 12 students also marked the week by exploring apprenticeship pathways linked to Criminology and Criminal Justice, building on their understanding of how apprenticeships provide a paid job combined with training and qualifications.

During the sessions, students researched apprenticeships linked to criminal justice using Google, government websites and Unifrog. This supported their metacognition skills, encouraging them to think carefully about how they research and evaluate reliable career information.

They then had the chance to explore specific apprenticeship routes in more depth, including pathways towards becoming a Probation Officer, examining entry requirements, training routes and long-term career progression.

It was then time to take on a Mini CID Challenge, applying their analytical thinking and teamwork skills in a hands-on CID task, developing the key employability skills highlighted earlier in the week — communication, problem-solving, reliability and collaboration.



FINDING OUT ABOUT DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Our Sixth Form students also had the chance to take part in a session focusing on degree apprenticeships.

Led by Dale Willis from the company “My Great First Job” it was an opportunity for students to explore degree apprenticeships – what they are, how they work, and whether they could be the right pathway after sixth form.

This included looking at how students can earn a salary, gain real workplace experience, and graduate with a full degree – all without university tuition fees. The talk also explored the application process, entry requirements, and how students can make themselves competitive candidates.

Following the talk, sixth formers then had the opportunity to ask personalised questions about routes, industries, and next steps.

YEAR 11 SHINE IN MOCK INTERVIEWS

A huge well done to our Year 11 students, who recently took part in mock interviews.

Professionals from a wide range of sectors - including the prison service, retail, business management, project management, logistics, engineering, energy & sustainability, and law - joined us to put students through their paces.

Our students impressed their interviewers with their confidence, clear communication, and maturity throughout the sessions.

Thank you to all of our visitors for giving their time and expertise - we truly appreciate it.

Year 11 will now receive personalised feedback from their interviewers during form time over the coming weeks, helping them grow and prepare for the real thing.

We are incredibly proud of you all!



REAL DATA, REAL SKILLS FOR THE REAL WORLD

Geography lessons have been helping students to connect classroom learning with real life scenarios.

Year 12 students have been completing a river case study using live data from the Environment Agency rivers database. By working with authentic environmental data, students have been investigating real-world issues such as water quality, flood risk and river management.

As part of the project, students analysed data sets, identifying patterns and trends, and presenting their findings in a professional-style report, reflecting the type of work expected in higher education and many careers.

It also provoked important discussions about climate change and the importance of looking after our rivers and landscapes.

A SEA OF YELLOW

This year, Ashlawn School has faced some of its most difficult days as we have been navigating the loss of two deeply valued friends, colleagues, and role models – Mr Phillips and Miss Ravindran.

While words often fall short in the face of such loss, it is during these times of profound sadness that the true spirit of our school community shines brightest.

As a heartfelt tribute to both Mr Phillips and Miss Ravindran, on the day of Mr Phillip's funeral our Sixth Form students proposed having a sea of yellow across Ashlawn.

This included hand-making yellow ribbons for students and staff to wear, as a small sign of our gratitude for two individuals who gave so much to our school.

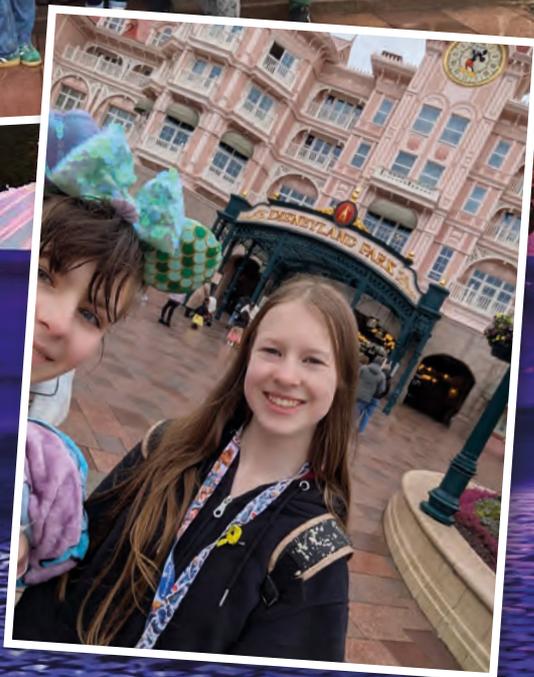
This also provided the opportunity to raise valuable funds for our local air ambulance, a cause that is very important to us all.



ADVENTURES IN DISNEYLAND PARIS

A group of Year 9 students were lucky enough to take part in a trip to Disneyland Paris this term.

Despite the great British Weather following them across the Channel, everyone had a fantastic time creating memories together.



Disneyland
PARIS



NATIONAL WELLBEING AWARD FOR SCHOOLS

We firmly believe that a happy, healthy community is at the heart of a great education, so the work we've been doing as part of the National Wellbeing Award for Schools is very important to us.

It means that we're ensuring that emotional wellbeing and mental health aren't just "extra" things we do but are woven into the fabric of our school culture. From supporting our students' resilience to making sure our staff and families feel heard, it is about making Ashlawn a place where everyone can thrive.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone that recently took the time to complete our parent/carer evaluation survey as part of the initiative - your perspective is hugely valued and appreciated.

Let's work together to make wellbeing a priority. Thank you for being such an active part of the Ashlawn family!



STUDENTS SHAPE CHANGE AT 'HAVE YOUR SAY' WORKSHOP

We recently held a 'Have Your Say' workshop, bringing together 25 students from across all year groups to work collaboratively on shaping our prevention initiative for gang and knife crime.

Throughout the session, students engaged thoughtfully with a range of community experts and partners, sharing ideas, lived experiences and practical solutions to help drive meaningful and lasting change. The session highlighted the importance of student voice and the power of collaboration, with young people playing an active role in shaping initiatives that affect their lives and communities.

RAF COMBINED CADET FORCE

During the Autumn term, we launched our very first Combined Cadet Force RAF contingent in conjunction with Rugby School.

We're delighted to confirm that just a few months on, 25 of our students from Year 10 to Year 13 are now taking part in the programme.

Membership of the CCF can have many benefits for participants, offering unique opportunities to build self-confidence and leadership, through structured military-themed, adventurous training.

It also helps to develop practical skills like teamwork, first aid, and navigation, while fostering community, discipline and personal development.

So far, our students have been participating in weekly parades and activities over in the Rugby School grounds, as well as having the incredible opportunity to visit a local RAF base and fly a Grob (a flight training aircraft)!

Similar to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, CCF programmes are highly regarded by universities and employers.

If your child would be interested in finding out more about joining the CCF, please contact Mr Vessey via the school office.



THINKING ABOUT SIXTH FORM?

Alongside preparing for their GCSEs, over the coming months our Year 11 students need to make some important decisions about their next steps at Post-16.

Whether they wish to stay at Ashlawn Sixth Form or explore other avenues, we are here to support them as they choose the courses and pathways that will be the right fit for them.

Here at Ashlawn, our Sixth Form curriculum is designed to empower our students to achieve their best academically and develop a lifelong love of learning to pursue their passions.

This includes a tried-and-tested pastoral, careers and enrichment offer that has been shaped to provide a supportive and inspiring environment for our Sixth Formers.

Preparing students for further and higher education as well as the world of work is also at the very heart of this. So, students benefit from personalised support with UCAS applications, employability skills programmes, information about higher level apprenticeships and so much more.

There are also lots of opportunities for students to develop their personal character and confidence. Our Pay It Forward programme, student leadership, peer mentoring, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and CCF are just some examples of the opportunities that Sixth Formers have access to.

We are proud to say that our Sixth Form is rated 'good' by Ofsted and last year 87% of our students secured their first-choice university places, with 10% of our students also going on to pursue higher level apprenticeships.

After half term, we will be holding our one-to-one consultations with Year 11 students that have applied for a Sixth Form place at Ashlawn.

If you would like to find out more about how your child can apply for a Sixth Form place at Ashlawn for September, and they haven't done so already, please get in touch with the Sixth Form office as soon as possible.



CAREERS

CORNER

SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT'S FUTURE (YEARS 7-13)

Careers education at our school starts in Year 7 and continues right through to post-18 planning.

Our aim is to help students understand their strengths, explore opportunities and make confident, informed decisions about their futures — with parents and carers playing an important supporting role.

Here's how we support students in school and how you can support at home.

OUR CAREERS PROGRAMME IN SCHOOL

Fortnightly Careers Programme (All Year Groups)

Students take part in a structured careers programme during tutor time every fortnight, building knowledge of careers, pathways, employability skills and future planning in an age-appropriate way.

1:1 Careers Guidance

Students can access impartial careers interviews with a qualified careers adviser to explore options and make informed decisions at key transition points.

Annual Careers Fair

Students meet employers, colleges, universities and training providers to explore a wide range of education and career pathways.

Guest Speakers, Employer Encounters & Careers Show Trips

We regularly welcome professionals from different industries and organise visits to careers shows and external events, giving students direct exposure to the world of work.

National Careers Events

We take part in national initiatives to broaden awareness of opportunities:

- National Green Careers Week (November)
- National Apprenticeship Week (February)
- National Careers Week (March)

Mock Interviews (Years 11 & 13)

Students experience realistic interviews with external employers to develop confidence and professional skills.

Work Experience (Years 10 & 12)

Students complete structured placements to gain first-hand experience of the workplace and explore possible career interests.

Careers Google Classrooms

Each year group has a dedicated careers classroom where opportunities are shared, and students complete targeted careers homework suited to their stage in their career journey.

Timetabled Careers Activities

Every half term, students take part in guided careers sessions in IT rooms, researching pathways and using careers platforms.

PARENTS & CARERS: ACCESS UNIFROG TOO

You can create a linked parent account to support discussions at home.

With a parent account, you can:

- See what your child is exploring
- View careers events and webinars
- Track careers tasks
- Explore pathways yourself

Set up at: www.unifrog.org/parent

CAREERS USING UNIFROG

We use Unifrog, an award-winning online destinations platform, to support all students.

Students use Unifrog to:

- Discover strengths and interests
- Explore careers and subject pathways
- Join webinars and short courses
- Build a personal skills portfolio
- Search for apprenticeships, university courses and employer opportunities
- Prepare applications and personal statements

UNDERSTANDING FUTURE PATHWAYS

Students may progress to:

- A Levels and vocational qualifications
- Apprenticeships (including higher and degree apprenticeships)
- T Levels (technical courses with industry placements)
- University and higher education

Helpful websites for families:

- [Amazing Apprenticeships](#)
- [National Apprenticeship Service](#)
- [UCAS](#)
- [Prospects](#)
- [Not Going To Uni](#)

HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

- Talk regularly about interests and strengths
- Explore careers and pathways together
- Encourage involvement in careers events
- Use Unifrog together to research next steps

Working together helps students feel confident and prepared for their future.

T-Levels are new qualifications that are currently being introduced across a range of subjects at Post-16.

T LEVELS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

This quick guide has been created for parents and carers, to help you understand what T Levels involve and why they could be a great next step for your child.

Key facts about T Levels

- T Levels are **level 3** qualifications, like A-levels.
- They are designed for **16-19 year olds** who have completed their GCSEs.
- A T Level is a **two-year** course.
- They are offered by many **schools and colleges** across England.
- **One T Level** is broadly equivalent to three A-levels.
- There are **20** different T Level subjects.
- T Level courses include an **industry placement** of at least 45 days with a relevant employer.
- T Levels are **designed and backed by employers** to give students the knowledge and skills they need.
- T Levels are awarded **UCAS points** in line with A-levels.



Watch this two-minute animated film all about T Levels: amapps.uk/t-level-animation



T Level subjects

Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care:

- Agriculture, Land Management and Production
- Animal Care and Management

Education and Early Years:

- Education and Early Years

Business and Administration:

- Management and Administration

Engineering and Manufacturing:

- Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing
- Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control
- Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing

Construction and the Built Environment:

- Building Services
- Engineering for Construction
- Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction

Health and Science:

- Health
- Science

Creative and Design:

- Craft and Design
- Media, Broadcast and Production

Legal, Finance and Accounting:

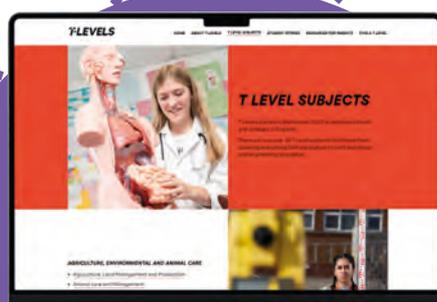
- Accounting
- Finance
- Legal Services

Digital:

- Digital Software Development
- Digital Data Analytics
- Digital Support and Security

Sales, Marketing and Procurement:

- Marketing



Explore T Level subjects:
tlevels.gov.uk/students/subjects



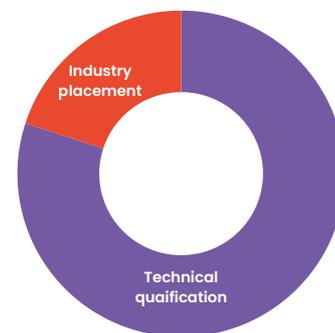
T LEVELS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION



Structure of a T Level

Every T Level is taught through a mix of classroom and workplace-based learning. Students spend around 80% of their time at school or college and around 20% of their time developing the skills needed for the workplace on an industry placement with an employer.



T Level FAQs



Who does a T Level suit?

T Levels are perfect for students who know the broad career area they want to pursue, as they are designed in collaboration with employers. They suit students who want to study and also gain valuable skills through workplace experience.

Who is responsible for finding the industry placement?

The training provider (school or college) will be responsible for finding the employer(s) that will provide the industry placement.

What are the entry requirements for a T Level?

Many providers require GCSEs including English and maths at grade 4 or above, so checking with the provider is really important. Some T Level providers offer a T Level Foundation Year course to prepare students for a T Level.



How are T Levels graded?

Students who meet all of the requirements of their T Level are awarded an overall grade of either Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* and receive a nationally recognised certificate.



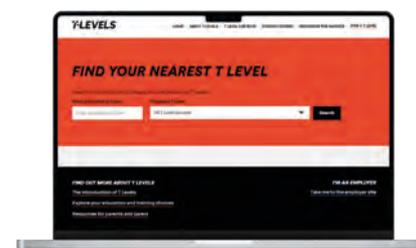
What can my child do after a T Level?

After a T Level your child is equipped to:

- access entry-level employment.
- move on to a relevant apprenticeship or degree apprenticeship.
- continue their technical education at levels 4/5, for example Higher Technical Qualifications.
- progress to Higher Education and study a relevant degree. Over 160 universities accept T Levels. If your child has a particular university in mind, it is worth checking their entry requirements.

How can you find T Level providers?

Visit the government website tlevels.gov.uk/students/find and enter your postcode to find your local college or school offering T Levels.



Find out more about T Levels by visiting: tlevels.gov.uk



At Ashlawn we...

CARE

COMMUNITY

We value every member of the Ashlawn family and treat each other with kindness and compassion.

ASPIRATION

We work hard and make the most of exciting and challenging learning experiences, in order to open up the world around us and achieve our dreams.

RESPECT

We respect each other and our differences. We respect our learning environment and appreciate everyone's right to the best possible experience at Ashlawn.

EXCELLENCE

We are committed to trying our best and achieving the highest standards in our love of learning, so that we can be the best versions of ourselves.



ASHLAWN
SCHOOL

Our best, always

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