



UNSUNG HERO RETIRES AFTER 36 YEARS AT CHALK FACE



An unsung hero of the teaching profession is retiring after 36 years at the chalk face.

Devout Catholic and family man Matthew Arthur has spent 30 years teaching at St. Ambrose College, the last 21 years as Deputy Head, still teaching chemistry and religious education but also responsible for the hard yards of monitoring standards, time table design and teacher development.

During his many years, St. Ambrose has developed from a post war, flat roofed barracks into an icon of modern education in a superb, new, space age building with dramatically improving results inside and outside and classroom.

However, Matthew says: "Teaching hasn't changed at all. There are still some children who want to learn and others who do not and the challenge is to make sure all of them gain as much as possible by making the experience as challenging, interesting and rewarding as possible."

He added: "My advice to a newly qualified teacher is to treat the job as a marathon and not a sprint. I have always felt teaching to be a vocation and it is a great privilege to be able to teach and have the opportunity to guide the next generations, but it is very demanding both emotionally and physically and you have to pace yourself."

Matthew who followed his own father Anthony into the teaching profession added: "As a teacher it is essential you are firm but fair, and be ready to excuse a pupil so long as they recognise the error of their ways and change their behaviour for the better."

Educated at Cardinal Vaughan School in Notting Hill and Bangor University, Matt first taught at St Ambrose before brief spells at Worth Abbey in Sussex and St. Bede's in Manchester before being head hunted to return by St. Ambrose..

He said: "It's a community school. There is a tangible moral code seen in how the boys respect each other and the staff and I feel it is one of the great strengths not only of St. Ambrose but of a Catholic education."

Matthew, who lives in Marple is married to Anne and a father to three daughters, briefly rose to fame for his stand against a temporary cover teacher whom he asked to go home after he refused to wear a tie, a decision that saw him win Rod Liddle's employee of the month in the Sunday Times and universal acclaim in the local and national media, as he argued: "We ask the boys to wear ties, so we must ask the same of the staff."

That sense of fair play and egalitarianism is appreciated by the boys. Seyi Olofintilla, 13, said: "I was a bit of a naughty boy in Year 7, but Mr Arthur helped me in my journey and showed me the right way and he has told me he can see me as a future Head Boy and that he sees me as a leader. That makes me feel 10 feet tall."

Jamie Foster Grime, 13, added: "Mr Arthur covers in Religious Education lessons and whenever he teaches us we know we are not going to have any old boring lesson, but something different and interesting, He's a really kind and understanding man."