

# **The Northumberland Church of England All Age Academy**

## Academy Organisation statement

### Introduction

Located in the southern part of Ashington, The Northumberland Church of England All Age Partnership Academy will play a unique role in the educational landscape of the Northumberland family of schools. The natural 'school' of choice for learners in the community of Hirst, Newbiggin by the Sea and Lynemouth the Academy will seek to significantly improve the life chances of young people within these communities by providing young people with a strong foundation for future learning and enable access to the worlds of further and higher education by equipping learners with the skills, knowledge and confidence to realise, and surpass, their expectations and potential.

The Academy will draw on the best and most effective proven practice nationally and internationally. We will promote the QCA concept of disciplined innovation ensuring that new approaches to learning, teaching and assessment respond to the specific needs of learners and that outcomes are subject to rigorous evaluation before further steps are taken. The Academy will offer learners their full entitlement to the National Curriculum at all Key Stages and will ensure that there is a significant emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills including the higher order skills. A focus on individual needs and assessment for learning will further support our determination to address historic underperformance within these communities.

A school for learners aged 4 to 18 as well as nursery aged children the Academy will operate over five sites but form one all through school with a shared vision, values and aspirations under the leadership and management of the same Executive Director and Executive Leadership Team. The development of a partnership wide all age Academy which admits children from the age of 4 will enable the staff team to construct a curriculum and pedagogy which builds on learner skills and development throughout their school career incrementally securing progression for individuals without the barriers that can be created by transitions from one school to another. The Northumberland Church of England Academy will make a significant contribution to key local objectives by improving standards through an unrelenting focus on literacy and numeracy; by improving continuity and progression across the Key Stages; and, by developing effective and sustainable approaches, ensuring that learning meets the very specific needs and aspirations of individual learners. We will develop strong relationships across the whole Academy ensuring that provision enables learners to maintain a continued enthusiasm for learning and to set their sights high.

A culture of learning, high expectations, aspirations, challenge and inclusion will pervade all aspects of Academy life and will be reflected in the curriculum, the leadership and management structure and the daily working practices of both learners and staff.

This document outlines how these goals will be achieved.

### The themes of the Academy

The Academy curriculum and organisation will be developed around 3 central themes: Investing in My Future; Investing in My Community; and, Investing in My Environment. These will provide a framework for ensuring that individual subject teaching and project based and independent learning are coherent for the learner. Each theme is directly related to the Academy vision and mission and will act as a point of reference for day to day planning and assessment.

Based on the belief that learners and staff must first invest in themselves if they are to invest in others (that is Love your neighbour as you love yourself) the theme of Investing in Myself will be an overarching theme without which the others lack meaning.

### Organisation of learning

The Academy will admit 210 learners aged 4 each year with varying numbers on each of the sites. While it is anticipated that the majority of post 16 provision will be for students continuing their 14-19 learning path from within the Academy a small percentage of places may also be available to students from other schools. The sponsors recognise that the full organisational structure will not be in place immediately and that transition planning will need to facilitate a smooth transition between the current school structure and the partnership wide Academy. Continuity for learners will be the key driver for all transition planning ensuring that learners are able to continue and improve their learning journey and that the Academy maintains the confidence of their parents and the local community. The curriculum organisation proposed in this statement fulfils both long and short term needs of the partnership and is designed to accommodate the needs of specific groups of students whether they start in 2009 or are already within the schools which will become part of the Academy.

The Academy will cater for the full range of abilities including those learners with statements of Special Educational Needs. Programmes of learning will be specifically tailored and accredited to meet the needs of all learners with targeted learning opportunities provided to support and extend the learning of individuals or groups. This approach will ensure that all learners continue to make progress comparable to that of their peers while others will be stretched and further challenged.

The Academy will also cater for the very specific needs of learners with SEN within the regional SEN provision on the Hirst site. This will be an extension of the current integrated provision at Hirst High and Seaton Hirst Church of England Middle Schools but from September 2011 will include students who might previously have attended Abbeyfields First School Regional SEN provision. The all age regional SEN provision on the Hirst site will enable an appropriately inclusive provision which will benefit learners across the Academy and enable those with highly specific needs to access the Academy curriculum at any age as part of an integrated curriculum offer.

Figure 1 shows how learning will be organised from Reception to year 13. The proposed structure recognises that children and young people of the same age do not all progress at the same rate and in the same ways and yet it is important for their emotional and social development that they learn amongst their peers. Equally important is a well constructed model of organisation which provides clear accountability for learning and achievement as well as enabling and encouraging new ways of thinking about learning alongside those methods which are tried and tested.

### Between the ages of 4 and 11

Between the ages of 4 and 11 (and also in years 7 and 8) learning will be planned and delivered in two year chunks reflecting what is common practice in many of Northumberland's current First Schools. From Reception to Year 8 learners will be organised into mixed age, mixed ability learning groups supported by two teachers and by one or more teaching assistants as appropriate to the needs and age of each group. This will establish a teacher pupil ratio of 1 to 30 but will also facilitate more flexible approaches to learning. The structure will provide group sizes large enough to enable different groupings according to specific learning needs and opportunities. Small group work will be supported by a greater range of adults and different learners will be able to work in different groupings according to the demands of the curriculum and, when appropriate, their ability. The proposed structure will facilitate a project based learning approach which enables pupils to make sense of their learning by making connections

between different subject areas but will also enable more formal teaching groupings i.e. groups of 20 or 30 when appropriate. While older students i.e. those in years 5, 6, 7 and 8 may occasionally have a lead lesson in their group of 60 most formal teaching will take place in smaller groups of 20 or at the most 30. However, these groups will be constituted according to the needs of the curriculum and student learning not the structural needs of the organisation.

<b>Years 11, 12 + 13</b>	<b>Individual pathways</b> <b>Assumes that some year 11 begin 'so called' post 16 learning</b>
<b>Years 9, 10 + 11</b>	<b>Groups appropriate to stage.</b> <b>Could be 2 x 60 for completion of KS 3</b> <b>Other groups according to pathway choices</b> <b>Assumes most year 9 begin GCSEs courses or equivalent</b>
<b>Years 7 + 8</b>	<b>7 x 60</b>
<b>Years 5 + 6</b>	<b>7 x 60</b>
<b>Years 3 + 4</b>	<b>7 x 60</b>
<b>Years 1 + 2</b>	<b>7 x 60</b>
<b>Reception + Foundation</b>	<b>7 x 60</b>

**Figure 1**

This method of organising learning is also designed to support the pastoral needs of learners through the provision of 'family' groupings. Mixed age groupings will support the development of social interaction and confidence building particularly as older learners in the group will be encouraged to 'mentor' and support younger learners.

A core team of staff will know and understand learner needs and plan for them over a 2 year period while it is proposed that teaching assistants or teachers may 'move up' with learners to the next stage whenever possible to promote continuity. This arrangement will require and support a team planning approach from all staff involved with a learning group and a rigorous approach to assessment for learning. Learning will be planned and coordinated across a Key Stage team which includes all the mixed age learning groups with learners of the same age e.g. Years 3 and 4 under the direction of an Assistant Director who will have specific responsibility for standards in that Key Stage. One member of each learning team will be designated team leader for a period of two years but this will be a rotating role to support staff development and other staff will take on coordinating roles to support curriculum coherence within the learning team.

Given the admission numbers on some primary sites the size and organisation of this learning group may vary slightly.

Despite significant year on year fluctuations in numbers on the Lynemouth site the same model of organisation (i.e. mixed age groups incorporating a 2 year age span) will continue to operate as we believe that this will be key to the progress and achievement of all Academy learners. Space in the new school in Lynemouth will be highly flexible in order to accommodate the needs of a mixed age learning team that might be as small as 25 or as big as 60. Staffing will be reviewed annually across the whole Academy to ensure that appropriate staffing meets the needs of mixed age learning teams on all sites.

Each learning team will also be part of a learning population (for example, all pupils in Key Stage 2) and the learning team staff will be able to plan key pieces of learning not only across a year group but also in wider mixed age groupings. This will enable a more flexible approach to curriculum provision than would otherwise be the case in traditional primary or secondary provision which will ensure, for example, that the Academy is able to draw on the particular strengths that individual staff may have across the whole team. Time will be structured in ways which readily suit curriculum and learning needs with flexible blocks of time for learning. This may result in half day blocks of time for an extended activity or shorter bursts of time to promote language learning, for example. This approach will also facilitate learners working together across different sites particularly at the primary stage. The direct responsibility for managing the day to day learning of the pupils or students and assessing their progress will be in the hands of the learning team staff.

Assistant Directors and their support teams will ensure that the curriculum and lesson planning are appropriate. They will monitor standards of teaching and learning and work closely with learning group staff to support the personal development of learners. They will also maintain an overview of learners' progress across different sites developing and implementing appropriate intervention strategies when required. Learning group staff will be familiar with both the learning and pastoral needs of students in their group and this will help them to establish positive relationships with parents and families which we recognise will be critical to securing higher levels of achievement for all learners. Teaching Assistants or other non teaching staff will play a key role in bridging what has been a traditional pastoral and academic divide by moving 'up' with learners at the end of the year.

#### Between the ages of 11 and 13/14

Students in Years 7 and 8 will also be organised in mixed aged groupings of 60. The peer support offered within these 'family' groupings by older students (i.e. Year 8 students) to younger learners (those in year 7) will help to ease the transition from the primary to the secondary sites. At Key Stage 3 the Academy will continue to organise learning in ways which most effectively respond to learner needs. This will enable students to work in mixed age ability groupings when appropriate (e.g. for maths learning) or in single age mixed ability groupings to address particular aspects of Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education. It will also provide the flexibility to develop project based learning in mixed or single aged groupings covering a range of potential themes ( such as British National Identity or Landscape and Community) which draw on aspects of a number of different subject disciplines and enable students to develop and practise different skills and competences.

#### Between the ages of 13/14 and 19

Students in the 13-19 stages of the Academy, whether this is phase 1 (13-16 year olds) or phase 2 (Post 16), will also work in mixed age groups but these will be determined by the chosen curriculum pathways which best meet their needs and future aspirations. A year 9 student may therefore be preparing for his English GCSE in a year based team but be involved in a project based activity along with year 10 students to fulfil the requirements of a specific element of a BTeC Performing Arts course. This will clearly require a different approach to timetabling which is based on learner rather than organisational needs. A similar strategy will apply to students in phase 2 although we anticipate that they will increasingly learn in more independent ways with staff guides to coach and mentor them through their learning programmes. Learners will have access to the full range of learning resources available including peer learning ( where individual students will support each other's learning and progress) and self directed learning (where individuals make choices about what and how they learn) using the virtual learning environment and off site work and learning placements

## Areas of learning

The curriculum from age 4 to 11 will be shaped around the 6 areas of learning and development identified within the Foundation Stage Programme (Communication, Language and Literacy; Creative Development; Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Personal Social and Emotional development; Physical Development). This will provide a framework which complements the formal subjects within the National Curriculum. While we recognise and accept the importance of individual subjects at all Key Stages this approach reflects and reinforces the Academy's desire to support the development of transferable skills and enable pupils to make sense of their learning.

Within the secondary phase there will be 4 areas of learning: Communication, Language and Literacy; Social and Physical Interaction; Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Creativity. These areas of learning will inform the design of the building which will be arranged in 4 Learning Zones. While this is not a faculty structure it is expected that the subjects that are included in each of these Learning Zones will work collaboratively to share space when appropriate, to develop specific projects and to share expertise. This will, for example, enable students to identify the links between Science and Technology and how both are critical within the specialism or to understand that both maths and English are forms of communication. Each subject will be incorporated within an area of learning/Learning Zone as follows:

- **Social and Physical Interaction:** PE, Geography, RE, History and Modern Foreign Languages
- **Knowledge and Understanding of the World:** Technology, Science and the specialism
- **Creative Development:** Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Media
- **Communication, Language and Literacy:** English, Maths, PSHCE and ICT

Our curriculum framework will recognise and build on the key staging posts of development in each of the areas as identified in the primary and secondary strategies but will additionally extend these as appropriate developing learners' capacity to make connections between the different areas of learning. Assistant Directors under the direction of the Principal Director Learning and teaching will ensure that a rigorous approach to curriculum design and planning provides a coherent structure for learners' progress at each stage that takes full account of the steps that are required to develop skills and confidence as learners progress through their learning journey. Assistant Directors and Key Stage Leaders will be responsible with learning team staff for monitoring the progress of individuals and groups, setting learning targets and ensuring that learning is meaningful from the learner perspective.

## Communication skills

The development of good communication skills, particularly literacy and numeracy are fundamental to the high standards of achievement that the Academy aspires to for all its learners. There will be a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills throughout the primary phase of learning with all activities focussing on the development of listening and speaking ensuring that young learners develop an enthusiasm for the spoken word and are well prepared to begin and sustain positive attitudes to their language development. To support this, the Academy will invest significant resources in the early phases of development with a high staff learner ratio in each learning group to facilitate small group work and focussed support for all learners. In the knowledge that our goals cannot be fully achieved without parental support, strenuous efforts will be made by each learning group to engage parents in the development of their children's language skills. The aim will be to enable parents and carers to support their child and sustain positive attitudes to reading and learning at home.

Developing the language of numeracy will be equally important throughout the primary years. Understanding and developing a love of number will be a fundamental building block not only for the development of higher order mathematical skills but will also develop the communication skills required to excel in areas of the specialism.

### Making sense of learning

Flexible blocks of time for learning whether these are the regular 2 hour block of learning time, a full day, 2 days or even a week dedicated to a project or an aspect of a GCSE course will provide the time and opportunity for learners to make sense of their learning by developing connections between curriculum areas which are artificially separated within a traditional timetable. We recognise that there will be a place for teaching separate subjects or aspects of subjects within the curriculum offer but the Academy will also develop a project based learning approach that enables learners to practice making choices and decisions about their learning and to pursue avenues which extend their natural curiosity. This will support a genuine passion for learning and help to secure student commitment to learning throughout their compulsory school career and beyond. This will complement teacher led learning but also empower students to become increasingly more self directed and independent, skills which will be essential as they begin and continue their GCSE or Diploma pathways.

This will be supported by a whole Academy approach to Learning to Learn which will seek to develop the skills required to be an expert learner from the age of 4. This will include the development of the right attitudes and dispositions to learning which will enable children and young people to become successful learners. The Academy will focus on developing skills which can be transferred, including those of decision-making, team working and presentation with project based learning providing the opportunities in which these can be practised and refined. Teachers will also be charged with ensuring that teacher led sessions enable students to further develop and apply these skills.

Developing staff effectiveness will be essential to the success of the Academy and our learners. As a result we will support effective teacher planning and student learning by establishing designated opportunities and time in the Academy week for staff CPD and team planning.

### Developing confidence

Developing learner (and staff) confidence will be essential to all of our learning goals. The Academy curriculum will place a strong emphasis on progress in developing confidence with key events and activities built into the learning programme to provide opportunities for risk taking and learning how to respond when things do not go as planned. This will form an important part of our sports programme and will also involve activities such as off site learning, residential visits and 'work related and enterprise learning opportunities' in the Academy and in the community. Most importantly our approach to developing learner confidence will inform the pedagogical approach in all learning groups with learners being encouraged to understand that taking risks in learning (e.g. offering an answer which may not be quite right) is as important as working hard.

Sport and physical exercise will be a strong element of the curriculum with all learners taking a minimum of 2 hours of physical activity a week and being actively encouraged to take part in team events, competitions and personal challenges to further extend this time. This emphasis supports the development of healthy lifestyles for our young people but will also support the development of confidence both through success and through learning how to respond to failure. This will enable learners to recognise that striving for success and fulfilling a personal goal takes time and effort and that not succeeding and what you learn from it can be as important as reaching the goal itself.

### Age related learning

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Our organisation for learning assumes that learners will pass through the national key stages at a time appropriate to their learning needs. For most in the primary phase this will be at the ages of 7 and 11. Some students in key stage 3 will complete their programmes of learning by the end of year 8 and begin preparation for stage 1 of their 14-19 pathway in year 9 while targeted intervention and support will be required for others to complete their Key Stage 3 learning. Whether students are ready to progress to new courses or not Year 9 will be a clear point of transition for learners. It will be used to consolidate learning competences and provide a significant range of opportunities for students to make choices and sample the Key Stage 4 curriculum and ways of learning which will be initiated in earnest from year 10. This will involve taster sessions, an extensive range of educational visits including within F.E. and H.E. environments as well as specific projects which enable them to practice the higher levels skills required as they prepare for external qualifications. For those students who are ready to progress individual advice and guidance will support the choice of courses to be taken. A group of Year 9 students may either start a Level 2 together at the beginning of year 9, for example, ICT, or join a group of year 10 students. This will be dependent on the courses chosen, numbers and the most appropriate provision.

### 13-19

The 13-19 curriculum is organised across 2 phases in recognition that students are ready to progress to key stage 4 and post 16 learning at different times. This structure will enable learners to choose and specialise in the ways of learning that suit them best with some learners accessing provision through the 14-19 partnership with Northumberland College, Ashington High and other partners and others focussing their learning on provision made in the Academy and/or through access to an extensive range of electronic resources. Support and teaching will continue to be tailored according to need with specific learning groups created to respond to specific needs. The Key Stage 4 entitlement will be met, for instance, through learning groups focussed on English, maths and science. These may be mixed age groups, with teachers increasingly acting as facilitators of learning as well as traditional deliverers of learning in recognition that students require different approaches to maintain their engagement and motivation particularly as they mature and that everyone learns in different ways. On occasions students will therefore assume personal responsibility for their own learning while at others didactic forms of teaching will be more relevant. This will be a natural progression from our learning approach in key stage 3 itself a blend of traditional teaching and project based learning designed to develop students' ability to become increasingly independent and expert learners. Grouping by ability, when appropriate, rather than age, will support this way of working throughout all phases of learning in the Academy.

Targeted intervention will continue to be a key feature of learning in both stages of 13-19 learning with intervention strategies put in place to ensure that the specific needs of individuals and groups are met. This may involve direct teaching and support in either small or large groups or other types of provision depending on need.

This flexible approach in no way suggests an unstructured approach to learning. However it will not be determined by a rigid timetable with all students following the same learning programme every week. Students will be expected to attend key sessions whether these are lead lessons or a more traditional lesson structure but this will be complemented by a more flexible approach to time which enables learning to be self directed with the support of a learning coach. Thus a group of students who have fully understood a fundamental aspect of the Science programme will be able to develop a fuller understanding moving to the next level through an investigation that is set up by a teacher but supported by a technician in the science wing of the Design Centre. This will require deep knowledge and understanding of individual students' learning and a rigorous approach to long, medium and short term planning from all staff. However it will

ensure that students are both challenged and supported so that they remain enthusiastic and focussed as all learning will be relevant to their personal needs, interests and experience.

We recognise that this approach to learning cannot be put in place overnight. Vigorous debate and dialogue on the subject of teaching and learning will be actively encouraged throughout the Academy. Principal and Assistant Directors will be charged with the development and implementation of a well structured and appropriately tailored programme of staff development to ensure all teachers and other staff are well prepared and expert in the varying approaches to learning and teaching. This will be a key element in the academy's approach to ensuring students progress well and achieve highly.

The Academy will offer a wide range of curriculum provision for learners in this phase. In addition to appropriate qualifications in English, maths, science and R.E. for all learners at Key Stage 4 the Academy will offer options from the traditional range of subjects such as Geography, Art and Food Technology. In addition the Academy will develop a range of vocational provision in subjects as diverse as sport, Health and Social Care and Performing Arts. A mix of qualifications will be offered including GCSEs, BTECs and, whenever appropriate, the new national diplomas. The Academy will focus on those diplomas which fall naturally within the specialism but will also seek to offer Creative Media and Arts.

Provision at Key Stage 4 will explicitly enable progression routes to post 16 learning either within the Academy or elsewhere. The Academy will offer levels 1, 2 and 3 courses in vocational provision but will focus on level 3 in Academic provision. A levels will include English, maths and religion and ethics along with those subjects which best complement the specialism of the Academy for example art and design, technology and the sciences.

#### Core subjects

The Academy will place a significant emphasis on the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes in each of the core areas of the curriculum i.e. English, mathematics and science. High standards of literacy and communication skills will be fundamental to all achievement. Equally important to success, including within the specialism, will be a grasp of the basic principles in maths and science. A significant percentage of time will be devoted to these areas of the curriculum for learners of all ages to ensure a strong foundation for future learning and employment. For learners in Key Stages 1 and 2 this will represent 55% of teaching time and for learners in Key Stage 3, 52%. The Academy will follow the full National Curriculum at all Key Stages and will explore the opportunities offered by the revised requirements of the new secondary curriculum matching our approach to designing a curriculum which meets the needs of our learners.

#### R.E. and Collective Worship

The Christian ethos will pervade all aspects of Academy life with R.E. and Collective Worship providing an anchor for interpreting and articulating it within the curriculum framework. There will be no proselytising as the Academy will welcome students of all faiths and those of no faith. However, R.E. and Collective Worship will provide regular and important opportunities for sharing and understanding the nature of fundamental concepts such as faith and the common good and they will play a significant role within the curriculum

#### The specialism

The principal goal of the Academy is to improve the life chances of young people by raising aspirations, achievement and attainment. This goal is reflected in the approach to the Academy's specialism of Design and the Built Environment. The specialism will build on Hirst High School's current specialist school status in Technology. The High School has recently received re-

designation as a specialist school and this will provide a foundation for future development in the Academy specialism of Design and the Built Environment.

Provision at 14-19 will include high quality opportunities to focus on the professional aspects of the specialism such as preparing students for careers in Architecture, Engineering, Surveying or Land Management, both explicitly and implicitly conveying to them and the community the message that students can, and should if they so wish, aspire to a professional life. We also recognise that some students will choose to follow careers in the trades associated with the specialism and they will be actively supported and encouraged through our partnership with the local FE College and other providers. Learning in the younger years will also recognise the importance of service industries such as plumbing and joinery by developing project based learning which uses this as a context for wider learning. The Academy focus will also be on developing the skills and aptitudes required to develop an understanding and appreciation of the land, the environment and design and the impact that each of these has on communities and the people in them. As such the process of designing and developing a master plan for the new Academy building will become an integral part of learning for students in all year groups from September 2009.

While the specialism will be included in teaching and learning across the whole curriculum key specialist aspects will be located in a Design Centre which will be at the heart of the Academy. All learners will access this environment at some time in their learning programme and for younger learners this will be carefully managed. The Design Centre will provide state of the art facilities and as far as possible an authentic context for learning about aspects of the specialism. This will be complemented by real and virtual opportunities to work with people from the industry and using the industry as a context for learning. This will help to ground students' learning and create meaningful contexts for learning which will enhance student engagement.

In addition the specialism will provide the framework for developing the employability skills that students need to move with ease from the world of learning to the world of work. Work related learning opportunities, particularly those facilitated through the networks opened up through the involvement of Northumberland Estates will provide a real and motivating context for developing these skills. Nowhere will this be more evident than in the planning and preparation for the new build and refurbishment required on the Academy sites. Thematic approaches to learning will enable learners of all ages to be actively engaged in the development of their new learning environment. This could range from engagement in environmental planning and provision of renewable energies to developing key aspects of the design or Furniture Fixtures and Equipment solutions.

Aspects of the specialism will provide the foundation for key projects throughout a student's career. These may be the focus of a week dedicated to a particular issue such as the use of renewable energies or be part of a wider project based learning programme focussed, for example, on the local community where the landscape is examined to determine how it could better meet the needs of young people or the elderly. Without creating artificial connections the specialism will be highlighted throughout all curriculum areas whenever possible so that learners understand the processes which significantly affect every aspect of their lives.

### Enterprise

Academy learners will be characterised by their enterprising behaviours. They will be risk takers, problem solvers and be willing to embrace new opportunities. All teaching and learning and the curriculum structure will be geared to supporting the development of these attitudes amongst learners of all ages. The Academy will also explicitly build on current opportunities being created in the local community through Wansbeck Enterprise Education Network which are aimed at developing an enterprising culture within the wider community.

### Achieving continuity of learning

Learners who join the Academy at the age of 3 or 4 will know that they are part of the Northumberland Church of England Partnership Academy even though they may spend the majority of their time on one primary site. Their inclusion in the wider Academy will be a seamless process with opportunities to work with other learners, staff and in the wider Academy environment from an early age. This will develop a familiarity with other aspects of Academy life and yet still provide the secure base needed for younger learners. The Assistant Directors of Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will ensure that each learner has a similar learning experience whatever their main site and will work closely with the Assistant Director Key Stage 3 to ensure that learning and the curriculum are planned carefully between key stages 2 and 3.

The mixed age learning groups will support the development of a collaborative culture amongst learners as well as staff. Students in year 8, for example, will develop a mentoring role for students in year 7 so that the older students can actively support the process of transition from one mixed age group to another whether these are on the same site or not. In this way all young people will learn to exercise responsibility and practise caring for others as a natural element of the Academy environment. This process will be supported as learning support staff who have established a relationship not only with learners but with their families will also move up to the next mixed age group with their group of learners.

Particular and careful attention will be given to the needs of traveller children to ensure that they too achieve continuity of learning and continue to feel part of the Northumberland Church of England Academy even when they are not physically present. The Principal Director Learning and teaching will oversee the development of high quality distance learning materials and support programmes which respond to the specific needs of individual travellers. Using portable devices travelling children will be able to access the Virtual Learning Environment and join their peers in online learning activities. This along with active peer mentoring with learners at the Academy supporting their peers through online discussion will help to facilitate a smooth transition back into mainstream school life.

We are keen to ensure that our traveller learners make a successful transition into secondary learning and believe that our mixed age approach will support this. We will also consult the traveller community on what they consider to be appropriate curriculum provision which will support both success in the public education system and respond to learners' future needs as travellers.

### The Academy day

The day will consist of 3 sessions. For older learners these will last approximately 2 hours, each of which will accommodate a break or an alternative activity. In lesson 1 all learners will be escorted to breakfast by their teacher and in lesson 2 teachers will escort learners to lunch either taking their lunch at the same time or leaving learners in the care of appropriately trained support staff. Assemblies for collective worship will not take place at a fixed time but at a time most appropriate within a given learning day. Similarly, although they will be coordinated on a half termly basis breaks and lunchtime will take place to suit the learning needs of learning teams and different age groups with a staggered approach to lunch and recreation reducing the need for significant amounts of circulation and formal dining space on the Hirst site yet actively supporting social development. Fewer lessons and managed breaks will reduce the need for movement particularly on the secondary site creating a calmer atmosphere and encourage the development of positive behaviour patterns.

Primary learners will have 21-24 hour formal teaching week with an additional opportunities to take part in extended learning activities before or after the formal school day. Secondary learners will have a 25 hour week with similar opportunities for extended learning.

Longer lessons will require careful planning and management by staff. They will also enable the deep learning which is essential to develop a clear grasp of new concepts or to solve problems. Extended blocks of time for learning will facilitate different learning activities, different organisation of learners and different ways of learning. The longer learning blocks will enable learners to immerse themselves in learning activities and yet can easily be broken down into smaller units according to the needs of learners or the learning objectives. This, along with the larger number of staff allocated to a learning team particularly in the younger years, will enable a flexible approach to time which can offer challenge to those learners who readily understand, and support for those who may need longer to develop understanding. This way of working will also enable staff coaches or significant adults to meet with their named learners at regular intervals during the learning programme to assess progress and to identify future learning targets.

Extended provision will provide a menu of activities offering young people choice and diversity. Sport will feature prominently within this offer with older learners required to opt for a minimum amount of additional physical activity in each term thus supporting one of our core objectives namely developing healthy and confident young people. A similar approach will be taken with other aspects of the extended programme to ensure that all learners participate in a range of activity in a year. Given the various locations of the Academy careful consideration will be given to the nature of extended provision on each site ensuring that all learners are able to access a wide range of provision. A similar approach will be taken to the range and location of family learning opportunities.

Pre-school provision will be provided to ensure that young learners have early access to the Academy and that their needs are fully met. Equally we will ensure that similar provision is available at the end of the school day for those who require it.

Arrival at the beginning of the school day will be both a social activity and a time for self organisation with learners able to access their personal storage space during this time and at other key points in the day.

The structure of the day will facilitate provision for 13-19 years olds who may be undertaking off site learning whether this is part of local strategic 14-19 provision or with a work based learning provider. While the day at the Academy may finish earlier most students, particularly those who are older, will be in the habit of taking part in regular extended provision and be familiar with the demands of a normal working day.

### The use of space

In the Primary phase each mixed age learning team will require their own learning space or home base. For all learners this will support the development of a strong identity and will be designed to maximise the capacity of the groups to work in different ways and in different sized learning teams. Younger learners will spend the vast majority of their time in their home base. However as students become older and require increasing access to specialist space their home bases will be increasingly shared with older learners and provide generic learning space to be used by different areas of the curriculum. While this is key to a functional building design it will also support the transition to different ways of working as students mature in both their behaviours and their learning habits. Thus a year 7/8 home base will also provide generic learning space to teach maths or MFL to students from Year 9 through to Year 13.. We will continue to provide for the pastoral and support needs of older students through the home base system but they will spend less and less time solely in this area preparing them for the different ways of working post 16 and in the world of work.

Personal storage solutions will be appropriate to the age of learners. The youngest learners will require a small cloakroom area to hang their coats and leave belongings immediately adjacent

to their classroom environment while more innovative solutions may be developed for older students within the base areas. This may or may not be a locker.

Staff will also require a safe place to leave belongings but this too will require careful consideration with regard to both location and security. All staff will be encouraged to take their breaks in the restaurant area with learners. However, they will also need their space for relaxation which should be quiet but easily accessible from the main body of the school. With increasing use of ICT a shared relaxation/ workroom for staff and the oldest students could provide a useful model for independent and collaborative working.

Space for year 9 students will require careful consideration. Year 9 will be a transition year enabling students to experience the opportunities offered by greater choice and increasingly personalised learning pathways which resemble those in Key Stage 4. At the same time they will continue to require access to a home base area for key activities which build on the project based learning approach developed in years 7 and 8. While some year 9 students will be ready to move swiftly to Key Stage 4 provision, others may need to complete their Key Stage 3 programmes of learning and require a more supportive environment in which to do this. A year 9 home base area will need to be highly flexible and reasonably central as staff and students will need to be able to move easily and swiftly between it and specialist areas.

The internal layout and organisation of the Academy will promote a sense of belonging for all learners. They will identify with the spaces in which they will learn, eat and socialise. Behaviour will be managed proactively as staff will also identify with the same spaces. Hence the learning bases will enable independent learning by individuals and groups, be they staff or students. Dining areas will be comfortable areas in which to relax but also provide an appropriate area for informal discussion and work. This will be particularly important in the context of an extended learning day particularly for those in the 13-19 age group. Older learners will act as role models for younger learners ensuring that they quickly understand how to learn and work in their learning environment by modelling appropriate behaviours and learning patterns. This will apply in the learning bases and in common areas such as dining, the Learning Resource Base and the Design Centre.

### ICT to support learning

ICT will be integral to Academy life and learning. Access to ICT will be instant and available wherever it is required by learning needs, within the Academy, from home and the community or when students are travelling. ICT will provide access to appropriately differentiated learning materials as well as archived material within and beyond the Academy supporting the Academy's goal of achieving personalised learning for all students. While ICT will be a seamless element of the environment learners will also be enabled to exercise choice about when it is and it is not appropriate as a tool for learning.

Modules to support learning will be online and designed to be interactive to facilitate independent and remote access for all learners. This approach will also enable innovative approaches to learning activity individually or in teams of varying sizes. Access to the most up to date technology and software particularly in relation to the specialism will be central to the development of meaningful and purposeful learning opportunities of direct relevance to Design and the Built Environment and all learners and staff will develop expertise in their use.

Much of learners' work will be completed and assessed online and they will maintain with the support of staff an e-portfolio as a record of progress. This will be complemented by their e-learning plan accessible through their personal e-space within a Managed Learning Environment (MLE). The MLE will also support collaboration with other partners locally, regionally and further a field. Important messages about the learning day and activities will be posted online with the

expectation that older students will develop the organisation skills required to manage their time and activities effectively.

The concept of Learning Resource Areas will change as the nature of learning evolves and learners increasingly become more independent and learn to work together in teams. While there will be a centrally staffed Learning Resource Space on the Hirst site to enable access to specific expertise and resources at any time of the day the concept of learning resource areas will be significantly wider than this on all sites. Each learning team or area will have access to space that can be used flexibly for learning. In some cases this may be a large space equipped with ICT; in others small group spaces to enable learners to work in teams or pairs. Learners and staff will recognise that resources take many different shapes and forms and can be used in different ways to produce different outcomes.

### ICT to support organisation and management

ICT will support every aspect of the Academy's organisation and management:

- The capacity to effectively manage and interpret data will ensure that learner tracking at both the individual and group level supports the learning and development not only of learners but also staff and the organisation;
- ICT will play a key role in facilitating communication and collaboration within and beyond the Academy;
- Strategic implementation of ICT will help to ensure that staff can maintain an appropriate work life balance;
- In the new build ICT will provide intelligent management of the facilities themselves while provision on existing sites will be adapted and updated where appropriate and possible

### High levels of learner responsibility

High levels of learner responsibility will be required within all activity. Equally, listening to and acting upon the outcomes of student voice will be central to the ethos of the Academy. Learners will be supported from an early age to develop the skills to be independent in their learning and they will have increasing levels of autonomy for their learning and behaviour as they move through the Academy. This will include:

- decision making within daily learning situations regarding the best approaches to tasks and learning activities;
- a menu of learner responsibilities or jobs;
- a strong student voice with a real say in the management and governance of the Academy;
- offering 360 degree feedback on learning to both peers and staff;
- maximising the opportunities offered by increasingly flexible learning practices with perhaps students from the 13-19 population working from home from time to time rather than in the Academy learning environment.

The Academy will actively seek to develop the personal capacity of all learners by teaching key skills required to work in these ways through the Learning to Learn programme and ensuring that all learning provides the opportunities to put these skills into practice.

### Creating a healthy Academy

In the knowledge that learner satisfaction is fundamental to the well being of both learners and staff, learning and progress will be rewarded as learners progress through the Academy. The Academy will emulate best practice in other schools including the predecessor high school by publicly celebrating the achievement of learners and staff. However it will also develop a robust

and structured rewards framework linked to Personal Development Plans which will explicitly recognise and reward the smaller steps taken which lead to the major successes.

The structure of the Academy day will enable learners and staff to eat together at times which meet the needs of their learning programme. Breakfast will be available in the morning and learners will have access to a healthy range of food and healthy snacking at key times of the day. The working practices with longer blocks of time for learning will facilitate a more informal approach to breaks within the day enabling periods of rest and relaxation to be taken at times which are most beneficial to maximise learning but which do not interfere with the learning of others.

The Learning Team structure and the pedagogical approach will ensure that staff are able to develop strong, positive relationships with learners throughout the Academy. Learners will feel safe because they are known and are working in environments which provide security and a measured approach to risk taking with peers and in situations which are carefully managed. This will ensure that many of the issues associated with challenging behaviour are proactively managed as part of the learning programme. The guiding principles of our behaviour policy and practice will be the teaching of Jesus; namely, treating others as you would like to be treated by them.

This will be further supported by a carefully constructed approach to providing opportunities to develop personally, socially, emotionally and spiritually. While it is difficult to assess learners' progress in this area, planning will take account of the varying needs that they have as they grow in maturity and confidence. A competency based framework which explicitly focuses on the development of skills for learning will enable staff and learners to monitor progress in acquiring and developing skills and attitudes and to assess their impact on learning. This will be supported through positive behaviour management strategies in each learning team.

We aspire to a high staff learner ratio in the primary phase to support this approach and the development of good communication skills, the lack of which are often the cause of challenging behaviour particularly in secondary schools.

We also recognise that there will be occasions when more formal responses will be required to secure the standards of behaviour that we seek. All learners will know the Academy expectations of their behaviour and any transgressions will always be managed in a fair and consistent manner. Learners will understand that it is their behaviour which has caused offence and any formal responses will leave them with their dignity and the knowledge that they can find ways to redeem themselves supported by staff and their peers. Justice, forgiveness and reconciliation which are at the heart of the Christian faith will form the basis for the behaviour policy along with Christian teaching on loving your neighbour as yourself and treating others as you wished to be treated.

### Leadership and management

All staff will be expected to assume responsibility for developing leadership skills amongst their learners. This will be made explicit in job descriptions and in all future staff recruitment.

Like learners staff will work and learn in groups and teams. The design of all learning will be collaborative, drawing on the skills and expertise of all members of staff, be they teachers, teaching assistants, expert teachers, Assistant Directors or subject leaders.

Each staff learning team will ensure that programmes of learning for individuals and groups within the team are appropriate to meet their needs in terms of interest, support and challenge. The learning team leader will be accountable to the Assistant Director for the progress of learners who will work with them to identify and implement appropriate measures to raise attainment.

Learning team staff will be accountable to the learning team leader. Each member of the team including teaching assistants will assume responsibility for the progress and personal development of a group of learners and assume responsibility for coaching, monitoring progress and pastoral support of these learners.

The quality of learning team leaders, all teachers and learning support staff will be of the utmost importance, as will a rigorous and well conceived training and development programme. Staff at the Northumberland Church of England Academy will be forging new learning paths for themselves and for their learners. Our curriculum framework will require fresh ways of thinking about learning and innovative and well founded solutions to new challenges as they emerge. With the support of staff, learners will participate in lesson design and help to shape the learning experience. This will require high levels of subject expertise, self confidence and flexibility from staff.

The organisation of learning will itself facilitate new approaches to staff development. Teaching assistants will be able to 'move up' with their learning group while primary experts will have the opportunity to share their practice with secondary specialists and in turn learn from them.

### Executive Leadership Team

#### **Executive Director**

The Academy will seek to appoint an Executive Director to provide corporate and strategic leadership of the Academy vision. The Executive Director will lead the corporate delivery of the Academy vision including its Christian character, policies and priorities ensuring that these are understood and implemented across all Academy sites.

#### **Principal Directors**

The Academy will seek to appoint 4 Principal Directors who will fulfil various aspects of a traditional headteacher's role across all phases of the Academy. Under the leadership of the Executive Director each Principal Director will ensure learners' entitlement to high quality provision by providing strategic leadership and management for specific areas of Academy life. These are: Organisation, staffing and management; Learner Well-Being; Learning and Teaching; and Operations. With the exception of the Principal Director Operations these appointments will need previous successful senior management experience in schools. Also with the exception of the Principal Director Operations each Principal Director will line manage Assistant Directors who will be directly accountable for standards in each key stage. It will be essential that both successful secondary and primary experience are appropriately represented on the Executive Leadership Team to secure significantly raised standards across all Key Stages.

#### **Assistant Directors**

Accountability for standards will be of paramount importance in an Academy which operates over 5 sites. Equally important will be the ability to create smaller learning groups from a school population of 3000. Assistant Directors will be key to this along with the Primary Site Leaders.

There will be 6 Assistant Directors each responsible for a key stage and one Assistant Director responsible for the SEN Resource Base Provision. The Assistant Directors for Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will work with learning teams to ensure high quality learning, teaching and outcomes. They will work across the 5 sites and be ultimately accountable for standards throughout the key stage for which they are responsible.

While the same principle will apply at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 the level and type of accountability will vary depending on Key Stage. For example the Assistant Director Key Stages 4 and 5 will be

responsible for students' personalised learning and pathways and therefore accountable for individual outcomes while subject leaders will retain accountability for the outcomes in individual subjects. Each subject leader will be accountable to an Assistant Director for the standards achieved in their subject area. The Assistant Director Key Stage 3 will be directly accountable for outcomes from project based learning while subject leaders will be accountable for standards in subjects taught by specialist teachers at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. .

The Assistant Director for the SEN Resource Base Provision will be directly accountable for provision and standards for students with complex learning needs.

### **Primary Site Leaders**

While an Assistant or Principal Director will be based on each primary site their wider responsibilities will require them to visit other sites and work with learners and staff across the Academy. Each primary site will therefore require someone who is familiar with the specific needs of the learners on that site and with the needs of the local community and who is familiar to parents and families. While the more senior members of staff will be responsible for the health and welfare of learners on each site the Primary Site Leaders will be responsible for most day to day operations on a given site. They are also likely to hold other responsibilities, for example, SENCO or Key Stage leader again on a particular site.

### **Key cross phase posts**

There are key aspects of learning which will require cross phase leadership namely: E-learning; Learning to Learn; Literacy and the Specialism. These posts will be critical not only to raising standards but also to developing a whole Academy ethos and approach to learning. Some of these posts are likely to require management support within either the primary or secondary phase.

### **Subject leaders and expert teachers**

A team of subject leaders and subject coordinators will lead on and champion specific areas of the curriculum within the secondary and primary phases. They will work with learning teams and other specialist staff to plan, deliver and monitor the quality of curriculum provision and learning and teaching. At secondary level they will be directly responsible for outcomes achieved within their specialist area at Key Stages 4 and 5 and in some cases at Key Stage 3.

### **Other posts of responsibility**

Each group of 60, including those in Years 7 and 8, will require a learning team leader to coordinate the learning for the group of learners. In addition the Academy will seek to appoint Key Stage Coordinators within the primary phase.

#### Associate staff: Learning Support

The Academy will employ a range of associate staff and will plan strategically to ensure that it complies with appropriate guidance on workforce related issues. This will include Higher Level Teaching Assistants and other associate staff who offer direct support to aspects of teaching and learning and behaviour and pastoral management.

### **Other associate staff**

Of equal importance will be a range of other associate staff who will ensure the smooth running of the operational side of Academy life. Under the direction of the Principal Director Operations

these staff will support the facilities, technical and administrative functions of what will be a large and complex organisation.

### Management and administration

Staff working in the ways described will require access to both conveniently located work space and a place in which to relax and gather their thoughts. Staff work bases located in each home base or specialist area will be designed to meet the specific needs related to that age group. Thus a staff work base for early years staff may also double as a social area where staff can relax for short periods while students are supervised by others, while a staff work base in a specialist area may simply be a designated open area where staff work alongside students who are working independently. Staff will also have access to a separate staff quiet area where they can take some time out during the Academy day. This will not be the traditional staff room designed to accommodate a full staff briefing. These will be held in a more appropriate large space which will also be used for learners at other times of the day as well as for staff training purposes and community events.

Senior staff areas or offices will be distributed throughout the Academy buildings ensuring that they are accessible to students and staff and reflect their active involvement in learning programmes and behaviour management.

Administration to ensure the smooth running of the Academy will be critical to success. It will be located according to need but will include on the Hirst site a central learner services area, an open and welcoming main reception with a separate reception point for the primary phase and SEN provision as well as administrative support for key functions in learning teams.

### Collaboration with schools and other providers

The Academy recognises the unique nature of the provision that it will be able to offer within the region and is keen to share developing expertise and resources within the wider community. The Academy will actively seek ways to share lessons learned from being an all age Academy within the wider education community in Northumberland and beyond.

The Academy will play an active role in the local 14-19 partnership developing provision in collaboration with Ashington High School and Northumberland College in particular but also exploring other varied opportunities for our learners.

Genuine collaboration with employers will form a core element of our approach to the specialism in the knowledge that raising learner aspirations for working in a professional environment can only be achieved through access to genuine opportunities for learning in and about these environments and through regular and repeated exposure to role models from industrial and professional backgrounds. We will be as keen to work with people from our own local community as we will with regional or international businesses recognising that each offers expertise and access to ways of working which extend learner and staff knowledge and understanding.

### **Regional provision for students with special needs**

The provision for learners with highly specific special needs will be integral to the life and ethos of the Academy and all staff and learners at the Academy will be expected to actively engage with the process of inclusion. However, we recognise that such learners also require highly specialist levels of support in an environment which is designed to meet their needs. We further recognise that some separation of function will be required for this provision

The Assistant Director SEN will be responsible for the quality of learning and outcomes for this group of learners. He or she will also work closely with other Assistant Directors and subject leaders to ensure that this provision facilitates access to a curriculum which responds to the needs of individual learners. All Assistant Directors will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies which seek to develop inclusive practice for all students of the Academy.

#### Final word

The Northumberland Church of England Academy will provide an education will provide an education that stretches the mind, strengthens the body, enriches the imagination, nourishes the spirit, encourages the will to do good and opens the heart to others.