

The Northumberland Church of England all age Academy

Ethos and Vision

Ethos

At The Northumberland Church of England Academy we shall strive to:

- provide an inclusive and diverse learning environment with a distinctive Christian ethos which honours God;
- encourage staff and students to aspire to fullness of life that they may achieve their potential;
- promote the moral, personal, physical, social and spiritual development of individuals within a Christian framework; and,
- create a community in which everyone without exception is respected, valued and happy.

Core Principles

Kind

We shall care for others, especially those in need.

Honest

We shall tell the truth and be true to our word

Humble

We shall help others do well.

Responsible

We shall be responsible for what we think, say and do.

Determined

We shall work hard.

Brave

We shall always seek to do what is right.

Forgiving

We shall learn from our mistakes and encourage one another to try again.

Context

Located in the southern part of Ashington the Northumberland Church of England All Age 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.

A school for learners aged 4 to 18 as well as nursery 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 principal and 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 the need for 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 development; by improving continuity and progression across the Key Stages; and, by developing robust and sustainable approaches to personalised learning. We will develop strong and effective 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 day to day working practices of both learners and staff.

Into the future

Our mission is to:

- provide an inclusive and diverse learning environment with a distinctive Christian ethos which will impact on all aspects of our work and involve our community;
- promote the moral, personal, physical, social and spiritual development of individuals ;
- relentlessly pursue routes to success for our learners and our staff; and,
- create excellence and sustainability in every aspect of our work.

This will result in significant gains for learners of all ages. The Academy will set and achieve high standards in relation to all previous benchmarks. This will be reflected in:

- achievement of national averages or above in all public examinations and assessments;
- improved rates of attendance particularly for those students of secondary age;
- 100% of students moving onto further education, apprenticeships or work with training with 50 % continuing into higher education.
- 100% learner participation in community related activity

We will achieve this by:

- assuming that every adult and learner in the Academy has a natural capacity to learn which requires nurturing to blossom;
- harnessing the energies of children, learners, staff and parents ;
- raising aspirations to encourage young people to continue life long learning;
- equipping all learners with the transferable skills needed for the world of work and contributing to the economy;
- providing contextualised training, work related learning and enterprise education;
- developing an inspirational and challenging curriculum which genuinely responds to the needs of every learner;
- learning from the best practice in the wider educational context;
- developing organisational and staffing models which achieve the fine balance between pragmatism and innovation;
- ensuring that the effectiveness of all Academy staff is maintained and developed through continuous professional development; and,
- working in partnership with the Local Authority and other providers in Ashington and the local area.

Through the looking glass

Looking into the future the Academy will demonstrate the following key features:

- High aspirations and excellent standards of achievement;
- A community which cares for, supports and offers challenge to learners, staff and parents;
- High status accorded to learners of all ages, abilities and aptitudes;
- Mastery of key skills especially literacy by all learners;
- Learners and staff who understand the importance of both leadership and team work and who can demonstrate aptitude in both
- Openness, transparency and clarity about expectations and outcomes for staff and learners;
- A curriculum and opportunities which prepare young people for employability and which develop a passion for lifelong learning;
- Confident young people and adults who are prepared to take risks and learn from mistakes;
- Learners who are healthy in mind, body and spirit;
- A highly motivated, effective and empowered workforce;
- An articulate, informed and involved student body; and,
- Community partnership in learning and achievement.

Learning, teaching and the curriculum

Central to our goal of pursuing routes to success for all our learners will be a detailed knowledge and understanding of individual learner needs and the construction of a robust, engaging curriculum which is meaningful, purposeful and relevant. The independent teacher working in isolation will be relegated to the past and all learning design will be collaborative and informed by peer assessment and feedback with strong and coherent curriculum teams which cross traditional age and curriculum boundaries. Practice will be further sharpened by active and systematic learner participation in lesson design and review of the quality of learning. A rigorous approach to internal self review and assessment at every level of the organisation will be the key to developing a new pedagogy and driving up standards.

A relentless focus on literacy will underpin every aspect of learning and teaching ensuring not only that learners have the basic skills to fully access the curriculum and achieve but also that they develop the higher order skills associated with the highest levels of success in both a school and working environment. Reading and writing will remain central features of learning for all age groups throughout their Academy career.

However, mastery of such basic skills will also incorporate the essential behaviour and learning patterns and skills required to master learning and which support young people in becoming disciplined, reflective and focussed learners. Learning how to Learn will be a core element of the curriculum within a safe and secure learning environment. All learners will be equally valued, will learn in an atmosphere of collaboration, where they are encouraged to exercise responsibility and reflect on their learning and thus develop the resilience and resourcefulness required for success in learning in any context. Thinking, questioning, decision-making and independence coupled with high expectations will characterise all learning incrementally building learner capacity to respond constructively to challenge and to develop into responsible independent learners.

Our curriculum framework will reflect our belief that all learning is an investment. Learners and staff will be encouraged to develop behaviours and skills which actively support an investment in the future, the community and the environment.

The development of learner confidence will be fundamental to all aspects of learning and teaching. It will be the focus of strategic planning similar to that required for individual curriculum areas or project based learning modules. Opportunities to develop confidence will be integral to curriculum development and all teaching and learning strategies on the basis that learners need to confront challenge and learn how to deal with mistakes in order to develop the coping strategies which support high levels of achievement. This will be complemented by a programme of activities appropriate to learners' age and maturity which take them beyond their comfort zone and enable them to test themselves in new contexts. Learner voice will be an integral part of empowering young people to contribute to the life of the Academy and its community.

Staff confidence is also critical to our future success and a parallel approach will inform the CPD programme for all staff in the Academy developing in them the leadership capacity which they, in turn, will nurture and develop in learners. The all age Academy will also ensure that staff have the capacity to extend their range of teaching and learning skills to both develop and capitalise on their expertise.

All learning and teaching will be underpinned and informed by an understanding of the different stages of children's development.

Learning and teaching between the ages of 3 and 7 will be characterised by:

- a strong focus on the development of literacy skills
- active engagement with families to develop the skills to support learning
- the development of social interaction and structured play
- developing an enthusiasm for the spoken word and for active listening
- a high pupil staff ratio
- small group work
- an emphasis on physical development

Learning and teaching between the ages of 7 and 13 will be characterised by:

- a continued focus on the development of literacy skills

- increasing levels of learner autonomy in learning
- a project based learning approach where appropriate
- greater choice in how and what to learn

Learning and teaching between the ages of 13 and 19 will be characterised by:

- individual pathways informed by student need and choice
- high levels of learner autonomy and independence
- off site learning whenever appropriate
- flexibility in learning methodology including extensive use of technologies

Fresh ways of thinking about the curriculum will impact on the organisation of the Academy including the structure of the learning day and week; the ways in which learning takes place; and the makeup of staff teams. Learner rather than staff or organisational needs will drive every aspect of Academy life. Key features will include:

- longer blocks of time for learning;
- flexible and effective learning time
- mixed age (2 years) learning groups;
- peer support and coaching for staff and learners;

Learners will experience a range of learning situations: lead lessons or modelling, small team and independent learning, and in some cases a more traditional class team. Each learning situation will be determined by the specific learning outcomes which are required by the module or which have been negotiated between staff and learners. The latest technology will further enhance a rich and varied learner entitlement and enable access to learning resources, both real and virtual, well beyond the traditional confines of the organisation.

Personalised learning

Personalising learning will be central to achieving our goals for learners. All staff will have an in depth knowledge and understanding of learner capacity supported through working with them in vertical teams. Continuity and progression will be supported by ensuring that Learning Support Staff remain with learning teams as they move through their learning journey. We will seek to develop curriculum breadth and diversity sufficient to meet all needs and will develop innovative responses to meeting individual needs without compromising the needs of others. This will be supported by effective systems for tracking progress, knowledge of the individuals themselves and longer blocks of time for learning. Learners will learn which methods of learning suit them best and they will increasingly exercise choice about the methods of engagement and presentation as their levels of understanding mature. Personalised learning pathways will demand robust approaches to differentiation, acceleration and progression as well as creative learning design, rigorous planning and rigorous implementation of Individual Learning Plans

Specialism

The Academy specialism will play a fundamental role in raising the aspirations of learners and their families with an explicit focus on the professional careers associated with design and the built environment. Practical aspects such as joinery and plumbing and the more traditional crafts will form elements of the learning context in various ways. However, it will be professions such as architecture, land and environmental management and engineering which will help to secure a change in perspective within the Academy both explicitly and implicitly communicating that young people can and should, if they so wish, aspire to a professional life.

The development of the Academy building itself will be a learning context for the specialism actively engaging learners of all ages in shaping their future and that of future learners. This will apply to the design, the construction and subsequently the management of the building and the landscape. A strong emphasis on Science, Maths, Art and Technology and the provision of a design centre within the Academy will reinforce the importance of the specialism for all learners while ongoing environmental issues will enable learners of all ages to understand and engage with the specialism at a highly practical level.

Part of our commitment to our own learners and others with whom we will work will be the development of a strong network of professionals working in the area of the specialism. We will explore and nurture this network to raise aspirations through personal and group contact, offer work placements which provide

genuine opportunities for vocational and occupational experience and develop the professional expertise of our staff. We will seek to know and understand the professional environment in which many of our young people will become employed.

Sport and physical exercise

Sport and physical exercise will be a key element of the curriculum for learners of all ages to develop a positive approach to health and fitness and also to develop confidence, team spirit and the ability to lose with grace. All learners will be encouraged to take part in individual or team sports beyond the formal curriculum to develop and sustain healthy lifestyles. Staff will also be encouraged to take part in healthy activity with the provision of opportunities beyond the context of the working day.

13-19

Coherent pathways which support progression will be fundamental to our provision at 13-19. In addition to our own provision we will establish a strong relationship with the 14-19 strategic partnership in Ashington and develop links with, among others, Newcastle University to encourage young people to aim higher and consider potential career paths. We will specialise in specific courses related to the specialism and develop a reputation within these for excellence. Access to the latest technology, to up to date application of skills and knowledge and to specialist expertise both academic and professional will support robust learning for all age groups and provide CPD for staff. Specialised diplomas will be a key feature but learners will also be able to access a broad range of provision including BTECs, the new diplomas, GCSEs, A Levels and NVQs.

We are particularly conscious of the need to develop provision which actively addresses the current high percentage of learners who leave education at the age of 16 and cease to engage further with learning. Our provision post 16 will evolve naturally from provision at Key Stage 4 and will be specifically and appropriately designed to attract and motivate students to continue the pursuit of learning. We will place a high value on developing excellence in vocational, occupational and academic learning and develop a secure bridge between learning in the Academy and learning in the workplace or in other learning organisations to ensure that our students are fully prepared for employment and further and higher education.

Every Child Matters

The Academy will fully subscribe to the outcomes outlined in Every Child Matters and which inform Children's and Young People's Plans in particular:

Being healthy

Sport and physical activity will be central to our curriculum and extended provision. Our approach to P.E. and sport will be inclusive and ensure that all learners can take pride and pleasure in being active. We recognise that for some young people sport is the key to being and feeling successful and that this is a powerful motivator for further learning. It is also a key part of our approach to developing confidence and developing learner well being

Learners and staff will be encouraged to eat together and to eat healthily. As the nature of learning evolves and a more flexible school day emerges eating as a social activity will become increasingly important and may even merge into a 'working lunch' as learners mature in age.

Our understanding of being healthy includes the concept of a healthy and happy mind as well as body. How young people learn and the conditions in which they learn will actively contribute to their health and well being.

Staying safe

Respect for each other will be a central tenet of Academy life. Learners will be encouraged to work and learn together at all times helping to promote a culture free from bullying and discrimination. The Academy organisation, a strong and articulate learner voice and an emphasis on how things are done will support the development of a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all.

While learners will remain safe and cared for the Academy will not seek to eliminate all elements of risk in the knowledge that managed risk taking aids personal development.

Enjoying and achieving

This is at the heart of our approach to learning and teaching and will drive all other aspects of Academy life. We will further enhance provision through vibrant extended learning opportunities which will be available not only to young people but also their families. Our aim is to achieve the highest possible standards for all, through increasing engagement and enjoyment of learning. Learner success will be celebrated across the Academy

Making a positive contribution

Young people will be expected to make a significant contribution to their own learning through participation in lesson design and to the Academy through active participation in management and governance. They will become resilient, responsible, reflective and resourceful learners who make a positive contribution not only to their own learning but to that of others.

Learners will be encouraged and expected to assume responsibility for themselves, for each other, for their environment and for their community. This will be reflected throughout all aspects of teaching and learning and through the Academy learning organisation itself with peer support a key feature of the mixed age learning environment.

Achieving economic well being

We are determined that learners will leave the Academy ready to play a full part in their community and in society. They will leave us with a high level of employability skills, high levels of achievement and perhaps, most importantly, high levels of confidence ready to fully engage in the world of work.

ICT

While ICT will be a seamless element of the environment young people will be enabled to exercise choice about when it is, and is not appropriate, as a tool for learning. Particular emphasis will be placed on the need to blend ICT skills with people skills to achieve the highest standards.

ICT will:

- be integral to life and learning;
- be offered as a qualification;
- be instant and available according to learning needs;
- provide access to appropriately differentiated material through a virtual learning environment;
- enable access to key environments such as construction sites to support learning, particularly in the specialism;
- promote independent and remote access for learners; and,
- enable work to be completed, assessed and managed online

Inclusion

A Christian ethos will be fundamental to every aspect of organisational and personal behaviour. Everyone will be valued equally and included as important members of our community. This will be reflected in all of the Academy's structures, management strategies and in our dealings with groups and individuals. The highest expectations will be placed on all staff and on all learners in this regard.

Our relentless drive to improve standards of communication for all learners is testament to the rigour with which the Academy will strive to achieve inclusion for all.