



BrightTribe
learn grow prosper

ALAT and Bright Tribe Trust Teaching and Learning Policy and Practice - Secondary

Trust board approval date
September 2014





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1. Mission Statement

Adventure Learning Academy Trust (ALAT) AND Bright Tribe Trust (Bright Tribe) brings a new energy and approach to providing the best education for our students. Through proven practices, ALAT / Bright Tribe will transform the learning of students, raise standards and provide the highest quality learning environments, enabling students and teaching staff to thrive and be the best. ALAT / Bright Tribe's aim is to break down the barriers that limit educational progress. We do this through adopting a personal learning pathway for every child – one that takes account of individual needs, aspirations and talents.

ALAT / Bright Tribe's values:

Learn

Provide the best education for every student.

Ensure the highest quality teaching and learning.

Work with the family, parent or carer.

Grow

Grow our students' futures.

Develop the best teaching staff.

Provide the best learning environment and supporting technology.

Prosper

Lead the way in education.

Realise the opportunities.

Be connected to the community.

2. Introduction

The policy and practice outlined is the most important of all the ALAT/Bright Tribe documents because it represents the core business of our Academies. A large number of hours of learning will be experienced in our Academies every day. Of course, a ALAT/Bright Tribe Academy constitutes much more than teaching; nevertheless, the success of our pupils and of the (insert academy name) is determined by the quality of learning which takes place. Our role is to guide, form and enable pupil learning, so that achievement and attainment are as good as they can be.

This policy and practice guide is designed to help all of us to promote excellent learning. It will form the basis of ongoing discussion and work throughout the first and subsequent years to design a new pedagogy appropriate in promoting excellence within the (insert academy name).

3. Key principles of this policy are that:

We have a consistent and shared understanding and approach to promoting learning. Different styles, strengths, enthusiasms and approaches are valuable and to be celebrated and shared as long as they improve outcomes for pupils

Teaching that is firmly rooted in the principles of Formative Assessment supported by thorough planning and staff committed to their professional development, is the framework within which learning happens in Colchester Academy.

Teamwork underpins our professional roles. Our success depends on how closely we support and energise each other.

We are on a learning mission and have much to learn from colleagues and other professionals; we will learn from our mistakes

Teaching is sometimes difficult and learning can certainly be messy; there are always barriers to overcome when promoting learning. We are right to be ambitious for our pupils' achievement, and optimistic that learning can always be enhanced for all our pupils. Every pupil has the right to access the very best learning.

We are responsible for providing the guidance, support and expertise necessary for the best learning to take place. We should enable our pupils to be active learners at every opportunity.

4. Learning and teaching

This is the core business of the Colchester Academy. It is our aim to motivate all our pupils to have high aspirations, to want to do their personal best and to have the desire to be successful in and outside the Academy. We are preparing pupils to be successful in a rapidly changing world and employment that has many challenges, some unforeseen.

We will nurture flexible, creative learners; teachers and pupils will work in partnership to create a stimulating and successful learning environment.

The pupils of Colchester Academy will be involved fully in the learning process promoting an active culture of learning for all.

The guidance sets out the principles for learning which have the potential to increase the life chances of our pupils by raising the quality and nature of the education we provide; it has the potential to improve pupils' engagement, enjoyment, achievement, relationships and behaviour in Colchester Academy and for all of us to find real professional fulfilment in our work; in developing a culture of learning.

5. Ofsted and beyond

- 5.1. We will be measured under Ofsted frameworks; although these are not an end in themselves they do capture what Colchester Academy expects of its staff. They are a scaffold which will help us get to the excellent provision for our pupils which is the mission of the Academy.

In terms of what should be seen by Ofsted and others in the Academy is good teaching which involves:

- Highly skilled and enthusiastic staff
- Extensive expertise to inspire
- A culture of learning and challenge

- Very effective planning that leads to brisk, lively, and imaginative teaching that ensures learners' differing needs are met.
- Holding high expectations of learners
- Keeping frequent checks on learning
- Asking probing questions
- Setting work that is appropriately challenging
- Involving learners in evaluating and reflecting upon their learning so that they learn quickly and make good progress
- Quickly identifying learners who need additional help and providing effective support promptly
- Setting homework to support learners' needs

This policy sets out the principles and expectations behind our learning environment and should be read in conjunction with the policies on Curriculum, Assessment and Behaviour for Learning.

6. Formative Assessment

6.1. The principles of formative assessment pioneered by Dylan William, Paul Black and the work on an expansive pedagogy by Bill Lucas will inform and continue to influence the learning processes in Colchester Academy. Dylan Wiliam sets out five key principles for embedding effective formative assessment in lessons. These are:

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions that informs the pupil where their learning is going
- Orchestrating effective discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of progress in what pupils know, understand and are able to do as a result of that learning
- Providing feedback that moves the learner forward
- Activating pupils as learning resources for one another
- Activating pupils as owners of their own learning

6.2. We want all staff to apply the principles of Black and Wiliam's work to all aspects of their teaching and not simply to assessment activities.

We will work at ensuring that all staff, pupils and their families understand the expectations that we have for learning and our role in it at Colchester Academy.

This document outlines the features of a good lesson, the expectations we have of staff and the expectations that we have of pupils with regard to lessons and learning.

This is a process in developing learning and teaching rather than being at a final destination and will form much of the work amongst staff in the coming terms.

6.3. Good curriculum design, lesson planning all require teachers to make decisions on a continuum and as we move to developing a new pedagogy we take into account learning which:

- Equips learners for life in its broadest sense
- Engages with valued forms of knowledge.
- Recognises the importance of prior experience and learning.
- Requires learning to be scaffolded.
- Needs assessment to be congruent with learning.
- Promotes the active engagement of the learner.
- Fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes.
- Recognises the significance of informal learning.
- Depends on the learning of all those who support the learning of others.
- Demands consistent policy frameworks with support for learning as their primary focus.

7. The way we do things at Colchester Academy (see also the Outstanding Lesson Toolkit and AFL Policy)

7.1. This Teaching and Learning Policy is aspirational and the policy reflects the ongoing work needed to fully embed all the effective practices.

1. All learning sessions should be planned with clear learning objectives. Objectives should focus on what is to be learned and should not be an identification of tasks to be completed by pupils.
2. Learning objectives should state clearly what pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the learning session.

Although all learning sessions should have clear learning objectives; how and when these are to be shared with pupils is at the professional discretion of the teacher and the objective of the lesson. Some learning sessions for example may best be done with the learning objectives being shared at the end of the session as the learning is being reviewed. Learning objectives may be written on the board, flashed up by a projector or be explicitly referred to orally.

Pupils are not expected to spend valuable learning time copying learning objectives into their books.

7.2. **Setting success criteria** is an essential part of the objective setting process. Success criteria should inform pupils of what they need to do in order to meet the learning objectives, make accelerated progress and meet external assessment criteria. Good success criteria are an essential part of the formative assessment process as they

allow pupils and teachers to judge the progress pupils are making, how well they have performed and highlight what they need to do to make progress. Success criteria provide the framework for providing effective feedback.

7.3. **The role of feedback**

In order to become independent learners, pupils need to be informed about their learning. The teacher's role is critical to this process. By ensuring a pupil has a clear understanding of the short and longer term learning objectives and the success criteria the teacher can then help guide the pupil through the next stage in their learning journey.

Intervention and advice can come from many sources, employers, peers, teaching staff; and in many forms, for example, general class feedback, a personal discussion or comments written on a piece of work. This list is not exhaustive.

Feedback should provide guidance to the pupil on how to make progress. The nature and role of feedback will be further developed through the policy on assessment.

7.4. **Orchestrating effective discussions**, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning

In order to learn effectively it is important that all pupils are actively engaged in tasks that stretch and challenge them. Some principles are outlined below and the application of strategies is at the professional discretion of the teacher.

Orchestrating effective discussions; careful thought needs to be put into planning the role that talk has in lessons. Pupils need to be able to articulate their ideas and thought, offer clear explanations, develop lucid and cogent argument as a skill in itself but also as a prerequisite to effective writing. Well organised and clearly directed group talk is an effective learning tool.

Techniques such as no-hands questioning, employing wait time or asking for a pupil to summarise a discussion can lead to whole class engagement and ensure all pupils have an opportunity to talk and no one pupil dominates.

Organising effective tasks and activities; thought needs to be put into planning the work that pupils will do. For example, carefully organised group work using the principles of co-operative learning can ensure that all pupils are engaged.

Eliciting evidence of learning; a key challenge is to ensure that classroom activities provide opportunities for pupils to exhibit their learning so that teachers and pupils can make informed decisions about the form and amount of progress being made.

7.5. **Activating pupils as owners** of their own learning and learning resources for one another

It is the goal of Colchester Academy to nurture independent, problem solving learners who have the skills to be successful in an increasingly globalised world. We are trying to educate and prepare pupils to work in areas that have not yet been imagined. To achieve this we must train and equip pupils to be critical and reflective learners.

Through learning to learn and developing metacognition skills pupils will be able to think about the learning process and how to learn successfully. Engaging pupils in the learning progress, employing effective questioning techniques, sharing learning objectives and success criteria and giving pupils opportunities to assess their own work, they become engaged in the learning process. Pupils can extend these skills by engaging in peer

assessment and employer challenges, giving each other advice, listening to employers and by having opportunities to teach each other and be mentored.

8. The Learning Plan

8.1. Teachers and all staff involved in leading learning are expected to plan their lessons effectively.

Lesson planning must take into account the principles outlined above. This consistency of approach will support pupils in their learning and will support colleagues in delivering consistently high quality lessons.

Teachers will be expected to be observed formally 1 per term. This may be carried out by SLT or their line manager, a peer observation or an externally commissioned observation to ensure Colchester Academy's judgements are robust.

8.2. Schemes of Work

In conjunction with the learning plan, departments are expected to have schemes of learning in place to plan curriculum delivery and pupil progress. Schemes of learning should be there to support teachers deliver the curriculum and provide consistency of experience for pupils. Schemes of learning are not however intended to stifle colleagues' individuality and creativity. (Examples of Schemes of Work: Annex A)

8.3. Seating Plans

The best planned learning activities can fall apart if the dynamics of a class are not conducive to learning.

Every pre 16 group should have a prepared seating plan. If all teachers explicitly control where pupils sit this creates a consistency of expectation across the school and enables teachers to plan for effective learning by seating pupils in ability groups or pairs, or mixed groupings, according to task. This in turn supports all staff because pupils will expect teachers to direct where and with whom they work.

These expectations represent a clear set of guidelines for all staff and pupils to adhere to, to enable a productive and collaborative learning environment in school.

9. Expectation of Pupils

1. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and strive to become independent, problem solving and life-long learners.
2. Pupils should see staff as a 'critical friend' who is there to advise and guide them through their learning.
3. Pupils need to learn to be resilient when things do not go as planned and resourceful in problem solving
4. Pupils are expected to contribute to activities and learning sessions. They need to have a go at all activities.
5. Pupils are expected to approach their learning with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.
6. Pupils should focus on learning activities in lessons, and should be prepared to put effort into these activities.

7. Pupils are expected to be organised and come to lessons, on time, with the correct equipment for their learning activities.
8. Pupils should behave in a way that allows themselves and others to learn. This includes listening when others are speaking and supporting others when they are developing ideas.
9. Pupils should meet deadlines and hand work in on time. When this is not possible, they should communicate this to their teacher and be prepared to negotiate a deadline which is mutually acceptable.
10. Pupils should be polite and respectful of others.

10. Expectations of Teachers

1. Staff should have a strong understanding of the principles behind good learning and teaching.
2. Staff are expected to have high expectations of their pupils and be dedicated to inspire and encourage those that they teach.
3. Staff should listen to pupils' ideas. They should involve pupils in their learning and discuss how to make progress.
4. Teachers should assess pupils' work and provide feedback regularly.
5. Staff should be helpful, approachable, supportive and understanding of their pupils' needs.
6. All pupils should be treated with dignity and fairness. Staff should be positive about their pupils and enthusiastic about their learning. They should be warm, friendly and welcoming.
7. Staff are role models and should model the behaviour that is expected from pupils. Teachers should treat pupils with maturity and respect even when it is not reciprocated, we are the adults in any situation.
8. Staff should be assertive and exercise good classroom control. They should be consistent in applying school policies.
9. Teachers should be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject disciplines.
10. Staff are expected to be organised and prepared for their lessons.
11. Staff are expected to be on time to lessons.

11. Independent Learning

We recognise that many pupils benefit from being expected to complete work independently. In order to achieve, it is essential that all pupils are able to continue work outside the direction instruction of staff.

11.1. Department practice

- Pupils are sometimes overwhelmed by being given too many long-term tasks with similar course deadlines. The curriculum will be scheduled for such deadlines to ensure pupils are not overwhelmed.

- Within each scheme of learning suitable independent learning tasks will be identified. The nature of tasks will vary between subjects. Activities should always be worthwhile and not set just in order to keep pupils occupied. Whenever tasks are devised which will last longer than 1 week (e.g. extended research) pupils will be supported to break them down into manageable sections and helped to manage their time.
- All tasks will be planned to ensure appropriate differentiation.
- There is a recognition that some subjects/topics benefit from regular consolidation and therefore long-term projects will not be used to the exclusion of everything else.
- Work can take many forms but may include: written tasks, research, reading, thinking, watching a TV programme, measuring, drawing, learning, preparatory work for practical, listening and discussing.
- Teachers will make a professional judgement about the amount of time that a task should take based on the individual pupils and the class.
- All teachers will emphasise the value of the skills of an independent learner by regular praise and reward of pupils who are demonstrating them.

12. Pupil Planners

- The pupil planner is provided in order to help pupils organise their time.
- All teachers will give adequate time in lessons for pupils to record tasks needed to be completed.
- The planner is also a means of communication between parents and staff. Pupils are expected to carry their planner with them at all times.
- Tutors will periodically focus on relevant study skills and personal organisation skills, where relevant monitoring of individual pupil planner will be made.

13. Learning Resources Centre and other out-of-hours support

- This is open until 4pm



**Adventure Learning
Academy Trust**

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Adventure Learning Academy Trust

CMA House 2nd Floor Newham Road Truro TR1 2SU

T 01872 858 161 E enquiries@alat.org.uk

www.alat.org.uk

Bright Tribe Trust

Building 1000 Kings Reach Yew Street Stockport SK4 2HD

Telephone 0161 475 0222 Facsimile 0161 831 9766 Email enquiries@brighttribe.org.uk

www.brighttribe.org.uk

