



## Newsletter

May 2022



It is good to be writing to you all again, knowing that we have had our Easter break with some welcome sun.

First of all, we would like to extend a warm welcome to all the staff and Governors at Will Adams Academy, which joined Alternative Learning Trust on 1 April 2022.

Our schools have worked tirelessly this year, under really difficult Covid circumstances. Although the government has declared an end to Covid restrictions, unfortunately the virus is still causing massive disruption to our schools, with both staff and students being off for up to 10 days at a time. All of the staff teams have been amazing in keeping children safe and educated but a break is much needed before our Year 11s have their exams in May and June.

Thank you for all you do to support our children and families in our schools; your support is vital to the work that we do.

Have a purposeful summer term.

Emma

*Oscar Wilde*

*'A flower blossoms for its own joy'*

*And so we have that hope for each young person  
who we prepare to leave us in the summer term.*



ACRONYMS:

AP Alternative Provision  
DfE Department for Education  
ESFA Education & Skills Funding Agency  
RSC Regional Schools Commissioner  
SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

## Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Trust's fourth AGM was held on 23 February 2022 and was attended by all Members. The meeting provided a good opportunity to catch up with all that we have been doing, as well as providing assurance to Members that Alternative Learning Trust has complied with its audit requirements and statutory filings.

## Areas we are working on outside the Trust



- DfE Behaviour Hubs - we have completed work with one school and have three schools we are currently supporting from the same trust in Staffordshire/Cheshire. We have also been allocated two new schools to support.
- DfE Stakeholder Group. Which has informed the SEND review and wider AP developments.
- Emma Bradshaw has been voted on to the RSC London Advisory Board (formerly the Head Teacher Board).
- Team Teach training.
- School improvement support.
- Bids have been submitted to deliver London-wide and national programs around Nurture, Healthy Relationships and Exclusion.

## DfE Update – SEND Review

### What is the SEND Review?

The group brings together government departments with representatives for parents, schools, colleges and early years, local government, health and care and independent experts to advise and help conclude the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review.

The Review was published at the end of March and has a whole section on Alternative Provision, focusing on regional commissioning, secure funding, multi-agency working, Alternative Provision and SEND commissioning. The stakeholder group Emma attends has contributed to the review and proposals in the Green paper.



[SEND review: right support, right place, right time - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## Visit to Kent schools by DfE's Alternative Provision Lead and Policy Advisor

On 29 March 2022 David Curtis (DfE's AP Lead) and Callum Armour (DfE Policy Advisor, AP) visited North West Kent Alternative Provision Service and Will Adams Academy to learn more about Alternative Provision to support policy development.



North West Kent Alternative Provision Service



Will Adams Academy

## Audit



Audit is an annual event which is undertaken by an independent external audit company. Auditors visit the Trust to scrutinize all aspects of Governance, Finance and HR. The process follows internal scrutiny and informs the Trust on areas for development as well as providing clear assurance that robust structures and procedures are in place.

Baxter & Co are the Auditors who have been appointed by the Members. Alternative Learning Trust received 'full assurance' this year and has the areas below to develop. This was Christopher Cann's first full year as Chief Finance Officer and his leadership, expertise and amazing team have led to the full assurance audit report.

### Key findings from the audit report

- Ensure regular finance reporting to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies is in place, including production of monthly management accounts.
- All schools work with the Trust to ensure that all payments and bank reconciliations are completed monthly.
- All schools need to ensure that they have up-to-date salary statements in place which correlate with payroll.
- All Related Party Transactions (RPTs), or where there are familiar/conflict of loyalty transactions, need to be clear and we must always ensure authorisation of any document is completed by a non-related party.
- All credit card statements and invoices need to be independently authorised.



## Internal Scrutiny

Internal scrutiny is a requirement from ESFA which entails an independent review of two or three areas within the Trust each year. The areas of focus must be decided by the Trust Board and fed back into Trust developments through the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee. The internal scrutiny report and management response then feed into the external audit process. Areas of focus for this financial year are HR processes, Payroll processes, IT systems – both centrally and within our schools.

## Covid update

- The Limes College has had a period of online learning due to a significant Covid outbreak.
- North West Kent Alternative Provision Service has experienced some staffing challenges but has maintained open status.
- Will Adams Academy has had some disruption through Covid but managed to maintain open status.

## Governance update

- Pamela Edwards leads on Trust Governance and has had a particular focus on induction and training this term.
- We are in the process of recruiting a Clerk to Governors in the Kent/Medway area.
- The Limes College has appointed a new Clerk to Governors.
- We are also seeking Members and Trustees from the Kent/Medway area. If you have any contacts who may be interested, please contact Pamela for more information.



## HR and pay harmonisation

The Trust has been reviewing its pay, terms and conditions for non-teachers. All teaching staff salaries are governed by the nationally recognised Teachers' Pay Terms and Conditions. The working group has decided to offer all non-teaching staff the opportunity to adopt the nationally negotiated terms and conditions.

- Pay harmonisation will be completed for North West Kent Alternative Provision Service in April 2022.
- Pay harmonisation will be completed for The Limes College in September 2022.
- Pay harmonisation will be consulted on for Will Adams Academy after 1 April 2022 and should be completed by September 2022.

This process has been led well by Lisa Parry (Trust HR Lead).



## Estates

Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids are in process for The Limes College and North West Kent Alternative Provision Service, with focus on replacing windows and boiler for North West Kent Alternative Provision Service and security fencing for The Limes College. Will Adams Academy will fall into the September bidding round for CIF.

## School improvement successes and challenges relating to The Limes College and North West Kent Alternative Provision Service (NWKAPS)

Director of School Improvement (David Ward)



### Successes

- Safeguarding in both provisions is very strong; a recent review was carried out by Ross Thompson, Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Training opportunities for staff within both schools.
- Safeguarding groupwork now operating across the Trust.
- Both schools' ability to develop sound curriculum.
- NWKAPS' work experience programme and careers/destinations work. This is developing with a new team at The Limes College. The work around careers is strong, with work progressing on developing a work experience programme. Destinations - success in both schools is excellent for pupils moving on to college, apprenticeships or sixth form.

- Use of early entry GCSE examinations is providing pupils with opportunities to achieve GCSE grades in the November and January series.

### Challenges

- GCSE exams will be difficult for pupils this year due to the impact of Covid. However, pupils will benefit from a range of adaptations to GCSE exams this year; these adaptations will help them reach their potential following the disruption they have faced during the Covid pandemic.
- Attendance is rising but needs to improve further. Both schools are currently sitting above the national average.
- Developing reading across both schools.
- Work on extending the progress made by the most academically able pupils.
- At NWKAPS – utilize the expertise and experience of newly –appointed middle leaders to further develop teachers.



Emma Bradshaw  
Executive Principal