

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024

Alternative
Learning
Trust



Welcome to you all at the end of the academic year 2023-2024. We have had some amazing work completed in all of our schools, as you can see from some of the examples below and the updates further along in this newsletter.

We are really pleased to welcome Saffron Valley Collegiate formally, although in spirit they joined us last September.

The Limes College (see their full update on all they have been up to, including setting up their own multi-agency Task Force to support children, following on from the great work of Saffron Valley Collegiate). The links below are about the Task Force at Saffron Valley - a model we want to replicate across the Trust's schools.

Saffron Valley Task Force overview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5w0Xl7iZZ4>

Young Person - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWd76iOOGVA>

North West Kent Alternative Provision Service is becoming Estuary Academy North and is opening a satellite provision on the Isle of Sheppey, to be named Estuary Academy Island. We welcome the new Head of Estuary Academy Island, Danielle Thurlow, to the hub team there.

Will Adams Academy is growing and developing, sharing good practice from its Assessment Centre across the Trust and regionally. We also welcome the new Head at Will Adams - Emma Smith.

We are also working with Kent County Council to open a new Special School in January 2025 on the Isle of Sheppey; the school will be called Nore Academy. This will be opened in a new building alongside Estuary Academy Island.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY: OUR TRUST FOCUS

For the next chapter of our journey as an ALT family of schools, we are looking at how we become more equal, celebrate difference and diversity more, and include all of our children, families, staff and volunteers in our work and as part of being in this family.

We are, as a Trust, light-touch as far as controlling what our schools do and yet we hold our values strongly: to genuinely be a loving organisation that builds strong relationships and communities so all of our people (staff, students, parents, partner agencies and volunteers) flourish, we have to take our social justice value and go into areas that can be uncomfortable and difficult, and dig deep into EDI.

We are starting knowing that we honour all areas of the Equality Act and want to develop as a family of schools to not just legally abide by it but to out-work the subtle ways it should influence how we create our Trust family culture and our individual schools' culture; how we are with each other as staff and how we are with our families and other agencies. Do we respect all? Do we challenge ourselves to be better and learn more about our communities, people, places, cultures and differences? Are we conscious of recognising and connecting with all for who they are?



Can we become an even better family of schools? Can our individual schools' cultures as well as our ALT family's culture be the best they can be for all? Can we be better at looking at data, training, curriculum and representation to support inclusive culture?

We are focusing on race and culture in this season with our leaders. We will touch on the intersectionality of all of the areas, and we are starting here because it is often the area people leave until last as it is difficult and can get lost. It is also a key area for us and the work we do – our cohorts of vulnerable excluded children are overrepresented by Black, Asian, Traveller and White working-class children and families, in that order. Discrimination according to race is one of the key areas that the Equality Act needs us, as a family of schools, to concentrate on as it disproportionately affects us, our families and our communities. All protected characteristics are equally important and some discrimination is more evident than others in different settings - and in our setting this area is a key issue. All areas are going to be covered and that is why race and culture will feature first. It crosses over all other protected characteristics in many and complex ways with some of our known challenges:

Racism – why are Black boys and Gypsy, Romany, Traveller boys overrepresented in exclusion from school? Why do White working-class boys appear on attainment statistics as the lowest achieving group?

Gender-based issues and violence – why do 90% of our cohorts have violence against women and girls as part of their lived experiences and what is it like to be a little boy/girl growing up in one of those households, how is that affected if I am not white and my mum is? What if I identify as a girl having been born biologically a boy, or I am gay and the household has strong misogynistic dominance evident through power and control?

Disability (often hidden) - why am I more likely to be in Alternative Provision if I have neuro diversity and mental health issues?

WE are aware of much of the above and more. In the education sector we are often the schools that ask these questions and hear these stories in art, autobiography and in therapeutic work.

This work is about how we get better at knowing this (data and monitoring), checking and monitoring it, challenging the communities that allow this, receiving and giving training to help our communities be more inclusive.

This is not a one-off event; this is a culture development and a journey and I welcome all to join us on it. We want to enter into a Brave Space to get deeper we will have difficult conversations.

First step - workshops with key leaders.

Second step – whole Trust INSET days.

Third step – whole Trust challenge to develop films about the protected characteristics – developed and made by staff, volunteers and students and facilitated by a production/film team. We are creating films as a way to start this next part of our journey, using education and this project to create a resource that will be centrally available for all to use. We are anticipating that this is a project that will creatively and educationally engage all schools.

Fourth step - review of EDI in each school and across the Trust – developing self-evaluation and development areas supported by the Trust Team.

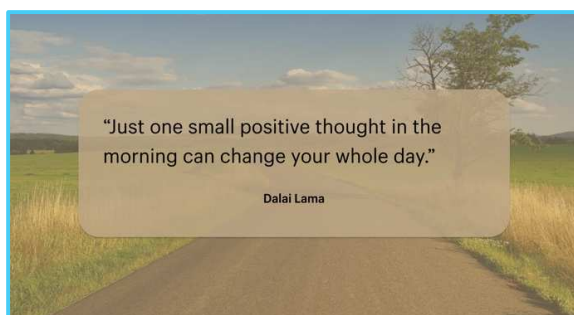
"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"
is a common saying that originated from a Chinese proverb.

We will be applying Emergent Strategy

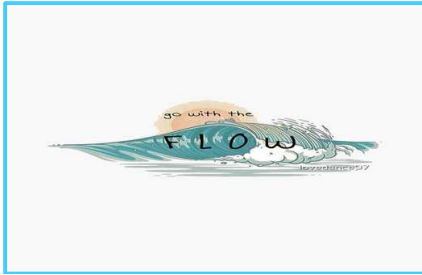
Emergent Strategy – Adrienne Maree Brown

Below are her core principles of Emergent Strategy

1. Small is good, small is all (the large is a reflection of the small)



2. **Change is constant (be like water)**



3. **There is always enough time for the right work. There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.**



4. **Never a failure, always a lesson.**



5. **Trust the people (if you trust the people, they become trustworthy).**



6. **Move at the speed of trust.**



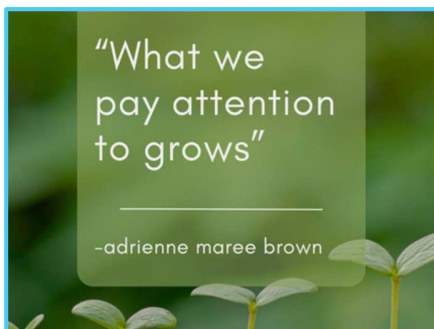
7. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass – build the resilience by building the relationships.



8. Less prep, more presence.



9. What you pay attention to grows.



~ GOVERNANCE MATTERS ~

Earlier this term we said farewell to two Governors and would like to thank them both for their dedicated support and contributions during their tenure:

Jenny Batt – Governor at The Limes College
Lisa Thistlethwaite – Governor at North West Kent Alternative Provision Service

Have a great rest over the holidays and I look forward to working with you all in the autumn term.

Emma



THE LIMES COLLEGE

20th March 2024 – OpenDoors Construction Event – Leatherhead



A group of students in Key Stage Four took the opportunity to visit a working construction site to gain valuable insights into the construction sector.

Site staff including a site manager and sustainability officer delivered a presentation on the current build, and discussed the various trades involved in a construction site. Various career pathways were highlighted and the students had the opportunity to ask questions regarding all aspects of a career in construction.

The students were then given a full access tour of the construction site, exploring the current state of build from all angles. This also enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of health and safety in the workplace.

A thoroughly informative and enjoyable day was had by all.

15th May 2024 – Discovery Day at Northeastern University



The Limes College had an amazing opportunity to explore Northeastern University in St. Katherine Docks on a personally guided tour of the campus and facilities.

Our students got to explore all areas of the university accompanied by two student ambassadors, who provided a broad range of information about university provision and student life.

Our learners explored the modern and accessible facilities and were visibly amazed at the wonderful views of the iconic Tower Bridge!



Alongside exploration and finding out more about university life, our learners were tasked with creating their own student societies and presenting their ideas to their peers - giving them the perfect opportunity to practice some of the transferable skills they will be putting to use in almost every aspect of their adult lives.

An enjoyable day was had by all, and further discussions have taken place about the very real possibility of going to university in the future.

13th June 2024 – Creative Arts Workshop at Carshalton College



Six year 10 students who are studying creative art qualifications at The Limes College were invited along to the Creative Industries Summer Show at Carshalton College.

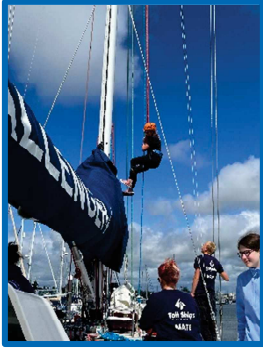
We were fortunate enough to have a private tour of an art exhibition displaying work from both Level 2 and Level 3 college students. This consisted of work from across the subjects including Art, Media, Photography and Textiles. The students also visited a ‘working’ lesson where they were able to ask questions about course content and college life in general. Our next stop was an art lesson; here we learned how to draw proportionate facial features using a mirror and a calliper.



The Limes College is working towards the Quality in Careers Standard

As part of the ongoing development of our Careers and Destinations department, The Limes College are pleased to announce that as part of our growth, we are embarking on and committed to achieving the ‘**Quality in Careers Standard**’. Our aim is to consistently provide an outstanding programme of careers education that recognises and supports the developmental needs of all students. All of our staff team, students, parents/carers and professional partners have been informed about this exciting development and we thank them for their continued support.

Please see our website for full details <https://www.thelimescollege.org/careers-education-information-advice-and-guidance/>



Tall Ships 2024

This year, two groups of students attended our annual residential trip, sailing on a 70 foot yacht in the Solent for five days. The students across both trips were fantastic and engaged eagerly in all of the activities on offer. The students got to 'skipper' the yacht, climb the 100ft mast and jump from the boat in to the sea. They were encouraged to help with the everyday tasks of cooking and prepping dinner for all on board. The behaviour that was shown from our students was outstanding and the sun was out for us all week.

This is an annual trip that we run twice a year and have been doing so since 2016. For some it is their first time away from home and the first time on a boat. Students are assessed whilst on board on their team work, effort, communication, learning, attitude to supervision, reaction under pressure, problem solving and team management. All of the students received glowing reports.



The Limes College

At The Limes College, the Safeguarding & Outreach Team has been providing rewards trips for the students; a way of celebrating achievement and success and to acknowledge hard work and efforts to overcome personal barriers and challenges.

Thorpe Lakes

Students took to the waters at Thorpe Lakes, helping each other complete the floating obstacle courses and taking opportunities to push each other off in a competitive spirit – all in the name of fun!



Thorpe Park

Our thrill-seekers boarded insanely fast rollercoasters and soared through all sorts of loops and twists...



Legoland

A trip especially for our youngest learners, we took eight of our primary students to visit Legoland, a day filled with smiles, new experiences, and positive memories. Students encouraged each other to step outside their comfort zones, supported each other and were a pleasure to be with.





Go Karting

Students got to put their foot down on the tracks, racing against staff and students alike, their competitive spirits igniting as they competed for the best times and first place.



Jack Petchey Award Winners

This academic year, six of our students were awarded the Jack Petchey Award for various achievements and successes. Collectively, they spent the money on new equipment for the Hair and Beauty department, a lunch out at Nando's, new equipment for use during lunchtimes and additional go-karting trips.





Saffron Valley Collegiate 2023/2024

This has been a year full of change whilst at the same time being a period where some of the best things have stayed the same!

September saw the arrival of a new Headteacher and it was a time where there was lots to learn and lots of new faces to put names to. This was a particular challenge as SVC is split over four sites in Croydon which is a pretty big London borough. Spending time in each provision definitely made it easier to get to know each other and how each provision works. In the south of the borough there is a Key Stage 3 provision and a Key Stage 4 provision. In the north there is another Key Stage 4 provision and then, towards the east of the borough, we have our newly-merged Medical provision.

Throughout the academic year students have pursued a number of outdoor activities - from camping with Key Stage 3, visits to Aqualand and Ninja Warrior, and residential trips to Hindleap Warren and Frylands Wood Scout Outdoor Centre.



After the successful Trust INSET day at High Ashurst in September, we were inspired by the venue and fortunate enough to be able to take students for revision/study days combined with activities ahead of exam season. It was a great opportunity to have staff working with students from different sites and the feedback from students was – “more please!” Later in the year, each provision put together a range of sessions to address Lost Learning which gave students the opportunity to get involved in something new as well as providing space for staff to work with students in smaller groups to develop their cultural capital. We had students out enjoying the art at Tate Modern, others having their say whilst learning how to podcast, and then there were some learning how to play the ukulele!



Finally, as a whole staff team we were able to experience Stormzy's new football centre, Merky FC HQ as part of our most recent INSET day and it was great opportunity to experience what's on offer for our students as well as getting involved in shared activities. Merky FC HQ allows football to be played on high-quality 3G pitches and acts as a community space for Croydon's creatives. Announcing the launch Stormzy said: "We all know there's not enough spaces for young people to hang out, so I teamed up with Adidas to create this football centre near where I grew up in Croydon." This really chimed with us as a school community as space is a key issue for our students across SVC and this is an opportunity on our doorstep that we will definitely be taking advantage of!

Although we are a school on multiple sites, the joy of the INSET day was a chance to share and experience new activities with staff who may not be on our home-sites and to focus on the values that bond us together as part of the SVC family!





STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES!

Careers Fair

Students had the opportunity to meet employers from a range of industries.



Residential

Two amazing days at East Grinstead!
We joined NWKAPS for our first sleepover.



Our Very first combined Sports Day!

Will Adams Academy and NWKAPS joined forces for our very first staff and pupil sports day!
A healthy competition between both schools and staff, with our pupils accepting all challenges that were put to them, showing great strength and determination to not give up!
Pupils were also able to participate in the solo activities showing exceptional confidence and resilience throughout.



EXAM SEASON CLOSURE

We said goodbye to our year 11s this term and what a term it had been! Excellent attendance and effort in GCSE exams and the finalising of course work for our vocational studies.
Our Year 11s are in a strong position with their conditional offers from colleges and apprenticeship providers and we eagerly await their results in the summer.
Our destination teams have some incredibly creative plans lined up for August as we support our students on the next steps of their journey.

QUOTES FROM OUR CHILDREN HERE AT WILL ADAMS ACADEMY!

"It was great fun, I enjoyed coming together and helping put the tent up"

"I enjoyed careers day and learning about all the different careers, it was cool the police were there".

"Sports day was nice for everyone to come together"



Our Intervention days have been very popular this term. We use our Boxall objectives as our focus for the day. The strategies we use to manage student anxieties on the high-ropes, their team work during problem solving or their resilience building when activities get tough are transferred to our education experiences back in school. The majority of our students are now in their final year of secondary education, we are looking forward to watching them grow and excel in all that they experience next year.





North West Kent Alternative Provision Service



We are proud to announce our new name 'Estuary Academy North'

The opening of our satellite provision on the Isle of Sheppey seemed like the perfect time for us to rename our North West Kent School. Our new Logo has been carefully designed and you will notice that our joint, compass logo points to our geographical position within our Kent & Medway Hub!



End of Year Residential Trip East Grinstead

The weather was unusually kind to us when we spent a few nights away in East Grinstead for our end of year residential. We experienced a jam-packed few days of good old outdoor activity but surprisingly still didn't need sleep when the sun went down!



Ben Browne secured fifteen interested companies to attend our annual Career's Fair.

A wonderful opportunity to hear about the breadth of opportunities available at the end of Year 11.

What better way to *inspire* us as we start another year of focused study at Estuary Academy. [Look at us getting a shout-out on a company website....](https://modusltd.co.uk/inspiring-the-next-generation-of-construction-professionals/) <https://modusltd.co.uk/inspiring-the-next-generation-of-construction-professionals/>



The event was not just a chance for students to explore future job prospects, but also a powerful reminder that every student has a unique path to success. Martin and Ben took along a few real-life drawings and templates that Modus would use on projects, as well as, in true quantity surveyor style, a 'Guess the number of bricks used' competition for the pupils to have a shot at!

We could see a number of benefits from the careers fair and the impact it had on students. These included:

Renewed Motivation: Seeing real-world applications of their skills ignited a new sense of purpose and direction.

Expanded Horizons: Exposure to a variety of careers broadened their understanding of what is possible beyond the classroom.

Enhanced Confidence: The experience of networking and engaging with professionals boosted their self-esteem and communication skills.

Since the careers fair, we have had one proactive student make contact and express their interest in pursuing a career in construction, specifically in quantity surveying.

We hope to be able to support them with any work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, when the time comes.

Modus have always been committed to supporting and inspiring the next generation of construction professionals through tailored training schemes, apprenticeships and supported degrees so it was brilliant to engage with future prospects who we could be providing opportunities for.

TRANSITION WEEK

Year 10 to Year 11

Transition week gave the opportunity to explore Vocational Options with tasters in all eleven subjects to include the **newly launched** Psychology, Geography and Performing Arts.



Estuary Academy Island

It has been such an exciting build up to the opening of our brand-new school in September, from site visits to getting to know and understand the Isle of Sheppey and its amazingly driven community; it feels like the perfect fit for our Trust.

Having met so many members of the community on the Island who are so altruistic and focused on making positive contributions, at this transformational point for education it feels like an incredibly exciting change to be part of.

We are privileged to have amazing facilities from full size football pitches, a horticultural garden with its own irrigation system, a forest school, a construction suite and so much more. The list really is endless and it is what the children we serve deserve.

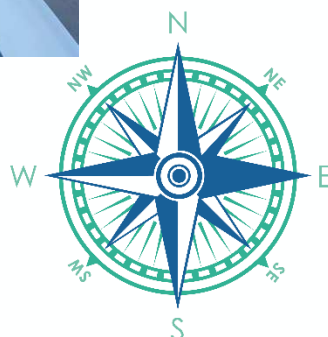
In the build up to the opening we have been working hard to establish relationships with the community including our new neighbours 'Halfway Houses Primary School' who we look forward to collaborating with in the future and 'East Kent College' in Sheppey who we hope to build a relationship with to facilitate effective transition for our children, further improving destinations and success for them.

Additionally, 'Curly's Farm' who are an inspirational provision striving to provide a fully inclusive education on a working farm for all children and 'Launch It' at Master's House who support young entrepreneurs in Sheppey to establish their business. Everywhere we have gone we have been blown away by the talent and passion of so many people who we have also been fortunate enough to recruit into governance structures.

During the week between 15th July to 19th July we are fortunate enough to have time to spend with our new staff team to welcome them into our trust and will be attending venues across the Island to appreciate and support all it has to offer. A highlight will be 'IslandWorks' a newly refurbished dockyard church which is a hive of activity for the community providing shared working spaces and a space for all the community events Sheppey has. We will also begin work in this time with expert consultants focusing on strategic SEND leadership, high quality inclusive teaching and how to support the community most effectively.

During the summer we will also be working with our families and children to ensure that, at this time of change, they are supported for their transition. We have activities for each week and will be dropping off a range of resources linked to wellbeing, reading, and experiencing the outside world for the children to enjoy.

The school opens its doors in September and we could not be more excited to welcome the children and begin our journey in Sheppey. It feels pertinent here to reference our new logo. The compass, a symbol linked with the nautical world, honouring our island status but also referencing the concept of 'direction' with the hope we will navigate this journey and guide our children to live fulfilled and successful futures.



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ACADEMY
ISLAND
INSPIRE, ASPIRE, EMPOWER