



# Altwood Church of England School

## ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Altwood Church of England School is a small mixed 11 – 18 comprehensive school based in Maidenhead. We serve a vibrant community where every student is treated and valued as an individual. We set high standards and expectations and we encourage and support our students to achieve their very best. The school is situated in pleasant grounds with many of the curriculum and other spaces having undergone recent refurbishment. Altwood Church of England School converted to an Academy in 2012.

### OUR VALUES

As a Church school we:  
Welcome all, value all, respect all;  
Celebrate the fact that everyone has God-given gifts and talents and embrace the responsibility we have for enabling students to make the most of these gifts and talents so that they can go on to achieve highly;  
Have excellence as our goal;  
Provide extensive opportunity for spiritual development and personal support;

Value our rich and diverse school community because it is made up of young people who are of the Christian faith, other world faiths and of no particular faith; all have a significant part to play in our society.

### OFSTED GOOD (2017)

'(The school) provides extensive opportunity for spiritual development and personal support;'

'The effectiveness of the leaders' approach to improving the quality of teaching was evident during this inspection.'

'Pupils are very keen to learn and are eager to do well'

'Pupils' behaviour is good. Positive relationships between pupils and with adults permeate the school'



### OUR COMMUNITY

Leadership is a very important part of life at Altwood. The House system provides the basis for extensive leadership opportunities and every student is encouraged to play an active part in one way or another.

Altwood Parliament ensures that students have the opportunity to fully engage in decision making at our school and the (PiXL) Edge programme credits all of our students, encouraging them to develop their leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication. These key life skills support our academic curriculum so that our students can play a positive role in the school and wider community.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ALTWOOD

Teaching and learning is at the heart of our drive for continuous school improvement. Based around our non-negotiables and our teaching and learning cycle staff and students are clear about expectations and set high standards to ensure progress is made in all lessons.

At Altwood, we take staff development seriously, as it is fundamental in providing the students with the best possible education and the most equitable class room experience. New staff are given a bespoke induction programme so that they quickly know the Altwood approach. All teachers participate in regular professional development through tailored INSET and staff learning programmes.

Students are expected to arrive at all lessons ready to learn, with the core equipment with them (Six for Success) which includes a reading book as well as the usually stationery. They speak highly of their experience of teaching and learning at Altwood, and their attitude to learning is positive. Students are encouraged to 'Think Hard' and challenge themselves in order to make the best possible progress.

Precise feedback is also crucial to ensure that teachers guide students to identify the gaps in their knowledge and boost their learning. Work is routinely marked in green with a focus on praise: what went well and specific improvements: even better if. Students are regularly given clear time in the lessons to improve their work which we call DIRT (dedicated improvement and reflection time), with the guiding principle 'if it's not excellent, it's not finished'.

What our students' say:

89% say that teaching and learning is good or better and that they know what they need to do to improve their work.

'I like to have a checklist of what I have achieved and what I need to do to make the most progress.'

Over 80% of students in Year 11 and the Sixth Form believe that they have made good progress

'Teachers give lots of their time to help me improve.'

'I enjoy lessons where there are lots of different activities which keep me focussed and make learning fun.'

## ENGLISH and the PERFORMING ARTS

Currently English forms part of a wider faculty which includes drama, music and media.

English GCSE follows the AQA Specification in both Language and Literature. Current texts include An Inspector Calls, Blood Brothers, Animal Farm and The Sign of Four. Students study Macbeth for their Shakespeare text. Outcomes at GCSE are strong with 78% of student gaining a Grade 4 or above (2018). Students achieve well in top grades with 21% having achieved a Grade 7 or above (2018).

With strong achievement at GCSE, English Literature is a popular A-Level option for many students. They follow the Edexcel specification and go on to achieve well.

The department is well resourced in a recently refurbished building which is at the heart of the school, including a suite of teaching rooms and a dedicated ICT suite. A small library uses the Accelerated Reader programme to track and drive improvements in students reading skills.

Oracy is an important part of the departments focus. The debating team have competed locally and at national competitions.

A specialist literacy coordinator works within the department and wider school leading small group literacy lessons, 1to1 support working closely with the SEND area and supporting development of literacy skills across the area. This work has made a significant impact on improving students reading ages and ability to access the curriculum.

Being a member of the PIXL Club, the department has access to additional resources and initiatives to support raising standards work.

