



alehunteracademy
a Saffron Academy Trust school

‘Living for Learning, Learning for Life’



“The school is
an inclusive
and caring
environment.”

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A Message from the Headteacher

At Alec Hunter Academy, we pride ourselves on the positive relationships we engender between our young people and the adults who work with them on a day-to-day basis. We believe that students learn best when they feel valued and when the expectations of them are high.

We anticipate that our learners will attend school with a positive attitude to learning, that they will embrace challenge where they encounter it and will be enthusiastic, resourceful, adaptable and resilient.

We intend our young people to leave Alec Hunter with happy memories, having enjoyed a diverse range of experiences that have prepared them for the next phase of their education and for their adult lives.

Trevor Lawn BA (Hons) First Class, PGCE, NPQH Headteacher



Committed to Excellence

Alec Hunter Academy is part of the Saffron Academy Trust, a high-performing family of local schools that work closely together to provide an exceptional standard of education to the children in our care. We do this by sharing good practice, developing common policies and striving for continuous improvement. At the same time, we value the individual character of each of our schools and encourage them to engage fully with the communities that they serve. This is reflected in the wide range of activities that can be found across the trust and the partnerships that we have established in our pursuit of excellence.

Alec Hunter Academy and Saffron Walden County High work in close collaboration, sharing staff, strategies, and the desire to enable all students to achieve their very best. We are proud to be working closely with a school that has made such huge strides forward in recent years and continues to improve at an impressive rate.

Caroline Derbyshire CEO, Saffron Academy Trust

Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve our community by providing opportunities for all our young people to progress, enjoy learning and fulfil their academic potential in a safe, caring environment that prepares them well for a successful future.

Core Principles

The six core principles of our academy are:

- *Giving our best, every minute of every lesson, every day*
- *Promoting high aspirations, confidence and self-belief*
- *Respecting ourselves, each other and our environment*
- *Valuing every person as an individual of equal worth*
- *Celebrating our successes in learning and beyond*
- *Developing positive, productive partnerships*





High Expectations

Our role in preparing students for the world of work begins by ensuring that they take pride in everything that they do, from wearing their uniform smartly to taking responsibility for their own learning. Students are expected to adhere to our core principles, which encourage everyone in the school to be respectful and always to give their best. This extends to our staff, who strive to provide engaging and creative experiences for the youngsters in their classes. Our ethos inspires teachers with the confidence to innovate and students with the motivation to succeed.

Our Behaviour for Learning Policy is clear, consistent and engenders a climate in which students understand exactly what is required of them. By developing positive relationships with their teachers, they will establish a firm platform of trust and collaboration, on which they can build their skills and knowledge, allowing them to make strong progress towards the challenging and ambitious targets that are set for every child.

“School leaders have established a culture where expectations of pupils and teachers are high and improvement is rapid.”

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High Quality Learning

Through our desire to assist every child to achieve their best possible outcomes, we have placed learning and teaching firmly at the heart of our school. We believe that good teaching which promotes great learning, progress and enjoyment is the primary factor in raising standards.

We maintain that learning should be a challenging yet rewarding experience for everyone and we anticipate that students will play their part by being active, resilient and committed to their studies. At Alec Hunter, we aim to provide a rich and varied diet of learning opportunities which allow our learners to develop their abilities to the full.

We encourage our young people to reflect regularly on the ways that they learn best and to take responsibility for working productively in groups or pairs where cooperation, collaboration and communication are essential to producing positive outcomes.

Treating Learners as Individuals

At Alec Hunter, we value the diversity of backgrounds, skills, experiences and perspectives that our learners bring to the school. Our inclusive ethos is founded on a desire to nurture the strengths of each individual in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Our most able students are prompted to take on additional challenge within lessons and benefit from an extensive programme of enrichment outside of the classroom, enabling them to access the very highest grades and progress to top universities. Students who find it more difficult to access certain elements of the curriculum are supported to achieve their best through Student Development Plans, often providing access to additional academic interventions, such as literacy or numeracy programmes, for example.



Working in Partnership

We believe that good communication between home and school is essential if learners are to fulfil their potential. Students receive termly progress checks, outlining their levels of attainment and attitude to learning across all subjects, throughout their time at Alec Hunter. Parents also have access to a website called Go4Schools, whereby they may access specific details about homework tasks that have been set for their child.

At the beginning of each academic year, all students and parents are invited to a target setting or target review evening, to ensure students have clear objectives for the year ahead, which they contribute towards defining through a negotiated process. Students and parents are also invited to at least one Parents' Evening each year (two in Years 10 and 11), where appointments can be made with individual subject teachers to discuss progress. However, we welcome contact at any time if parents wish to raise a query, highlight an issue or discuss progress, with a team of staff in different roles well placed to address any concerns.

A Stimulating Curriculum

The curriculum at Alec Hunter is central to our aim of providing outstanding education for all, regardless of background or ability.

At Key Stage 3, Year 7 and 8 learners engage in a wide range of subjects, providing them with a broad and balanced foundation during their first two years of secondary education, including the opportunity for almost all students to study more than one modern foreign language.

Year 9 is a 'bridging year', retaining many of the core elements of Key Stage 3, but permitting some degree of choice. Students are also offered the chance to sample new courses in preparation for making their final Key Stage 4 choices at the end of Year 9, at which point the curriculum becomes increasingly tailored to individual needs and personal preference.

The options processes in both Year 8 and Year 9 provide all the details required to make informed selections, supported by guidance from tutors, careers advisors

"Pupils and parents are positive about the support that the school provides."

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and subject leaders. We offer a wide range of qualifications, incorporating both traditional, academic subjects and more vocational opportunities, permitting learners to pick the pathway most suited to their abilities and interests. Above all, our young people are encouraged to pursue courses which they feel they will enjoy and in which they know they can achieve highly.

There are many innovative features to our curriculum, typified by our termly Skills Days. These are designed to offer our learners a range of experiences to complement their regular studies, often taking them away from the classroom on trips and visits or providing a cultural dimension to their learning via special events within the school.

Student Leadership

We believe that students should be given every opportunity to take on roles of responsibility, to prepare them to become society's leaders of the future. An active and enthusiastic School Council encourages learners to represent their peers, consult others, and present their views with clarity and sensitivity. Students also play a key role in the appointment of all new staff.

By joining our prefect team, under the direction of our Head Boy, Head Girl and their Deputies, many senior students enjoy representing Alec Hunter Academy at public events as well as assisting younger students and the staff of the school. A select group of fully trained Peer Mentors offers support and guidance to Year 7 students as they make the transition to secondary school, while our PROUD Ambassadors engage in outreach projects with our local community.

House captains take the lead with inter-house competitions, organising and coordinating events, and each tutor group has its own form representatives and sports captains. Any student can volunteer to be considered for such a role and those selected always wear their badges with great pride.

There are also numerous opportunities to take on leadership through a wide range of charitable and community-based initiatives. Our RAAP (Raising Awareness Against Prejudice) Group promotes equality and inclusivity in our school community, while the Eco-Committee works towards making Alec Hunter an environmentally friendly school.

"The school staff work hard to ensure that pupils have high aspirations and value their education."

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“There is generally a calm and positive atmosphere around all areas of the school during the school day.”

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Opportunities for All

Something for Everyone

At Alec Hunter Academy, we believe in enriching lives. Consequently, we offer activities both in and out of the classroom which cater for the needs and interests of all. We encourage all learners to participate fully in these opportunities.

Clubs and Enrichment

There is a full programme of sports, music and specialist interest clubs after school hours, catering for all tastes. Students can attend practice sessions in a different sport every night of the week if they wish, and many go on to represent the school in our successful teams. Our presence at local tournaments is consistently strong, even in less popular sports such as handball, futsal and hockey.

High quality music and drama productions have become a locally recognised feature of the school and provide further avenues for our young people to express themselves. Students have the opportunity to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments through peripatetic lessons. Moreover, through our links with Saffron Hall, a new concert venue with a growing reputation, internationally acclaimed artistes have visited Alec Hunter to work with our students and we anticipate that this will continue.

Our award-winning STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Club is thriving, with both boys and girls undertaking a range of projects from building and flying drones to designing feeders for Colchester Zoo animal enclosures, and from racing rocket cars to attending Science Challenge Days at local universities.

Trips and Visits

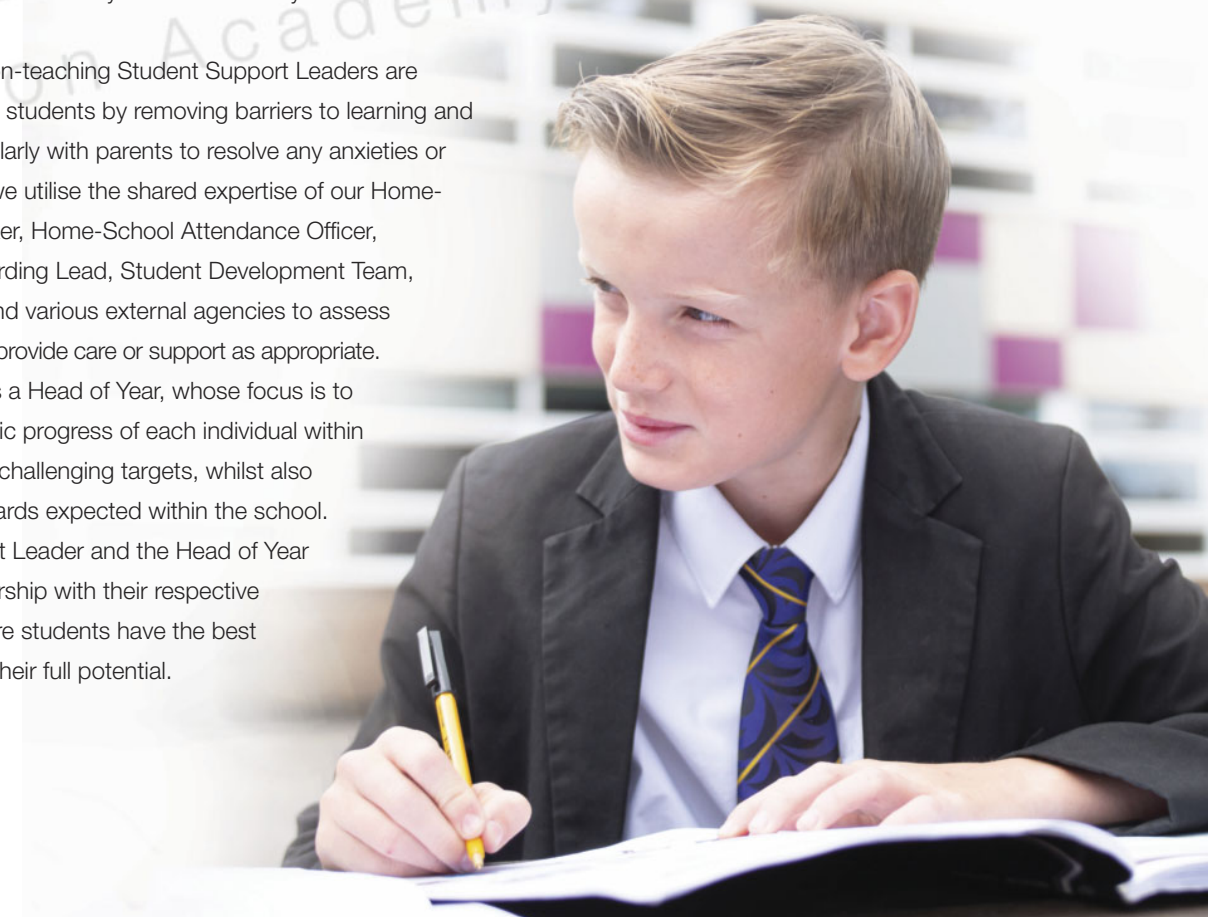
The school has organised a broad range of local, national and international visits and trips and exchanges to a variety of interesting locations. We have made full use of our membership of the Erasmus programme, a partnership of European schools, to organise mutual exchange visits for small groups of students to raise cultural awareness and collaborate on specific projects.

Curriculum visits to Germany, Spain, France, Austria and Belgium, to name but a few, have all played a key role in supporting learning through first-hand experience. Moreover, our biennial World Challenge Expeditions have given students life-changing opportunities to undertake community projects in Ethiopia, Uzbekistan, Tanzania and India in recent years.

The Team Around the Child

We recognise that there will be times when many students may need guidance and support, so we have invested heavily in creating a team of skilled and experienced professionals who care deeply about our youngsters' wellbeing and are on hand to address any concerns as they arise.

Our four full-time, non-teaching Student Support Leaders are dedicated to helping students by removing barriers to learning and communicating regularly with parents to resolve any anxieties or issues. In addition, we utilise the shared expertise of our Home-School Liaison Worker, Home-School Attendance Officer, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Student Development Team, Therapeutic Team and various external agencies to assess learners' needs and provide care or support as appropriate. Each year group has a Head of Year, whose focus is to oversee the academic progress of each individual within that cohort towards challenging targets, whilst also upholding the standards expected within the school. The Student Support Leader and the Head of Year work in close partnership with their respective year groups to ensure students have the best chance of reaching their full potential.





Progress is also closely monitored by all our Heads of Curriculum Area, and suitable interventions are initiated to address underperformance, whilst those who are performing above targets are also identified and congratulated. In addition, we hold regular Celebration Assemblies and an annual Awards Evening to recognise those students who are making exceptional progress, demonstrate an exemplary attitude to their studies or make a positive contribution to school life.

The Alec Hunter Community

Community Partnerships - We are an outward-looking school and have forged many productive partnerships both in the local community and through national and

international contacts. Aside from our extremely beneficial membership of the Saffron Academy Trust, we are full partners in the Braintree Sixth Form, we belong to two Teaching School Alliances and we work in a 'Triad' with Chelmer Valley High School and the Ramsey Academy, Halstead. This involves reciprocal monitoring and practice sharing with a view to helping all three schools to self-evaluate and improve.

We have a very positive relationship with all our feeder Primary Schools, with whom we have worked collaboratively on numerous cross-phase projects, supporting the process of transition. In addition, we offer some of our staff to primary partners to provide specialist teaching in Science, PE and Modern Languages at Key Stage 2.

Parents - Parents are kept regularly informed about events and student achievements through our newsletter, our school website and our social media feeds on Facebook (www.facebook.com/alechunteracademy) and Twitter (@AlecHAcademy).

The Alec Hunter Friends' Association organises a diverse programme of events to raise additional funds for the school and they are always keen to welcome new members who would like to contribute to these efforts.

Employers and Careers - Well-established links with local employers support our students' developing understanding of the world of work. Further education providers and external contacts from a range of employment sectors visit the school regularly to attend work-related Skills Days, conduct mock interviews and support the school through sponsorship and community projects.

The high quality of our extensive Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance programme was recognised recently when the school gained the QiCS (Quality in Careers Standards) accreditation.

Visitors - We are very proud of our school's 60-year history and of the learning environment that we have created. We know that Alec Hunter Academy is at the heart of its local community and holds cherished memories for the many ex-students who live in the vicinity. We are keen to keep in touch with our alumni, to hear about their successes and we always offer a warm welcome to visitors to the school.



"There are strong relationships between pupils and with adults in the school."

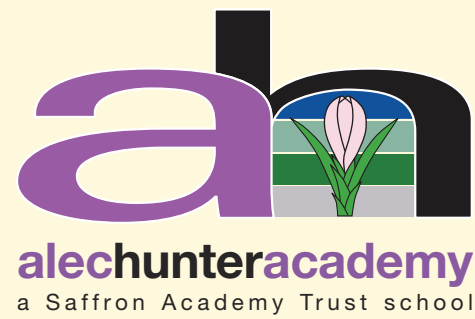
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We believe Alec Hunter is a great school, and we hope that you and your child will share our view – why not come and see for yourself?



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