



DIOCESE OF  
**ST ALBANS**  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



# Thomas Whitehead CE Academy School Prospectus

**Thomas Whitehead CE Academy  
Angels Lane, Houghton Regis,  
Dunstable, LU5 5HH**

**Website: [www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com](http://www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com)**

**Phone: 01582 865466**

**Believing and Achieving Together**

*'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'*

**WELCOME** to Thomas Whitehead CE Academy.  
As a parent, choosing a school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. This booklet is designed to help you make an informed decision about our academy.



Thomas Whitehead CE Academy is part of the Diocese Multi-Academy Trust. The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) was established in 2016 by the Diocese of St Albans and is a Charitable Trust and a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is an inclusive Trust, working with schools in the Diocese of St Albans; the Local Authority areas of Hertfordshire, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, parts of the London Borough of Barnet and two parishes in Buckinghamshire. The Trust works with the Church of England and community schools that share our values and ethos along with a commitment to a broad education that prepares pupils for a happy, fulfilled life. Thomas Whitehead CE Academy joined the trust in April 2017.

### **THOMAS WHITEHEAD CE ACADEMY VISION**

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Philippians 4:13.

Our vision responds to the words found in the scriptures and it is this flourishing in God's love, grace and wisdom that will enable our children to become wise, hopeful, aspirational and live well together with dignity and respect.

*'Believing and Achieving Together'*

### **OUR AIMS**

The dedicated staff of the academy aim to work in partnership with pupils, parents and carers in order to promote strong family and Christian values that help to develop a child's understanding and personal development. By adopting a team approach



teachers are readily available to support children and families in a variety of ways. It is our aim to provide a high quality education, which meets the needs of every child, in an inclusive, nurturing, safe and fun environment, helping them to reach their full potential. It is our aim for every child to enjoy the school day and their learning, being motivated to improve. A rich and exciting curriculum, which considers the needs of every child's development, will help us to do this. The

support of parents and families is welcomed and encouraged enabling us to share skills and enhance educational opportunities for the children in our care. It is our aim to ensure a consistent approach and provide continuity from Early Years to Year 6, when the children leave us and move onto secondary school.



## SCHOOL VALUES

Children who attend our academy are encouraged to become independent and responsible individuals who value themselves and each other, as well as the wider community and environment. Each term sees a focus on a different value, which encourages the children to develop respect for each other and themselves. The Christian values of love, forgiveness and thankfulness are taught and modelled throughout the year.

---

# Attendance & Punctuality

---

## ATTENDANCE



Regular attendance and punctuality are important factors of school life. A target level of 96% is expected for all children. The school records the numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences for each child throughout the year. These figures are reported to the Department of Education. Parents must notify the academy when their child is going to be absent from school and must provide a reason for the absence.

When your child is going to be absent from school we ask that you notify the school office, either in person or by telephone, as soon as possible. There is a voicemail facility that enables you to leave a message if you are unable to speak to a member of staff. When your child returns to school the absence should be followed up with a letter of explanation.

The school day is precious, so we ask families to avoid non urgent medical and dental appointments being made during school time, if possible. Parents may be requested to produce evidence of such appointments. Except in the case of emergency appointments, parents should inform the school by letter in advance.

### REQUEST FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE

The law relating to term time absence changed in September 2013. Any term time absence for the purpose of a holiday can no longer be authorised unless exceptional circumstances prevent it from being taken during the school holidays. Applications for term time absence should to be made to the Head Teacher, who will review the request and inform you of their decision. Any absence that is unauthorised will be recorded as such on the register and may result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued by Central Bedfordshire Council.

### THE SCHOOL DAY



The school day starts at 08:45 and finishes at 15:15. You can take your child to their classroom door in the morning and collect them from the same place at the end of the day. This allows you the opportunity to speak to the class teacher if needed. Alternatively, you can ring the school office and arrange for a mutually convenient time for the teacher to call you back or organise a meeting with him or her, if the discussion you wish to have is of a personal nature. Teachers currently communicate with families using an online system called Class Dojo, so this can also be used to make contact. The Head Teacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team will be available at the school gate, at the beginning and end of every day, if you have any questions or would like to discuss something with them.

### PUNCTUALITY

Good time-keeping is an important quality to learn. Being late for work would never be seen as acceptable behaviour and neither is being late for school. Lateness often causes children to feel upset, uncomfortable and distressed when they arrive in class after their peers are seated and ready for the start of the day. It also proves disruptive for the teacher and unsettling for other children that have already started their lesson. To maximise learning time, it is



vitaly important that all children, as long as they are fit and well, attend school every day and arrive on time.

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Worship is a foundation of our day. Each day we join together to worship and give thanks. At this time, we meet as a community to sing hymns, listen to stories, reflect on them and pray together. Children are involved in the delivery of Collective Worship throughout the school year. They help to plan, organise and lead the major services which are held in All Saints Church, throughout the year: Harvest Festival, Christmas, Easter and the Leavers' Service. Children may use Bible readings and write their own prayers for the services if they wish. The school has strong links with All Saints Church, Houghton Regis. The school week starts with Collective Worship in the church. At our times of Worship, we come together to be together, pause and be still, reflect and pray, celebrate and shine and worship and sing.

### PRE-SCHOOL

There is a vibrant pre-school unit at our academy, which takes children from the age of 2 years old. We are able to accommodate children that are in receipt of local authority funding of their place, as well as children whose parents pay for their child's care. The academy offers morning sessions, five days a week. The session times are 08:45 -11:45.

The Pre-School maintains the ratio of adults to children that is set through the Welfare Requirements of the EYFS. This allows us to dedicate time and attention to each child. It enables us to talk with the children about their interests and activities and helps them to experience and benefit from the activities we provide. It also creates a safe environment where the children can be adventurous and explore their setting!



### SETTLING IN

Pre-School is a huge step for your child and a sign of growing up. Although it is an exciting time, for some parents and children it can also be an anxious and emotional time. We want your child to feel safe and happy and to recognise other adults as a source of help, friendship and authority. Our settling in procedures aim to help you both feel comfortable in the class and to ensure that your child can benefit fully from what the setting has to

offer. The staff have many years of experience between them and will work with you to decide on how to help your child best settle.

Our pre-school has adopted a key person approach. This means each member of staff has a designated group of children for whom they are primarily responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child starts pre-school, their key person will help them to settle and will be key in enabling them to explore the setting and extend their learning. They will be able to reassure you of your child's development and will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have.

As part of the Pre-School's policy, to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, account is taken of any special educational needs or disabilities a child may have. The academy's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will be only too happy to help with this. It is always our main objective to work in partnership with parents and carers, in order to meet a child's individual needs.

### **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

Child in pre-school learn "In the Moment", the same as Nursery. Sessions are organised to enable children to choose what they do from the carefully planned resources, both indoors and outside. Children are joined by teaching staff who support their play, observe and enhance learning with thoughtful questions and extending learning, by working with children on their next steps.



## NURSERY

Our academy also has a nursery unit that takes children the September after their third birthday. Many of the children that attend our pre-school continue their education by moving up to our nursery class. However, there are new children that join our academy nursery every year and are made to feel just as welcome.

There are two sessions in our nursery class, morning or afternoon. We are able to accept a limited number of children that require a 30-hour place and have the relevant code to support this. Alternatively, parents are welcome to pay for additional hours. The morning sessions commence at 08:45 finishing at 11:45, with the afternoon sessions starting at 12:15 and ending at 15:15. Parents are able to pay for additional sessions if needed.

As set out but the Department for Education our nursery class follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. EYFS recognises every child is unique and that children develop and learn in different ways. The curriculum is designed to enable and to promote positive relationships. The seven areas covered by the EYFS are:

1. Communication and language
2. Physical development
3. Personal, social and emotional development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the world
7. Expressive arts and design.



Information on EYFS can be found on the academy website and at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

Children in nursery learn "In the Moment." This means that children are free to choose what they do from the carefully planned resources both inside and outside nursery. Teaching staff join them to support their play, observe, enhance learning by asking thoughtful questions and extend learning by working with the children on their next steps - a "teachable moment."

Alongside this there will be times when children sit together on the carpet for more "formal" teaching. These include registration time, phonics and maths, circle time, stories, rhymes and "Talk for Writing." These activities are spread across the week with the children sitting for short activities at the beginning and end of the session.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

It is school policy that all children must wear school uniform. It is practical, hard wearing and more suitable for the activities that children engage in at school.

A uniform also helps the children have a sense of belonging to the school and it is something we hope they will be proud to wear. The clothing does not have to be of a particular brand or purchased from a particular stockist. Most items are available from high street supermarkets. The school uniform is as follows:



### Polo Shirts

Polo shirts are to be white. School logo badges are available to purchase from the School Office although these are not compulsory.

### Dresses/Skirts/Pinafore Dresses/Trousers

Dresses, skirts or pinafore dresses must be grey and knee length. Summer dresses should be blue and white check.

Trousers must be full length, plain grey, tailored and without external pockets. Cropped trousers, skirt-trouser combination and trousers with splits are not permitted. Cords, jeans or trousers and skirts made of any kind of denim or denim look alike are not permitted.

### Sweatshirt/Cardigan

A royal blue V or round neck sweatshirt/cardigan.

### Socks & Tights

Socks may be plain black, grey or white and either ankle or knee length. Tights must be grey or black

### Shoes

Plain, black shoes must be worn in school. Trainers and other types of sports shoes are not allowed to be worn except for PE lessons. Heels and fashion boots are not allowed. Plain black boots can be worn during the winter months. The children spend a lot of their time running and jumping so school shoes need to have a secure strap to keep them on their feet.



### Outdoor Coats

Parents are asked to provide sensible weatherproof coats. Denim and leather jackets are not considered as appropriate school coats. Coats that incorporate fluorescent and reflective materials are more visible and therefore safer. The children will need hats and gloves in the cold weather.

### Jewellery

The wearing of jewellery at school is *not recommended* for reasons of health & safety, security and suitability. We strongly urge parents to discourage the wearing of jewellery at school. If, however, any parent still feels that some jewellery should be worn, only the following is permitted, which must be removed for activities such as sports and practical lessons.

- For pupils with pierced ears, one pair of simple, plain studs - one stud in each ear lobe only.
- A watch

If pupils are asked to remove items of jewellery for sports or practical activities, their safekeeping remains the pupils' responsibility.

### Make-up

The wearing of make-up or nail varnish at school is not considered appropriate or necessary.

### Hair

Hair must be appropriate for a Primary School environment and must not be extreme in style or length. It should not be cut shorter than a number 2 and must not be shaved-patterned. This also applies to shaved eyebrows. Only plain, functional and safe hair accessories are allowed. Children's hair that is shoulder length or longer must be tied back.

### PE Kit

Children are required to wear a plain white T shirt, royal blue or black shorts and black plimsolls for indoor activities. Trainers will be required for activities that take place outside. A navy-blue tracksuit can be worn for colder weather. A PE bag is needed and is to be kept in school.

## FAMILY SUPPORT

We believe that parents have a valuable and positive role to play in their child's education. By working together, we can provide an excellent start to your child's education. Families may need a range of guidance, support and advice at different times during a child's education. Families also enjoy taking an active role in school activities and family learning opportunities. Teachers are available on a daily basis for parents to talk to but our Family Support Worker can also support



families with worries or concerns regarding mental health, relationship, benefit claims, parenting support or your child's education, behaviour and wellbeing. In return, we expect parents to support our high expectations of children's work and conduct.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS and DISABILITIES (SEND)**

Many children may, at some time in their school life, need extra help, including high achieving pupils. Thomas Whitehead CE Academy is a fully inclusive school that celebrates the fact that every child is unique. We firmly believe that every child deserves a rich, broad and balanced education and that all children can make great progress. We recognise the diverse and individual needs of all our children, taking into account the additional support required by some, including those with SEND.

Whenever possible, these needs are catered for by the child's class teacher, with support from Teaching Assistants and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). If teachers become concerned about the progress being made by your child, they will discuss this with you. Sometimes these needs can be short term and sometimes long term. A SEND Support Plan, Individual Education Plan (IEP), Communication Passport or Behaviour Support Plan may be drawn up to help address your child's needs. Regular reviews help everybody to stay informed about progress and staff are on hand to discuss any concerns. Sometimes more formal assessments are required which the SENCO will discuss with you, if needed.

As part of the Children and Families Bill 2014, all schools in Central Bedfordshire are required to make available to families their "SEND Offer". This means they have to publish details about how they can support children and young people with a Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND). To read our SEND Offer and other documents, please see our academy website: [www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com](http://www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com)

### **LUNCHTIME ARRANGEMENTS**

Our school dinners are cooked by an outside catering company, Aspens. Menus are simple to understand, whilst providing a selection of healthy and hearty dishes that the children will eat and enjoy. The menus are varied and provide the necessary nutrients needed for children to grow healthily and keep energised. Aspens operate an online ordering app, SELECT, that allows parents to order and pay for their child's meal in advance.



All meals are cooked from fresh ingredients, on site. Each day will see a vegetarian option available. Aspens are able to deal with any allergies that a child may have, offering an alternative to these children. Pre-ordering allows parent and carers to make informed decisions on what their child is eating. It also has the added benefit of enabling the kitchen to order and cook the correct amount of food, reduces waste and helps with sustainability and the effects on the environment.



Menus are designed each term and run on a three-week rota. This allows for variety and greater selection for the children. Firm favourites such as roast dinner and pizza day are included, although there are always other options on these days. Alternatively, if you prefer, your child is welcome to bring a packed lunch from home. Parents are asked to provide a healthy lunch box, refraining from including fizzy drinks and sweets. Water is available for all children at lunchtime and throughout the school day.

## SAFEGUARDING

At Thomas Whitehead CE Academy, we have a strong school ethos which places children's welfare, happiness and safety at the heart of all we do. We are committed to protect all of our pupils and rigorously follow our Child Protection Policy, which is reviewed annually with The Multi Academy Trust of The Diocese of St Albans. Safeguarding is our school's highest priority and it is important that everyone plays a part in ensuring that children are safe. **Remember, everyone has a duty to protect children from harm.**

As part of a Multi Academy Trust regular meetings, health check visits and training is continually undertaken by our Safeguarding Team to ensure that all staff members are delivered training sessions that are relevant and up to date. Our team have all achieved certified training in the [DFE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) and attend inter-agency safeguarding courses intermittently, throughout the year. Staff development on safeguarding issues are delivered termly by our DSL or DDSL's. All staff members are up to date with all essential policies such as KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) and the Child protection Policy. All new staff members undertake extensive induction training with our DSL to ensure that they are well equipped and informed, with all of our policies and procedures.

## MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Miss D Mitra  
[dmitra@twa.dsamat.co.uk](mailto:dmitra@twa.dsamat.co.uk)  
DDSL



Mrs K Glastonbury  
[kglastonbury@twa.dsamat.co.uk](mailto:kglastonbury@twa.dsamat.co.uk)  
DSL



Mrs N Chiswell  
[head@twa.dsamat.co.uk](mailto:head@twa.dsamat.co.uk)  
DSL



Mrs H Long  
[hlong@twa.dsamat.co.uk](mailto:hlong@twa.dsamat.co.uk)  
DSL

## CHILD'S VOICE

We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us. All school staff are trained in Child Protection, with every child aware of the adults they can talk to if they have any concerns through displays and assemblies. Staff are trained to look out for signs of physical/emotional harm or neglect and are required to report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

**If you think that a child you know is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, please contact: Central Bedfordshire Council, Access and Referral Hub on 0300 300 8585 or out of hours, 0300 300 8123.**

## CURRICULUM

At Thomas Whitehead CE Academy, we are developing a curriculum which will enable all of our pupils to become wise, hopeful and aspirational, living well together with dignity and respect, flourishing in God's love, grace and wisdom. We believe deeply in the importance of helping our pupils develop as a whole person, happy and ready to take the next steps in their education and lives beyond Primary School. To achieve this, we teach the curriculum in a dynamic and fun way that means every child can unlock vital skills that will

drive their curiosity, raise their aspirations and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum is holistic, utilising the child's head, heart and hands. It is rich with thematic learning. We provide themed days, educational visits and visitors to school, that really bring our subjects to life, enriching learning. As a church school the new SIAMS Framework places extensive importance on school vision and how as a school, we use our vision to develop our curriculum. Therefore, it plays a vital role in our curriculum development.

Many of the key areas for consideration in our curriculum are reflective of our school context. Our current vision underpins our curriculum. We have designed our curriculum to develop strong characters who are resilient and able to cope with adversity, creative individuals and critical thinkers who strive to do their best. By teaching this, we aim to make the children in our care develop into young people who care about their role as part of a family and community, as well as the wider world. We hope our pupils are healthy with a deep social and spiritual understanding, with aspirations to match.

Our curriculum is based on the Cornerstones Programme; whilst English and Maths are taught separately, the knowledge and skills being delivered are linked to a central theme. These themes change each half-term/termly and are mapped across the whole school.

For information on the academy curriculum please see our website:

[www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com](http://www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.com)

### **ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS**

We hope that any questions you had about our academy have been answered within this brochure. However, if you would like to discuss anything further please do not hesitate to contact the Head Teacher for further details or more information.

Thomas Whitehead is a happy, vibrant academy with the children in our care being core to everything we do, so **WELCOME** to the family!