



THE KEY STAGE 3 ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PATHWAY (ALP)

2025 - 2026

Parent / Carer Information

Ecclesfield Curriculum Entitlement

All students at Ecclesfield are entitled to a curriculum which:

Is broad, balanced, ambitious and creative with opportunities for enrichment.

Is inclusive, challenging and diverse.

Is responsive to individual need through, extension, scaffolding, alternate pathways and additional provisions.

Includes a strong core of numeracy, literacy, Science, RPE, ICT, PE and PSHCE.

Is relevant to today's society. We promote political understanding and sound financial judgement, alongside citizenship, social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

Fosters a sense of belonging by celebrating the diversity and rich cultural heritage of our school community and local area.

We guarantee that to uphold our principles we will:

Put the needs of individual students above any external accountability measures.

Have a range of progression routes at KS4, that allow flexibility and ensure that all of our students can be successful.

Consider individual student needs to inform different pathways and groupings, with special consideration given to our students with SEND and our students who are doubly disadvantaged.

Work with parents and students to provide a structured and supportive programme with clear guidance on the courses available to students and clarity regarding why they have been placed on a specific pathway.

KS3 - The Ambitious Years at Ecclesfield School

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum is built on the principles of “The Ambitious Years”, a vision championed by education adviser and author Mary Myatt. First introduced through her national training sessions and publications in 2023–2024, this approach reframes KS3 as the intellectual powerhouse of secondary education—not a holding room before GCSEs, but a time for deep thinking, rich content, and character development.

At Ecclesfield, this philosophy underpins our commitment to a curriculum that is ambitious, inclusive, and values-driven, where every student is encouraged to: **Work Hard, Show GRIT, Aim High, and Be Kind.**



Aim High | Work Hard | Show GRIT | Be Kind

KS3 Curriculum



High Challenge, Low Threat



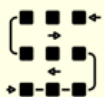
Thoughtful Assessment



“Automatic Doors” for Access



Language-Rich Classrooms



Sequenced and Connected Knowledge



Character Through Curriculum

Our ALP KS3 curriculum is designed to:

Provide a High Challenge, Low Threat Environment. We support our ALP students to have a smooth and coherent transition from KS2 to KS3 by offering extra visits in small groups and additional “taster” lessons. Our ALP students are taught in a small (maximum of 15) group of students, with extra support from an HLTA. The ALP students will be taught a program that aligns with the core concepts of the National Curriculum followed by our other mainstream students. This includes studying a modern foreign language. Ensure that all students in ALP are taught the core concepts that they need to be successful, across the KS3 curriculum.

Contain Opportunities for Thoughtful Assessment. To support our ALP students to access their learning, low stakes retrieval quizzes are used to help them remember important key vocabulary and facts. The subject assessments are focussed on core concepts and key vocabulary, they are designed with support from our school SENDCO and are used to identify areas in which the students need more support.

Provide “Automatic Doors” for Access. Our ALP students study the same range of subject as their peers, with the same core concepts and key vocabulary. The aim of ALP is to support the students make accelerated progress so that they can better access the KS3 and KS4 curriculum.

Be Driven by Language-Rich Classrooms. Reading, writing and oracy are integral to every subject. ALP students will receive additional literacy lessons to support them to be able to express their ideas confidently and communicate articulately. All topics in every subject have key vocabulary identified, which students are explicitly taught to use. Extra time in all the ALP students’ lessons will be dedicated to learning and using this key vocabulary.

Have thoughtfully Sequenced and Connected Knowledge. Ideas build over time. Our ALP curriculum has a spine of core concepts; we ensure progression by making explicit learning links between these concepts and dedicating a substantial amount of lesson time for structured retrieval opportunities.

Build Character Through Curriculum. Learning isn’t just about facts—it’s about developing empathy, independence, and pride in doing difficult things well. We have developed a cross-curricular character curriculum to encourage our students to become socially responsible.

What is the ALP?

The ALP provision is for the 15 students in each KS3 cohort who have the highest academic need and therefore require intervention to make accelerated progress. The KS3 Alternative Learning Pathway is a curriculum pathway that sits within our mainstream provision. It is designed to provide additional literacy and numeracy support to students who are significantly behind the 'Expected Standard' when coming to us from primary school.

ALP students are taught literacy and numeracy lessons by primary trained specialists whilst having the remainder of their curriculum taught by secondary subject specialists. The aim is for all students to catch up with their peers as quickly as possible.

What are the criteria for a student to be considered for ALP?

Students are offered a place in the ALP group because our Transition, SEND and Inclusion Team have identified that they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The student hasn't **yet** met the Expected Standard at the end of Y6 (SATS) in Reading and Maths.
- The student has a significant learning need.
- The student is one of the 15 most academically vulnerable in their cohort. *

*As each cohort of students we have at Ecclesfield is very different, please don't assume that your student will be in the ALP if they attend here. We don't know who our 15 most vulnerable students will be until we have our

How do we track the progress of students in the ALP?

Literacy and Numeracy

The literacy and numeracy skills of the students in ALP are assessed throughout Y7 and Y8 using the [Birmingham Tool Kit](#) (BTK). The assessments are completed in the normal classroom setting by their Maths and English teachers. The toolkits are used to identify which skills have grasped and which they need to work on next.

This information is shared with all of their subject teachers, along with specific guidance so that everyone can work together.

All Subjects

The students in ALP will complete DART Assessments three times a year. These will be done independently and in test conditions in their classrooms. The tests will be marked by their teachers, and they will be given feedback and guidance on how to improve. The DART assessments will be identical to those completed by the rest of the cohort. It is important that the students in ALP are exposed to formal assessments, our goal is that they make accelerated progress and leave Ecclesfield with Level 2 qualifications.

How do we Feedback to Parents?

The school carries out a data collection (DC) for all students, three times per year. These are sent home in the form of a report. The DC will provide information on each student's:

- Attitude to Learning in each subject.
- Attendance and punctuality
- Reading Age
- Number of merits
- Number of consequences

In addition to this, the parents of ALP students are invited to attend our SENDCO surgeries, which are held every half term. If parents/carers choose to attend the surgeries, they will have an opportunity to discuss their child's current progress with one of our SEND team.

If an ALP student has an EHCP, their parents/carers will also be invited to attend review meetings several times during the academic year. In these meetings, they will be able to discuss their child's progress against their EHCP targets with a member of the SEND team.

Can a student move from ALP into mainstream?

Yes, this has happened before and is the main aim of the ALP provision. Throughout the year, the teachers of ALP provide feedback on how each individual student is coping with the curriculum and the social aspects of school life. There are discussions following the feedback between our school SENDCO and members of the Senior Leadership Team. If we feel that a student would benefit from rejoining some or all mainstream classes, we will discuss this with their parents/carers and the student. If we all agree that this change would be in the best interests of the student, then we will create a transition plan.

The plan will be flexible and if the transition is not working for any reason, we will amend it, and if necessary, postpone or stop it completely.

Can a student move from mainstream into ALP?

If a situation arises when teaching and inclusion staff feel that a student may be more successful if they join the ALP class permanently or temporarily. If we feel that a student would benefit from joining ALP, and if there is capacity for this to happen, we will consult with their parents/carers and the student. If we all agree that this would be in their best interests, we will create a transition plan.

The plan will be flexible and if the transition is not working for any reason, we will amend it, and if necessary, postpone or stop it completely.

What is COPE?

In year 9, the additional literacy hours are replaced by our COPE curriculum. The COPE curriculum is designed to support students to navigate the transition from KS3 to KS4, college and beyond. The curriculum continues to have a significant literacy and numeracy content. By completing the units in the COPE curriculum, the students will achieve AQA Unit Awards of various levels. These can be uploaded into their [UniFrog](#) locker and used to support college applications.

The ALP Curriculum vs Mainstream Curriculum

| Year 7 | English | Maths | Science | PE | RPE | PSCHE | Geography | History | MFL | Art | Drama | DT | Music |
|------------|---------|-------|---------|----|-----|-------|-----------|---------|-----|-----|-------|----|-------|
| ALP | ** 14 | **10 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Mainstream | 9 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

** includes extra literacy and numeracy

| Year 8 (25/26) | English | Maths | Science | PE | RPE | PSCHE | Geography | History | MFL | Art | Drama | DT | Music |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|----|-----|-------|-----------|---------|-----|-----|-------|----|-------|
| ALP | **13 | **9 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Mainstream | 8 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

** includes extra literacy and numeracy

| Year 9 (25/26) | English | Maths | Science | PE | RPE | PSCHE | Geography | History | MFL | Art | Drama | DT | Music | COPE |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|----|-----|-------|-----------|---------|-----|-----|-------|----|-------|------|
| ALP | 7 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Mainstream | 7 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 |

What happens at the end of KS3?

When students have completed the KS3 ALP provision they will progress on to the KS4 Green Pathway. On this pathway the students will study for seven qualifications:

- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE English Language
- GCSE Maths
- GCSE Combined Science (2 qualifications)
- GCSE / Vocational qualifications x 2

In addition to this, the students will continue to follow the COPE curriculum, they will also have lessons in core PE, PSCH and RPE.

