

# Altrincham CE Primary School



**Grow Strong and Bear Fruit**

## Challenge Policy

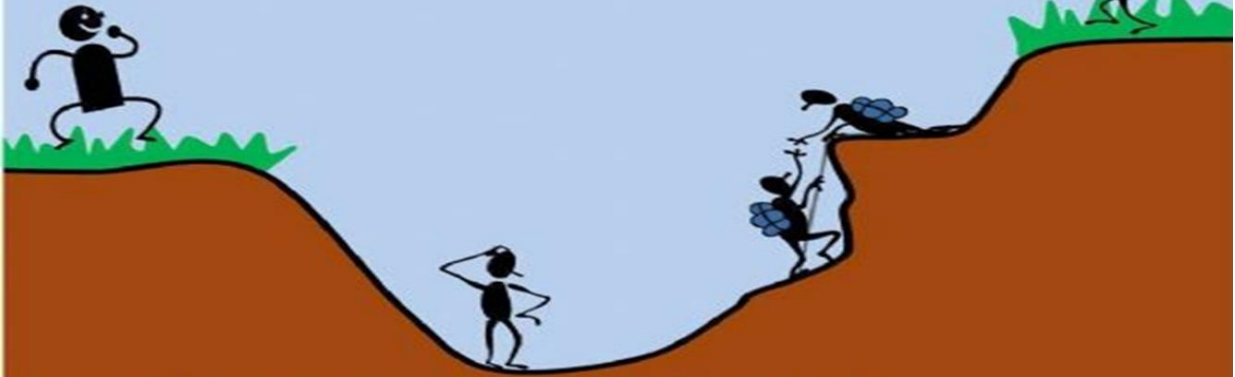
<b>Date of Policy</b>	January 2024
<b>Ratified by Governors</b>	
<b>Signature of Chair of Governors</b>	
<b>Reviewed</b>	
<b>Date of next review</b>	January 2027

I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty six times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.



Michael Jordan

## The Learning Pit



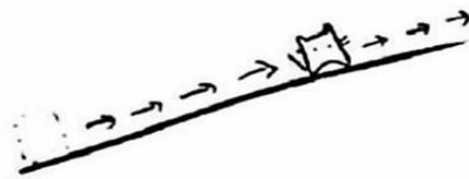
Good learners go into the PIT!



I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO



BUT I'M ALREADY SO FAR FROM WHERE I USED TO BE



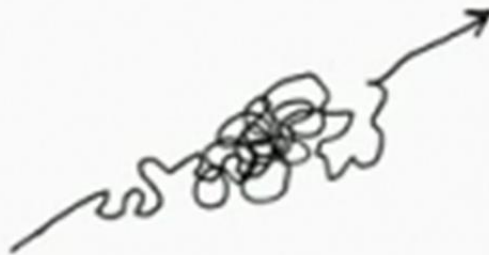
AND I'M PROUD OF THAT.

Success



what people think  
it looks like

Success



what it really  
looks like

At Altrincham CE Primary School, we are committed to providing an inclusive programme of challenge for all learners to enable them to reach their full potential through their **experience of a curriculum which is highly motivating, and which provides opportunities for challenge and high levels of attainment.**

*We believe that a child's abilities are not fixed but can be developed through experience and challenge – "The Growth Mindset", Carol Dweck.*

In line with the concept of a Growth Mindset we do not define children as able, gifted or talented but refer instead to their current levels of attainment.

Therefore, we support children in their **engagement** and **experience** by:

- developing self-belief and a positive or Growth Mindset;
- providing a personalised curriculum for developing knowledge, understanding and skills
- providing diverse and inspiring enrichment opportunities; thereby providing all pupils with challenge and access to higher levels of attainment.

Challenge is the central theme to all learning at Altrincham CE Primary School and this policy reflects the expertise and beliefs of the leadership and staff within school. It also reflects the commitment of the school to support and develop **all** of the pupils within our school as well as further enhance the support for the needs of the most able.

To effectively provide this challenging learning environment, we are working with families, the local community and external agencies; recognising the talents of the staff to enhance provision and using signposting to direct our learners beyond the school's provision where necessary.

As challenge is central to all learning at ACE, this policy is directly linked to our School Development Plan, our Monitoring and Evaluation procedures and our Continuous Professional Development provision.

## **Aims**

**Our Mission Statement and values articulate how we set out to achieve our aims:**

***"Grow Strong and Bear Fruit."***

***Based on the parable of the sower, we articulate our vision around the idea of nurturing children at Altrincham CE like seedlings, providing "good soil" in which they can grow strong and flourish. It is our mission to ensure that no child "falls by the wayside"; we provide that rich ground into which they can put down firm roots, enabling them to develop their potential as individuals. When they encounter "rocky ground", or become distracted by the "birds" of life's temptations, they will have the tools they need to achieve their dreams and make a real difference in the world. Stakeholders met to share views and input ideas to the vision. Nurture, growth and strong roots in the Christian faith and Bible teaching emerged as common themes.***

***“Some fell on good earth and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.” Matthew 13***

Our policy is intended to support the following aims:

- **The raising of aspirations for all pupils**
- **High expectations of attainment and progress for all pupils**
- **Ensure that all pupils reach their full learning potential.**
- **Create learning environments where all learners have the opportunities to take charge of their learning and initiate their own challenges.**
- **Greater enterprise, self-reliance and independence for all pupils**
- **Securing pupils’ entitlement to a personalised and challenging learning experience that engages with their needs and interests.**
- **Develop the skills and understanding in all school staff to create challenge within the classroom.**
- **Provide higher order thinking and questioning skills.**
- **Create a learning environment in which pupils embrace challenge not fear it.**
- **Use a range of flexible approaches to meet the needs of individual learners.**
- **Develop an awareness and belief that all learners have the right to be challenged.**
- **Enhance children’s learning experiences through extra- curricular activities and curriculum enrichment.**
- **Recognise under-achievement and seek to remove it.**

To achieve these aims at Altrincham we have come together as a staff and developed our own understanding of challenge within the context of our school and our children; we have identified what challenge looks like within the classroom; and we continuously strive to develop and improve our practice of challenge.

### **Definitions**

#### **What does challenge mean at ACE?**

***Challenge tests a person’s ability by asking them to work beyond their ‘comfort zone’. It requires mental or physical effort in order to be successful. We believe that challenge is about experiencing failure, building resilience, learning from it and unlocking deeper thinking.***

Challenge is:

- The promotion of independent learning
- Teaching children to persevere.
- Creating a safe learning environment where our children can take risks.
- Teacher and child led questioning which promotes higher order thinking.
- Fun, inspirational and creative learning
- Having a Growth Mindset
- The ability to move out of your comfort zone.
- Stimulating and exciting learning
- Avoiding acceptance
- Wobbling
- Getting out of the learning pit
- Providing opportunities to make mistakes.
- Providing a life-long skill to always strive to improve.

At Altrincham, challenge is an essential part of our children's learning which ultimately results in enhanced performance over time through a series of 'wobbles'.

### Provision

#### At Altrincham CE we practice challenge on three key levels:

- 1) Curriculum including assessment.
- 2) Extra-curricular provision both in and out of school.
- 3) Realising the needs of individual pupils and tailoring school life and provision to develop those needs.

### Curriculum

Challenge does not look the same in every classroom, as each member of staff uses their own skills, knowledge, expertise and interests to personalise challenging learning for each of their children.

All pupils experience appropriate levels of challenge through:

- Quality first teaching' across the full curriculum
- Personalised learning in the classroom,
- 'COAL' – Creative, Outdoor and Adventurous Learning Opportunities which includes the school's approach to teaching Art, Music, PE and Forest School
- Extra-curricular activities

**Challenge and Feedback** – The greater the challenge, the higher the probability that pupils will seek and need clear and focused feedback:

**Challenge and Application** – If challenge steadily increases over time those children with a fixed mindset will develop a growth mindset which will result in a greater desire for meaningful learning.

**Challenge and Thinking** – Challenge encourages thinking which results in children using skills such as reasoning, inquiry and creativity in a bid to seek better answers to problems.

**Challenge and Self-Esteem** – Self-esteem is about achieving a balance between pupils knowing they can succeed whilst at the same time believing they can cope with difficulties.

*At Altrincham, by practicing challenge as outlined above in conjunction with a clear understanding of what we are trying to achieve for our children; we aim to develop a learning culture which runs throughout school and grows our children into independent thinkers, active and enthusiastic learners and enhances their performance which raises self-esteem, through a sense of achievement.*

### Classroom Practices to promote a Growth Mindset, Engagement and Resilience of all pupils

Within the curriculum, staff ensure challenging learning is taking place through explicit planning for opportunities of challenge and/or flexibly within lessons as opportunities arise within children's learning. Challenge is not limited to a particular subject and staff are constantly seeking to challenge our children across our broad and balanced curriculum.

When practicing challenge within the curriculum, staff provide the following for the children:

A broad, balanced and 'irresistible' curriculum.

Cross curricular links to consolidate learning and motivate pupils e.g. maths skills in science and computing.

Ensure the classroom culture is where challenge is seen as necessary for learning to take place, challenge as part of a community of inquiry.

Use flexible groupings: use of teacher and self-assessment e.g. using key questions within the lesson to identify whether a pupil is ready to work independently or needs support.

Allow pupils to choose their own level of challenge, children aren't capped.

Questions to promote higher order thinking E.g. Bloom's Taxonomy analysing, creating, evaluating.

Increase thinking time after asking challenging questions.

Use of Social and collaborative learning opportunities to enable peer to peer support, assessment and reflection.

Remove the language of ability from school vocabulary and replace with attainment.

Embedding equal engagement of pupils by having a high level of awareness of questioning techniques and by employing suitable strategies e.g. Not waiting for hands to go up.

Teaching and using language of Growth Mindset concepts and challenge awareness e.g. Learning Pit, how many times have you wobbled today?

Promotion of resilient role-models. Reframing adult and pupil talk e.g. adding 'yet'. I can't do it yet. Building self-esteem and respond to negative self-talk

Modelling risk-taking and addressing fear of mistakes

Making links to our Mission Statement and Values and self-concept including persistence, dealing with failure, high expectations of engagement (discouraging passivity).

Encouraging reflective practice, valuing mistakes. Teaching the difference between errors and misconceptions

Differentiated challenge.

Use of cooperative learning to enable peer support, assessment and reflection.

### **Planning and Assessment**

Staff track children's attainment using on-going class-based assessments (formative) and regular formal testing (summative). Tracking is used to plan a progressive curriculum which is carefully matched to the needs of individual children. Thereby, offering support and challenge all of our pupils to ensure their improving attainment across lessons, weeks and years.

By recognising each pupil as a unique individual whose current levels of attainment in any area are not fixed, a pupil's learning experience is personalised within our teaching and learning frameworks.

Planned activities across the curriculum involve higher order thinking skills: analysing, evaluating, creating (Bloom's Taxonomy) and Metacognitive strategies linked to Rosenshine's Principles to develop retrieval. Planning includes regular shared class-experiences which provide knowledge, skills, understanding and enjoyment. We believe inspiring, first-hand learning experiences promote self-confidence and provide meaningful opportunities for the children to talk and write. Planning



includes trips for local and regional experiences, visiting experts with a rich range of materials and resources: visits/workshops from poets, authors, artists, actors, dancers. Our pupils benefit from a range of subject specialist teachers e.g. Trafford Music Service. All KS 2 pupils learn to play a musical instrument during their time at Altrincham.

### **Extra-Curricular Provision and Challenge**

Our carefully planned extra-curricular provision adds a further dimension of fun, excitement and inspiration to our challenge offer. Clubs and activities linked to foreign languages, sport, art, music and gardening are offered on a regular basis. They benefit all pupils and are invaluable for pupils to have further opportunities to practice and extend their skills.

### **Review and Monitoring**

**It is the responsibility of the leadership team and the teaching staff to implement this policy and maintain and develop the challenge culture throughout the school.**

**The success of this policy will be measured against the following criteria:**

- Lesson planning that explicitly provides opportunities for challenge
- Learning walks and observations that display challenging opportunities, flexible teaching and meaningful learning.
- Assessment data that is used confidentially to identify individual pupil needs and build on all children's progress to eliminate underachievement.
- Differentiation of challenge that takes into account the variety of learners and learning styles within our classrooms.
- High standard of pupils' work shown through regular scrutiny of work.
- Higher order thinking resulting in skills such as reasoning, inquiry and creativity in a bid to seek a deeper understanding of concepts.
- Staff and children who demonstrate a thirst for challenge and who enjoy challenging learning.
- Pupils who are independent learners and thinkers.
- Enhanced performance shown through assessment data are maintained and improved.
- An environment which displays staff and pupils taking risks, avoiding acceptance and questions more deeply.
- Feedback from interviews with children.
- Regular and appropriate training for all staff.

### **Process for Development and Review**

The school has an action plan to support the implementation of this policy with clearly identified monitoring and evaluation opportunities. Our commitment to challenge all pupils to achieve as highly as possible is reflected in our School Development Plan.

The success of the school's provision will be reviewed annually. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner as required.