



# Magna Academy Poole

- HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS
- EVERY CHILD
- NO EXCUSES



# Our Academy

## Vision and culture

At Magna Academy Poole, we are passionate about excellence in education. We aim to give students the very best start in life with a firm belief that excellent teaching transforms lives.

Our core belief is that, for all students to have high aspirations, they must:

- **Believe in themselves**
- **Be actively engaged in their learning**
- **See the connection between what they learn today and who they want to become tomorrow**

We teach a highly challenging academic curriculum for all students. We are unapologetically ambitious for every child, no matter what:

- **their background**
- **their prior attainment**
- **their needs**

Everything we do at Magna is driven by this, so that our students can leave Magna with the best set of qualifications possible. We want them to leave us as well-rounded young people, having maximised their life chances under our care.

This vision is outlined in our Mission Statement:

### **Highest aspirations**

Students, staff, the Academy and the community will live up to the expectations placed upon them.

### **Every child**

All children can be successful, regardless of their background.

### **Purpose**

We do not dwell on barriers. We look for solutions. Every excuse is a step on the road to failure. Everyone succeeds here.



We operate a 'no excuses' and a 'growth mindset' philosophy.

We believe that every child can achieve, no matter what their starting point.

## Our vision

We wish to create a 'scholarly culture of excellence', that permeates everyday life at Magna. Students learn about the 'Magna Mindset' in tutor time and assemblies, and putting it into practice every day.

At Magna, every decision and action taken is done so with the aim to ensure that every student can climb their personal mountain to university, or equally aspirational alternative, so they are able to eventually thrive in a top job and have a great life.

The Aspirations Trust core purpose is to develop young people with the aspirations, skills, qualities and high-level qualifications that will enable them to be the very best they can be, enabling them to compete on a global stage.

To achieve this in a highly complex and ever-changing world, we have to ensure that our educational provision is always relevant, innovative, evolves in response to changing needs and provides an outstanding education for all our students.

The Trust's three guiding principles underpin our vision;

- **Self-Worth**
- **Engagement**
- **Purpose**



As such, we believe that Magna is a 'grammar school for all', taking the best of grammar school ethos and emphasis on:

- **Strict discipline**
- **Smart school uniforms**
- **Academic rigour**
- **Qualifications**
- **Aspirations**
- **Effort**

but making it available to all children without selection.

We are benchmarking our standards and curriculum against leading independent schools.

All of our students will now sit the Independent Schools Examination Board 13+ Exams at the end of Year 8, as part of their 'flight path' to success at GCSE.

This helps to ensure that our students are exposed to the same rigorous challenge and knowledge as their peers at leading independent schools.

To help drive us forward, we have adopted four 'Mantras' that underpin our vision that you will find on the following pages.

## Work Hard. Be Kind.

We believe wholeheartedly in the traditional values of hard work and kindness. Our Academy is warm and caring but is also strict in setting standards.

Our expectations of students and staff are exceptionally high, and we take this approach because we care very much about our students' future and their long-term happiness. If poor attitude or poor behaviour goes unchallenged, it is all too easy for disruption to damage learning opportunities and to create unhappiness for the student and for all their peers.

We focus hard on student achievement. We believe in all our students and we expect that each one of them is capable of making rapid and substantial progress. Meeting that goal requires hard work and dedication from all of us - teachers, students and parents together.

Kindness and gratitude are also a core part of Magna life.

There are many opportunities each day for students to show kindness and politeness to their peers and to staff. We believe that practising gratitude makes our students feel more optimistic, energetic, enthusiastic and happy. In assemblies and tutor time, students and staff nominate their peers for 'appreciations', showing gratitude to others who have gone 'above and beyond'. Perseverance is also critical to our students' future success.

Our adopted Academy poem, 'If' by Rudyard Kipling, conveys this value:

*'If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew,  
To serve their turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you,  
Except the will that says to them: 'hold on!'*

Hard work brings its rewards. Our Rewards Policy, created in partnership with the Student Leadership Team, is very well received. We have also created Graduation Ceremonies for our Year 8 students at the Academy. For our Year 11 and 13 students, we now hold a very special ceremony at Kimmeridge House on Bournemouth University's prestigious Talbot Campus.



**WORK  
HARD  
AND  
BE  
KIND**



 Magna Academy Poole

[www.aatmagna.org](http://www.aatmagna.org)

 @MagnaAcademy

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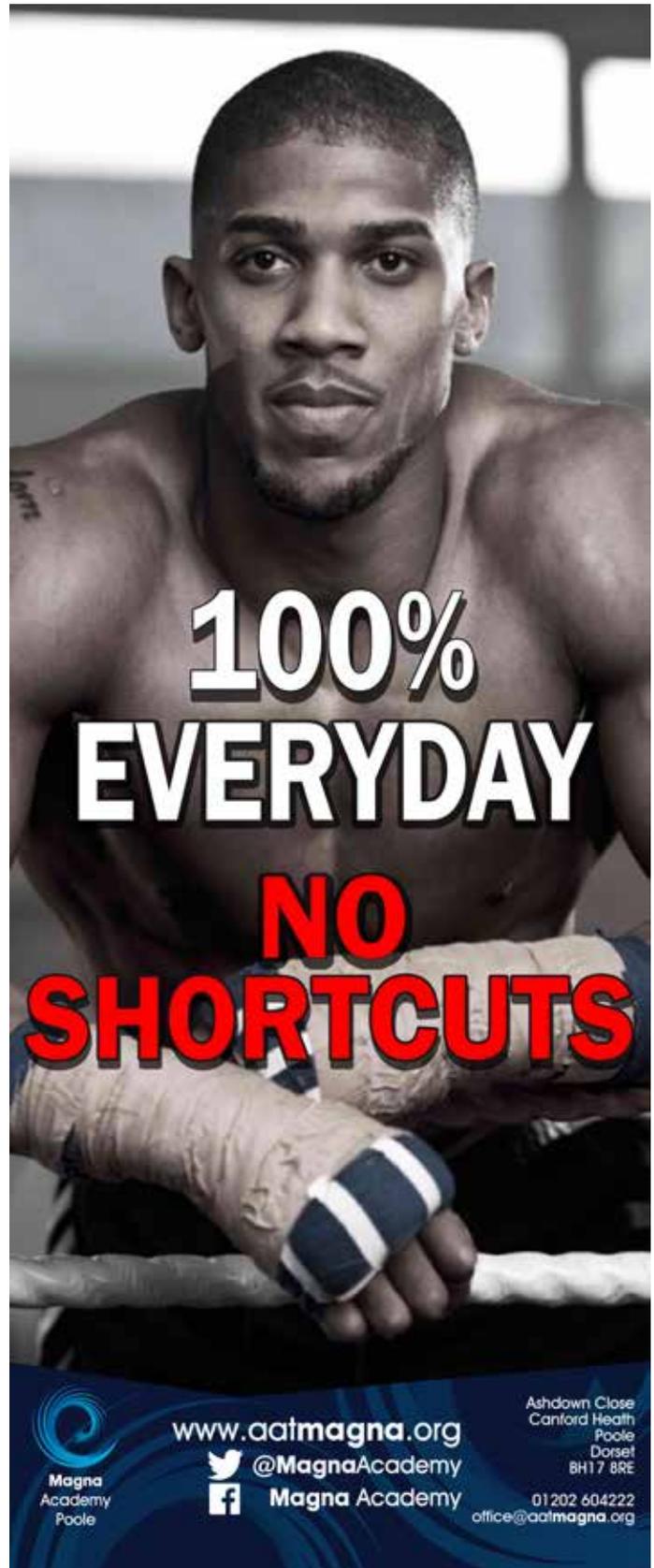
## **100% Everyday. No Shortcuts.**

We expect students to try their very best, each and every day.

This will lead to effective habits and mastery. As part of this, we expect every student to complete their homework every day.

No excuses, no opt-out.

This will enable students to make more rapid progress and achieve well in their exams. By taking this approach they will have access to a range of opportunities and can go on to do amazing things with their lives.



**100%  
EVERYDAY  
NO  
SHORTCUTS**

 **Magna Academy**  
Poole

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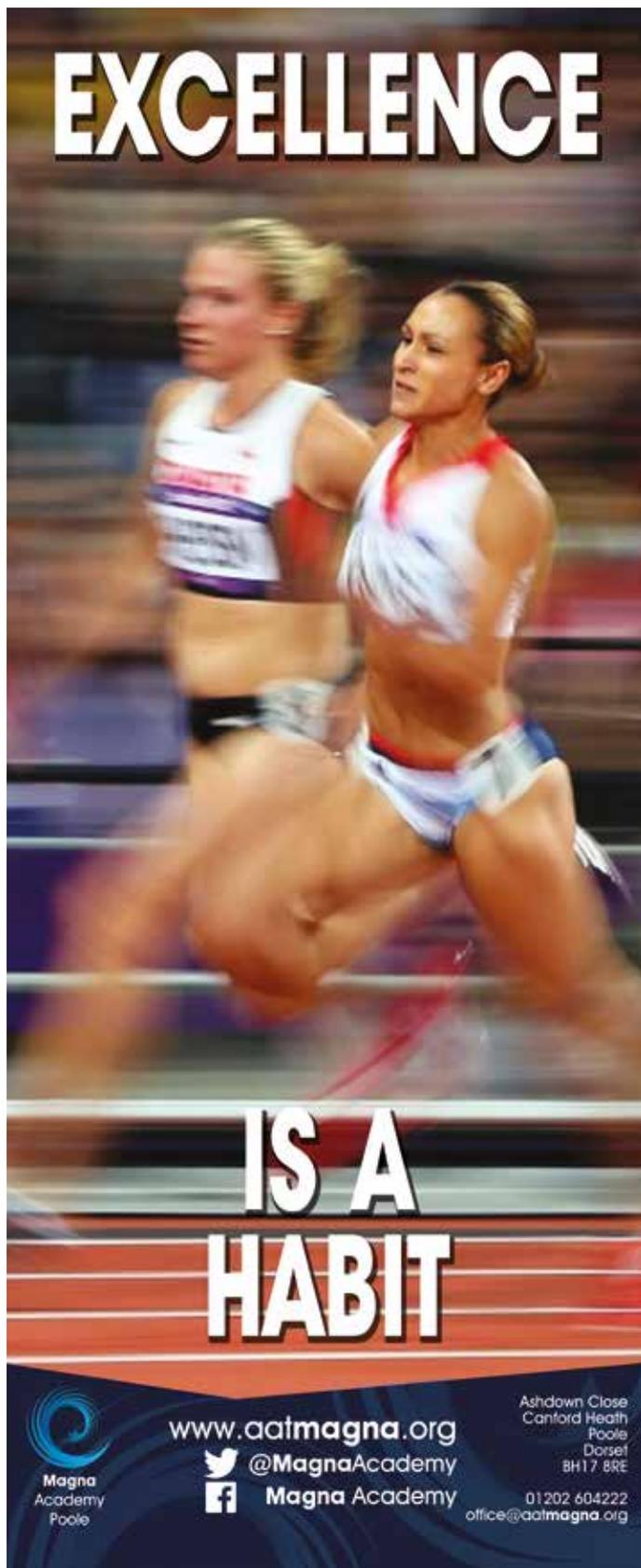
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## Excellence Is A Habit

Rather than excuse bad learning habits, at Magna we insist on excellent learning habits everyday - with high expectations and no excuses.

Our view is that, over time, all students can pick up excellent learning habits for themselves and will end up as a result happier, better qualified and more successful people.

We celebrate excellence through our student devised Rewards Policy.



**EXCELLENCE**

**IS A  
HABIT**

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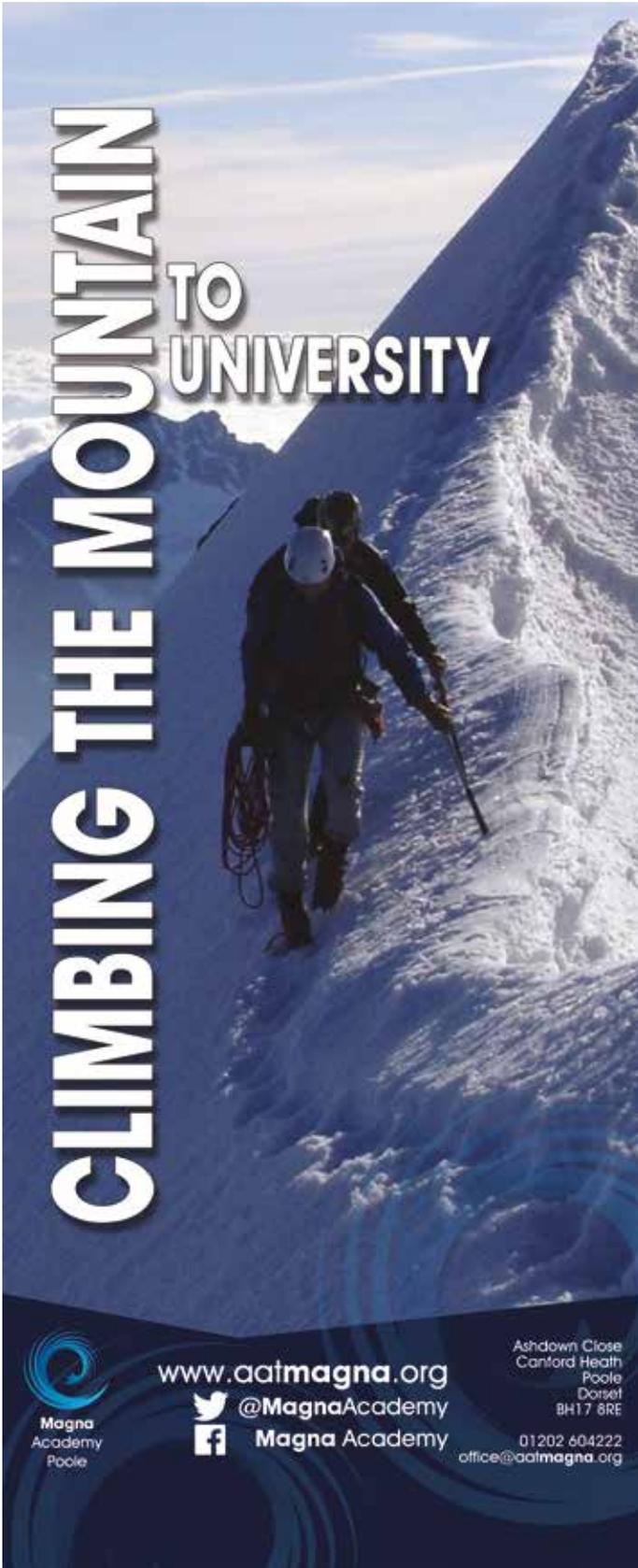
## Climbing The Mountain To University

We have developed excellent links with a large number of universities, which are being further enhanced this year.

We aspire for as many students as possible to win places at competitive universities, and believe all students are capable of this, if they give 100%.

We push our students to excel on their journey and this will often involve pushing them out of their comfort zone.

Staff provide maximum support, rewards and sanctions to help our students on their journey, as 'they climb the mountain to university or high powered alternative.'



**CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN TO UNIVERSITY**

**Magna Academy Poole**

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To help develop this culture, year groups are now also known by the year in which they will enroll at university or a high powered alternative:

- Year 7: Class of 2024
- Year 8: Class of 2023
- Year 9: Class of 2022
- Year 10: Class of 2021
- Year 11: Class of 2020
- Year 12: Class of 2019
- Year 13: Class of 2018

### Teaching and learning

Our Teaching and Learning strategy is also heavily influenced by Doug Lemov and his 'Teach Like A Champion' book and we believe passionately in relentlessly implementing any strategy that will eliminate disadvantaged student attainment gaps.

We do not believe in learning styles. We believe in teaching to the top and scaffolding downwards for all students, with a highly challenging curriculum.

### No Excuses

We believe in Zero Tolerance. We do not make exceptions. When we say we have high standards, we mean it. If you think it is mean to give a detention when a student does not have a pen, Magna isn't the school for you.

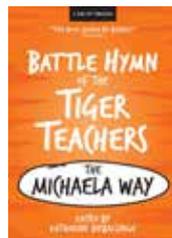
Our students walk in silence between lessons, with 30cm pencil cases (with full equipment), in hand, ready to immediately start working as soon as they enter a classroom in silence. This supports our teachers making very strong starts to lessons.

We hold parents to account as well and insist that they support their children by supporting our rules. This creates a very orderly school where children are safe. It requires staff who will 'sweat the small stuff'.

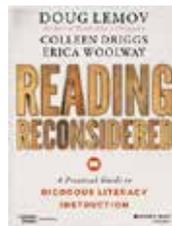
Here are some examples of publications on teaching and learning that inspire us and/or are aligned to our own vision:



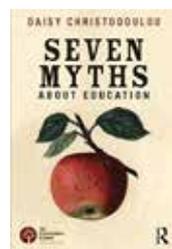
'Teach Like A Champion' by Doug Lemov



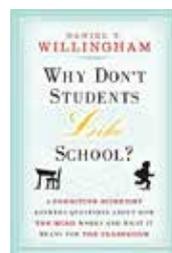
'Battle Hymn Of The Tiger Teachers: The Michaela Way' by Katharine Birbalsingh



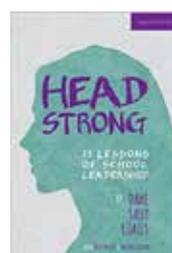
'Reading Reconsidered' by Doug Lemov



'Seven Myths About Education' by Daisy Christodoulou



'Why Students Don't Like School: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How The Mind Works' by Daniel T Willingham



'Head Strong: 11 Lessons Of School Leadership' by Dame Sally Coates

## Work-Life Balance. Not burn-out.

We know that teaching is the most rewarding, exhilarating but exhausting profession.

So we are guided by a philosophy of simplicity that aims for maximum impact on student learning with minimal overload on workload for staff.

We reduce burnout by applying this effort-to-impact ratio to everything we do.

For example:

- We operate a feedback policy, which does not require you to make individualised comments in exercise books, saving you hours of time.
- Collaborative planning with centralised, shared units of work and resources.
- Teachers do not produce end of year written reports – just six weekly data inputs.
- Homework is streamlined into note taking, drilling and self-quizzing, reducing marking workload and ensuring very high homework completion.
- Strict discipline and robust no-nonsense no excuses behaviour systems allow staff to teach without being ground down in low level disruption.
- All students have full equipment in their pencil cases all of the time – you will not have the hassle of having to hand out pens, pencils etc at the start of each lesson because students don't have their equipment with them.
- Staff will never be blamed for poor student behaviour because their lessons are not engaging enough – you will always be fully backed and supported - behaviour is the collective responsibility of the academy, with the Principal ultimately accountable.
- Highly visible and supportive SLT visit every classroom every lesson to check that every student is meeting your expectations.
- System of escalating sanctions with centralised same day detentions, including for homework non completion – you are not continuously setting detentions, running detentions and chasing non-attendance.
- We do not grade lessons/teachers with 'high stakes' lesson observations – we believe in a growth mindset approach, where teachers continually improve over time through continuous coaching/ feedback loops.



## National Teaching School (NTS)

You will really benefit from all that working at a Teaching School has to offer.

Teaching schools take a leading role in recruiting and training new entrants to the profession.

They identify and develop leadership potential, provide support for other schools, and work with schools across their alliance to raise standards of teaching.

Introduced in 2011, teaching schools are all rated as 'outstanding' schools. They work with partner schools in an alliance to ensure high quality school-led initial teacher training and professional development opportunities for teachers at all stages of their career.

They raise standards through supporting other schools, engage in research and development, and ensure that the most talented school leaders are spotted and supported to become successful headteachers.

Roger Pope, Chair of the National College for Teaching and Leadership, said:

*'I'd like to congratulate Magna Academy - they should be very proud of this achievement.'*

*Teaching schools are at the heart of school improvement. They're supporting other schools, attracting and training the best new teachers and developing the next generation of leaders.*

*At NCTL, we want to do all we can to support their work.'*

## National Support School (NSS)

If you join Magna, you will also be joining a NSS, and as such you may also have future opportunities whilst at Magna to help support a school that is struggling in challenging circumstances.

To help you do this, you may have the opportunity to become a Specialist Leader of Education.

This would offer you outstanding professional development and career enhancement opportunities.

**National Teaching School**  
designated by



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

**National Support School**  
designated by



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

## Background

- Magna Academy opened on 1st September 2013. It replaced the predecessor school, Ashdown Technology College, which had been in special measures.
- Magna operates in challenging circumstances. We have a secondary modern intake, operating in a selective grammar school borough, with approximately one third of our students being disadvantaged and approximately a third of our students being 'PA Low' on entry.
- We are looking for staff who want to make a difference to the life chances of our students and rapidly accelerate their progress.
- Our culture is also summed up by this quote from Dame Sally Coates in her book 'Headstrong':  
*'The difference between the culture required in a challenging school with that of a more affluent school is the difference between the intensive care ward and physiotherapy ward of a hospital.'*
- On a visit in December 2014 to the Academy, Prime Minister David Cameron said:  
*'I want to congratulate the whole leadership here at the academy and also the students who work so hard. You have already seen your results go shooting up. I know you want them to go even further and I think you should be really proud of what you've achieved.'*
- Dfe ranked Magna 2nd/55 for 5EM 'Similar Schools' (2015) and 3rd/55 (2014). OFSTED stated:  
*'From their generally low starting points, students make exceptional progress.'*

- In 2016, Magna achieved 0.52 P8 (within top 5% nationally) and 2nd/55 for A8 'Similar Schools'.

Magna received a letter of congratulations from the Regional Schools Commissioner and Nick Gibb MP.

- BTEC Level 3 results place Magna Academy in the top 1% of schools/colleges nationally for value added, representing exceptional performance.

The sixth form is on an exciting journey of expansion, following the introduction of academic A levels in September 2014, alongside the existing BTEC Level 3 qualifications.

## Our future ambitions

- Our outstanding June 2015 inspection report was testament to the tremendous hard work of our staff, governors, students and parents/carers.

We are all exceptionally proud of this fantastic outcome for both Magna and the local community.

- This report represents a milestone on our journey. We want to, and know we can, achieve so much more, best summed up by the philosophy of Dave Brailsford, from Team Sky, who stated:  
*'We are always striving for improvement, for those 1% gains, in absolutely every single thing we do.'*



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an Aspirations Academy



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