

Welcome to

# The Darwen family of schools



Lives transformed through  
entrepreneurial education





# Welcome to the Aldridge family of schools

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I am delighted to introduce you to our family of schools. We are part of the national Aldridge Education Multi Academy Trust, and since September 2016, we have operated as a regional cluster of four schools. All retain their own distinctive identities, yet all share a common ethos and approach to ensure that every child achieves their best.

In 2008, I was the Principal responsible for opening Darwen Aldridge Community Academy. I led the organisation until 2016, when I became Executive Principal for the North West cluster of schools.

During that time, we've made remarkable progress in the region. In 2013, Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio was established within Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, before moving to its own premises. In 2014, Darwen Vale High School became an Aldridge Academy, and in 2015, Sudell Primary School joined us.

## We have exciting plans to grow our family of schools in the North West, retaining the cluster approach in the areas where we work.

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We share a common vision for our schools:

- That every one of our students, regardless of background, will achieve the best possible outcomes in their learning at an Aldridge school or college.
- By taking an innovative approach to our students' learning and experiences in education, we will give them a wide perspective on the possibilities open to them and the practical skills to access every opportunity they want in life.
- All our schools and colleges are unique. We believe we can achieve more by pooling and sharing resources, but each school and college serves a particular community and some, like Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio, have a unique purpose and curriculum.

Together, we are working towards a collective goal: "By the age of 25, all Aldridge graduates will have experienced an outstanding and enjoyable education and be able to sustain the life of their choice. They will be independent, thriving economically and making a real, positive contribution to their communities."

It is exciting for staff to be working in a dynamic community of partner schools, and we are determined that as we develop and grow, we will support all of our students to even greater successes.

Within this sleeve, you will find further details about our schools, our people, and what it is that makes our approach stand out from the rest.

If you wish to contact me directly, I would be pleased to share more information about our schools and future plans.

Our promise to you is that if you put your trust in us, we will not let you down.

**Brendan Loughran**  
Executive Principal





# The Aldridge Education difference

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Since their establishment, our family of schools have made a significant contribution to Darwen and the surrounding areas. Collectively, we offer the highest value-added education provisions in the region, helping young people reach their full potential.

We do this by developing real skills for real life. We know that there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to education, which is why we've made it our mission to support individuals, as well as the communities around them.

## A focus on entrepreneurship

To us, entrepreneurship isn't just about business start-ups. It's about innovation: doing things differently, and encouraging students to take this approach. The Aldridge difference lies in our commitment to breaking down barriers to success, and giving young people the skills, attributes and belief to achieve at all stages in their life.

To facilitate this, we ensure a culture of continuous learning and improvement across all of our schools. By investing in our staff, and empowering them to create a broad and balanced curriculum suited to their school, we enrich the learning experience for our students.

This level of variety means we are able to support the student at each stage of their educational journey. By joining the Aldridge family, you'll be able to find the right learning environment for you or your child, now and in the future.



# Our family of schools

Our secondary schools share many features, not least the emphasis on excellence in the common core curriculum. However, they all have their own identity...

From the innovative approach of our large Community Academy and its outstanding Sixth Form, to the smaller-scale and college-style approach of the Enterprise Studio, to the long tradition of excellence at Darwen Vale, each school supports and complements the other.

The prospectus enclosed within this sleeve is designed to give you a better understanding of what makes an Aldridge Education school distinct. However, we believe the best way to discover this difference is to pay your chosen school a visit.

If you are interested in joining us, I encourage you to attend any of the scheduled open evenings. Alternatively, make an appointment to visit us at any time; you will always be made to feel welcome.



## Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

Our flagship academy has embedded an entrepreneurial approach into its culture, combining innovation with outstanding provision to develop employability skills from ages 11-18. Since its establishment, DACA has gained a reputation for doing things differently, with a focus on building and inspiring communities. The Sixth Form at DACA is one of the highest performing post-16 providers in the North West.



## Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio

Our Studio School is a small, close knit community with a strong focus on enterprise skills, providing a unique and innovative route to professional careers. Specialising in creative digital media, technical digital media, social care and child care, it offers a highly personalised learning environment that nurtures creativity and employability from ages 13 to 19.



## Darwen Vale Academy

With a long history and tradition of excellence, Darwen Vale combines the best of the former grammar school with the forward-thinking approach that Aldridge Education is renowned for. We are planning to specialise in professional dance, performing arts and music, offering a creative community for students aged 11 to 16.

# Shaping the next generation



Each school within our group has something unique to offer. However, all are built on the same attributes that make Aldridge Education so special. We encourage every student, teacher and parent to embody these values, empowering their independence.

These six attributes underpin the spirit of entrepreneurship that we nurture in every student. By focusing on these values, our community schools aim to develop entrepreneurial skills in young people from the very beginning of their education with us.



## Creativity

Explore new ways to solve problems, interpret events and achieve goals.



## Determination

Show persistence in light of challenges along the way.



## Risk-Taking

Be open to new experiences and doing things differently.



## Teamwork

Work together to achieve common goals and get better results.



## Passion

Love what you do to achieve and succeed.



## Problem Solving

Interpret challenges, concepts, thoughts and facts to find answers.

## Creating a community

We are committed to building inclusive communities that make an exceptional educational experience accessible for all. That's why our final attribute – social conscience – strives to foster a supportive environment for every student.

Our goal is to give all Aldridge graduates an outstanding and enjoyable education, laying the foundations to sustain their life of choice. We aim to foster independence, so that our students can thrive economically and make a positive contribution to their communities.

## Enriching the local area

We encourage students to become active citizens and social entrepreneurs, by making volunteering and work placements a strong focus within our curriculums. In doing so, we aim to support local businesses in Darwen and the surrounding areas.

Working together, we are helping to bridge the regional skills gap and drive local regeneration.



# Lives transformed through entrepreneurial education

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