

The Aspire Academy – Curriculum Offer 2025-26

The Aspire Academy is determined to offer a varied and inspirational curriculum which offers each pupil access to a wide variety of GCSE, Functional Skills Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications as well as vocational opportunities working towards various qualifications including NCFE Level 1 and Level 2 Certificates, BTEC Level 1 and Level 2, NOCN Level 1 and AQA Unit Awards.

Curriculum Intent Statement

Our curriculum is designed to enable pupils to develop interpersonal skills; build resilience; develop self-esteem and become creative, independent, critical thinkers. Every child is recognised as a unique individual. We celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values; qualities needed for lifelong learning and future success.

We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in pupils' lives where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge.

Pupils traditionally arrive with gaps in subject knowledge because of low engagement and/or low attendance prior to referral. Our induction process, including baseline testing, helps us establish where each pupil's starting points are upon entry. Before joining the school, pupils spend 2 afternoons completing GL Assessments:

New Group Reading Test (NGRT)

This comprises of 3 sections: Phonics, Sentence Completion and Passage Comprehension.

New Group Spelling Test (NGST)

This comprises of 2 sections: a single word section and a spelling in context section.

Progress Test in Maths (PTM)

Each test assesses aspects of mathematical skills and knowledge, together with the key process skills of fluency, mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.

Pupils are tested to provide additional information to the referral form from their high school and to gain information about:

- Anxiety levels, academic resilience, self-esteem, attitude to school and attitude to learning
- Reading age
- English comprehension
- Mathematical ability
- Thinking/reasoning skills

The data generated is cross-referenced with information supplied by referring schools, KS2 data, the pupils themselves and their families.

We also use screening for phonics, Thrive and conduct a sensory audit as part of the induction process.

Curriculum Offer - Key Stage Three

English: In English, we focus closely on providing our pupils with the required Reading, Writing and Spoken Language skills to prepare them for GCSE English Language and Literature exams at Key Stage Four – and for life post-16. Individual support is given to pupils who need to develop their English skills to help them close the gaps in their learning. Opportunities for reading are provided in addition to English lessons, sometimes taught in the library. On induction and at intervals thereafter, pupils undertake reading assessments to help target appropriate reading materials.

The intent throughout Key Stage Three is for our pupils to be encouraged to develop and progress in their use of language in all areas. We aim to develop:

- their skills and abilities in writing for different purposes, audiences, and genres
- their ability to read fluently, critically and with deep meaning
- their ability to speak, listen and communicate in a wide variety of situations

Such skills and abilities will be developed through units of work that will offer exposure to the core skills areas of English in a cyclical model. This will have the impact of preparing pupils for the increased pressures of either returning to high school or continuing their education at The Aspire Academy.

For pupils identified as having fallen behind in reading compared to national benchmarks, reading interventions are put in place. We use Read, Write, Inc: Fresh Start – a nationally recognised programme.

Maths: In Maths, the curriculum is created to give pupils the opportunity to develop their skills through problem-solving and real-life scenarios, allowing pupils to see the relevance of the Maths being studied. Individual support is given to pupils who need to develop their Maths skills to help them close the gap in their learning and to pupils who need to be stretched and challenged to further their mathematical development.

Science: In Science, our aim is to help our pupils develop a deeper understanding of a range of scientific phenomena therefore developing an inquisitive, enquiring mind.

There are two dimensions for each scientific process; know and apply.

Know is know-how or being able to carry out the skills accurately and fluently. Key words are defined because processes require conceptual knowledge as well as skill. At KS3, know is sufficient for mastery.

Apply goes beyond what is generally expected and assessed at KS3. It is the thinking behind the doing or describing and explains the principles to carry out skills and strategies.

Effective lessons in science have two aspects to them: content and process.

Enquiry is divided into the areas of:

- Analyse, consisting of presenting data, analysing patterns, drawing conclusions and discussing limitations
- Communicate, consisting of constructing explanations, communicating ideas, critiquing claims and justifying opinions
- Enquire, consisting of devising questions, testing hypotheses, planning to control variables and collecting data
- Solve, consisting of estimating risks, examining consequences, interrogating sources and understanding how scientific ideas change over time.

When required, the teaching of evolution will be provided for as a comprehensive, coherent and evidenced theory.

Physical Education: In PE, we encourage pupils to move confidently with fluency, precision and control in a wide range of physical activities. Our aim is to develop pupils' lifelong interest in physical education, physical activity and sport by creating opportunities for them to identify areas of strength and to improve on areas for development. Pupils put their skills and tactics to the test in game situations. Team games we offer include football, hockey and rugby. Pupils also have the chance to participate in individual sports such as rock climbing and table tennis. There is always a focus on body management and preparation and looking to develop a healthy body and a healthy mind.

Information Communication Technology: Pupils access various AQA unit awards in employability skills for ICT; making a leaflet, making a school poster, handling information, photography, using a spreadsheet, personal computer components, digital imaging. There is preparation for an ICT Functional Skills examination for those with the aptitude.

Geography: In Geography, pupils study weather and climate as well as learning about their place in the world through study of other countries. Pupils should develop their place knowledge through the study of the human and physical geography of a region within Africa and a region within Asia. Ordnance Survey map skills, fieldwork and Geographical Information Systems will also be explored. All can be rewarded with Unit awards.

Religious Studies: Religious Studies at Key Stage 3 provokes challenging questions about: the ultimate meaning and purpose of life; beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality; issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, religious traditions, and other world

views that offer answers to these challenging questions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

RS encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

RS encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society and global community. RS has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

Food and Cookery: In Food & Cookery at KS3, all pupils study 'Food a Fact of Life', a food and cookery course developed by The British Nutrition Foundation. This course has been designed so that pupils understand and apply the principles of nutrition and health, cook a repertoire of predominantly savoury dishes so that they are able to feed themselves and others a healthy and varied diet. By the end of the course pupils will be competent in a range of cooking techniques: for example, selecting and preparing ingredients; using utensils and electrical equipment; applying heat in different ways; using awareness of taste, texture and smell to decide how to season dishes and combine ingredients. In addition, they will develop competency in adapting and using their own recipes and understand the source, seasonality and characteristics of a broad range of ingredients.

Art: The aim is to engage with artwork from different contexts, recognising the varied characteristics and using them to inform pupils' own creating and making. They will develop an understanding of the role of the artist in different cultures, times and contexts and about making informed choices about media, techniques and processes. Pupils will develop ideas and intentions by working from first-hand observation and other sources, exploring and experimenting with ideas, materials, tools and techniques as well as taking safe risks and learning from mistakes. Pupils will develop skills to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' work, adapting and refining their own images as a result.

PSHE: Utilising, building on and adapting the resources and planning offered in the **Jigsaw** PSHE resource package, staff enable pupils to reflect on and evaluate their achievements and strengths in all areas of their lives and recognise their own worth. They demonstrate respect for differences between people. They can recognise some strong emotions and identify ways of managing these emotions positively (for example, talking with a friend or teacher about their feelings on divorce or falling in love). Pupils explore how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They are taught to make informed choices to maintain their physical health and

mental wellbeing and can explain reasons for these choices. Pupils learn to assess the element of risk attached to making choices about healthy lifestyles, travel, internet safety, personal safety and personal finances.

They are taught to understand the basic facts and laws about alcohol, tobacco and legal and illegal drugs. They can demonstrate effective ways of resisting negative pressure, including from their peers (for example, knowing where to get help, knowing that there is an option to delay, showing resilience).

Pupils learn to recognise difference and diversity (for example, in culture, lifestyles, sexuality or relationships) and can demonstrate understanding and empathy towards others who live their lives in different ways. In assertively challenging prejudice and discrimination (for example that related to gender, race, disability) pupils can begin to recognise and discuss the importance of relationships to marriage, parenthood and family life. They can discuss ways that relationships change over time and how to negotiate within relationships (for example, agreeing a curfew time with a parent or carer).

Pupils have the chance to work towards completing AQA Unit awards in a variety of related topics and also look at social media, sexual health, smoking effects, friendships, bullying, exploitation (Lottie programme) and radicalisation (Zak programme), drug and alcohol awareness, the law and society, effective citizenship, democracy and Fundamental British Values. We have set up a programme within tutor time, where pupils work towards a specific AQA Unit Award each week based on a wide variety of PSHE topics and historical events; e.g. racism, social media, nutrition, honesty – all delivered at varying levels ranging from pre-entry level through to level 2 (depending on the year group).

Relationship and Sex Education: The Aspire Academy has a RSE policy and delivers Relationship and Sex Education as an integral part of the PSHE programme utilising Jigsaw (see PSHE) and additionally with external speakers and charities (such as Purple Leaf) to help pupil understanding around harmful sexual behaviours in small workshops and year group assemblies. The sexual health nurses also offer one to one support for pupils as well as the learning opportunities in classes, to supplement the training offered to staff.

Reading: As part of the school's plan to improve reading, KS3 pupils have a timetabled lesson each week when reading for pleasure is the aim. Pupils may share in a class reading book, they will have access to the library and will be encouraged to engage in some personal reading.

Wellbeing (Learning outside the classroom): Pupils access learning outside the classroom each week in a timetabled session of 80 minutes accompanied by their form tutor and another colleague. This is a provision to allow pupils the opportunity to gain some new experiences, visit new places and consider their mental health and wellbeing. The learning opportunities include sporting activities such as football golf, climbing or karting, nature walks, visits to

places of local interest and specific projects e.g. the Knife Angel sculpture and accompanying workshop.

Vocational and Creative Offer: Pupils are given the opportunity to access some vocational and creative subjects to give them a taster of the subjects in preparation for Key Stage 4 and to provide them with some of the basic skills they will need to be successful in those subjects such as:

- Outdoor Education
- Educational Visits
- Motor Vehicle Maintenance
- Kickboxing/Mixed Martial Arts
- Construction
- Sport and Fitness
- Hair & Beauty

Enrichment Opportunities: The curriculum is enriched with opportunities for curriculum visits to care farms, the Donkey Sanctuary, businesses and public services, such as the RSPCA, The Fold, Worcester Bosch, SouthCo and H&W Fire Service. Interested pupils also have opportunities to go horse riding, bike riding and fishing. Additionally, there are external charities and organisations who come in and deliver workshops or programmes which allow our pupils access to a whole array of unit awards. External visitors have been from H&W Fire Service, Worcester Warriors RFC, West Mercia Police, RSPCA, The Fold Care Farm, Help Harry, Homeless Project, Leukaemia Hospice, the sexual Health visitor and the school nurses.

Spiritual, Moral, Social Cultural education: This permeates the whole curriculum at Aspire.

Careers Education:

Year 7/8: Careers Education units in PSHE cover 'managing transition and new surroundings', 'relationships with self and others', 'healthy friendships and relationships' and 'spending and saving'. Assemblies and tutor group discussions introduce the concept of higher education. There are curriculum-based career opportunities via the KS3 Alternative Provision timetabled options on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Year 9: Careers education units in PSHE cover 'managing money' and 'focusing on careers and future options' where choices will tie in with their KS4 GCSE and Alternative Provision options. Assemblies and tutor group discussions support KS4 curriculum choices, linking them to identified career pathways. There are curriculum-based career opportunities via the KS3 Alternative Provision timetabled options on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Year 7: The Year 7 pupils have a reduced timetable consisting of English, Maths, Reading, Art, Food, PE, Wellbeing and one vocational option.

Curriculum Offer - Key Stage Four

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning and Thursday morning are core curriculum days. Wednesday afternoon, Thursday afternoon and Friday are vocational curriculum times.

English: Pupils continue to develop from their prior learning in Key Stage Three. They broaden their knowledge and understanding by studying a range of fiction and non-fiction texts relating to their GCSE English Language and Literature examinations. They learn how to develop the ability to critique the written word and to use this skill within their written responses. In the Language exam, pupils are assessed on reading and writing from unseen material. For English Literature, 'Macbeth' and 'A Christmas Carol' are studied for Paper 1 and 'An Inspector Calls', the Power and Conflict poetry from the AQA Poetry Anthology and Unseen Poetry are studied for Paper 2. Pupils work towards both GCSE and Functional Skills qualifications, with Functional Skills examinations being taken throughout their Key Stage Four experience when they are ready. As in Key Stage Three, pupils who require additional support with their English studies are able to access one to one and small group teaching sessions tailored to their needs.

Functional Skills qualifications support pupils in gaining entry into Further Education courses, with the added benefit of tackling functional and relevant literacy skills for the everyday practices of the workplace. The study of English at The Aspire Academy has the clear intention to prepare our pupils for entering the wider community and the world of work.

Qualifications offered in English: AQA GCSE English Language 8700, AQA GCSE English Literature 8702, Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills English from Entry Level 1 through to Level 2.

Maths: Pupils in Key Stage Four continue to develop from their prior learning in Key Stage Three in their Maths studies. Pupils will sit Edexcel Functional Skills Maths examinations starting at their base level throughout their Key Stage Four experience, working their way through the levels as they progress mathematically. As in Key Stage Three, pupils who require support connected to their Maths studies are able to access one to one and small group teaching sessions tailored to their needs.

Qualifications offered in Maths: Pearson Edexcel GCSE Mathematics 1MA1, Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills Maths from Entry Level 1 through to Level 2.

Science: Pupils will follow the AQA GCSE syllabus for Physics, unless prior learning and/or a late referral to the academy makes this inappropriate. The alternative is the AQA Entry Level Certificate in Science. GCSE study in Physics provides the foundations for understanding the material world. Scientific understanding is changing our lives and is vital to the world's future prosperity, and all pupils should be taught essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science. They should be helped to appreciate how the complex and diverse phenomena of the natural world can be described in terms of a small number of key ideas relating to the sciences which are both inter-linked and are of universal application. The GCSE course has 8 units: Energy, Electricity, Particle model of matter, Atomic structure, Forces, Waves, Magnetism and electromagnetism and Space physics.

Qualifications offered in Science: AQA GCSE Physics 8463 (AQA Entry Level Certificate Science 5960 working at Levels 1, 2 and 3).

Geography: Pupils in Key Stage Four will access this AQA GCSE course based on a balanced framework of physical and human geography, allowing pupils to investigate the link between the two themes and examine the battles between the man-made and natural worlds. The subject content is: Living with Physical environment; Challenges in the Human environment; Geographical applications and Geographical skills.

Pupils will have the opportunity to take part in GCSE fieldwork, collecting and correlating evidence, contributing towards skills for their GCSE examinations.

Qualification offered in Geography: AQA GCSE in Geography 8035.

Business: Business is now being delivered as a core GCSE subject rather than as a vocational option. This qualification is linear. This means that pupils will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

Subject content:

1. Business in the real world
2. Influences on business
3. Business operations
4. Human resources
5. Marketing
6. Finance

Assessments:

Paper 1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity

- Business in the real world
- Influences on business
- Business operations
- Human resources

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 90 marks (50% of GCSE)

Paper 2: Influences of marketing and finance on business activity

- Business in the real world
- Influences on business
- Marketing
- Finance

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 90 marks (50% of GCSE)

Qualifications offered: AQA GCSE in Business (8132)

Mental Health Awareness: We know that young people who attend The Aspire Academy are at greater risk of experiencing severe and life-changing mental health difficulties than their mainstream counterparts. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have one lesson each week dedicated to exploring their own mental health and the things that impact upon it. These lessons include

high-quality and up-to-date psychoeducation on topics such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, relationships, gender, sexuality and substance misuse. In these sessions, pupils are encouraged to discuss issues through open and honest dialogue with their peers in a safe space with a trusted adult. They learn healthy coping strategies as well as how to access help and support.

Qualifications offered: Level 1 AQA Unit Awards

PSHE: Aspects covered: CV preparation, interview skills, applying for jobs, work skills, understanding health and safety and PPE, risk assessments. Pupils can assess their personal qualities, skills and achievements and use them to set future goals, presenting themselves confidently and using praise and criticism effectively. Pupils explore the range of post-16 options available to them and can use careers advice and support networks to plan and negotiate their career pathways, setting realistic targets, often with support. Pupils also learn to use some of the financial tools and services available to them to manage their personal finances working towards unit awards too.

Pupils can describe the short and long-term consequences of personal health choices and can make decisions based on this knowledge. Opportunities also exist to identify some of the causes, symptoms and treatments of mental and emotional health disorders such as stress and depression, including the link between eating disorders and self-image and can identify strategies for preventing and addressing these. They can assess the risks and benefits associated with lifestyle choices such as sexual activity or using alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs and can make safer choices based on this assessment. They learn where to find professional health advice and are confident in seeking it (for example, from their GP or other support services).

Pupils can compare the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups. They can take the initiative in challenging and giving support in connection with offensive and can develop appropriate relationships with a range of adults. Pupils can access support packages in Lottie and Zak from the CCP in Kent. We have set up a programme within our pupils' tutor time, where they work towards a specific AQA Unit Award each week based on a wide variety of PSHE topic and historical events, e.g. Covid-19 awareness, racism, social media, nutrition, honesty – all delivered at varying levels ranging from pre-entry level through to level 2 (depending on year group).

Physical Education: In Key Stage 4 we further develop pupils' confidence in participating in physical activities. Pupils are introduced to more complex tactics and techniques from the sporting activities from Key Stage 3, with more focus placed on tactics within the game. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in activities which encourage lifelong participation such as using the local gym. We also aim to provide pupils with opportunities to show leadership skills through sporting situations.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education: This permeates the whole curriculum at Aspire.

Mock Examinations:

The Aspire Academy views the provision of mock examinations as a significant learning opportunity for pupils in their GCSE year to practise the skills required to meet the demands of public examinations and build resilience and coping strategies to help. Mock exams take place over two periods at the start of December and from mid-January of Year 11.

Careers Education including Employability advice, information and guidance:

Year 10 Careers education units in PSHE cover 'Diversity in the UK' and 'Work Experience'. Curriculum based career opportunities are provided via our KS4 Alternative Provision timetabled options on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, to include accredited vocational options and work experience. Assemblies and tutor group discussions about the range of post-16 progression routes take place during the year.

Year 11 Careers education units in PSHE cover 'Preparing for Adult Life and 'Exam Preparation. Curriculum based career opportunities are provided via our KS4 Alternative Provision timetabled options on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, to include accredited vocational options and work experience. Assemblies and presentations with a continued focus on post-16 pathways take place during the year. Whole year group visits to the Worcestershire Skills Show and the Regional Skills Show at the NEC, Birmingham support our programme. Mock interviews with employer contacts – SouthCo, Platform Housing and the Chamber of Commerce are offered to all pupils in Year 11. Qualified Careers advice comes from IAG, from referring schools and from local college Careers Advisers. There is tutor and college admissions team support for the completion of online application process and with attending interviews. College/Training Provider visits include NCS presentations. Workplace visits to local businesses also take place e.g. SouthCo, Worcester Bosch, and there are also virtual work experience opportunities.

Vocational Offer:

BTEC Level 1 Introductory Award in Art & Design Skills

NCFE L1 Award in Caring for Children

BTEC Level 1 Introductory Award in Construction Skills

NCFE Level 1 and Level 2 Award in Nutrition and Health

BTEC Level 1 and Level 2 Award in Home Cooking Skills

BTEC Level Introduction to Hair & Beauty

NOCN Level 1 Certificate in Vocational Studies: Motor Vehicle Pathway

LSF Level 1 and Level 2 in Sports Leadership

AQA Awards: Hair & Beauty

AQA Awards: Health & Social Care

AQA Awards: Sport

STEM On Track Build Award
Kickboxing/Mixed Martial Arts

External Alternative Provisions include: Bonterre, Gloverspiece Mini-Farm, Longlands Care Farm.

Enrichment Opportunities: Pupils have the opportunity to access exciting events laid on in the community locally and regionally such as the Hitz foundation course at Worcester Warriors, The Aspire WEN Employer Showcase and the Worcestershire Skills Show. Aspire Plus provides out of hours support for STEM activities and residential outdoor pursuits, experiences in the Isle of Wight, skateboarding and BMXing, overnight camping and day trips. Pupils can get involved with local charity fund raising events and the pupil council.

Work Experience: Opportunities exist to explore careers at Engineering businesses such as Worcester Bosch, local garages, cafes, leisure centres and gyms, care homes and children's nurseries, farms and stables. We have a growing partnership with some small family run businesses who are supporting our pupils with all the skills they will need to be successful in employment or training post-16.

If parents or carers wish to find out more about the curriculum, then they should contact the Deputy Head Teacher on 01905 455422 and arrange an appointment.

Additional provision at Aspire

Some pupils require some form of direct therapeutic input and so can access outdoor adventure therapy one day a week for a period of weeks. The smaller class sizes, the nurturing approach to learning adopted at key stage three and the resilient and relentlessly reasonable approach from skilled staff all contribute to pupils learning to make better choices and learning to restore relationships when they don't, through a restorative approach. Key Stage Three pupils in particular benefit from access to a practical offsite curriculum where possible. It is our belief that exposure to the way we work applied to the curriculum we provide will improve behaviour, improve social skills, improve self-esteem, improve resilience and improve future life outcomes. The opportunity to achieve accreditation along the way is always available in the form of AQA unit awards or entry level qualifications.

For Key Stage Four pupils, the opportunity exists to achieve some accreditation in mental health awareness and substance misuse as short duration Aspire awards. We are happy to support applications for Education Health and Care Plans by completing specific work as requested for the 'plan do review' cycle. Aspire works collegiately with the wider community; with professionals from children's services, social care, police, youth justice, CAMHS, SEN, Cranstoun, Purple Leaf and Stonewall, alongside family support workers, social workers and nurses as well as the leadership, teaching, attendance officers and education staff from

referring schools. At Aspire we will do everything we can to support all types of referrals, whether short term or longer.