



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

2025-26

Responsibility	Head Teacher
Date of next review	01/10/2026

Signed: 
On behalf of Governors

Date: 01.10.2025

Signed: 
Head Teacher

Date: 01.10.2025

Teaching and Learning Policy

Preamble to teachers' standards - DfE 2012.

"Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils."

Rationale:

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at The Aspire Academy.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of The Aspire Academy community.

This Teaching and Learning Policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and, along with our ethos, forms the context in which all our other policy statements should be read.

We see teaching and learning as a process of cooperative teamwork between pupil, staff, parent/carers, relevant professionals and others in the community.

We believe that effective learning takes place when:

- Pupils feel safe and are safe
- Pupils feel valued as individuals and are actively involved in the learning process
- Classroom relationships are built on mutual tolerance and respect
- Pupils are encouraged by their teachers and are given opportunities to enjoy a genuine sense of achievement
- There is a common awareness that high standards of self-discipline and order are expected
- The environment in which pupils and teachers are working is stimulating, comfortable and safe
- Pupils are listened to, and their communication needs recognised and supported
- Adults work in a relentlessly reasonable way to bring about progress, not perfection
- Pupils access a curriculum that is fully inclusive and meets our latest curriculum offer statement that fully reflects our ethos, values and vision

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Section 1

Aims:

At The Aspire Academy we undertake to:

- Raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their personal best
- Develop confident, disciplined and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices.
- Foster a love of learning.
- Build character, foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others.
- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, sexuality and individual needs and belief.
- Value and respect all cultures through our work to promote British values.
- Provide a secure, safe and happy workplace.
- Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment.
- Work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, professionals and other relevant members of the community to create the most appropriate learning environment for the individual wherever that may be; not exclusively in school.
- Develop independence and independent learning.
- Develop the employability skills of the pupils to undertake 21st century working roles, including 'green' skills

Section 2

Teaching and Learning Ethos:

Our Ethos

The Aspire Academy is committed to providing:

a safe, containing, caring, good humoured and well-disciplined school where strong nurturing relationships and an understanding of childhood trauma and attachment issues are at the heart of everything; a world class Alternative Provision in which we present an environment where all pupils can thrive, grow, heal and achieve through a relentlessly reasonable approach to personal development; opportunities for pupils to build their social capital, resilience, self-esteem and a portfolio of recognised qualifications in order that they may make a positive next-step; all pupils with the opportunities to achieve a positive destination when they leave the academy.

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the School Improvement Plan. Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning, taking pupils' lower starting points and disadvantages into account. In the course of their daily work, the staff will adhere to Teacher standards, HLTA standards and professional standards, including the staff code of conduct, and contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- Providing a calm, quiet and effective working environment in which each child/young person can achieve to his or her maximum potential.
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered, with pupils met on arrival at the door
- Providing positive role models.
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behaviour and relationship policies.
- Providing evidence of purposeful and informative planning for all learning episodes, maintaining accurate record-keeping and updating assessment documents in a regular and timely fashion, including mark books and intervention logs.
- Effective management of their professional time.
- Developing links with the wider community, including commissioning schools.
- Providing children and young people with meaningful, purposeful tasks, related to the National Curriculum programmes of study where appropriate, and other relevant programmes of study, including developing Functional Skills.
- Valuing and celebrating all pupils' successes and achievements.
- Reviewing personal and professional development by providing appropriate INSET, training and support from colleagues to ensure a high level of professional confidence and expertise.

- Welcoming, supporting and training of teaching and non-teaching colleagues or other professionals.
- Using the knowledge and expertise of parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals to support the pupils' learning.
- Engaging positively with, and valuing the contributions of, parents/carers and other stakeholders

Equal Opportunities:

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, all children at The Aspire Academy are given full access to our curriculum where appropriate and possible and, if needed, individualised programmes of study. Staff will endeavour to help all children and young people to fulfil their potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

Safeguarding and Child Protection:

All pupils and staff have the right to feel safe and to work in a non-threatening environment.

Section 3

Management of the School Day:

I. The School Day

Monday to Thursday

08.30 Breakfast Club
08.50 Tutor time/Registration
09.20 Lesson 1
10.05 Lesson 2
10.50 Break
11.10 Lesson 3
11.50 Lesson 4
12.30 Lunch
13.00 Lesson 5
13.40 Lesson 6
14.20 Tutor time/Registration
14.30 Special mentions assembly
14.40 Pupil departure
15.15 Staff briefing
15.30 Staff Departure on 32.5-hour contracts
16.30 Staff departure on 37-hour contracts

Friday KS3

08.30 Breakfast Club
08.50 Tutor time/Registration
09.20 Lesson 1
10.05 Lesson 2
10.50 Break
11.10 Lesson 3
11.50 Lesson 4
12.30 Lunch
13.00 Tutor time/Registration
13.10 Special mentions assembly
13.20 Pupil departure
15.15 Staff briefing
15.30 Staff departure on 32.5-hour contract
16.30 Staff Departure on 37-hour contract

II. Time Allocation

Teachers will follow the agreed Schemes of Work and exam board syllabuses to ensure that programmes of study are covered effectively.

At The Aspire Academy we are committed to providing programmes of study as required by exam board syllabuses and established Schemes of Work. Subject content check lists will be available on the walls of all classrooms for all subjects, in each term.

We are committed to raising standards in all aspects of the curriculum with a particular emphasis on key, transferable and basic skills. By key or basic skills, we mean the ability to read, write and communicate and to use mathematics and ICT at a level necessary to function and progress at work and be employable for society in general.

Classroom Management and Organisation:

I. Management

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning, and different needs:

- Whole group/class teaching
- Group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, interest)
- One to one teaching
- Learning conversations
- Collaborative learning in pairs or groups
- Independent learning

Appropriate levels of noise and other sensory stimulation e.g. lighting levels will be considered.

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate skills, concepts and knowledge for future employability.

II. Behaviour Management

The Aspire Academy has a Behaviour Policy (which includes the use of reasonable force) regularly reviewed and signed as read by all staff.

III. The teaching environment

- The teaching environment reflects the pupils' needs.
- Each teaching room will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence, including displaying classroom expectations and reward points.
- Workstations which facilitate pupils working independently and with minimal distraction are provided as and when needed.
- Height adjustable furniture could be available in rooms where needed.
- The physical environment will not be a barrier to access and learning

Planning:

Schemes of Work are in place for each subject. They will have been reviewed and updated by the individual subject leaders and made available for scrutiny at the start of each academic year.

It is our intention to provide parents/carers and commissioning schools with an overview of the curriculum for each year group during the academic year.

Staff attending courses or on other planned absences are expected to leave work for staff covering their timetable.

Nationally accredited courses are on offer to all pupils at KS3 and KS4. These include GCSEs; Cambridge Nationals; Functional Skills; BTEC Awards and Certificates NOCN, NCFE and OCR Awards and Certificates and AQA Unit Award scheme certificates

Formal lesson plans are provided by teachers for lesson observations as part of the internal quality assurance process i.e. for Performance Management; internal monitoring by Subject Leaders for lesson plan scrutiny; Governor learning walks and monitoring visits; Quality assurance visits by SLT and Esteem MAT, and for OFSTED. There is no set format for lesson plans, although the 5-minute lesson plan is widely used. Lessons are not graded internally.

Adaptation, Differentiation and Personalised learning:

The Aspire Academy caters for a broad range of abilities. Pupils are organised into teaching groups with pupils working within a similar ability range or stage of learning and development. Teachers are expected to adapt their teaching to the differing needs of pupils. Differentiation remains necessary for some; particularly to ensure more able pupils are suitably challenged, but also that pupils who require additional help, receive it.

Teachers will adapt the curriculum by:

- Task
- Outcome
- Levels of support
- Opportunities
- Dialogue
- Resources

Consideration needs to be given to the following areas:

- Differing methods of communication
- Different physical needs
- Variability in reading age
- Positioning pupils within the teaching environment
- Differentiated resources i.e. large print books, age-appropriate reading content
- High achieving disadvantaged pupils, Gifted and Talented
- SEND
- Medical needs
- Recognition of different learning styles

Learning objectives will be specified for teaching in every learning episode, including objectives focussed on improving behaviour skills.

Record-keeping and assessment:

Baseline assessments are made on entry to The Aspire Academy using GL Assessments in Reading, Spelling and Maths. A learning needs meeting is conducted, and a strengths and difficulties questionnaire may also be used as a baselining activity as part of a wellbeing assessment. The results of these are shared with all staff.

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work, labelled low stakes assessments, to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Assessment for learning, including peer assessment, is encouraged. Record-keeping and assessment procedures are defined in the Assessment Policy.

Subject assessment levels are entered centrally into Arbor 4 times a year.

These are monitored throughout the year to enable comparisons to be made; including evaluation of performance, tracking of pupil achievement against targets and the planning of targets and next steps and reported to Governors.

End of year levels are collated for all subjects enabling comparisons and tracking of pupil achievement.

Mock examinations are held in 2-week periods in December and January to provide examination practice for pupils and realistic assessment information for staff. These also

provide integrity in the event of exceptional circumstances where public examinations cannot take place. Every effort is made to enable pupils to access the mock examinations.

Alternative Provision

Individual pupils may link with an existing course, or The Aspire Academy may have their own group at another provider.

All pupils are assessed for their suitability and risk assessments of pupil and placements are undertaken.

All courses are accredited through recognised awarding bodies.

Service level agreements help maintain Quality Assurance.

Educational visits

Educational visits provide a wide range of learning opportunities which directly support the curriculum through enrichment and the development of individual skills and cultural capital. All pupils have access to educational visits.

All educational visits are approved by the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head Teacher on an educational visits form, which must be accompanied by a thorough and complete risk assessment.

Monitoring and evaluation:

Leaders make a minimum of 3 classroom observations each year. Subject audits are completed on pupils' work files three times a year.

Tutors, Subject Leaders and Heads of Year monitor and record:

Attendance and punctuality

Teaching and Learning

Pupils' work, including their reading and writing

Planning

Achievement and progress

The impact of development opportunities and activities for staff

Any EHCP/IEP targets for pupils with additional needs.

Teaching strategies:

To ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of strategies:

- Regular and close contact between parents/carers, child, home school and any external agencies or workers.
- The involvement of subject leaders in the development of individual curriculum areas, to ensure continuity and progression between classes and Key Stages.
- Promoting reading and encouraging reading in every lesson.
- Utilising appropriate coloured slides on presentations and reducing “clutter” on slides, considering all pupils’ reading abilities.
- Discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate)
- Previewing and reviewing work
- Didactic teaching
- Interactive teaching
- Conferencing
- Listening
- Brainstorming and mind mapping
- Providing opportunities for reflection by pupils
- Demonstrating high expectations
- Providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement/building resilience
- Providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise, e.g. special mentions
- Making judgements and responding to individual need
- Intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process to encourage development; live feedback
- Providing all children with opportunities for success
- Using a range of communication strategies; verbal and visual, kinaesthetic and aural, as appropriate to the individual and the group
- Using a sensory curriculum where appropriate
- Using appropriate assistive technology
- Reinforcement through practical activities
- Using outside speakers to increase variety and perspective
- Marking and feedback

Resources:

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range and needs of the pupils using the room. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area and are regularly audited by the relevant subject leader.

Resources should:

Reflect the range of learning needs

Be reviewed regularly in terms of value for money

Be deployed to have the maximum impact on pupil learning

Be readily accessible

Subject leaders are responsible for researching and reviewing new resources
Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect; with due regard for Health and Safety and waste.

Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

Health and Safety

All members of staff have responsibility for health and safety.

Risk assessments are completed:

- annually for each teaching and non-teaching areas
- for individual pupils as part of their care plan, for specific subjects, where required e.g. Science, Food.
- for all offsite visits and activities.

Remote Learning and Creative Independent Study

For the majority of our children, the school day provides sufficient academic challenge. Teaching groups are small and children are closely directed by adults. Pupils need their own time and space after school to pursue their own interests, hobbies and play. There is a need to be sensitive to the feelings of older pupils who do not always welcome help from adults but need to feel independent to develop their self-esteem.

Undertaking work at home and at The Aspire Academy encompasses a variety of activities and expectations matching the very broad range of ages and abilities of children attending the school.

For some pupils, additional work is set in order to offer opportunities to practise skills or independently extend aspects of a lesson. Grades in nationally accredited qualifications can be enhanced by the completion of homework tasks. Periodically, some pupils may require support from parents/carers in either practising literacy, numeracy and ICT skills or ensuring consistent responses to behaviours or developing independence skills. Other pupils may be required to prepare for a future lesson to help empower them.

At The Aspire Academy we have made the informed choice to use Microsoft Teams as a digital hub that brings conversations, content, assignments, and apps together in one place, letting teachers create vibrant learning environments virtually. All pupils have access to Office 365 and can access Teams from any computer remotely. The staff at the

school educate the pupils in how to use Microsoft Teams and offer ongoing support, enabling everyone to maximise the potential use of remote learning. More details regarding Remote Learning can be found in the Remote Learning Policy.

We also utilise SAM learning for some pupils to improve engagement offsite and when on suspension and provide the opportunity of off-site outreach sessions at agreed neutral venues, as and when required. Subject tutors also have access to SAM learning for use in subject lessons during the school day.

Utilising additional funding: e.g. Pupil Premium

Additional funding will always be targeted at improving the aspirations and outcomes for pupils. The pupil premium policy and review statement outline how this should and has been achieved. Any Catch-up funding for external tutoring will benefit disadvantaged pupils in achieving progress in English and Maths at a time suitable to the young people and families.

Additional support will be created in school outside the normal timings of the school day for pupils to catch up or make progress with higher level skills for school led tutoring and revision groups.

Guidelines

Creative independent study is an opportunity for individual success. Subject teachers will assess when, where and in which form creative independent study is set.

Creative independent study timetables *may* be devised for individual pupils, in conjunction with the Parallel Pathways teaching staff and in some cases commissioning schools.

Many routine activities in the home and community can be beneficial such as involving children in shopping trips or encouraging reading. Creative independent study can also include independence and social skills following a programme agreed between school and home. The programme may be part of a pupil's IEP, agreed at reviews, and may suggest strategies which can be used by parents/carers.

Creative independent study is not intended as a device to occupy the pupil out of school. The school will endeavour to support parents/carers where they have concerns regarding constructive use of time outside of school. The school may refer parents to other agencies for extra support.

Creative independent study may be purely conversation/dialogue based but must always look to be creative and independent for the most part.

Beyond Aspire: Learning beyond the school day

The Beyond Aspire programme aims to provide pupils with an opportunity to enjoy and achieve in a variety of environments beyond the classroom. Using both formal and informal educational approaches, pupils are accredited through the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

Sessions are designed to be pupil led with teacher supervision and are intended to promote a sense of ownership for the school site.

Beyond Aspire residential trips afford pupils the space to relax and feel more confident in engaging in learning both in the new environment and on return to school.

Often pupils are invited to take part in Beyond Aspire, because they are achieving well. Some are invited due to struggling with the expectations of school and therefore benefit from the opportunity to build relationships with other children and staff.

Section 4

Learning Processes:

Children enter school at different stages of development, different stages of the school year and probably having disrupted education with varying levels of complex vulnerabilities particularly in light of the pandemic experience. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Reading
- Experimentation
- Experiencing
- Listening
- Observation
- Becoming aware of
- Talking and discussion
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem-solving
- Making choices and decision-making
- Creative writing and re-drafting
- Feedback and marking

At The Aspire Academy, opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills through building resilience, risking failure with safe educational risks and experimentation, including asking for help for the first time.

Learning Styles:

Children learn in a variety of ways, and for this reason it is necessary to ensure that planning incorporates as many styles as possible. These styles include:

- Individual learning
- Collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs
- One to one learning with an adult, or more able pupil
- Whole class
- Visual
- Kinaesthetic
- Experiential
- Experimental
- Auditory
- Self-motivated and Self-supported
- Active learning
- Repetition and consolidation
- Revision and recapping
- Sensory

Teachers are likely to use a range of strategies in any one session.

Section 5

Governors' Role:

It is the Governors' role to monitor and review the policy and its practice through:

- Regular Governor visits/discussion to oversee the delivery of subjects through conversation with senior subject leaders feeding back to committee meetings for specific Governor challenge activities
- Undertake learning walks and information gathering visits i.e. looking at and reviewing lesson plans, informal observations, discussions with staff
- Liaise with the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher about all curriculum matters.
- Reporting/feeding back to the Full Governing Body

As detailed in the Governors Induction Policy:

- To receive reports from the Subject Co-ordinator, Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and/or the Staff Governor.

- To attend INSET where possible
- To receive reports on relevant issues, in particular Health and Safety, use of premises and to follow up any relevant issues.
- To promote and ensure equal opportunities in relation to race, gender, class and belief.
- To promote and ensure the practice of giving value and respect for diversity of all cultures and faiths through fundamental British values implementation.
- To oversee the instigation of a robust Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy.

Parents'/Carers' Role:

Parents/Carers are recognised as the pupil's prime educator and partner in supporting their child's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child comes to school feeling confident and positive.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually and regularly.
- Sharing with the staff any problems that their child is experiencing.
- Supporting their child and staff by attending and being actively involved in reviews, Open Evenings/Days and other meetings.
- Supporting their child and the staff by being actively involved in the process of progress and attending any annual reviews.
- Ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing the correct clothing, including PPE for work experience.
- Agreeing to the Home/School agreement concerning their child's behaviour.
- Understanding the contents of the school behaviour policy
- Encouraging their child to read and improve their reading skills
- Agreeing to, and supporting, the school's homework (creative independent study) procedures where appropriate.
- Trying to create a space at home where learning may take place, including where possible access to the internet with appropriate technology.
- Attending all medical appointments/inoculations when invited.
- Responding to letters, SMS and emails sent home from school.
- Checking out the school website and social media regularly for school developments and information
- Proactively informing the school of reasons for their child's absence and proactively encouraging attendance.
- Informing the school of any significant matters at home which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behaviour.
- Supporting extra-curricular activities, such as visitors to school, concerts, visits and fairs.
- Sharing with the school their child's success and achievements and aspirations

Support Staff:

Support staff should be involved in:

- planning, policy making and the development of Schemes of Work
- assessment, recording and reporting
- working with a range of group sizes
- in service training and performance management processes

In addition, they should:

- encourage and facilitate independence
- foster high expectations of pupil behaviour

Community Role:

The community is invited to support the school by:

- Contributing to activities, such as assemblies, artistic events, specialist outings, and clubs.
- Presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated.
- Guiding pupils' behaviour as they play around the school and in the community and providing positive role models with regard to behaviour.
- Organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Supporting school events
- Providing for work experience opportunities and employability experiences
- Voluntarily helping in and around the classroom.

The School's Role (including other professionals):

In relation to each of the above areas the school will reciprocate by:

- Responding to all offers of support as far as it is able.
- Respecting all information given in confidence according to data protection legislation (GDPR).
- Giving clear information on the aims and objectives of the curriculum and school procedures.
- Giving reasonable/appropriate access to teaching staff.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers and commissioning schools to ensure the success of their children and encouraging parental involvement in working out the way forward for their child's educational future especially into post 16 education, training or employment.

Section 6

Twilight Provision

When pupils are struggling to access the Aspire curriculum during normal school hours, they may be placed on a twilight programme which offers a minimum of 18 hours of education per week; including English, Maths, Science and vocational activities.

Parallel Pathways

The Parallel Pathways programme supports pupils who cannot attend school. Working with the Local Authority and their CCAS pupils, The Aspire Academy provides an examination centre, safeguarding support, attendance monitoring and post-16 pathway support. Alongside these, the Local Authority will organise tuition through another provider.

Other opportunities, such as Motor Vehicle tuition or Mixed Martial Arts training can also be available to those who can access them after school or off site.

Our Parallel Pathways coordinator liaises with all external bodies, supporting pupils and attending meetings as required.

Review:

This policy reflects the beliefs of the Governors and the staff.

This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.

This policy is written in compliance with the Equal Opportunities: Race, Equality and Diversity Policy and should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Assessment Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Relationship Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- SEND Policy

Date reviewed: September 2025

Date of next review: September 2024