



Aspire Teaching and Learning Policy

Policy adopted:	September 2025
Policy reviewed by:	Executive Team, Aspire Trustees Ratified by Trustees: June 2025
Policy expires:	August 2026
Review date:	May/June 2026

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1. Purpose and context

Aspire aims for all students to receive a high-quality education centred around a high-quality curriculum that meets their needs.

This policy aims to:

- Explain how our provision creates an environment that ensures students are safe, loved, and learning.
- Explain how we support all students in working towards a positive transition destination.
- Make the expectations for everyone involved in teaching and learning clear and transparent.
- Limit unnecessary workload.
- Summarise the key elements of our approach to curriculum and assessment
- Promote high expectations and improve standards of teaching and learning.

2. Our guiding principles

Our vision is to provide amazing educational experiences for children who face challenges in succeeding at mainstream schools. Our core principles of safe-love-learn underpin the life and work of our schools – we prioritise ensuring that pupils feel secure, valued, and ready to fulfil their potential.

Aspire's vision is to support young people, whatever their background and circumstances:

***We will create the conditions to support students to learn and flourish in and through love.
We change lives.***

Our approach to teaching and learning, alongside everything else at Aspire, is guided by our red-thread questions. These are well embedded in the culture of Aspire and shape decisions daily.

*What is best for the child?
How can we make this happen?
How would I feel if this was my child?*

Pupils learn best at Aspire when they:

- Feel safe
- Feel loved
- Are listened to and have their opinions valued
- Are given permission to use their creativity
- Understand how this learning affects their future and opens new doors
- Have their special educational needs considered at all stages
- Receive inspirational teaching
- Know what is being asked of them and how to be successful
- Can link this learning to their lives, culture and identity
- Recognise that not all learning takes place with pen and paper or in a classroom.
- Have the necessary tools and spaces for learning

3. Roles and responsibilities

Every member of our school community is involved directly or indirectly with teaching and learning, from teachers delivering lessons in the classroom to our maintenance staff keeping the environment safe and clean.

This is how we will create the above conditions for pupils' learning at all times:

3.1 Teachers

Teachers at our school will:

- Inspire and challenge students to achieve maximum progress and a love of the subject.
- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct set out in the Teachers' Standards.
- Plan and deliver excellent lessons which lead to academic progress for students
- Plan and develop your curriculum, with the support of your subject leader, so that it is in line with the overall Aspire Curriculum Policy and with the individual aims and ethos of your school site
- Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.
- Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively.
- Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn and how best to overcome these
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.
- Contribute to the APDR cycle and associated target setting.
- Meet the expectations in the curriculum policy, curriculum vision and behaviour policy.

3.2 Support Staff

Support staff will:

- Know pupils well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Work one-to-one with students or in small groups, according to a programme or planning created and overseen by the class teacher
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required
- Engage in providing inspiring lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Meet the expectations set out in curriculum policy and behaviour policy

3.3 Middle leaders

In addition to the responsibilities in the teachers' section, middle leaders at our school will:

- Lead staff in their school/provision to ensure that the planned curriculum enables all students to progress in their academic and social/emotional development and achieve excellent outcomes in line with Aspire's strategic curriculum aims.

- Lead staff in their school team to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good, leading to positive outcomes and academic progress for all students over the time they are with Aspire. Identify training needs for staff in their school and implement strategies and support to ensure that staff continually improve.
- Lead staff in their school team to ensure that all staff know about students' individual learning needs, that all teaching responds to those needs, and that all staff and parents are meaningfully engaged in the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle.
- Implement systems for tracking and monitoring student progress and achievement and ensuring swift intervention when students are not making expected progress. Report to the Head of School or AMP Lead on the quality of teaching and learning, student progress data, qualification and post-16 outcomes.
- Support the Senior Leadership Team at their school to hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and learning and implement performance and capability processes when required to ensure that no student experiences poor quality teaching and learning for an extended period of time.
- Organise and chair a subject network group that allows teaching staff to discuss and work collaboratively on their curriculum plans and stay up to date with developments in the subject.
- Where requested, support the provision of high-quality subject-based CPD and best practice sharing for staff across Aspire.
- Ensure their subject area/department has appropriate schemes of work, curriculum intent documents and long/medium-term curriculum plans for their subject.
- Support the Heads of School or AMP Leads across Aspire with quality assurance where requested, for example, through lesson observation and scrutiny of work and/or planning audits.

3.4 Heads of Schools and AMP Leads

Our Heads of Schools and AMP Leads will:

- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team at the school/AMP to ensure that the planned curriculum enables all students to make progress in their academic and social/emotional development and to achieve excellent outcomes and is in line with Aspire's strategic curriculum aims.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team at the school/AMP to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good, leading to positive outcomes and academic progress for all students over the time that they are with Aspire.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to implement quality assurance systems to ensure that evidence is in place demonstrating the quality of planning, teaching and learning over time.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to ensure that all staff know about students' individual learning needs, that all teaching responds to those needs, and that all staff and parents are meaningfully engaged in the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle.
- Implement systems for tracking and monitoring student progress and achievement, and ensuring swift intervention when students are not making expected progress
- Work with the other Heads of School/AMP Leads to ensure that the timetable supports all teachers and students to achieve high quality teaching and learning and a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identify training needs and put in place strategies and support to ensure that all staff in the school are continually improving.
- Hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and learning and implement performance and capability processes when required to ensure that no student experiences poor quality teaching and learning for an extended period of time.

3.5 Senior leaders

Our senior leaders will:

- Turn Aspire's vision into practice
- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels, for example, by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

3.6 Executive leaders

The Executive team will:

- Establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how students learn.
- Ensure teaching is underpinned by high-quality relationships and an understanding of relational and trauma-informed practice, as well as high levels of subject expertise.
- Ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is in place, which is coherently structured and sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught at each stage.
- Establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise who engage with professional networks and communities.
- Ensure that the curriculum prioritises SEMH development and literacy (in particular, reading, speaking and listening) as the basic skills students in Alternative Provision need in order to thrive and flourish in their education.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils at our school will:

- Try their best to learn new skills.
- Make behaviour changes so they can be more successful in their learning.
- Treat pupils, staff and visitors with respect.
- Follow Aspire expectations and do as asked the first time.
- Respect Aspire property and equipment, and do not damage anything.
- Be kind to other pupils.
- Use appropriate language.
- Listen to what staff and pupils say and respond appropriately.
- Try all the work given and ask for help if needed.
- Speak to a member of staff about any questions, worries or concerns.

3.8 Parents and carers

Parents and carers of pupils at our school will:

- Ensure that their child attends Aspire for all sessions required.
- Inform Aspire if their child is unable to attend any of their sessions, giving a reason for their absence.
- Respect Aspire staff, pupils and premises and encourage their child to do the same.

- Work with Aspire staff if there are concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Encourage and support their child as they address the behaviour that needs to change.
- Speak to staff if concerned about their child's learning or daily routines.

3.9 Trustees

Trustees at our school will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the CEO or Executive Headteacher to account for its implementation
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching and that these are being implemented.

4. Learning environment

As an alternative provision with many sites and different provisions, our learning environment often looks different depending on the needs of the pupils we support.

We emphasise the need for our environments to be welcoming and create a sense of belonging and psychological safety. These are created so that both students and staff feel calm and at ease. All of our environments are nurturing and responsive, which means that we are better able to meet the needs of our young people.

Our learning environments are based on the principles of nurture and the principle that 'the classroom is a safe base'. We encourage ownership and pride in our environments, often allowing the young people to be a part of their design.

Some other common themes are:

- These spaces will be kept safe, clean and ready for pupils to use them
- Clearly labelled, comfortable and attractive
- Considerate of sensory needs, special educational needs and disabilities
- Where relevant, effective and meaningful use of learning walls or displays
- Accessible resources for learning, such as books, worksheets and other equipment
- A seating layout that allows everyone to see the board and participate

5. Responsive teaching

Teaching and learning at our school will take the backgrounds, needs and abilities of all pupils into account. As far as possible, we make the curriculum, determine learning objectives, assessment methods and likely barriers. A well-planned curriculum will reduce teachers' need to make in the moment adaptations. When additional adaptations are necessary, note that the strategies below are illustrative, not exhaustive and that adaptations will need considering from a subject-specific point of view.

Teachers of all subjects are expected to 'double plan', meaning that our curriculums are accessible to all. Double planning is an intentional process of adaptation where teachers make the necessary adaptations to already written curriculum. This process requires in depth knowledge of our students so that needs are being met.

We recognise that:

- Pupils are likely to learn at different rates and require different levels and types of support from teachers to succeed.
- Learning involves challenges, and there is a difference between removing barriers to learning and removing challenge.
- Seeking to understand pupils' differences, including their different levels of prior knowledge and potential barriers to learning, is an essential part of teaching.
- Adapting teaching in a responsive way, including by providing targeted support to pupils who are struggling, is likely to increase pupil success.

Our approach to responsive teaching involves three strands: we anticipate barriers; plan to address them; and make in the moment adaptations.

We anticipate barriers to learning like:

- different levels of prior knowledge
- vocabulary
- a particular SEND like ADHD, autism or dyslexia.
- decoding written text
- limited working memory
- cultural experience
- EAL
- a common misconception
- a lack of metacognitive knowledge or strategy

Plan to address them:

- read a text in advance
- supply background knowledge
- use pictures/video to contextualise upcoming information
- teach vocabulary
- introduce a concept via discussion
- teach necessary learning behaviour
- improve accessibility (e.g. clarity of resources, font size, proximity to the speaker, visibility of the whiteboard, and reader pens)
- plan to scaffold
- prepare a model to share with, for example, a visualiser
- plan targeted support from a TA

In the moment, adaptations:

- adjust the level of challenge
- change your language
- clarify a task or provide steps
- clarify what 'good' looks like
- highlight essential content
- re-explain a concept or explain it in a different way
- give additional (or revisit) examples and non-examples
- use peer tutoring
- elicit via questions
- allocate temporary groups to provide an additional scaffold
- Use assessment as a teaching method
- use an analogy
- set an intermediate goal

- provide a prompt
- structure a group attempt before an individual attempt
- scaffold

6. Remote learning

Please see the remote learning policies for Aspire Schools and AMP.

7. Marking, feedback and assessment

Marking, feedback and assessment is outlined in the marking, feedback and assessment policy.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy
- Aspire Curriculum Statement
- Aspire QA and monitoring guidance
- Aspire Remote Learning Policy
- Aspire SEND Policy and information reports
- Home-school agreement