



# finding my voice

KS2 Provision

**Aspire**





# Background: Aspire Schools & Shortenills

Aspire Schools provides education for pupils outside of mainstream education, all of whom are vulnerable with the majority from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are currently six school sites throughout Buckinghamshire - our 3 Alternative Provision settings, The Wycombe Grange, Blueprint and CSEC, our 2 SEMH school settings, Shortenills Forest and Shortenills Abbey, and Orchard House, a provision supporting young people with mental health needs. Beyond the classroom, we provide outreach services across the County.

We are an **Outstanding** Ofsted registered Alternative Provision and have proudly been so since 2005.

At Shortenills Forest, we believe that students with SEMH needs can benefit hugely from both nurture and nature. The school is set in ten acres of beautiful Buckinghamshire woodland and is the perfect place for students with SEMH needs. Our curriculum makes use of the incredible natural environment we have, with lots of opportunities for practical outdoor learning.

Aspire Schools recognises that for children who are facing challenges in succeeding in mainstream schools, early intervention is key. In order to offer mainstream primary schools much needed support, we have developed a unique and brand new KS2 provision at Shortenills Forest: **'Finding my Voice'**, that we launched in April 2025.





# What is Finding My Voice?

Finding My Voice is a part-time intervention designed to **change** lives. This is a unique approach that will support young people to change their narrative, and the narrative others have of them. Finding My Voice (FMV) is a programme that fills vital gaps in pupils' personal development, self-esteem and behaviour. FMV works on both the physical and metaphorical voice, looking at ways in which to communicate needs whilst changing children's inner narrative.

FMV is rooted in the principles of nurture and forest school and is a **1-day per week intervention** for children in KS2 (**Years 3, 4, 5 & 6**) to run alongside a mainstream offer. The intervention will take place outdoors no matter the weather. Pupils will experience the beauty of the outdoors and unleash their true potential.

**The intervention is 1-day per week for a 1-term period (typically 12 weeks)**





# The 4 principles

There are 4 distinct principles to the Finding My Voice intervention

## Empowered Reader

We see books as mirrors, windows or doors. They are either used to represent the young people, or for them to experience someone else's story/ life. Reading remains a big part of the 1-day intervention and regular camp stories are used to engage children in the love of books and literature in a more creative way. Children read at Base Camp every day.



## Authentic Oracy

Authentic oracy is split into 4 key areas, expressing, collaborating, evaluating and presenting. Expressing is about pupils being able to positively communicate, listen and being present. The young people will work with staff to find their authentic voice and grow in confidence and self-esteem.



## Powerful Purpose

Powerful purpose is about pupils having and gaining a deep understanding of themselves and their values. Powerful purpose is more than classroom based or even school based. It is about pupils understanding their value and purpose in the world.



## Outdoor Education

All the work we do on The Finding My Voice intervention is outdoors. This is based on project learning whilst exploring the knowledge and skills of a forest school curriculum. The Wild Passport is used to develop key competencies in outdoor education. Outdoor learning is coupled with exciting project work, where pupils will learn vital survival skills





# Self-Determination Theory

Our practices are rooted in Self-Determination Theory. The children taking part in the intervention get better at managing their emotions, whilst seeing the value that they bring to the world.

## Belonging

### Relatedness

Young people experience relatedness. These are not hierarchical relationships. More an understanding that 'you bring value to me, and I bring value to you'.

### Autonomy

Young people are better equipped with strategies to autonomously manage their behaviour and navigate emotions.

### Competence

Young people get better at knowing themselves, their values and their value in the world. The young people build skills through the 'Wild Passport'

**Empowered Reader**

**Authentic Oracy**

**Powerful Purpose**

**Outdoor Education**





# Finding My Voice Intervention: How We Change Lives

## **What will the young person get out of their time with us?**

- A better sense of self.
- Improved reading age and ability.
- A deeper understanding of their needs and interests.
- Strategies to co-regulate and self-regulate when in school.
- Connection to the natural world, through structured play and interaction.
- Better emotional literacy, identifying, naming and navigating emotions.

## **The way in which we teach:**

- Oracy rich - understanding conversation, roles and responsibilities.
- Connection to nature. The link between the natural world and nurturing young people.
- Creativity - we value creativity and creative skills. Instilling a core belief that everyone, no matter what, can be a creative thinker.
- Needs and interests driven. Students feel valued and know that they bring value to the world.
- We teach with an understanding that intrinsic motivation is important to the development of the whole child.





# How can I register a child for a place?

Our Summer Term intervention will begin on **Friday 17 April 2026**

The intervention is available for children in **KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)** and is aimed at children whose behaviour has reached a level where a Pastoral or Behaviour Support Plan is being considered.

The intervention will run **09:30 - 14:30 daily, apart from Wednesdays**. Up to 8 children can attend each day.

The cost per child to mainstream schools is just **£720 per child for the term**, or £1,416 for a child with an **EHCP**. Schools can register more than 1 child for each termly programme and we offer a **discount rate of 10%** for schools referring more than 1 child.

To secure a place for a child, please complete the **referral form** on our website found here:

**<https://www.aspireap.org.uk/For-Schools-and-Our-Partners/Referrals-and-Charges/>**

**If you require any further details, please contact us on**  
**[forestschooll@aspireap.org.uk](mailto:forestschooll@aspireap.org.uk)**

**Or visit:**  
**<https://www.aspireap.org.uk/KS2-Forest-School-Intervention/>**

Please note, Buckinghamshire Council or Aspire Schools will **not** be providing transport for this intervention - mainstream schools or parents will be responsible for getting students to and from the site each day:

**Shortenills Forest  
Nightingales Lane  
Chalfont St Giles  
Bucks  
HP8 4SG**





# Feedback

'It's good! I enjoyed whittling the most.'

**CT, Boy, Year 5**

'I love everything about forest school, it's fun!  
And we don't have to go to school.'

**DF, Boy, Year 6**

*'Finding My Voice has been so accommodating to our children's needs. From the first contact, they have listened, adapted and responded to our suggestions on how best to help our children succeed and learn from their time in the forest. The activities have been carefully planned around their differing ages, abilities and interests. FMV staff quickly built up positive relationships with the children, who felt secure and safe and able to challenge their own thinking and learning. Staff were also so hands-on with activities and helped to inspire the children to use a range of resources and create imaginative structures. The mixture of adult-led activities and child-led free play was excellent in allowing our children to explore the environment and enriched their learning journey. We are so thankful for the experiences given to the children and grateful for the enthusiastic but sensitive nature of staff and FMV overall.'*

**Teacher, Buckinghamshire Primary PRU**

*'Since starting Forest School, my daughter has not only grown in confidence, learnt new skills and grown a love of new world foods, she has also developed a wonderful, trusting relationship with the teachers. She has been suffering from emotional based school avoidance for years and battles extreme anxiety daily attending school. However, dropping her at Forest School comes with huge smiles and excitement and I truly believe this is from the calm outdoor environment and welcoming, understanding, patient and nurturing staff working with her. She comes home each week with new meals for us to cook as a family and new activities she would like us to try with her. She has made new friendships and found her calm place. This has had a huge positive impact on her life and us as a family. My only wish would be for her to be able to do this for longer.'*

**Parent of a Year 5 Child**

'We're just having fun all day. I'm not sure about nettle pancakes but I've made new friends.'

**EH, Girl, Year 5**





# Aspire

We **Change** Lives

