

ASPIRE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

# DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER APPLICANT PACK

We are seeking a truly exceptional executive leader to work with us at Aspire, an Alternative Provision academy trust in Buckinghamshire. This is a fantastic opportunity to join an ambitious and innovative trust, where you will have the opportunity to create meaningful and lasting change in the lives of some of the most vulnerable students in Buckinghamshire.

We change lives. Our work matters. Join us.

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For more information, or to arrange a visit or informal conversation with one of our leadership team, please contact our HR team on [hr@aspireap.org.uk](mailto:hr@aspireap.org.uk)



# WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Aspire Schools. This role will form a vital part of our Executive Leadership Team working closely with our founding CEO Debra Rutley. We are at an exciting point in the development of our Trust and we want to find someone who will continue to build on our recent successes, but also love their work, and continue to ensure that our Trust is developed on the ethos of 'leading with love'.

I am exceptionally proud of the work that we do at Aspire. Over the last 20 years, Aspire has grown from a single Local Authority PRU to a trust comprising of a variety of diverse schools and services that account for the majority of the alternative provision in Buckinghamshire. We deliver education that is responsive to, and meets the needs of the young people that we serve.

Aspire Schools is comprised of a family of three Alternative Provision schools, two permanent-stay SEMH schools, one short-stay SEMH school, an outreach provision and a primary forest school intervention. We also run a creative arts charity, Aspire for Young People, providing opportunities beyond the traditional statutory education offer.

You will be joining us at a very exciting point in our development journey, with the opportunity to lead a wide variety of projects related to the strategic growth and sustainability of our Trust. As Deputy CEO, you will provide inspirational leadership to our schools and provisions as well as assisting our CEO in her mission to represent the needs and rights of our students at local, regional and national level.

Aspire is a wonderful place to work, where everyone understands how their day-to-day work improves the life chances of the disadvantaged young people and communities that we serve. If you feel that our values align to yours, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

We change lives. Our work matters. Join us!

Mark Shaw  
Chair of Trustees



# OUR VISION AND VALUES



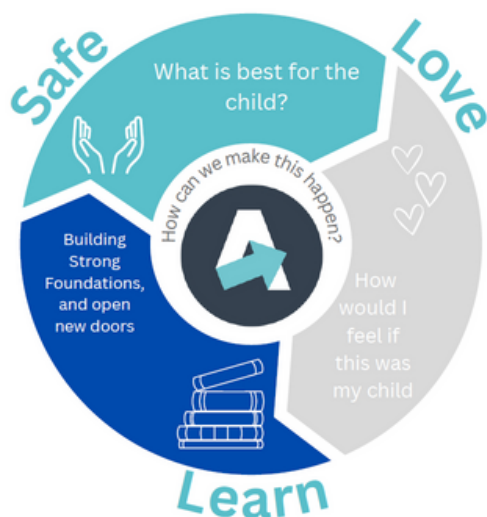
At Aspire we will create the conditions to support students to learn and flourish in and through love.

We change lives.

Our Aspire values can be seen in the quality of our relationships which are based on respect for all and an understanding that we are all valued.

Our values are “lived not laminated”. We live them every day, which means we can never be silent about challenging things.

## OUR VISION



## OUR VALUES



## ASPIRE STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2027



# OUR AP SCHOOLS



Our Alternative Provision schools in Chesham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe are short-stay provisions for students who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of exclusion.

Students come to us for a short period of time while we work with them, their families and their mainstream school, to identify strategies that will help them manage their emotions and be successful at school.

Sometimes our assessments indicate that mainstream is not the right place for a student, and in this case, we will work with them, their families and the local authority to help them move into a specialist setting.

The aim of Aspire's AP schools is to help students rediscover a love of learning, to help them learn and use strategies to regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour, and to help them identify and work towards a positive destination for their next steps in education and life.

If students join us in year 10 or 11, we think carefully about whether focusing on a return to mainstream is right, or whether a student would benefit from a stable and consistent placement until the end of KS4. If the family and all professionals working with a child agree, we will keep a child until the end of their year 11. In this situation, we focus instead on finding a positive post-16 destination and giving that student a supportive and successful transition into it.



# ORCHARD HOUSE AND OUTREACH/REINTEGRATION



## ORCHARD HOUSE SHORT-TERM SEMH PROVISION

Orchard House in Chesham provides support for young people in years 7-11 whose mental health needs are currently preventing them from engaging with their existing school. Placements at Orchard House are short term and enable students to access core subjects within a small, inclusive setting. Students are referred to Orchard House via their clinicians at CAMHS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).



## OUTREACH AND REINTEGRATION

Aspire's Outreach service works with every secondary school in the county. It is an Early Intervention Programme designed to be introduced when a student's behaviour has reached a level where a Pastoral or Behaviour Support Plan is being considered. All schools can directly refer students to the Outreach team.

Our team works with students on a weekly basis, one-to-one, for an agreed period of time. We build a bespoke programme for each student that we work with, depending on the challenges they are facing and the aims that they, their family and school have.

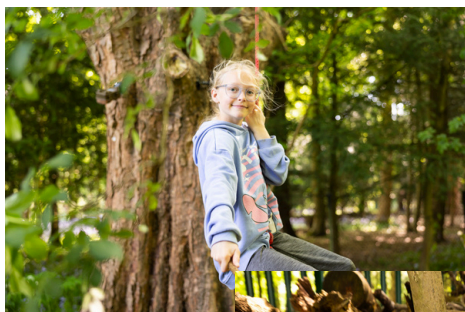
Our reintegration programme supports students before, during and after transitions between schools, whether that is as part of a direct managed move between secondary schools, or as a result of an exclusion and/or placement at Aspire.

# OUR SHORTENILLS SCHOOLS



## Shortenills Forest and Shortenills Abbey

Our long-stay secondary special schools, located in Chalfont St Giles and Aylesbury, are for students in Years 7-11 with EHCPs for SEMH difficulties. We believe that these students need and deserve a loving, nurturing approach, clear and high expectations of their behaviour, social development and academic work and carefully planned support and intervention that enables them to meet and exceed those expectations. We enable young people to manage their SEMH difficulties in school, and in the world, and to study a broad and balanced curriculum in order to create exciting and fulfilling futures for themselves.



## Shortenills For Post-16 Students

From September 2025, Aspire has begun to offer a bold new start for post-16 education at Shortenills Forest. Students take classes in English and Maths alongside vocational learning in grounds maintenance, horticulture and hospitality. Our first class of students will be the founding members of an on-site garden centre and café, giving each student first-hand experience of business development, teamwork and project management, all within a loving and nurturing environment.



## Key Stage 2 Forest School Intervention

Aspire recognises that early intervention is key for children who are facing challenges in succeeding in mainstream schools. In order to offer mainstream primary schools much needed support, we have developed a unique and brand new primary provision at Shortenills: 'Finding my Voice'. FMV is rooted in the principles of nurture and forest school and is a 1-day per week intervention for children in Key Stage 2 to run alongside a mainstream offer. Pupils experience the beauty of the outdoors and unleash their true potential.





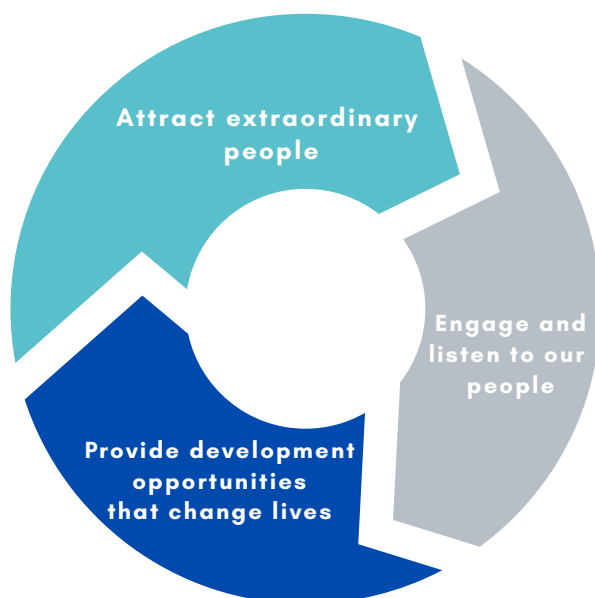
# OUR PEOPLE AND STRUCTURE



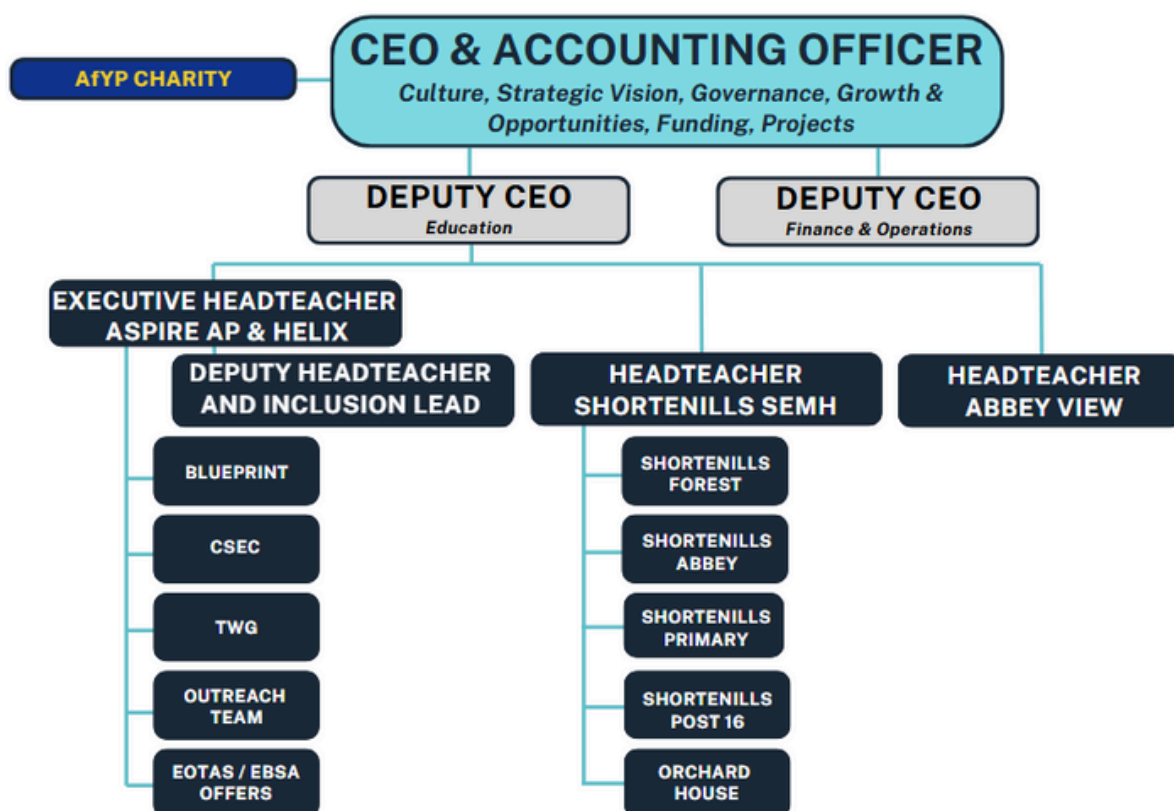
## Our People

### Everyone Matters

At Aspire, we change lives. We cannot do this without attracting, engaging with and developing extraordinary people. We value the contribution that each individual makes to the lives of vulnerable children and to the development of our Trust. **'Everyone Matters'** is the title of Aspire's new people strategy, which has been developed using the ideas of every Aspire employee. Our new CEO will be pivotal in further developing our strategy to ensure that it underpins all of our people activities.



## Our Structure



# DEPUTY CEO JOB DESCRIPTION



**Post:** Deputy Chief Executive Officer

**Responsible to:** Chief Executive Officer

**Line Manages:** The Executive Headteacher, The Headteacher of Shortenills, The Headteacher of Abbey View.

**Salary:** L31-L37 £108,202 - £125,345

The starting salary will be determined by the Board of Trustees, taking into account the experience and suitability of the successful candidate. The Teachers' Pension Scheme will apply.

## Statement of Purpose

As second in charge of Aspire Schools, the Deputy CEO will support the CEO and trust board by upholding the Trust values and providing visible leadership across the organisation. The Deputy CEO will work alongside the CEO to build and articulate the strategic vision of the Trust, to deliver outstanding learning outcomes for students, to ensure outstanding leadership and management is maintained in all areas, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff across our Trust, and to promote the Trust in the wider community.

The Deputy CEO role is intended to provide leadership continuity for the Trust. While there is an expectation that the successful candidate will be developed as a potential successor to the CEO, any future appointment will be subject to a formal selection process and is not guaranteed.





# DEPUTY CEO JOB DESCRIPTION CONTINUED



## Strategic leadership

- Work with the CEO to establish and sustain the Trust's vision, values, culture, and strategic direction in partnership with the Board of Trustees
- Support the Executive Leadership Team to translate the vision into agreed evidence-based objectives, briefings and operational plans, securing support and commitment from key stakeholders
- Ensure evidence-based improvement plans promote continuous school improvement linked to each school's self-evaluation
- Work with the CEO to create a safe, inclusive and positive culture across the Trust and its schools
- Work with the CEO to enable the Trust's organisational design and operational systems to meet its current and future requirements and manage change effectively
- Work collaboratively with the Trustees, actively supporting their work and providing information and advice to enable them to fulfil their strategic monitoring and their statutory and wider responsibilities.



## Operational leadership

- Oversee the Trust schools and provisions on a daily basis, ensuring regular visits and high presence
- Ensure executive leadership team accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed, to maximise the effectiveness of the team
- Establish rigorous, fair and supportive systems and measures for managing performance of staff and address underperformance
- Work with the CEO to develop and enable the framework and systems for school improvement across the Trust, ensuring capacity, quality assurance and accountability at all levels
- Support the CEO in mentoring and supporting new leaders within the Trust
- Provide accurate and timely reports of progress and performance to the trust board and its sub-committees as required and all other stakeholders in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Support the CEO in developing a programme of training and support for Trustees in order to ensure effective Trust leadership.



# DEPUTY CEO JOB DESCRIPTION

## CONTINUED



### Finance and sustainability

- Work with the CEO and CFOO to ensure that sound financial management systems are in place
- Prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
- Work with the CEO and CFOO to ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk
- Work with the CEO to direct the Trust's activities to achieve the most efficient, effective and sustainable provision of education to the highest quality, prioritising and making the most effective use of the resources available

### People strategy

- Lead and effectively manage the activities and performance of the Trust's executive team
- Work with the CEO to enable a people strategy that identifies talent, supports and develops all staff and sustains a culture of staff well-being and high staff professionalism
- Work with the CEO to ensure the Trust has high-quality employment practices that promote equality, diversity and inclusion, including ethical practices of recruitment and retention of staff
- Ensure staff have access to high quality professional development, aligned to balance organisational and individual needs
- Ensure the Trust has a strong talent management and succession planning programmes across all areas of the organisation's work.

### Safeguarding

- Work with the CEO and Executive Leadership Team to ensure that all safeguarding processes are robust and in line with current legislation and best practice
- Work with external agencies to ensure student and community needs are met
- Ensure that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of each school or provision and the people that they serve.

### Accountability and governance

- Promote a culture of accountability that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels and across all aspects of the Trust's work
- Work with the CEO to understand the role of relevant regulatory bodies and ensure the Trust and its schools respond to their requirements
- Understand and welcome the role of effective Trust governance, upholding the obligation to give account and recognising that Trustees are ultimately responsible and accountable for the Trust's work
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with the Trustees, recognising their key role in holding the CEO and executive team to account
- Ensure positive communications that promote the Trust and its work, and present the Trust effectively when dealing with the media.



# DEPUTY CEO JOB DESCRIPTION CONTINUED



## System leadership and civic responsibility

- Promote and enable ways in which the Trust's schools engage meaningfully with their communities and are responsive and accountable to them
- In line with the Trust's civic role, work with civic partners and stakeholders in the local area, region and/or nationally to contribute to the Public Good, ensuring the value of the child and coherent public service for children and families
- Foster and engage in the collective leadership of the sector, building strong local systems to address disadvantage and improve the quality of education for all pupils
- Work with the CEO to exert external influence on behalf of the Trust by active engagement with sector organisations, regulators, policy makers, local and national government, industry and other partners.



# DEPUTY CEO PERSON SPECIFICATION



|                | Criteria   | Essential | Desirable |
|----------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Qualifications | Good Honours degree or equivalent  | •         |           |
|                | Qualified Teacher Status   | •         |           |
|                | Evidence of professional study in the field of education and/or leadership   | •         |           |
|                | Masters level qualification  |           | •         |
|                | NASENDCO   |           | •         |
|                | NPQH or NPQEL  |           | •         |
| Experience     | Substantial senior leadership experience at Executive Headship level including the formulation and delivery of corporate strategies, policies and objectives | •         |           |
|                | Experience of successfully establishing and sustaining a strong performance management culture that drives up standards and performance                      | •         |           |
|                | Experience of successfully leading and managing change, translating organisational ambitions into real and measurable achievements                           | •         |           |
|                | Experience of leading in mainstream and alternative provision settings   |           | •         |
|                | Strong record of educational leadership: raising standards, achieving outstanding results and having a personal impact on staff and students                 | •         |           |
|                | Experience of developing and delivering successful school improvement programmes across a whole school(s)  | •         |           |
|                | Track record of achieving high levels of professional credibility with other leaders in education  | •         |           |
|                | Experience of creating, developing and maintaining effective working relationships with key stakeholders including the Local Authority                       | •         |           |
|                | Experience of working with students with learning, challenging, emotional or behavioural difficulties.   | •         |           |
| Knowledge      | Knowledge of current secondary practice, including the National Curriculum and educational developments  | •         |           |
|                | Knowledge of legislation and practice in the field of education and Special Educational Needs  | •         |           |
|                | Knowledge and experience of devising, developing and monitoring programmes to support the needs of young people with SEMH difficulties                       | •         |           |
|                | Knowledge of models of effective leadership and organisational structures  | •         |           |
|                | Knowledge and understanding of people, governance and budget management and financial systems  | •         |           |



# DEPUTY CEO PERSON SPECIFICATION CONTINUED



|                    | Criteria  | Essential | Desirable |
|--------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| Skills             | Ability to prioritise, plan and organise yourself and others  | •         |           |
|                    | Demonstrated ability to monitor and manage multiple competing priorities simultaneously, ensuring all tasks are driven to timely completion   | •         |           |
|                    | Ability to work efficiently and accurately, particularly under pressure, to deadlines and using own initiative  | •         |           |
|                    | Effective partnership working skills – able to build and draw on the strengths of others to generate outstanding results  | •         |           |
|                    | Skilled in developing a culture of outstanding performance and supporting improvements in standards, in teaching and learning and in behaviour  | •         |           |
|                    | The ability to lead and form trusting teams that set the highest standards in the curriculum and provide effective curriculum leadership  | •         |           |
|                    | The ability to identify and nurture talent so that teachers and leaders are developed   | •         |           |
|                    | Strong verbal and written communication skills, including excellent report-writing skills   | •         |           |
|                    | The ability to collate, analyse and interpret complex data to inform school development   | •         |           |
|                    | Excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence: with the ability to build strong working relationships with trustees, local headteachers/Principals and other stakeholders; and to always be approachable to staff at all levels | •         |           |
|                    | Excellent IT skills, including the ability to use social media to enhance the Trust's reputation and improve pupil/students' learning   | •         |           |
| Personal Qualities | Highest levels of integrity and a commitment to highest levels of effort, endeavour and compassion  | •         |           |
|                    | Confident and calm in difficult situations  | •         |           |
|                    | Personal resilience and tenacity – the ability to see things through and work through challenge   | •         |           |
|                    | Experience of leading in mainstream and alternative provision settings (desirable)  | •         |           |
|                    | Loving and warm personality   | •         |           |
|                    | Strong interpersonal, communication and presentation skills, including warmth and empathy whilst holding others to account  | •         |           |
|                    | Creative, dynamic approach anticipating and solving challenges  | •         |           |
|                    | Able to motivate, inspire and challenge others  | •         |           |
| Other Factors      | A commitment to Equal Opportunities   | •         |           |
|                    | Driving licence essential as is access to a vehicle   | •         |           |

# HOW TO APPLY

Potential applicants are invited to have an informal discussion with our CEO, Debra Rutley, and to visit one of our schools. To arrange this, please contact [hr@aspirap.org.uk](mailto:hr@aspirap.org.uk).

To apply for this role, please click 'Apply Now' via MyNewTerm.

Aspire is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share the same commitment. The appointment will be subject to an enhanced DBS check as well as a health questionnaire.

