



Department  
for Education

# Free school application form

Special free schools

**Published: December 2015**

Insert the name of your free school(s) below using BLOCK CAPITALS

**ASPIRE FREE SCHOOL**



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# The application form explained

Before completing your application, please ensure that you have read both the [background information and glossary document and the relevant assessment criteria booklet](#) carefully. Please also ensure that you can provide all the information and documentation required.

## Sections

### Declaration

The declaration must be made by a company member on behalf of the company/trust. The declaration section is found in the Word application form. All applicants are required to complete this section in full.

**All applicants will need to complete sections A, B, C, E, H and I in full.**

For sections D, F and G, the information you need to provide will depend on the type of group you are. Please refer to the relevant section of the *background information and glossary document*, and the *assessment criteria booklet*, for the information your group should include in these sections.

**Section A** asks you for applicant details in the Excel form.

**Section B** asks you to outline your proposed free school(s) in the Excel form.

**Section C** asks you for detailed information on the vision for your school(s) and is to be completed using the Word form.

**Section D** asks you for detailed information on your proposed education plan(s) and is to be completed using the Word form.

**Section E** asks you to evidence that there is a need for the school(s) you are proposing in the Word form.

**Section F** asks you to demonstrate that you have the capacity and capability to open the school(s) you are proposing and is to be completed using the Word form.

**Section G** specifically asks about costs. This requires the completion of the relevant sections of the Excel budget template.

**Section H** asks for information about premises, and suitable site(s) you have identified. This requires the completion of the relevant section of the Excel application form.

**Section I** is about your suitability to set up and then run a free school. There is a separate Word form for this.

Failure to submit all the information required may mean that we are unable to consider your application.

### **Submitting Sections A to H**

The completed Word and Excel templates and the budget plans need to be submitted by email to the department by the application deadline to: [FS.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FS.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk). Your email must be no larger than 9MB in size.

The Word template should be between 50 and 100 pages long (depending on which type of group you are); formatted for printing on A4 paper; completed in Arial 12 point font; and include page numbers. Annexes are excluded from the page limit and should be restricted to CVs for key individuals. Please do not include photographs, images and logos in your application.

The contents of the budget Excel template and Excel application form are excluded from the page limit.

Please include the name of your school in the file name for all Word and Excel templates.

You also need to submit two hard copies (of Sections A-H and the budget plans) by a guaranteed method such as 'Recorded Signed For' post to: Free Schools Applications Team, Department for Education, 3rd Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. You may also hand deliver if you prefer.

It is essential that the hard copies are identical to the version you email.

### **Submitting Section I**

Section I, i.e. the Personal Information form, is required for each member, director, and principal designate who has not submitted forms within the past 365 days; together with a list of those members, directors, and principals designate who have submitted Section I forms within the past 365 days. These need to be submitted by email alongside a copy of Section A (from the Excel template) to [due.diligence@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:due.diligence@education.gsi.gov.uk) stating the name of the school in the subject title.

### **Data protection**

Personal data is collected on the Word and Excel templates in order to consider an application to set up a free school and will not be used for other purposes. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act, the Department for Education is the data controller for this personal information and for ensuring that it is processed in accordance with the terms of the Act. The department will hold all personal information you supply securely

and will only make it available to those who need to see it as part of the free school application process. All personal information supplied in these forms will only be retained for as long as it is needed for this process.

## Application checklist

Task to complete	Yes	No
1. Have you established a company by limited guarantee?	✓	
2. Have you provided information on all of the following areas (where appropriate)?		
<b>Section A:</b> Applicant details	✓	
<b>Section B:</b> Outline of the school	✓	
<b>Section C:</b> Education vision	✓	
<b>Section D:</b> Education plan	✓	
<b>Section E:</b> Evidence of need	✓	
<b>Section F:</b> Capacity and capability	✓	
<b>Section G:</b> Budget planning and affordability	✓	
<b>Section H:</b> Premises	✓	
3. Is the information in A4 format, using Arial 12 point font, and includes page numbers?	✓	
4. Have you fully completed the appropriate budget plan(s) where necessary?	✓	
5. Have you included CVs in the appendices for all relevant individuals in the template provided and in line with the requirements set out in the criteria?	✓	
6. <b>Independent schools only*</b> : Have you provided a copy of the last two years' audited financial statements or equivalent?		



7. <b>Independent schools only*</b> : Have you provided a link to your school's most recent inspection report and completed an externally validated self-assessment and governance assessment?	n/a	
8. <b>Independent schools only*</b> : Have you provided the documents set out in the criteria document specifically around your current site?	n/a	
9. <b>Re-applications only</b> : Have you changed you application in response to the written feedback you received, if you are re-applying after being unsuccessful in a previous wave, as set out in Section 4.4 of this guide?	n/a	
10. Have you sent an email (of no more than 9 MB in size**), titled: <b>Free School Application - School Name: [insert]</b> with all relevant information relating to Sections A to H of your application to: <a href="mailto:FS.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk">FS.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk</a> before the advertised deadline?	✓	
11. Have you sent two hard copies of the application by a guaranteed delivery method such as 'Recorded Signed for' to the address below?  Free Schools Applications Team, Department for Education, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT	✓	

\* Independent schools include existing alternative provision and special school institutions that are privately run.

\*\* If your application is larger than 9MB please split the documents and send two emails.

Section I of your application	Yes	No
<p>12. Have you sent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a copy of Section A (tab 1 of the Excel template); and</li> <li>• copies of the Section I Personal Information form for each member, director, and principal designate who has not submitted one of these forms within the past 365 days; and</li> <li>• a list of those lead applicants, members, directors, and principals designate who have submitted Section I forms within the past 365 days</li> </ul> <p>by emailing scanned copies of Section I forms to <a href="mailto:due.diligence@education.gsi.gov.uk">due.diligence@education.gsi.gov.uk</a> stating the name of the school in the subject title, including a full list of members, trustees, and the principal designate (if appointed); and a copy of Section A?</p> <p>(See guidance for dates and deadlines)</p>	✓	

## Declaration

**\*\*This must be signed by a company member on behalf of the company/trust\*\***

I confirm that the information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I further confirm that if the application is successful the company will operate a free school in accordance with:

- The requirements outlined in the background information and glossary document;
- The funding agreement with the Secretary of State;
- All relevant obligations and requirements that apply to open academies (e.g. safeguarding, welfare and bullying) – this includes statutory requirements (those that are enshrined in legislation) and non-statutory requirements (those contained in DfE guidance); and
- For children with an education health and care plan ('EHCP') naming the school, the requirements pertaining to children with SEN within the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice, including the duty to admit a child where the school is named in an EHCP;
- For schools where the Secretary of State agrees in the funding agreement that they can also admit non-statemented pupils with special needs, the school must, in respect of these pupils, comply with the School Admissions Code, the School Admissions Appeals Code and the admissions law as it applies to maintained schools. 16-19 applicants do not need to follow these codes but must have admissions arrangements and criteria which are fair, objective and transparent.

I have fully disclosed all financial liabilities and the full extent of each/any debt for which the company, trust or existing school is liable.

I confirm that I am not and have never been barred from regulated activity within the meaning given by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. I further declare that all current members and directors of the company have confirmed to me that they are not and have never been so barred, and that if it comes to my attention whilst I am a member or director of the company that I or any other member or director are or have been so barred I will notify the Department for Education. I and all other members and directors of the company understand that the company's free school application may be rejected if a member or director of the company is found to have been barred from regulated activity.

I acknowledge that this application may be rejected should any information be deliberately withheld or misrepresented that is later found to be material in considering the application.

**Signed:**

**Position:** Member of Company

**Print name:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**NB: This declaration only needs to be signed in the two hard copy versions of your application. Please use black ink.**

Please tick to confirm that you have included all the items in the checklist:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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## Completing the application form

### Section A – applicant details (use Excel spread sheet)

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- complete the Section A tab in the Excel spread sheet; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

### Section B – outline of the school (use Excel spread sheet)

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- complete the Section B tab in the Excel spread sheet; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

## Section C – vision

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants.

Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- provide one version of this section, referring to individual schools or circumstances if you are applying for more than one school;
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

### **Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area**

#### Introduction

Grove Park Academies is a Multi Academy Trust consisting of one school, Grove Park Primary School, situated in Sittingbourne; this was established as an academy in June 2012. Grove Park is a good school and the ethos of the trust is built on the following aims:

- A school where everyone feels valued and respected
- A place with a warm, happy, calm, safe atmosphere where everyone enjoys learning and working together
- A school, which has learning and teaching at the heart of everything that it does
- An ethos that celebrates all achievements and recognises success
- A place which has consistently high expectations for all and where academic achievement is not the only measure of success

Grove Park Community Primary School prides itself in providing a happy and secure learning environment, in which a child can achieve academic and personal excellence. Every child is special. The school regards their time at the school as an opportunity to fully develop their potential through a well structure learning and nurturing environment where they can grow and thrive

#### ***‘Growing Towards the Future’.***

The school is over subscribed and a popular choice in the local community. Our success is built on the above principles and we feel that we are now in a position to expand and share

## **Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area**

our expertise and feel the Aspire Free School provides us with an opportunity to fulfil this next stage of the Trust's journey.

Aspire Free School is founded on an ambition to transform the life opportunities of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and/or Speech, Language Communication Needs (SLCN). Our mission is to provide children the support they need to learn, thrive and succeed in their education.

Grove Park Academies propose a co-educational, 2 Form Entry specialist school in Kent, admitting 112 children aged between 4 and 11 years with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Pupils' primary need is ASD and/or speech, language and communication needs. Young people with such needs have a complex profile and extensive barriers to their learning. Attainment levels are likely to vary in each individual. They will have difficulties in meeting the language, social, attention and participation demands of typical learning situations. Parental preference will be for a special school and pupils are unlikely to reach their full potential without significant support in the correct learning environment.

Pupils will be taught subjects from the National Curriculum whilst using specific approaches flexible enough to capitalise on an individual's strengths and particular interests. To achieve the best outcomes, the curriculum content must be meaningful and relevant so that each pupil will want to engage and become effective learners. Aspire will adopt the curriculum used in Grove Park School, in order to provide a thematic approach across both provisions, differentiated to meet all pupils' abilities.

Given the difficulties and challenges pupils will typically encounter, Aspire Free School will focus on the following outcomes:

- Numeracy and literacy skills for life and excellent progression in all areas of learning.
- Excellent progress in pupils' personal, social and emotional development by working in a multi-disciplinary approach with educational, therapy staff and family, recognising their central importance in this role.
- Pupils well prepared for a successful transition to the secondary phase of their education.
- Collaborate with local schools, sharing skills and good practice, improving understanding of ASD and communication needs. This will involve training for local schools.
- Appreciate and serve the needs of the whole school community: pupils, their families and carers, staff and governors. Develop an all school culture, where everyone works to their best abilities and promotes the same high expectations. Reverse inclusion between Grove Park School and Aspire Free School for individual pupils when deemed appropriate.

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The Aspire school day will run from 09.15 – 16.00; however, the provision will be open from 08.30 to allow parents to access work opportunities. Aspire will offer clubs to maximise socialisation opportunities, routine and familiarity, developing and furthering skills taught over and above those learnt in the classroom, in line with Grove Park School.

### Rationale

The proposal for Aspire Free School is a direct response to demand for further special school places in Kent from the local authority, parents and an onus on the benefits of early intervention. In addition, the school will be located in an area of high deprivation and need.

#### Kent County Council

KCC recognise the direct need for the Aspire Free School. In their 2015-2019 Commissioning Plan for Education<sup>1</sup> they confirm that the number of young people with an EHCP (previously Statement of Special Educational Need) with ASD identified as the primary need has increased significantly over the past four years, by 65%. **We anticipate these trends continuing. Therefore, we will need to continue to commission provision in these areas**, whilst decommissioning provision in areas of decreasing need.<sup>2</sup>

Primary Need	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	5 year +/-
ASD	1490	1680	1849	2271	2457	967

The table below shows the Statemented pupil Primary need by year group (2014)<sup>3</sup>

Primary Need	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ASD	108	133	129	111	157	162	198
SLCN	52	56	57	71	71	71	83

- In Spring 2014, 852 **Swale children** held an EHCP/SSEN, **the highest number in Kent**.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf](http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 10.4

<sup>3</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref figure 10.5

<sup>4</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref figure 10.3

## Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area

- In April 2014, 383 Swale children attended a Kent special school and 57 an independent provision.<sup>5</sup>
- Young people are travelling long distances to reach a provision, this is expensive - **£17 million spent on transport costs** in 2013.<sup>6</sup> **We aim to reduce the need for children to be transported to schools far away from their local communities.**<sup>7</sup>
- As at January 2014 there were 718 pupils whose needs could not be met in Kent maintained schools. 169 of these pupils remain the responsibility of their home authority. Approximately 10% attend non-maintained or out of county Special schools with the **largest numbers of these in schools for autism (ASD)** or behavioural, emotional and social needs (BESN)<sup>8</sup> **“reflecting that Kent’s maintained Special school provision has been at capacity”**.<sup>9</sup>

The proposer group have developed a good working relationship with Kent County Council who directly recognise the need for the school. The Head of Assessment & Placement for SEN, Julie Ely is fully supportive of the application.

### Parental Preference

Parent/Carers are dissatisfied with current provision options. The new Code of Practice 2014 shows a clearer focus on the views of parents, children and young people and on their role in decision-making. The proposer group have engaged with parents in multiple ways – directly at public meetings, telephone calls, emails, through social media and in addition via an online support group for parents/carers of children with ASD, consisting of over 350 members.

The demand for places in an Autism specific provision has increased and continues to do so, children travel long distances to reach an appropriate provision and the number of 2014-2015 SEND tribunals relating to ASD stood at 35%. Out of the Tribunals heard 86% of cases are won by parents, and this figure does not take into account the number of cases that are conceded before hearing. Kent ranks 5<sup>th</sup> highest of Local Authorities with the most registered appeals.<sup>10</sup>

### Early intervention

<sup>5</sup> Management Information, Swale data, table 2a, page 19, April 2014

<sup>6</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2013-2018

<sup>7</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 6.5

<sup>8</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 10.21

<sup>9</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 3.8

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.specialneedsjungle.com/will-these-figures-make-las-think-twice-before-ending-up-at-the-send-tribunal/>



## Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area

Research shows that children who receive intensive early intervention services are more likely to have improved long-term outcomes. These services can maximize their learning potential by addressing communication, play, problem behaviours and overall skill development from a very early age. We know, through extensive brain research, that neural plasticity (the brain's ability to learn new skills) decreases with age. When children are very young their neural plasticity is high, but as they get older it decreases. When this plasticity decreases, it becomes more difficult to learn new skills.

<http://www.eif.org.uk/what-is-early-intervention/>

<http://researchautism.net/autism-interventions/types>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284086/early-intervention-next-steps2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284086/early-intervention-next-steps2.pdf)

This is not to say that individuals with autism are not able to learn skills if intervention is not started by a certain age. Their brains are capable of learning and using new skills and information at any time. Behaviourally speaking, however, as we all age and grow the skills we have learned which are effective and efficient will be more difficult to change due to a longer history of reinforcement. So the earlier we intervene to address an individual's difficulties with communication, social interactions and problem behaviours the more likely we are to elicit quick and positive change.<sup>11</sup>

### The area

Kent has the largest population of all of the English counties, with just over 1.46 million people.<sup>12</sup> There are 22,961 disabled children and young people aged between 0-18 in Kent,<sup>13</sup> 7013 children with a statement, over 3000 pupils (44%) attend 23 Local Authority maintained Special schools and one Special Academy<sup>14</sup> and 3,804 have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.<sup>15</sup> The County has 12 sub districts and one unitary authority – Medway authority have 1182 children with an EHCP.<sup>16</sup> Although, we anticipate them to name school's from within their own county as a preference, we recognise that parental choice may lead to SEND tribunals as Aspire Free School may be as close as a 15-minute journey for some children. The MP for Rainham and Gillingham has confirmed the direct need for the school, within his constituency, evidenced in section E. The Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy states its desired

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.autism-community.com/education/early-intervention/>

<sup>12</sup> Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Pg 6

<sup>13</sup> Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Kent.gov.uk 2013-1016

<sup>14</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 10.16

<sup>15</sup> Management Information, Swale data, Index of multiple deprivation (IMD), page 32

<sup>16</sup> January 2013 School Census Medway Council – 1182 children with an EHCP in Medway, not all ASD.

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outcome is: **“a reduction in the number of Kent children with SEND placed in an independent or out of county schools.”**<sup>17</sup>

### Swale overview

Grove Park Academies suggest that Aspire Free School ideally be located in Sittingbourne, a central town in the Swale Borough with a population of 28,000 0-15 year olds, and in Spring 2015 there were 4,174 pupils with a Primary SEN need<sup>18</sup> In the most recent accessible data (2012) figures show that 22% of children are in poverty and in March 2015, there were 398 children being Looked After.<sup>19</sup> Sittingbourne is a growth area and school rolls’ forecast to increase over the next five-year period. New housing development included in the Swale Borough Council Draft Local Plan indicates that there will be up to 10,800 new dwellings across Swale during the period to 2031 with a build rate of 776 per annum.<sup>20</sup>

Swale has an above average birth rate, although this is beginning to fall in line with national and Kent rates. The impact of a decade of rising numbers will be felt in the primary phase over the next few years, whilst also beginning to impact on secondary school numbers. Consideration of Swale as a whole masks significant local pressures in Sittingbourne and The Isle of Sheppey. Inward migration, in particular on the Isle of Sheppey and in Sittingbourne, continues to create significant pressure in the primary phase.<sup>21</sup>

Those with SEND are at higher risk of safeguarding issues, poverty and poor lifelong educational attainment. They may have restricted access to services due to lack of coordinated assessments and provision, and may be at increased risk of family breakdown.<sup>22</sup> Swale and Thanet, the two most deprived districts in Kent, have the two largest concentrations of disabled children and young people who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.<sup>23</sup> The IMD2015 states that whilst Thanet is still the most deprived area of Kent, **“Ashford and Swale have seen the greatest change in national rank, both moving up 22 places between 2010 and 2015. This indicates that these areas are more deprived in 2015 than in 2010 relative to all other local authorities in England.”**<sup>24</sup>

There is a persistent link between disadvantage and low educational attainment and participation, which continues to blight life chances into adulthood. Pupils eligible for free school

<sup>17</sup> Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, pg 15

<sup>18</sup> <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Further-evidence-2015/Area-profile-all.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Further-evidence-2015/Area-profile-all.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 13.12.5

<sup>21</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 13.12.1

<sup>22</sup> The Annual Public Health Report of the Director of Public Health 2012/13 Medway Authority pg. 42

<sup>23</sup> Strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, page 11

<sup>24</sup> The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2015): Headline findings for Kent

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meals (typically 34% in a Swale Special School<sup>25</sup>) achieve half as well at age 16 compared to their peers, are more than twice as likely to become NEET, and are four times more likely to drop out of education or training before the age of 19.<sup>26</sup> “Kent has five of the national youth employment hotspots where youth unemployment among 18-24 year olds exceeds 20%, one of these areas being Swale.<sup>27</sup> In January 2014, Swale had the third highest unemployment rate compared to the other Kent districts.<sup>28</sup>

### Existing Provision

There are 24 special schools in Kent.<sup>29</sup> “75% of Kent special schools are good or better compared to 87% nationally according to Ofsted.”<sup>30</sup> The nearest comparable school to the Aspire proposal is Laleham Gap (Ofsted rated Good), a specialist provision for high functioning ASD pupils and/or speech and language difficulties and educates children aged 3-16 years. The school is approximately 30 miles away in the borough of Thanet. Eligible local Swale children travel the approximate 1-hour journey via transport provided by the Local Authority.<sup>31</sup> The Trust will employ their own Speech and Language Therapist and have access to an Occupational Therapist through the NHS for those who have this provision specified in their EHCP.

Meadowfield School serves the Swale District (Sheppey, Faversham and Sittingbourne) and provides for learners with a range of needs related to profound, severe and complex needs. The residency data suggests that on the whole the school caters for pupils living in Swale with the exception of a few pupils travelling from Herne Bay. KCC recognise that the need for places within the District is likely to exceed capacity, in part due to the number of referrals for looked after children in Swale.<sup>32</sup>

### Summary

Aspire Free School will be a centre of excellence and run according to the Autism Education Trust ‘best practice’ model. It will be staffed by highly specialised, qualified teachers and provide an additional specialist provision for young people in the county, alleviating some pressure off of existing full to capacity schools and be a valuable resource for Grove Park

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<sup>25</sup> Planned Pupil Premium Funding, Meadowfields School website

<sup>26</sup> Kent Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, pg 15

<sup>27</sup> Kent Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, pg 19

<sup>28</sup> ONS Claimant Count January 2014, District Datapack lite, The post 16 Landscape in Swale, 2014, pg 23

<sup>29</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, draft 2013-2018, page 62, 10.6

<sup>30</sup> Working Together Improving Outcomes, Kent Children and Young People’s Commissioning Board, 2013-2016, pg 14

<sup>31</sup> RAC Route finder

<sup>32</sup> KCC Commissioning document, 2015-2019, ref 10.40

## **Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area**

Primary School, existing mainstream schools within The Gateway Alliance,<sup>33</sup> educational professionals and parents.

### **Vision and Ethos**

Aspire strive to deliver a child centred holistic approach towards our pupils, working within multi- disciplinary teams, where families are paramount in the success of their child's future; and young people have a view and a voice in decisions regarding their lives.

Aspire is committed to provide skilled, high quality, specialist personnel with a creative approach to their teaching and support in order to improve pupils' outcomes. The entire provision will work together on a school culture to develop our ethos of 'Growing Towards the Future.'

All areas of school life will focus around three principles working together as a cohesive whole for academic achievement and personal development –

Learning

Nurturing and

Thriving

Aspire will:

- Have small class sizes of 8 pupils on a 2 Form Entry.
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is differentiated to meet individual learners' needs, ensuring each pupil reaches their full potential, not only through academic success but also in their social, moral, spiritual, creative, physical and mental development.
- Encourage and enhance the self-worth of each pupil, with the specific goal of reducing poor emotional regulation, high rates of anxiety and challenging behaviours related to Autism, to reduce any barriers to learning and allow pupils to have a positive educational, community experience.
- Develop the social and general life skills required to optimise and develop each individual learner's experiences and outcomes.
- Ensure each student is equipped for life with literacy and numeracy skills.
- Provide a safe, structured, positive, happy learning and working environment where pupils are secure and confident in their abilities and experiences.

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<sup>33</sup> A collaboration of 12 mainstream primary schools in Swale, of which Grove Park is a member

**Section C1 – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area**

- Accept value and embrace the unique contribution each individual makes. Offer a school council to encourage the pupils to be actively involved in shaping the future of their school.
- Focus on pupils' abilities rather than on their limitations.
- Work in partnership with families, recognising their central importance in developing children's confidence, well-being, personal development and empower them with the knowledge and services they rightly expect.
- Employ experienced, qualified staff and ensure their expertise is valued; provide ongoing training in order to help them develop as professionals to the best of their abilities; managed by a dynamic high calibre Executive Headteacher with the same-shared ambition and vision to transform the life opportunities of young people with autism.
- A qualified therapy team will advise staff on how to implement strategies particularly in areas of social communication and emotional regulation.
- Offer a range of enrichment activities both within and outside school times, minimising associated anxieties and maximising structure to pupils.
- Promote working within the local community.

In summary, Grove Park Academies wish to create a school offering further distinctive choice for parents and young people, enabling pupils to attend a local provision with a child centred approach to their education. We will offer high standards and positive outcomes, not only academically but also throughout their entire development, placing importance on emotional, social and life skills, preparing them for everyday situations in modern day Britain. Experienced, qualified teaching staff in conjunction with the therapy team will support pupils, and work alongside parents and the community.

## Section D – education plan: part 1

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- use the table below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

In the table below, please provide the proposed numbers in each year group at the point of opening and an explanation of how pupil numbers will build up over time. Please add additional rows/columns if appropriate. If you are an existing independent school wishing to become a free school, please use the first column to show how many pupils you currently have. If you are proposing more than one school you will need to complete a separate table for each.

If you are proposing to open later than 2017, please leave the relevant earlier columns blank.

	Current number of pupils (if applicable)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Reception		8	24	16	16	16	16	16
Year 1				16	16	16	16	16
Year 2				8	16	16	16	16
Year 3		8	8	16	8	16	16	16
Year 4				16	16	8	16	16
Year 5			8	8	16	16	16	16
Year 6				8	8	16	16	16
Totals		16	40	88	96	104	112	112

## Section D – education plan: part 2

### D1 – an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake

If you are applying for more than one school and they will all be similar, please provide one version of this section, referring to individual schools or circumstances, where relevant. If schools will be different, you may find it simpler to provide more than one version of this section.

All applicants will need to complete the table of subjects and hours. Please use the table below.

Subject/other activity	Hours per week	Mandatory/ Voluntary	Comments
English	5	M	Based on National Curriculum
Maths	5	M	
Science	1	M	
Aspire for Life	2.5	M	Social & Emotional programme, integrated across all subjects.
Computing	1	M	Based on National Curriculum
R.E.	1	M	This will be the Kent Agreed Syllabus
P.E./OT	2	M	Based on Green Acre Sports Partnership/ OT programmes e.g. BEAM.
Design Technology	2	M	Topics will be taught cross curricularly, consequently there will be an even distribution of coverage through the year.
Art			
History			
Geography			
MFL	0.5	M	This will be taught through everyday activities.
Music & Drama	0.5	M	Based on National Curriculum
PSHE/SEAL	1	M	Based on National Curriculum
Clubs/Non curriculum	4	V	Opportunities to attend a variety of clubs

All applicants will need to complete this section you will give us different information depending on which type of group you are.

### **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

At Grove Park Academies Trust children follow the National Curriculum, we think children learn best by making links between curriculum areas and being allowed to explore and discover things for themselves.

Our ethos focuses on children being encouraged to work collaboratively and develop a range of learning behaviours and skills that will benefit them for life, not just their time at school.

Aspire will also follow the National Curriculum, which will be adapted and differentiated where necessary to meet the various individual or group needs. All staff will work collaboratively to develop the schemes of work for each year group. We anticipate subject knowledge of the National Curriculum can be shared by an experienced and knowledgeable subject management team. We will work closely with Andrew Lamb, who is an experienced Special School Headteacher (part of the pre opening team) in the design of the curriculum and any specific details that may need to be considered; for example, how therapy can be incorporated into the learning culture, social development and any alternative approaches that will need to be considered within certain subjects.

There are clear advantages in following the National Curriculum, providing a clear structure to the learning, which is developmental and allows for progression and positive outcomes for our pupils. The curriculum will allow flexibility to make adjustments within the programmes of study that adapt to the needs of our learners; but also offer opportunities for transitions between the schools.

In addition to the thematic curriculum approach English, maths and science will be taught as discrete subjects as much as possible but links between the various topics will be made within these subject areas. This approach will ensure a broad and balanced curriculum and positive outcomes for our pupils.

#### **Social Relationships Pupil Welfare**

It should be noted that any school curriculum must also include experiences outside formal timetabled time e.g. lunchtimes, playtimes, assemblies, school clubs etc.

The social and personal development of our pupils is an essential part of the curriculum and must run alongside the academic ambitions for the pupils. Social relationships can significantly impinge on progress in learning for ASD pupils and often manifests itself in:

- impairment of social interaction
- social communication
- social imagination and flexible thinking



## **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

- an absence of a significant delay in cognitive development
- an absence of general delay in speech and language development.

These factors have a significant effect on progress in learning particularly in such areas as:

- social reciprocity
- recognition and interpreting various social situations
- understanding social rules
- the acquisition of friendship skills
- understanding and expressing varied and emotional states.

Positive outcomes for learning and social maturity can be achieved through a strong emphasis on building a solid infrastructure of skills in social relationships and well being and learning how to become a good learner. Over learning may form a key part of the curriculum for certain pupils. Further intervention strategies to support individual and groups of pupils may be required in order to enable them to access the curriculum and the processes of learning.

Teaching methods vary and whilst all classrooms will have interactive televisions and appropriate technology, sometimes there will be a return to 'chalk and talk' methods. We will use as many opportunities as we can to explore the outdoor area and give children experiences with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning. Children will be taught in mixed ability groups. We will take advantage of other learning opportunities, namely; outside visitors and visits. As an inclusive school there will be opportunities for both schools to work together in this area.

### **Pupil Needs**

The curriculum will offer **broad and balanced** content, based on the National Curriculum, providing a clear structure in each year group; supporting the key elements of knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with ASD require order and structure and this will be provided by a clear pathway meeting their academic and social needs.

For some pupils there may be a possibility for reverse inclusion between the two schools in the MAT.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Early Years Foundation Stage – EYFS**

The Foundation Stage is the starting point in a child's schooling as they move from pre-school. It is essential that any pupils transferring from a nursery setting with an EHCP, with an ASD or SLCN diagnosis, have a positive experience and a smooth transition. As part of the normal practice this will involve visits in setting, at home and meetings with

## **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

other professionals working with the child; it will be vital that communication between all professionals and the pupil's parent/s/carers is strong so that practitioners can have a clear understanding of the pupils learning and development in order to plan for all of their needs. Grove Park currently operates a phased introduction to school and this would be the proviso from which we started at Aspire.

The children will follow the EYFS curriculum built within the seven areas of learning and development. The curriculum will be designed to create a curiosity in the world around them, encouraging them to become enthusiastic learners.

The over arching principle of the EYFS is that:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

The characteristics of effective learning will be observed throughout the foundation stage with teachers taking account of:

### **Playing and exploring – engagement**

Finding out and exploring

Playing with what they know

Being willing to 'have a go'

### **Active learning – motivation**

Being involved and concentrating

Keeping trying

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

### **Creating and thinking critically – thinking**

Having their own ideas

Making links

Choosing ways to do things<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> EYFS

## **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

This will form the basis of the plan do review cycle.

The three prime areas of learning are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These will be developed through the four specific areas listed below:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Arts and design

The children will experience a wide range of opportunities in their learning through a range of teaching approaches:

- Child initiated learning
- Teacher initiated learning
- Teacher directed learning

The foundation stage will develop the learning behaviours, independence and interests of these pupils, which in turn will prepare them for the transition to Key Stage 1.

The children will learn to use the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They will learn phonics through the 'Sounds Write' programme. A range of reading material will be used including those which teach whole words as some children with ASD will find this approach easier.

### **Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2**

The principles of the EYFS curriculum will be followed during term 1 of year 1 to ensure there is a smooth transition. The teacher and SENCo will then devise a timetable to move towards a more structured curriculum to meet the needs of the cohort.

The children at Aspire will follow the National Curriculum covering the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computing
- Religious Education (Using the Kent Agreed Syllabus)

## **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

- Physical Education
- Design Technology
- History
- Geography
- Art and Design
- Music
- Modern Foreign Languages
- PSHE/SEAL

The school will use 'Sounds Write' as the phonics programme throughout the school and all staff working with the pupils will complete the necessary training.

Children will develop their learning behaviours, developing independence and confidence; they will complete the statutory assessments at the end of year 2 and year 6 in line with their ability and school expectations.

### **Transition to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2**

Teachers in year one will be familiar with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum; and can use this document to plan from in the first term; ensuring continuity and progression for all children.

If children are ready to move to the National Curriculum then these documents will also be used in planning. There is still a significant amount of play based learning and opportunities to use the outside area.

### **Core Subjects:**

#### **English**

English is divided into three specific areas of reading, writing and SPAG (spelling punctuation and grammar).

#### **Reading**

Sounds-Write will also be used to teach phonics and spelling patterns across the school; although whole words will also be taught. This programme also allows for over learning and breaks learning down into small targeted steps focusing on word building, word reading and spelling. It also includes reading and comprehension activities. This specific programme is recommended by Ofsted (January 2013 – How the training conforms to the core and training criteria). The Sounds Write app offers a variety of activities to develop lifelong reading skills and also enhances the use of technology in an appropriate manner.

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Children read with varying levels of success, but we will encourage parents to practice the first 45 common exception words as often as possible and send these home within the first term in Reception, if appropriate. Sounds linked to the 'Soundwrite' scheme will be sent home for children to practice. There are 160 further high frequency words to learn to read and spell and then a further 120 medium frequency words.

The school will use a variety of reading schemes including Ginn, Oxford Reading Tree and Soundwrite books. This will allow the children to practice their skills and read books that will develop their confidence; reading the same book more than once is how children become proficient and begin to develop a love of literature.

Parents will be invited in during the first term to learn about the phonic and reading schemes we are using. We will revisit these sessions with parents frequently to ensure they are able to help their child. Reading books will be sent home every day.

### **Writing**

We will operate a strong emergent writing policy in line with the mainstream primary school, which means children will be allowed to write using sounds they know and reward them when they read it back, for example, extra Golden Time, House points, stickers, ICT time etc.

The Government grammar and spelling test, introduced as part of the end of Key Stage assessment, will be taught as part of the English curriculum and built into the planning.

The writing process involves skills in language, organisation, motor control and planning and sensory processing. These four areas can be problematic for many individuals with ASD-

- **Language difficulties** - can influence a student's ability to come up with ideas to write about.
- **Organisational challenges** - affect the ability to sequence words into sentences that make sense, and then sequence those sentences into a logical order for a paragraph.
- **Motor control and planning difficulties**- affect the ability to orient and stabilise the body whilst coordinating fine-motor muscles to hold a pencil or use a keyboard.
- **Sensory regulation**- can be difficult for the pupil to filter out the bombardment of sights, sounds, smells and movements whilst writing.

Written recording will be supported using a range of ICT/Computing programmes such as Clicker. This will enable pupils to feel a sense of accomplishment in creating texts. A multi-sensory approach to developing a more proficient script will be used when teaching handwriting. Teaching staff will seek advice and work closely with the therapy department. Some of our pupils will have a clinical need and find it is easier to record

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using a computer rather than by hand writing. Others may need or gain additional benefit from extra support with recording.

### **Speaking and Listening and Communication**

Whilst Speaking and Listening is no longer part of the curriculum, this will remain a focus for our children, because of their significant difficulty with communication. All children need to be competent speakers to express their thoughts and desires and to be able to communicate effectively in writing. Almost everything we do in the classroom centres around speaking and listening and children who are competent in this area often succeed in many other curriculum areas. There are many opportunities to speak, not least in class assemblies, which parents are invited to and the Christmas productions.

Promoting successful communication in a range of styles is key to developing confidence and self-esteem when interacting and engaging with others. Regular phonics and guided reading sessions, along with developing pupils writing and spelling skills, will create the foundation to securing skills for life. Communication and literacy skills will be woven into every aspect of school life, to encourage pupils to develop transferable skills.

Children with ASD should have access to phonics using a multisensory approach through auditory, visual and tactile teaching rather than just relying upon auditory processing skills or their writing.

### **Mathematics**

The learning of mathematical concepts is considered central to children and young people's ability to understand and make sense of the world around them. Aspire understand that enabling pupils to develop their skills in mathematics can have a real and tangible impact on the quality of their current and future lives. The school will follow a clear calculation policy, working on a methodology that fits their abilities; the ultimate aim will be to secure a method appropriate to their age and in line with national expectations.

Aspire will teach mathematics in a fun and imaginative way that is tailored to the individual needs of our pupils. Pupils will be encouraged to understand the importance of mathematics in everyday living and real life situations will be used where possible. The focus of our curriculum, therefore, will be to make use of various learning styles to teach and practice mathematical skills. These skills will then be applied to a variety of practical situations in a meaningful context for the pupil, showing how maths is an integral part of their future independent lives. Additionally, life numeracy skills will be included in the Aspire for Life Programme.

Understanding the technical language of mathematics may cause difficulty. For example, the pupil with ASD may understand the general meaning of words such as 'odd' and 'difference', but may not understand their different meanings in the context of

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mathematics. Understanding mathematical vocabulary particularly within the context of problem solving will need to be taught explicitly, revisited and added to each year.

Precision is necessary for mathematics, however pupils with ASD may find it demanding to focus on accuracy and detail. Each student will be offered guidance and support to improve their mathematical skills. Aspire will provide a safe place, where pupils are permitted to make mistakes, and then taught how to learn from them and improve next time.

Mathematics will be taught daily, there will be a clear emphasis on teaching the core skills of tables and four rules of number. Children will have opportunities to apply these skills to a range of open ended investigations.

**Science**

Every pupil at Aspire will be taught science weekly during timetabled lessons.

Pupils will have a wide range of practical scientific experiences. Science will also be taught in a cross curricular context, this will focus on the acquisition of knowledge, and experiments. Pupils will study a wide range of interactive topics, which can be applied to their everyday life experiences. Outside learning will be facilitated to offer a broad range of learning environments and experiences.

**Themed areas of study**

The Foundation subjects will be taught in a cross curricular themed approach where possible through the agreed topics, (Example below). Many of the topics will be linked with a focus on content and the skills needed to explore these subjects. The pupils will learn key facts; for example putting dates in order, learning names of the Continents and oceans; paint mixing and the ability to use a variety of tools.

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Reception	Nursery Rhymes and Fairytales	Christmas	Weather and travel	Celebrations	People who help us	Animals
Year 1	Sense of wonder	Light it Up	Once upon a time	Raise the Drawbridge	Come outside	Go wild
Year 2	Materials	Great Fire of London	Spoonful of Sugar	Rainforest	Pirates	Seaside

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Year 3	Stones and Bones	Crafty Celts	Romans	World Around Us	Making Waves	Light
Year 4	Eco Warriors	Rule Britannia	Vikings	Illumination	King of the Castle	Home Sweet Home
Year 5	To the Extreme	Victorians	Fasten your Seatbelts	World War II	Swinging Sixties	Rivers
Year 6	Gift of the Nile	Awful Egyptians	Forces of Nature	Groovy Greeks	Magnificent Mayans	Changes

**Music and Drama**

These subjects provide a multi sensory approach particularly surrounding visual, auditory and kinaesthetic methods. For some children, these subjects can be difficult and yet others may respond well to the creativity that they offer. Recent research has shown that Autistic children aged between 7 and 12, attending one 45-minute lesson in drama each week for 10 weeks, “show that all children showed some improvement in their social skills. The most significant change was in the number of facial expressions recognised, a key communication skill, others improved in their level of social interaction.”<sup>35</sup> Role-play can be used to practice and further develop skills across the curriculum such as speaking and listening, responding to music and movement and enhance social skill development, self-awareness and self-esteem.

**Religious Education**

Aspire will use the Kent Agreed Syllabus to teach RE; this is the scheme used by the majority of Kent Schools. The school will operate a predominantly Christian ethos through assemblies. We will promote a positive attitude and tolerance to different beliefs and religions; the pupils will learn about Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism.

Aspire will offer a range of thought provoking and stimulating learning opportunities, which may bring a new perspective to their thinking. It is important for all children whatever their belief or religion to share the importance of moral obligations and respect towards one another. We will use role play and adaptive teaching methods during these lessons. For our pupils this type of learning will bring new challenges with an unfamiliar environment, therefore careful planning is required, however, for some, this learning method will ignite their interests.

<sup>35</sup> Newscientist – Drama helps kids with autism communicate better – health – 15 April 2014



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### **Physical Education**

Aspire will promote a healthy lifestyle. The children will learn a range of skills and games which include netball, hockey, rounders, tag rugby, tennis and football for example.

Physical Education is an essential area for development of the mind and body which promotes a positive attitude. However, for children with ASD, PE can be an area that they struggle in. This could be for a variety of reasons such as–

- **Difficulties with generalisation**- different activities may need to be re-learnt as skill transfer and application may be limited.
- **Speed of skill acquisition**- increased time may be required for the processing and retention of skills and information.
- **Sensory issues** - noise, touch, smell and light may affect the pupils' ability to process information and affect behaviour.
- **Social difficulties** - co-operation, turn taking, sharing, negotiation and understanding rules.
- **Gross and fine motor difficulties** - imitation may be difficult when completing complex tasks.
- **Communication** - due to the pupils' interpretation of verbal messages, the increased length of time taken to process instructions and the lack of understanding of abstract concepts.
- **Environment** - difficulties in defining space can lead to unpredictable movement within the space (this may include changing rooms as well as the teaching and learning space).

Teaching will account for all of these difficulties and encourage active participation, with support as necessary. It may be that on a PE day children come dressed in PE kit already so the anxiety linked to changing or losing items is minimised. It will also ensure children know which day PE is and allow them to be prepared.

When a pupil discovers a sport that interests them, they will be encouraged to participate in the sport offered in the wider community. Should a young person have a particular gift or talent in this area, we will make every effort to nurture and support the individual to reach their full potential. This could be in the form of applying to the Swale Youth Development fund – a charity set up to help young local people nurture their talents by supporting them financially, for pupil premium pupils this fund may be appropriate or the school sports funding.

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### **Computing**

Computing is a key subject and is one that will typically interest Aspire pupils, because often this is a key motivator. Pupils will be taught the complexities of how the world operates through modern day communication systems and skills such as coding. Pupils will be taught the importance of e-safety and to recognise why it is important. Aspire staff will ensure that they all follow the e-safety policy and the Trust network will have the highest feasible internet security level.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) state, "The use of ICT can have a distinct benefit for children with ASD. The Government's good practice guidance AET 2011 suggests that schools should provide a thorough ICT assessment of the strengths and needs of individual children on the Autism spectrum. This should include an analysis of which equipment and communication aids are accessible and would be beneficial to the child." Therefore, Aspire will ensure software and Technology resources will be tailored to meet individual needs within the ICT budget. Aspire staff will integrate Computing into the curriculum by carefully planning and consider how it will meet the educational and curricular aims of each individual student.

Sensory over-stimulation and over-indulgence can occur, therefore software will be selected and programmes will be chosen by Aspire staff that are suited to individual pupils and take into account the use of graphics, animations and sounds.

Technology is sometimes more effective when individuals with ASD work with another to construct meaning, where verbal and visual cues can be used jointly, and discussion is encouraged. Aspire will use its computing resources to actively encourage communication and interaction with different programmes and each other. Cloud based programmes will be used in order for pupils to continue their learning outside of the classroom. Grove Park Primary already uses Bug Club (Reading and Phonics) and Matific (maths software), which children can access at home; both schools will work together to access these resources.

### **Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)**

Aspire School will base the school's sex and relationship education policy on SRE policy on the DfE Guidance document (DfES 0116/2000).

In this document SRE is defined as: learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

It runs in conjunction with the PSHE, Child Protection and Safeguarding, anti-bullying and inclusion policies.

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The aim of SRE is to provide children with age appropriate information, explore attitudes and values and develop skills in order to empower them to make positive decisions about their health related behaviour.

This should take place with consideration of the qualities of relationships within families.

At Aspire School we aim:

- To provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled
- To clarify/reinforce existing knowledge
- To raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;
- To help pupils understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;
- To help pupils' develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities.
- To provide the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others;
- To help gain access to information and support
- To develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle
- To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media
- To respect and care for their bodies
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood

### **Enrichment Programme**

Throughout the year as part of the themed learning we will build in an enrichment programme to support the various topics being studied and create a number of **Focus Days** to support the learning, bringing topic to the children in a way that will engage their learning even more, through practical hands on experiences.

**Forest Schools** - The Government's Natural Environment White Paper 2011 states that there is an urgent need to address the growing disconnection of children from the natural environment. A study by Blakesley, Rickinson and Dillon, 2013. *Engaging children on the autistic spectrum with the natural environment: Teacher insight study and evidence review*. Natural England Commissioned Reports, NECR116 states that the most compelling benefits of outdoor learning for autistic children were supporting the

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curriculum (bringing the curriculum to life); skill development (social skills and well-being) and personal, social and health education.

The philosophy of **Forest Schools** is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through an innovative educational approach to outdoor play and learning in a woodland environment. Pupils visit the same area on a regular basis and through play, have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others.

The aim of Forest Schools is to develop:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Intrinsic motivation
- Empathy
- Good social communication skills
- Independence
- A positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence

states that: "Forest school is an excellent medium for working with pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders since the ethos of the scheme is setting pupils up to succeed through easily achievable tasks. The opportunities for tackling the triad of impairment: social interaction, communication, and flexibility of thought permeate all of the activities in an environment devoid of the stresses of schools and classrooms." Subject to satisfactory risk assessments, Aspire aim to have a section of our outside learning space safely fenced off for this purpose.

Once staff have been appointed, a member of staff will attend the Forest School training, to allow the proper implementation of the scheme.

As part of the partnership and inclusive work between the two schools we hope to explore this work together as Grove Park Primary will have at least one teacher trained in this area. It also hoped that when events occur at the mainstream primary school, such as Viking visitors that children from Aspire who are able would participate in these days to allow hands on learning, social interaction and collaborative learning.

### **Clubs**

The aims and objectives of clubs, is to engage pupils with socialisation opportunities and structure during the day. These will be available to all pupils who show an interest in the area offered, but can be further targeted at individuals who need specific intense support over and above that offered through the typical day, for example those pupils

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who qualify for pupil premium funding may require additional emotional support, this could be offered in the form of a nurture club. Children who may have a very restricted diet could attend a food science club. Other clubs such as Lego club and computing are likely to appeal to a wide range of pupils and are ideal for those who require additional support to communicate with others, staff may find that this is a useful time to reinforce skills learnt throughout the curriculum. Clubs will be accessed during the day, a breakfast club before school starts will allow pupils to eat in a social setting and regulate blood sugar levels. As the school grows we will offer after school clubs, extending the opportunities for parents to work and maximise socialisation opportunities for pupils. It may be that some of these take place at the mainstream school. For example an animal club runs on Mondays at the school and pupils could attend this.

### **Teaching Time**

All Key Stages will formally start the school day at 09.15 when registration closes. Anybody arriving after this point has a late mark put against his or her name. The day will finish at 16.00.

English and Mathematics will last for one hour, and Aspire for Life lessons will be taught daily emphasising key skills for life during key stage two. Other subjects will offer shorter lesson times; as will the key stage one curriculum. Concentration and emotional regulation is poor and modifications may be needed for lesson times. Typically, our cohort will require lots of movement, by focusing on shorter, targeted, structured lessons we will increase productivity from these pupils. Participation in short sensory motor circuits effectively prepares children to engage with the day ahead or set task. Behavioural needs such as fidgeting, poor concentration, excessive physical contact or overall lethargy can indicate that a child is finding it difficult to connect with the learning process. By offering additional movement breaks, we can energise or settle young people to learn effectively.

### **School Council**

Pupil voice is important. Young people need to know that their opinions have been heard and acted upon appropriately, it is also important that they have responsibility, trust and a sense of community. Aspire will have a school council, consisting of one member from each year group, who will attend termly meetings with a member of teaching staff in order for their views to be fed back. When the school is at full capacity we will give the School Council a small budget for the school, this shows trust and that student voice is taken seriously. This will also reinforce life skills of money management and effective budgeting.

The school will also have an eco-council. Pupil members will have the responsibility to switch off the lights and conserve energy, pull the blinds, look after the school grounds when required. Meet to discuss how things could be improved and introduce new ideas.

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Classroom helpers' responsibility will be to tidy the book corner, sort out the pencil pots, and help with general tidying within the classroom. Cloakroom monitors will help to keep the corridors organised and tidy.

There will be opportunities for the two schools in the Trust to work together as joint school council projects.

#### **Therapeutic Curriculum**

Aspire will commission the services to assess and support the delivery of therapy programmes. Speech and language will be delivered collaboratively through the curriculum as much as possible with the speech and language targets embedded in the learning across the school. Some pupils may have more specific requirements, with language programmes, as part of their EHCP; and these will be delivered in accordance with the therapy plan by trained teaching assistants and planned by a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

The SALTs at Aspire School will endeavour to maximise each student's individual communication potential. Complex needs addressed at Aspire will include:

- Attention and listening skills
- Receptive language skills
- Expressive language skills
- Oro-motor and/or phonology
- Speech and language delay
- Social communication skills
- Functional communication skills
- Sensory processing disorders

Occupational and physiotherapists may also need to work with individuals where this is a part of the EHCP plan. If possible these may be applied to small groups and not always on an individual basis.

#### **Meeting additional needs of pupils with ASD**

The children will be admitted on the basis of the admission criteria and the EHCP will have to meet that criteria. Aspire and the ethos of the Trust is to ensure a fully inclusive approach. Whilst the school will follow the National Curriculum the needs of the child will be at the forefront of any planning, which will include strategies of approach and content to meet the needs of all pupils. All professionals will work closely to ensure that needs are identified and appropriate plans are in place; these will include therapy, learning and social development.

**D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

**Pupil Premium**

The principles of teaching and learning will apply to all pupils at Aspire. Provision for Pupil Premium Pupils will be set in accordance with needs both academically and socially and interventions will be devised appropriately, for example, counselling, social therapy programmes, tuition if appropriate.

**Aspire For Life Programme**

Aspire School firmly believe that for its pupils to succeed, they should be equipped with the skills required to carry them through school life, but also those that prepare them for adult life, and on which a solid foundation can be built. To achieve this goal, every pupil at Aspire School will be taught how to maintain independent living skills; staff and the therapy team will support the pupils to learn these within a school environment, but will endeavour to support the transfer of these skills in to external settings such as the home, the community and their future careers. Independent living and thinking skills will be taught cross curricular for all Key Stages, when appropriate, and as separate subjects where necessary. The four key areas of development will cover the following topics:

Communication	Etiquette. Soft skills surrounding friendliness and customer service. Interaction skills, social imagination, including understanding body language, importance of handshakes and eye contact. How to ask for help in everyday situations. Socialising in everyday situations such as talking to health professionals and answering the telephone. Appropriate responses for a variety of relationships. Establishing and maintaining friendships. Speaking clearly and confidently.
Cognition	Money management. Independent travel. Basic everyday home management including cookery, laundry care and DIY skills. Leadership skills. Planning and prioritisation, accurately estimating times for tasks and establishing appropriate routines. Medication storage and self administration, if appropriate and in line with the agreed policy.
Emotional	Relationships including sex education. Drug and alcohol awareness. Staying safe in everyday situations including. How to deal with anxiety, anger and frustration appropriately.

**D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

	Morals and respect for others including bullying and the importance of E-safety.
Sensory and Physical needs	Personal hygiene. Coping strategies for everyday situations. Independent personal care including habits and appropriateness, road safety and first aid. The importance of presentation including hairstyles and appropriate clothing.

**English as an Additional Language**

It is the duty of the Trust and Aspire school to ensure that we are inclusive at every level and all pupils, whatever their background and ethnicity, must be able to access learning to ensure they make progress, pupils who have English as an additional language will have access to a range of learning opportunities and approaches:

- Opportunities to talk and speak about tasks before writing.
- Adult support that enables access to vocabulary and scaffolds learning etc
- use of their own language to support some of their learning
- parental engagement

We plan to use the Kent Steps Programme; this is a planning model to ascertain the children's needs and capacity, to ensure next steps are planned appropriately; this may need to be run as an intervention. This would be a common framework to follow in Kent schools.

**Children in Care (CiC)**

In line with the inclusive ethos of the Trust, Looked after children will be fully supported at the Aspire School. CiC children have specific needs and it is essential that all professionals working with the child have clear lines of communication which allow for the best outcomes for these pupils. Grove Park Primary has successfully demonstrated that they have systems and strategies in place that serve to close the achievement gap between this pupil group. (Please see school data) Much of this good practice can be shared in the close working partnership of the two schools, Pupil Premium and additional funding can be used to enhance the level of support and strategies used; for example access to one to one tuition, quality first marking one to one, extra curricula activities etc.

**Parental Engagement**

The schools relationship with parents is essential, particularly given the specific needs of the children. Clear lines of communication will be established, through face to face meetings and reviews, newsletters and parental surveys. An 'Open Door' policy will be encouraged with many opportunities for parents to speak with the school. There will be



## **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

regular 'event evenings' to discuss ways to support children at home and drop in sessions so parents can speak directly with the SENCo. In time parenting sessions will be run to encourage a sharing of difficulties and a solution to some of the problems parents may experience.

The school will look to run a Home School Association in conjunction with the existing Grove Park Primary School group.

### **Transition**

Preparing people with autism is vital. Once pupils have had their place confirmed at Aspire the use of technology will also be an important element to a smooth transition. Short videos of the environment will be available via the school website, promoting familiarity before entering the school. When a pupil joins midterm, iPads will be used from the existing peer group to send a welcome message to the new member of the class and likewise the new student would be encouraged to reciprocate -alleviating anxiety for both parties. A photograph of the new student will be placed in the class to support the existing peer group.

When supporting a transition back in to education after a period of sustained absence, it is essential that the reasons behind the absence are clearly understood, and therefore can be supported sensitively and appropriately. A senior staff member from Aspire School, will be identified, and will visit the pupil in their current setting or home to begin to re-establish their trust and discuss the pathway for being integrated back into a formal school setting.

A Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) will be created to highlight the academic, social and emotional needs required for the pupil to feel comfortable and positive about their return to school. If, initially, the pupil requires a part-time timetable with progression to full-time, this will be recorded and agreed in the PSP.

Pupils may require external support from a counsellor specialising in ASD or other provision relevant to their needs. Success will eventually come in the form of self-management and recognition of appropriate responses to behaviours.

Even when pupils are familiar and comfortable with their educational setting, the disruption caused by inset days and school holidays, can raise anxieties and distress, not only for the pupil, but their family as well. If not properly managed, the impact on poor emotional regulation and change of routine could present themselves in the form of inappropriate, disruptive and challenging behaviour. Aspire School will use the last three weeks of the Summer Term to calmly and slowly introduce the pupils to their new class teacher and classroom; for the first week pupils will be slowly introduced to the new classroom by visiting it when it is unoccupied and calm, reassuring and familiarising themselves to the environment. The second week will allow the new class teacher to come into the current classroom which is familiar and spend time getting to know the

### **D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake**

pupils and follow their new timetable, along with the support of learning support assistants. For the final week, pupils will have the opportunity to spend time with their new, but now familiar, class teacher in their new classroom; adjusting to the new environment and preparing their Pupil Passport ready for the summer holiday ahead.

In 2006 the National Autistic Society carried out a survey called Make School Make Sense. One of the outcomes of this survey focused on the importance of appropriate support with transition and how, when done properly can make a great difference to the life chances of young people; unfortunately for many young people, this appropriate support with transition is never received. The survey, revealed that only 53% of young people had access to transitional plans during their time of education, and that it was imperative for these to have the input of adult social services, which in 83% of cases did not happen.<sup>36</sup>

Pupils will transfer to secondary school from Aspire. Some children will be able to access a main stream secondary school environment; Aspire will follow the guidance from the secondary school. We accept that some pupils will still require specialist provision. A clear transition to secondary school programme will be delivered during year 6 in term 6.

### **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

If you are applying for more than one school, please provide one version of this section, referring to individual schools or circumstances where relevant.

**All** applicants will need to complete the table below but you will give us different information depending on which type of group you are. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

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<sup>36</sup> Ambitious About Autism website 2014.

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

The principles of the Trust are about achieving the right outcomes for our pupils, we focus very heavily on giving children the right learning opportunities to achieve and thrive in line with their peers at every level. Clearly, there is a drive towards attainment built within the national expectations but achievement and progress in all aspects of schooling are essential. Aspire will work within the same principles, valuing pupil progress as successful learners and members of the community. Pupils will have clear targets set for their academic predictions.

### **Assessments**

All Aspire pupils will have observations before entering the school to ensure their suitability within the agreed admission criteria. This will include looking at:

- Educational Psychology assessments
- Speech and Language assessments
- Occupational Therapy assessments
- Paediatrician Reports
- Any additional reports from professionals working with the child

Once enrolled a more robust assessment will take place within a multidisciplinary team to establish their particular learning needs. It will be key to give children time to settle into school so an accurate picture of their capability is formed in all subjects. By building up a clear learning profile, teaching staff will be able to plan and individualise learning to a greater extent. The SENCo will consider each pupil and any additional arrangements that may need to be made.

Pupils will undertake teacher based assessments regularly and formative data will be produced at least three times per year. If there are any gaps in their cognitive profile then further assessments will be made.

### **Additional Needs**

A multi-disciplinary approach is essential; working together in teams supporting the young person is paramount. All professionals working with the pupil will undertake this role with the due consideration that it rightly deserves:

- Identifies pupils with SLT/OT/PT on their EHCP.
- Provides Assessment (formal and observation).
- Sets targets with prescribed activities annually.
- Provides programmes of therapy: Individual, paired, group, class-based in termly blocks, on a weekly basis. Monitors progress, undertakes evaluation and regular review of programme
- Provides Annual Review progress reports.

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

- Works as part of the multi-disciplinary team i.e. parents, teaching staff, OT, physio, SENCo, educational psychologist etc. to support and develop an optimum communication, functional, sensory environment to maximise the pupils' access to the curriculum and their achievement.
- Collects relevant activity data for service performance monitoring, quality assurance and measurement against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Strive to continuously improve the quality of the service through audit, evaluation and Continuous Professional Development activities.

### **Observations**

Aspire Journey Books could be used to record observations and progress, particularly in KS1 and Foundation Stage classrooms; this may remain appropriate as children progress through the school and will focus on each child being unique.

### **Personalised Learning Plan**

All pupils will have outcomes directly linked to their EHCP. Targets are set in order to differentiate work appropriately and assist the student in building confidence in their abilities to succeed and challenge themselves further to make improvements. Pupils will be encouraged to be involved in recording their progress and outcomes written in an accessible and child friendly format. Outcomes will be shared with parents regularly during parent/teacher consultations. A copy of the outcome sheet will be available for parents to take away. Transitions to and from Aspire may also form part of this plan.

Various strategies will be used to ensure children reach the targets that have been set. For example, over learning of phonics, pre teaching of vocabulary and multi sensory approaches to learning.

### **Academic and Data Tracking**

With the changes to the assessment and reporting processes we will use Target Tracker or B squared as a tracking resource for our pupils. These are well considered systems that contain all the relevant material for monitoring the achievements of the pupils in all aspects of their learning and in particular reading, writing, mathematics and science. Target tracker will allow us to keep detailed information on each student as they progress through the school, it will highlight gaps in learning and achievements can be easily seen. It will allow detailed tracking through all phases of the primary school, from EYFS to National Curriculum in line with the new terminology and expectations of 'emerging', 'expected' and 'exceeding'. The system is a cloud-based package, which is accessible to all staff and frequently updated in line with new initiatives and national requirements. B squared will allow us to track pupils who are not yet at National curriculum levels and identify targets and progress. This is likely only to be in a few areas as children will have a mixed cognitive profile.

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

As with all systems they require a substantial amount of information from the teachers and their input is paramount. Regular pupil progress meetings will be held to discuss each pupil, where targets and needs will be discussed. This will be very important to ensure all aspects of the pupils learning are on track to meet the expectations that have been forecast. It is also very important that we work closely with parents and carers and the sharing of all information is essential.

### **Performance Targets**

Effective teaching and learning is most productive when individual pupil progress is tracked, monitored, reviewed and modified by senior members of staff. The following data has been based on a benchmark against our most local comparable school, Laleham Gap, who have a similar intake criteria; however, we have added challenge to our figures.

#### **EYFS:**

We would expect 50% of the Aspire cohort will reach a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). This may be perceived as being low but given the cohort it is likely that children with ASD or SLCN difficulties may not meet the criteria to have a good level of development so early in their school career. Personal, social and emotional skills will be explicitly taught throughout their school life at Aspire.

#### **Key Stage 1:**

Phonics screening in year 1: we anticipate that given our phonics chosen programme and the work undertaken in the mainstream primary that we will achieve 65%.

60% in reading, writing and mathematics will be at the expected level at the end of KS1. We are not in a position to predict SPAG test scores at this point.

#### **Key Stage 2:**

60% to make the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics.

In terms of progress we would anticipate 70% to make their expected predictions.

#### **Attendance:**

100% in all key stages will be the target set. Whilst this is an ambitious target at the start, we would hope to achieve this in the long term when relationships had been established. Individual plans will be put in place for children who find attending school difficult. We anticipate achieving 96% as a minimum.

#### **Behaviour:**

100% of pupils to recognise and accept their behaviour and deal with this effectively. It is essential to recognise certain behaviours are a manifestation of an underlying issue, and this must be identified in order to support a pupil and their parents. Individual plans will be put in place for children who are exhibiting challenging behaviour in order to

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

reduce their anxiety and PSP will be in place for any child who may be at risk of exclusion or who requires a part time timetable. This may be evident if a pupil transfers to a particular cohort.

### **Social, Emotional and Communication**

Social, emotional and communication needs will be assessed using a range of tools. For example, in house systems such as logs, surveys, attendance data, teaching observations. As mentioned in D1 many ASD pupils require support and practice in developing their social skills and recognising acceptable behaviours in certain situations. Behaviour and learning behaviours will form an essential part of the curriculum and all staff will be required to incorporate this as part of their teaching, the ethos of the school and the MAT will ensure that the attitudes towards behaviour management are robust and consistent through a clear set of policies that reflect the ethos of the MAT and the context of each school within it. Policies will be regularly reviewed and communicated to all members of the school community. Pupil and parent surveys will be used as part of the evaluation about these systems.

There will be a robust tracking system for all behaviour incidents and these will be logged and recorded on a central file, the monitoring processes will continually evaluate behaviour incidents and any significant trends that need to be considered.

Attendance is a strong measure of a school's overall success as it often reflects the level of parental and pupil engagement and general happiness at school. Aspire will use SIMS to record attendance and regular monitoring will be used to see any patterns that may occur; first day calling will be adopted as a quick mechanism to discuss why a child is absent from school.

The school will use the systems available to keep records that do not require excessive paperwork; for example Target Tracker, B Squared and SIMS.

### **Therapeutic needs**

The school's vision for pupil success does not just focus on the academic and social outcomes of pupils, but also their emotional well-being and their skills for modern day life.

We will monitor pupils learning across performance, behaviour, attendance and personal development in order to set realistic achievable targets and set further outcomes in order for pupils to maximise their potential. By supporting the key issues identified in the pupils' plans correctly, through education, the need for additional support in adult life is greatly reduced. All of our pupils will be equipped for life in Literacy and Numeracy Skills. This is a high expectation for some pupils, as their profile typically indicates that either English or Mathematics will be a challenge for them. However, by providing therapy work, we believe we can make a difference to attainment.

Studies of the effectiveness of Occupational Therapy in Canada confirm this:

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

Ninety-eight percent of the fifty children made progress in their goals, with many gains maintained over the six-month follow-up period. Improvement on the standardized measures was clinically significant in the targeted area of school productivity. The rate of change for children receiving occupational therapy exceeded that expected due to maturation, suggesting that intervention was the reason for the improvement measured. The productivity goals were all educationally relevant, to support the premise that school-based therapy should support the student's performance in the school setting. Goals included copying from the board, holding a pencil correctly, keyboarding, cutting, colouring, use of a computer mouse, organising a desk and focusing on a task, all of which underlie and support academic performance.<sup>37</sup>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Trust always looks to appoint the best possible teachers and this will be reflected in the recruitment of staff to Aspire School; however, in the first two years we would look to appoint staff with specific special school experience. A rigorous recruitment process will take place to ensure the best qualified and capable staff are appointed.

There will be a clear expectation across the MAT of all staff with regards to planning, teaching and feedback to pupils. Senior leadership team (SLT) and middle managers will participate in regular formal and informal lesson observations as both 'Drop In' or pre-arranged sessions. This will involve observation of the learning taking place, covering appropriate differentiation, matching the needs of the children within the lesson, suitable and matched resources, behaviour strategies and learning behaviours within the class. The observer will then provide feedback to ensure the highest quality of teaching at all times. If a teacher falls below the expected high level, shadowing and mentoring support from the SLT will be implemented to ensure that the member of staff is fully supported within their role with clear targets set. All leaders will provide feedback to the SLT where the quality of provision will be discussed on regular basis. In addition to the face to face observations all teachers will be given opportunities to evaluate their own teaching and the teaching of their peers through filming of lessons.

All staff will undergo an induction programme and NQTs will have a clear development programme with an assigned Mentor for the year. All staff will have an annual appraisal with clear targets set, around pupil outcomes and those that support professional development; these will ensure that all teachers are working within the professional standards.

### **Pupil Performance**

Individual pupils will be monitored through the outcome process as well as through Target Tracker and B Squared. As part of the pupil progress meetings the Headteacher/SENCo will analyse findings to ascertain the underperforming groups or pupils and consider certain criteria/characteristics; for example;

<sup>37</sup> King et al. (1999) <http://www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/effectivenessofot.asp>

## **D2 – measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets**

- Rates of progress compared to similar peers and the class
- Pupil Premium pupils
- Attainment on entry

Judgements will be made as to whether the curriculum and specific provision and teaching approaches are contributing to any apparent gaps. RAISEonline and other available data can be used when there is sufficient historical information that compares with national data sets.

Actions will be put in place to deal with immediate solutions and long term plans will be set within the School Improvement Planning process and in discussion with the Local Governing Body Board.

Regular reports will be made available and reported back to the Standard's committee regarding overall school performance.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Regular meetings will be held throughout the year this will include an annual review and two additional parents' evenings. Effective communication between parents regarding attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance are essential to ensure the best outcomes at every level for our pupils. The school will use a range of formal and informal systems to communicate, including an annual written report by the class teacher.

### **Parental Surveys**

Across the MAT parents will have an opportunity to complete an annual satisfaction survey, where they will be able to support in the schools journey of continual review and improvement.

## **D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

If you are applying for more than one school, please provide one version of this section, referring to individual schools or circumstances where relevant.

**All** applicants will need to complete this section, but you will give us different information depending on which type of group you are. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

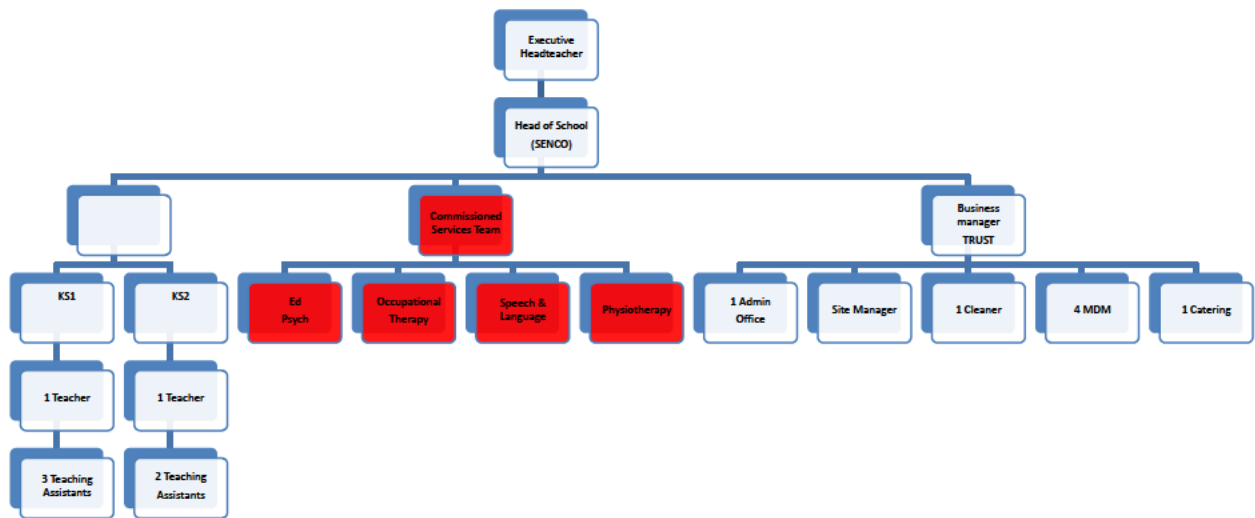


**D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

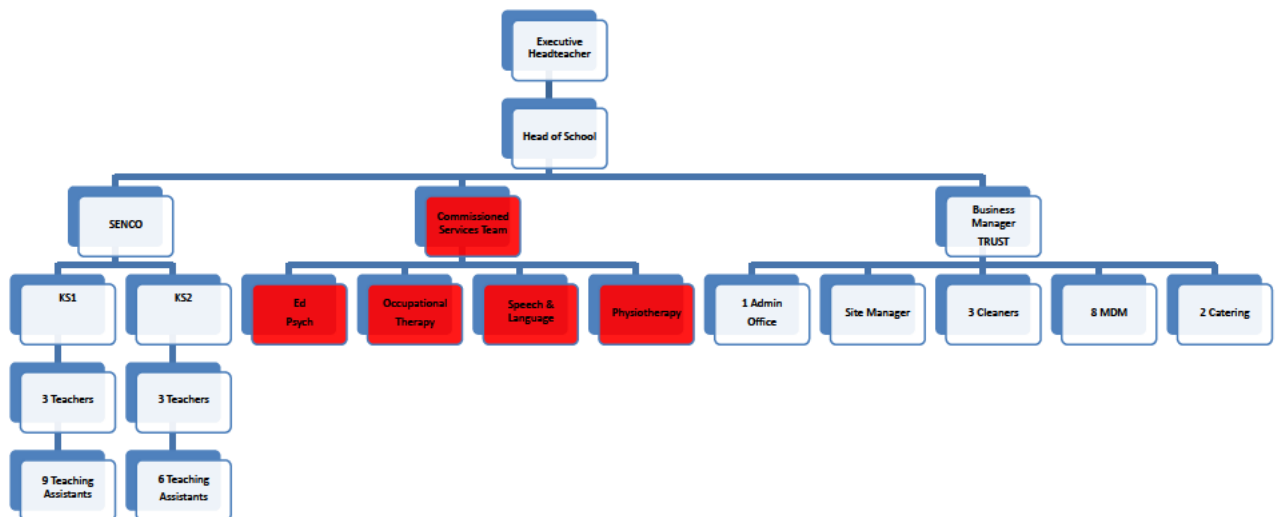
As part of the MAT Aspire will have a clearly defined staff structure, with divisions of responsibility and clear lines of authority and accountability. The staffing structure below shows the staff intended for years 1 to 5 in line with the growth of the school.

Labels marked in red indicate services that will be commissioned; the long term plan over time would be to build the skill base within the school’s staffing structure as a shared resource across the MAT.

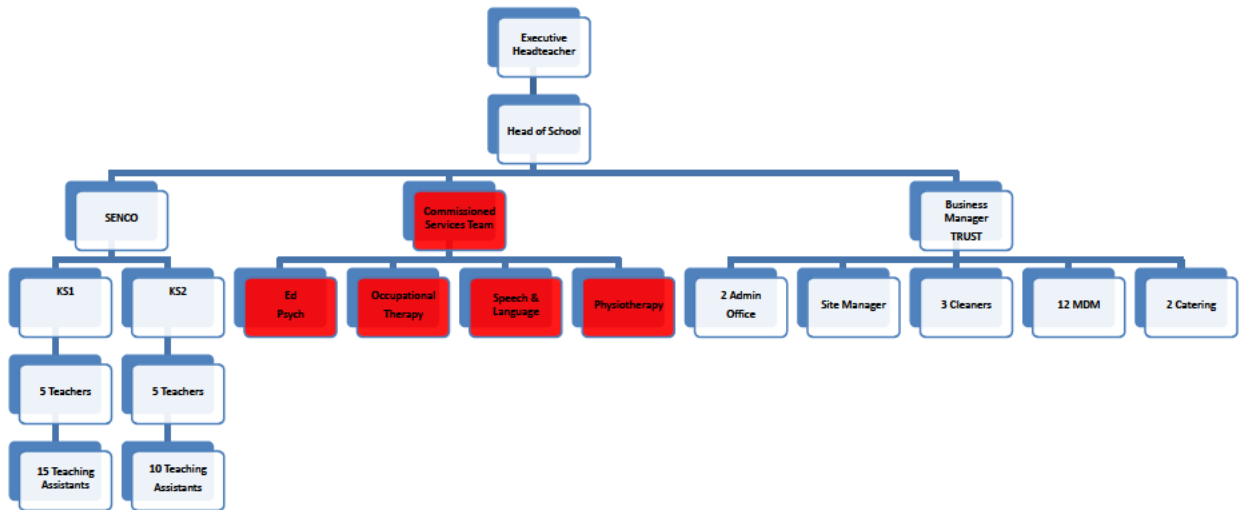
**Figure 1 Staffing Year 1**



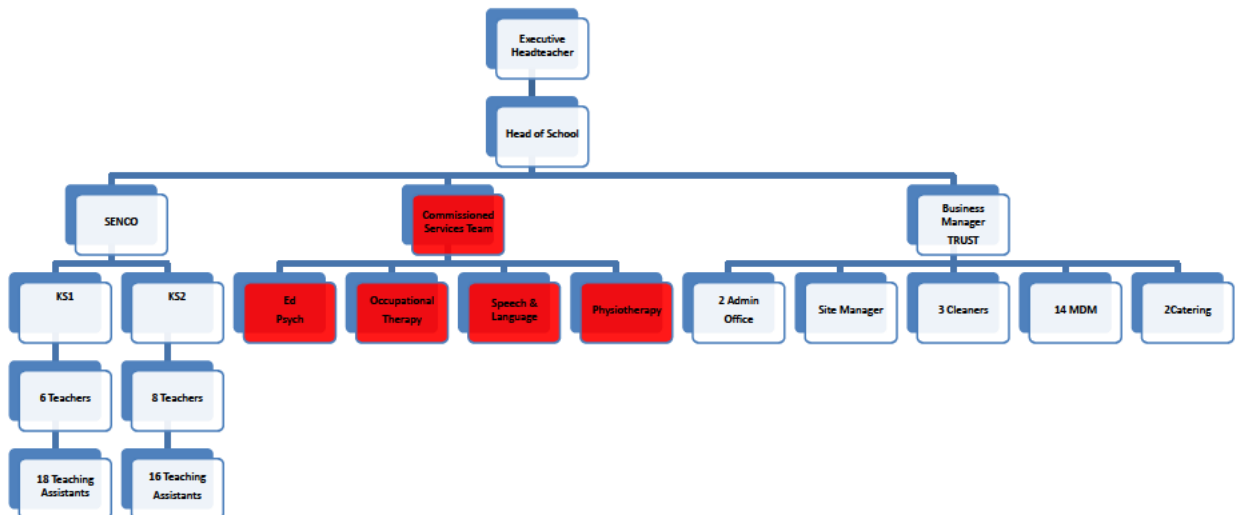
**Figure 2 Staffing Year 2**



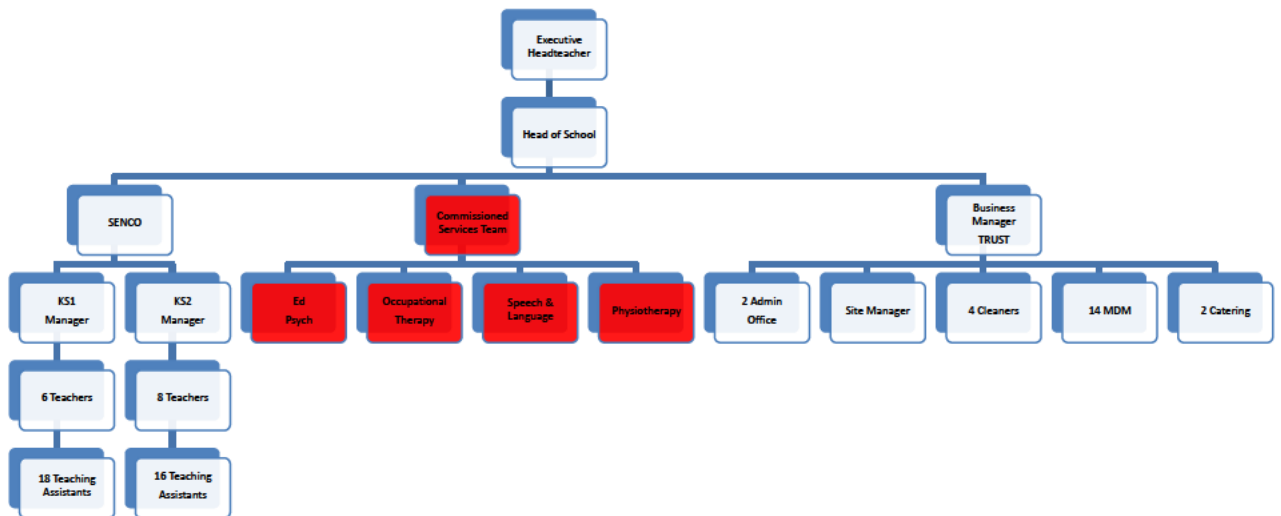
**Figure 3 Staffing Year 3**



**Figure 4 Staffing Year 4**



**Figure 5 Staffing Year 5**



### **D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

Staff are key to the success for our pupils and the school; based on that principle, the MAT will only employ the best staff who will provide a continuous high standard of teaching and learning. All staff must be ambitious for our pupils and the school and they must be prepared to continually grow professionally; the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure that high quality CPD is available across both schools. Aspire will offer a unique learning environment and opportunities to teach in a highly specialist school. Staff will develop key skills, further training and an in-depth knowledge of Autism in order to promote a long and successful career within the provision.

Aspire will always approach employment and recruitment with the vision and ethos of the Trust in mind to ensure we attract the best candidates to support those aims. All teaching staff will hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and all staff will have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Aspire pupils are likely to bring diverse challenges, therefore all staff will be required to be flexible, imaginative and forward thinking in all that they do.

The Governing Body and executive headteacher, with support from other SLT members, will have responsibility for selecting and appointing all teaching and support staff. At least one member of the selection panel will have had Safer Recruitment Training in accordance with required recruitment and safeguarding procedures. We will encourage highly experienced and knowledgeable, qualified teachers specialising in Autism Spectrum Disorders to apply for positions, as we believe staff with an understanding of our pupils' difficulties will provide the best academic and personal outcomes for each individual, instil, and encourage parental confidence in our provision.

Teaching staff will provide targeted intervention work, with the support of highly qualified Teaching Assistants (TAs); TAs will be expected to work with pupils who require a more independent approach, under the supervision of the class teacher. TAs will be expected to have the ability to teach and demonstrate a high academic level in both English and Maths. A basic requirement of employment will be a minimum grade C GCSE. Training will be ongoing to ensure skills are relevant and up to date. A robust appraisal system for all staff will ensure training needs are appropriately planned and implemented, which will create a highly skilled team, who are encouraged to be professionally ambitious in their own growth.

Our cohort will require a high level of intervention from Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy and this will be essential to the success of our pupils' personal and academic outcomes. In order to provide excellent results we will initially commission the services of a qualified team of professionals already available to schools; it will be a long term ambition to gradually create an in house team that are employed by the school to implement the therapy plans. The MAT already employs an educational psychologist and has plans to train the SENCo in occupational therapy, which will ensure that programmes are correctly adhered to. Speech and language assessments

### **D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

are already carried out by a commissioned therapist and plans delivered by trained staff. There will be clear advantages to creating an in house team in the long term for the benefit of all schools in the MAT.

Figures 1 to 5 above illustrate a gradual staffing growth of the school, we will look to appoint a Head of School in year 1 and the candidate will be required to demonstrate key skills in SEND as they will initially take the lead as SENCo, this will ensure that there is a clear pathway of expertise that begins at the top; eventually, and by year 2, a SENCo will be employed to work specifically in Aspire School.

The Trust will employ staff every year over the period of growth to full capacity and responsibilities and leadership roles will be added as the need arises. The Trust has expertise in the mainstream primary and this will be used to support the curriculum and the day to day running of the new school; and support the Head of School in the strategic development of Aspire. The principles of best value will be maintained and shared resources such as personnel and financial management will be run through the main primary school under the supervision of the Trust Business Manager. As the school grows additional staff will be employed to ensure that the smooth day to day running of all schools in the MAT is maintained.

#### **Key Staff roles and responsibilities**

The Senior Leadership Team will consist of the Executive Headteacher, Head of Aspire School/SENCo, Head of School at Grove Park Primary and the Trust Business Manager.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Expertise and Responsibility</b>
Executive Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the Trustees and Members to oversee the strategic direction of the Trust</li><li>• Ensure financial probity and work closely with the Business Manager to provide a sound financial plan</li><li>• Recruitment and staff structure for all schools</li><li>• Work with the Head of Aspire and SLT to ensure the vision</li></ul>

**D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

	<p>and ethos of the school is nurtured and developed</p>
<p>Head of School Aspire/SENCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No teaching responsibility</li> <li>• Day to day running of the school, e.g. covering absence</li> <li>• Responsible to the Executive Headteacher and the Local Governing Body</li> <li>• Extensive knowledge of the Code of Practice and needs of ASD pupils.</li> <li>• Staff recruitment with Executive Headteacher.</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Liaise and work with families and the wider community and outside agencies</li> <li>• Monitoring the quality of provision through teaching and learning and delivery of the curriculum</li> <li>• Responsible for the outcomes of the pupils in discussion with staff at Pupil Progress meetings</li> <li>• Be responsible for assessing children to meet admission criteria</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• See all SENCO duties below for year 1</li> </ul>
<p>SENCo appointed year 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy, ensuring that it complies with the new SEN legislation.</li> <li>• Have regard and knowledge of the new SEN Code of Practice and Equality Act.</li> <li>• Efficient and effective deployment of support staff and resources. Offer</li> </ul>

**D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

	<p>professional guidance to colleagues, securing high quality teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse and assess children's needs within a multi- disciplinary team.</li> <li>• Monitor data and help to set targets for individual children.</li> <li>• Assist in assessment and observations of potential pupils to Aspire.</li> <li>• Show perspective parents/carers around the school when required.</li> <li>• Regular liaison with the therapy team.</li> <li>• Offer a swift and easy referral route for parents via the school.</li> <li>• Support parents/carers regarding a range of issues that could affect their ability to parent effectively, and encourage them to take an active role in their child's whole development, signposting to relevant services or courses offered via the PTA/support group – Friends of Aspire, or to other appropriate organisations/charities.</li> <li>• Provide a range of activities and workshops for parents/carers, working with the PTA.</li> <li>• Be responsible for assessing children to meet admission criteria</li> </ul>
Business Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of financial planning across the Trust</li> <li>• Produce forecasts and budget projections</li> <li>• Work with Executive Headteacher and Finance committee to produce long term financial plans for the Trust</li> </ul>

**D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the auditors to ensure due process is always followed.</li> <li>• Personnel and employment contracts etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Head of School/Inclusion Manager (GPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No teaching responsibility</li> <li>• Responsible to the Executive Headteacher</li> <li>• Extensive knowledge of main stream primary education and SEND</li> <li>• Staff recruitment with Executive Headteacher</li> <li>• Liaise and work with families and the wider community</li> <li>• Monitoring the quality of provision through teaching and learning and delivery of the curriculum</li> <li>• Responsible for the outcomes of the pupils in discussion with staff at pupil progress meetings</li> <li>• Behaviour and exclusions (If needed)</li> <li>• Be responsible for assessing children to meet admission criteria</li> </ul>

**Key Stage Leaders**

After a sustained period of teaching in the school, the Executive Headteacher and Head of School will identify members of staff whom he/she feels would have the relevant skills to become key stage leaders at Aspire. We do not anticipate this to come into effect until year 5; however, the Head of School may put forward his/her recommendations prior to that point. Key stage leaders will be supportive of Head of School in his/her duties sharing the vision, ethos and culture of working together to achieve the best outcomes.

Key stage leaders' main responsibilities will be:

- Co-ordinate and evaluate teaching and learning within the Key Stage and to liaise with other members of the leadership team where necessary, to ensure continuity and progression throughout the curriculum.

### **D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

- Responsibility for progress and attainment of pupils
- Take a leading role in specific project(s) to be decided with the Head of School and Executive Headteacher.
- Lead by example as a teacher and manager, achieving high standards of pupil attainment, behaviour and motivation through effective teaching and data management.
- Be responsible to the Head of School for coordinating the work of the Key Stage, supporting and advising where appropriate.
- Ensure continuity and progression throughout the curriculum.
- Take overall responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils and their families in their Key Stage.
- Oversee the organisation of educational visits.
- Assist in the assessment process of future pupils to Aspire.
- Show potential parents/carers round Aspire at our open days.

#### **Class Teachers**

By the time that Aspire has reached full capacity all teachers will have responsibility for areas of the curriculum; we anticipate that they will work closely across the Trust. During the period of growth to full capacity Aspire will work closely with the mainstream primary for curriculum planning.

All staff will be employed in accordance with employment Law taking into account all regulations. Each member of staff will have a clear job description, designated line manager, access to high quality CPD and undergo a thorough annual appraisal.

#### **Financial contingency plan**

If the school is not at full capacity then staffing will stay at the proposed staff structures for the pupils on role. There will be a reduction in classes and we would have to look at the mix year group format, planned for years 1 and 2. Clearly, this would involve the employment of less teaching assistants and teachers.

In addition to this we would consider the dual role planned for the Head of School in year 1 as SENCo to continue until numbers allowed for expansion.

The financial planning will remain centrally based and the employment of additional admin support assistant will reduce costs. There would be a reduction of staff across the school in accordance with pupil numbers, for example, cleaners and midday meal supervisors.



### **D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels**

Clearly, with fewer children there would be a saving on therapy costs and resources. Overall, there would financial saving of the 30% in year 1 of [REDACTED] in year 7.

It would be necessary to run a rolling curriculum programme during this time to ensure the curriculum remained broad and balanced.

### **D4 – the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none**

All applicants will need to complete this section in full for each school they wish to open. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

### **D4 – the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none**

Aspire will be a non faith designated school and children from all faiths and cultures will be welcome. The ethos of the Trust is one of diversity, welcoming the opportunities that come from the variety of cultures, religions and languages; we see these as adding to the enrichment of experiences throughout the school. Our curriculum will offer learning opportunities to all children from all backgrounds capturing the diverse communities in which we live. All children, families and staff members will be welcome and a clear equal opportunities policy will be followed throughout the Trust schools; regular reviews of the curriculum will ensure that this is reflected as much as possible across all subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be promoted across all areas of the curriculum.

As part of the teaching and learning approaches within the school due consideration will be given to multi cultural views, avoiding any bias towards a particular gender or belief; a positive image of all groups will be promoted. The school will seek to develop integration strategies for groups who may face barriers to their learning through language or culture. As part of the Trusts policy towards equality and discrimination the school will have clear systems for tackling behaviours that challenge this ethos.

#### **Collective Worship**

Assemblies and opportunities to reflect are an essential means to promote beliefs and views on events in the world and our lives. As part of this we will have daily assemblies as a whole school, class or year groups to consider the world around us and whilst we will look to predominantly promote a Christian ethos we will celebrate other festivals in keeping with multi cultural society and the R.E. programmes of study; we will also use assemblies to celebrate our own successes through the year and consider other themes

#### **D4 – the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none**

that help develop our pupils reflection on what is happening in other areas of society and the World.

A clear plan will be set through the year to cover a range of themes; for example, topics such as 'Anti-Bullying Week', Remembrance Day together with those with a religious theme; these will be presented by senior staff, teachers, children and outside visitors.

#### **British Values**

The school will promote the principles of British Values: Democracy, Mutual Respect, Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs, Individual Liberty and the Rule of Law in accordance with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, as a 'Specified Authority' as set out in schedule 6 of the Act.

The Trust leaders will:

- establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of extremism
- ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with it
- communicate and promote the importance of duty
- ensure staff implement the duty effectively
- all school personnel including the Members, Trustees and Governors will have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism are and why we need to be vigilant in school
- all personnel including the Members, Trustees and Governors will know what the school's policy of anti-radicalisation and extremism and will follow the policy should the issue arise.
- All staff working at the school will undertake PREVENT training.

At Aspire we will:

- Ensure effective partnership working with other local agencies, e.g. LSCB, police, health, etc.
- Share appropriate information.
- Maintain appropriate and accurate records.
- Assess local risk of extremism (including Far Right extremism).
- Demonstrate we are protecting children.
- Developing clear protocol for visiting speakers.
- Ensure our safeguarding policy takes account of LSCB policies and procedures.
- Train staff to give them knowledge and confidence.
- Ensure there is robust ICT protocols that filter out extremist materials.

#### **D4 – the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none**

- Ensure that school buildings are not ever used to give a platform to extremists.

##### School Curriculum

- At Aspire we will teach a broad and balanced curriculum, as required by the DfE statutory national curriculum framework, which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, as well as promoting community cohesion.
- Examples of this are delivered across all subjects but also through the PSHE curriculum.
- We will ensure that all pupils understand the dangers of radicalisation and exposure to extremist views and that the teaching helps pupils build resilience against such activities and know what to do if they experience them.
- We encourage our pupils to be confident, have self-belief, show respect and tolerance.
- Pupils are taught to be aware of the dangers in today's society and recognise where there might be dangers.
- Pupils are taught to seek help from an adult if they are upset or concerned about anything they see on any forms of media, or actually witness.

##### **Equal Opportunities**

The Trust will ensure that all staff, and all applicants for employment in the school, receives fair and equitable treatment. All policies will take all measures to ensure that this principle is applied to all aspects related to working at the school; for example, recruitment, training, promotion, career development, capability, discipline, dismissal or redundancy.

In particular they will ensure that:

- No employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, religion, age, sexuality or sexual orientation.
- Objective, job related criteria apply to all school's employment policies, particularly recruitment and selection.
- The Trust follows the guidelines set out by the Schools Personnel Service with regards to human resources policies

#### **D4 – the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths/world views and none**

- Any vacancies are advertised according to the equality legislation.
- All appointments are made on non-discriminatory grounds and on the premise of the best person for the job in relation to the job specification and description.

#### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding will underpin the principles of everything that happens in the school through the curriculum, the day to day procedures.

#### **D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

This section covers how your school will address the particular needs of children at the school.

**All** applicants will need to complete this section in full for each school they wish to open. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

#### **D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

Special Educational Needs are broadly based over four key areas – Communication, Cognition, Emotional, Sensory and Physical Needs. Aspire pupils are likely to profile with difficulties in all of these areas.

The Aspire Free school propose a co-educational specialist school, admitting 112 pupils aged between 4-11, with an EHCP/Statement of SEN. The pupil's primary need must be ASD/ASC or SLCN. There may be co-morbidity such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, sensory processing or developmental co-ordination disorder. They will have a mixed ability profile from their cognitive assessment. All of these difficulties can have an adverse impact on a pupil's ability to focus on tasks.

- **Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)** - Pupils will have impaired communication difficulties, such as receptive and expressive language including pragmatic abilities; difficulty using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, including gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice, relevance, selecting salient points and a literal understanding of language.

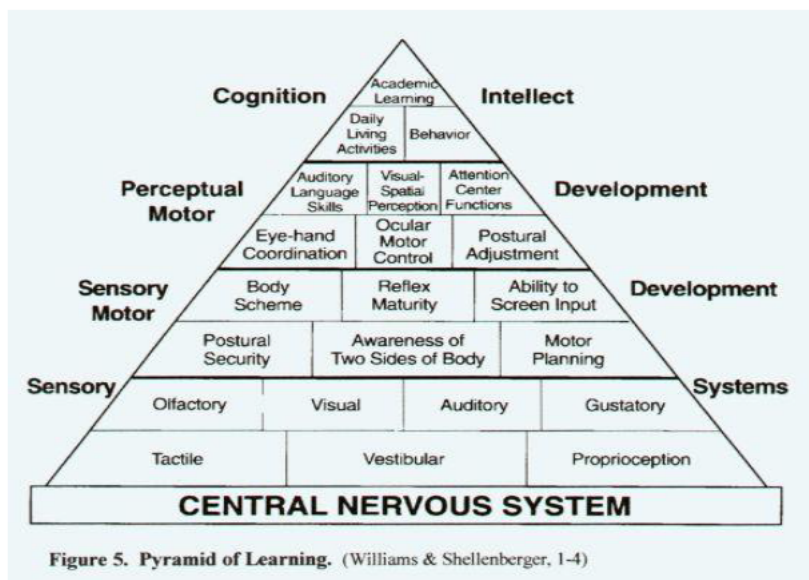
They will have difficulty recognising and understanding people's feelings and managing their own feelings; for example, stand too close to another person, prefer to be alone, behave inappropriately and may not seek comfort from another person. They will also

**D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

have difficulty understanding and predicting other people’s intentions and behaviour and imagining situations that are outside their own routine. ‘They may understand what people say to them but prefer to use alternative forms of communication, such as sign language. Some people with Autism might not speak or have fairly limited speech; this is not to say however, that pupils will not be able, just that their condition affects their use of speech.’<sup>38</sup>

Aspire recognise that pupils with ASD can make effective progress with appropriate interventions. However, these skills will not be learned by osmosis as they often are with ‘typical’ peers and need to be directly taught reflecting the age and stage of development for each child. The development of functional and meaningful verbal communication is a long-term aim for all pupils at Aspire. Each child’s specific SLCD needs will be outlined on their EHCP or reports from SALT. In order to facilitate total communication specific approaches will be used. For example, access to individual or group SALT programmes Social skills will be developed to enable the child to interact in different contexts with a range of different people. Real life opportunities will be provided as part of the curriculum so that children can begin to generalise and transfer what they have learnt. The therapy team will guide us on an individual, class and whole school approaches and make on-going clinical observations and assessments.

- **Sensory Processing Difficulties** - A student may be hyposensitive (lack of sensitivity) or



hypersensitive (intensified) to the effect on the central nervous system from – aural (hearing), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), taste, visual (sight), proprioceptive (recognising our body’s position in space) and vestibular (balance). For effective teaching to take place, a student must be focused and ready to learn. “The pyramid of learning begins

in the central nervous system [as shown in Fig. 5]. Each level must properly integrate with the previous level or levels in order to move on to the next level. The ultimate goal

<sup>38</sup> Anna Kennedy Online, Research, 8 January 2012

**D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

is to reach the cognitive level of functioning in order to attend to the tasks of daily living and learning."<sup>39</sup>(Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4) Research has confirmed the relationship of sensory integration to functioning in various daily occupations (Spitzer, Roley et al 1996). Parnham (1998) has correlated sensory integrative functioning (also known as sensory processing) with arithmetic and reading achievement in school-aged children."<sup>40</sup> Aspire will offer a multi-sensory environment, where typical sensitivities are kept to a minimum – low noise levels, natural lighting etc. Staff will be aware and sympathetic of pupils needs via their profile. The therapy team will work with educational staff to implement programmes to meet their needs and sensitivities. The use of sensory modulation and sensory integration programmes such as Integrated Listening Systems where poor sensory processing is significantly impacting on function and learning will be used following advice from the Occupational Therapist.

- **Calm/alert state** - For optimum learning to take place, it is essential that pupils' optimum calm/alert state is maximised, that is that they are calm enough to focus, concentrate and alert enough to learn. However, for young people with autism this is difficult to achieve due to their sensory processing difficulties and fluctuating arousal levels. The teacher will need to take these issues into account and plan appropriate starters, plenaries and therapy sessions as necessary throughout lessons. Resiliency and self-awareness techniques, such as deep breathing, gentle activity, will be taught throughout the curriculum and additional targeted sessions will be offered when appropriate to the individual.
- **Poor fine and gross motor control** - Research by the National Autistic Society indicates that many children will present with poor motor control. This can affect many school activities, such as handwriting and PE. Pupils precise needs will be defined and programmes implemented by the therapy team. Additional items such as sloped writing boards will be provided for pupils that need them. Speech to text software will be available to allow pupils to record their ideas The Occupational and Physiotherapist will assess individual need and implement programmes accordingly.
- **Fixed daily routine and interests** - The world can seem an unpredictable and confusing place to people with Autism, meaning they often feel more comfortable with a fixed daily routine so that the environment remains predictable and consistent. Many people with Autism also have intense special interests, often from a young age. These can be anything from art or music to trains and computers.<sup>41</sup> Staff will endeavour to warn pupils when a change is likely to happen in order to

<sup>39</sup> Sensory Integration Dysfunction "The Misunderstood, Misdiagnosed and Unseen Disability" Sandra Nelson

<sup>40</sup> Roley, Blanche and Schaaf eds. 2001. Understanding the nature of sensory integration Ch. 1 p14

<sup>41</sup> Anna Kennedy Online, Research, January 2012

**D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

prepare them. This will enable pupils to know what they are doing next, when it will be finished and what will happen when it is finished. Individuals may use timetables for some elements of their learning e.g. making choices during unstructured times and specific transitions. Staff will differentiate learning where appropriate and possible to allow personalisation with the student's particular topic of interest. Visual timetables will be used throughout the school.

- **Emotional vulnerability** - Research has shown that individuals on the spectrum have a higher level of "stress" (anxiety) chemicals in their nervous system, even during rest.<sup>42</sup> Emotional regulation difficulties, such as clinically high anxiety levels, school refusal, poor self-esteem, vulnerability to bullying and depression are significant factors in our pupil profile. Because it is difficult for children with ASD to generalise what they have learned from one situation to the next, the world can seem chaotic and overwhelming. Efforts to reach out and connect with peers can be awkward and unsuccessful. Children with ASD often have difficulty recognising their own emotional states, and lack effective coping skills to help them deal with overwhelming emotions. It is recognised that the consequences of communication difficulties include problems with literacy and social interaction, and that such difficulties are likely to exacerbate emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Pastoral support will be provided in a range of ways including-

- anger and anger management sessions on an individual and/or group basis
- support for children and/ or young people who have developed mal-adaptive coping strategies e.g. self-harming
- activities to improve personal resilience and reduce vulnerability
- individual and group teaching of emotions and managing emotional responses
- teaching of self-regulation and positive coping strategies

Aspire will have clear policies on bullying and acceptable behaviour that will be adhered to at all times. Aspire School will commit to ensuring that positive behaviour is promoted and achieved thus reducing the risk of exclusion. There will be a clear policy on exclusion that will be followed and implemented by SLT in conjunction with parents/carers and other agencies.

- **Differentiation** -The purpose of differentiation is to equip children to realise their potential within an environment where individuality is valued and diversity is celebrated. This will lead to a strong sense of self-worth and well-being, empowering children to take ownership of their learning and behaviour. Initial identification of

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<sup>42</sup> Daniel Siegel, author, The Whole Brain Child

#### **D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

each pupil's learning difficulties will be through observations, reports, EHCP, evidence of prior attainment, parental contribution and baseline assessments. A personalised programme setting out learning and therapy targets will be created for each Aspire pupil. "Personalised learning is all about shaping teaching around the different ways children learn" (DfES 2005).

- **Early Intervention** - Early intervention for children with Autism is crucial and has been proven to offer long term benefits. For a student to learn fully they must first have a level of emotional regulation. Aspire staff will assess the needs of each student, meaning that those who require additional support to their peers receive it and those that are ready for a more independent approach are challenged to their full ability. In the paper - Autism Spectrum Disorders: Early Detection, Intervention, Education, and Psychopharmacological Management, Bryson states: "Early intervention in Autism needs to be seen as similar to teaching language to deaf children or to teaching mobility and Braille to blind children—a necessary, publicly funded, rehabilitative service, without which outcomes cannot be meaningfully discussed." "Finally, there is wide agreement that the social and emotional well-being of children with Autism needs to receive more attention within the school system. That is, while academic learning is important, this goal should not supersede the children's need for social contact with others, for participation in recreational and other school-based activities, and for a sense of belonging and of being recognised and valued."<sup>43</sup>
- **Medical needs** - Some children will have a clinical medical need other than their ASD. This could be in the form of epilepsy, asthma, hypermobility, diabetes, incontinence or any other medical diagnosis. Aspire will have a health care plan for those pupils who need additional care. Medication will be stored safely and in an accessible place for designated first aid trained staff. Medication such as antibiotics will be administered during the school day after a consent form has been completed by the parent giving permission for a pharmaceutical product to be given. A designated first aid and care room will be available with appropriate facilities including a fridge in which to store medication. The Aspire team will devise a "Managing Medicine in School" policy based on the recommendations contained within the "Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions" statutory guidance (Sept 2014). Parent/carers will be kept informed of any medical needs arising during the day and contacted in the case of emergencies.

#### **External Agencies**

Aspire will provide a holistic setting to meet all areas of need and welcome the recent SEN reforms set out in the Children and Families Bill (2014) and Code of Practice. Multi-

<sup>43</sup>Autism Spectrum Disorders: Early Detection, Intervention, Education, and Psychopharmacological Management, Susan E Bryson, PhD, Sally J Rogers, PhD, Eric Fombonne, MD, 2003



**D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

agency work is crucial and we will work collaboratively with all agencies to support the needs of all pupils. Aspire will provide on-site OT, SALT, Physiotherapy and access to an ASD trained counsellor. However, there may also be the need for other agencies to support and be involved with our pupils and families too. All Aspire staff will follow clear procedures and policies when liaising with external agencies

**Mental Health** - The National Autistic Society state: "People with Autism or Asperger syndrome are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, especially in late adolescence and early adult life (Tantam & Prestwood, 1999). Ghaziuddin et al (1998) found that 65 per cent of their sample of patients with Asperger syndrome presented with symptoms of psychiatric disorder. However, as mentioned by Howlin (1997), "the inability of people with Autism to communicate feelings of disturbance, anxiety or distress can also mean that it is often very difficult to diagnose depressive or anxiety states, particularly for clinicians who have little knowledge or understanding of developmental disorders". Similarly, because of their impairment in non-verbal expression, they may not appear to be depressed (Tantam, 1991). This can mean that it is not until the illness is well developed that it is recognised, with possible consequences such as total withdrawal; increased obsessional behaviour; refusal to leave the home, go to work or college etc.; and threatened, attempted or actual suicide. Aggression, paranoia or alcoholism may also occur.

Wing (1996) asserts that psychiatrists should be aware of Autism Spectrum Disorders as they appear in adolescents and adults, especially those who are more able, if diagnostic errors are to be avoided. Attwood (1998) also stresses the importance of the psychiatrist being knowledgeable in Asperger syndrome. Tantam and Prestwood (1999), however, state that treatments for anxiety and depression that are also effective for people without Autism are effective for people with Autism. They go on to say that, practitioners and psychiatrists with no special knowledge of Autism or Asperger syndrome can be of considerable assistance in treating these conditions. Typically, however, it is of great advantage if the psychiatrist has experience of autism/Asperger syndrome<sup>44</sup>.

Given the above, it is essential that health professionals have knowledge of the individual student. For the Aspire cohort, accurate communication is challenging, particularly as this can be displayed in the form of behaviour, therefore good relations with parents and carers is essential to ensure that reliable information is received and passed on to any external agency confidentially. We have built good relations with a local counsellor who specialises in Autism Spectrum Disorders and where appropriate we will refer pupils to his services or to CAMHS for a full assessment of needs

**Working with families**

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<sup>44</sup> Mental Health and Asperger Syndrome, The National Autistic Society.

**D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately**

Aspire believe in the sense of belonging a community brings and will encourage parents to attend termly support group meetings, workshops or courses such as CYGNET (which cover - understanding Autism, sensory difficulties, communication, puberty and supporting siblings and is aimed at parents of children aged 7 to 18 years). Talks, delivered by experts in their field on relevant areas of common challenges, such as behavior related to poor emotional regulation. We will signpost parents to relevant services when not offered directly by Aspire School. Such courses will be offered through the associated support group, and linked Home School Association (HSA).

## Section E – evidence of need

This section asks you to evidence that there is a need for the school(s) you are proposing. **All** applicants will need to complete this section in full for each school they wish to open.

### E1 - provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the areas

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- use the space provided below;
- include evidence as annexes; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are**

**Introduction**

The Trust is submitting this application for a free special primary school based on prior work and information gathered by original members of the Aspire Team (applications in waves 7 - 9), further recent evidence of demand from Kent County Council (KCC) and the local community. Grove Park Academies has added educational knowledge and experience to the original team and this application has reflected and been significantly strengthened following feedback from the Department, in particular, the submission under a Multi Academy Trust.

The vision has been developed in response to views collected from KCC commissioners, health professionals, educationalists, parents and members of the community in order to build an accurate reflection of need for the proposed provision since mid-2013.

## **E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area**

The proposal for Aspire Free School is a direct response to demand for further special school places in Kent from the local authority and parents. In addition, the school will be located in an area of high deprivation and need (see section C).

### **Grove Park Academies**

Grove Park Academies is currently a multi academy trust with one school; Grove Park Primary and are in the process of applying to become a Sponsor Academy. We are aware of the current demand for places in specialist provision and have subsequently decided to work with the original Aspire group, who had previously been invited to an interview with the department in January 2015, supporting the joint vision and collaborate as part of Grove Park Academies.

Grove Park Primary (**Ofsted rated good**) has extensive experience of SEND and in particular pupils with ASD; a consistent track record of success for its pupils and is well thought of in the local community; the school is currently oversubscribed and has a very diverse population of need. The outcomes for such pupils was acknowledged by Ofsted in their July 2013 report:

**‘pupils with disabilities and special needs are carefully monitored and well supported by knowledgeable adults, and consequently they make good progress overall, with some making exceptional progress in writing.’**

The senior leadership team have informed parents of this application via a letter sent home – please see appendix A for the wording that was used. This created a number of positive responses to the parental survey devised to gather a reflection of need from parents. The school website also contains this information.

Grove Park works in a collaboration of 12 local Primary schools (Gateway Alliance), all have welcomed the opportunity for this specialist provision to be available in the Swale area. Some members of The Gateway Alliance advertised the survey within their own newsletters. The Inclusion Manager for Grove Park Primary leads on the SENCo forum for the Swale district.

### **Regional School’s Commissioner**

Whilst Grove Park Academies is not yet a fully registered sponsor, the process has been initiated and the application is with the Regional Office. As part of this process, the Trust have spoken to the Regional School’s Commissioner and his office and they are aware that Grove Park Academies is applying to open a Free School. We have received an email that confirms we will receive the Sponsor Capacity Fund in principle. It is hoped that whilst we have not yet got the approval for the free school from the RSC we anticipate that this will be forthcoming in line with our successful sponsorship.

### **Local Area**



**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are**  
 schools with the **largest numbers of these in schools for autism (ASD) or be-**  
 havioural, emotional and social needs (BESN)<sup>50</sup> **“reflecting that Kent’s main-**  
**tained Special school provision has been at capacity”.**<sup>51</sup>

**Parental Preference**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Parents have been clearly informed of the planned proposal and this has been received well within the Autism community. A paper copy has been made available and the wording used is as stated in Appendix B.

Would you request that Aspire Free School be named on your child’s EHCP as first choice?	Yes, child has an EHCP	Yes, currently undergoing assessment	Yes, after seeing the provision and being satisfied that it would meet my child’s needs
Social media	28	3	6
Email	5	2	2
Direct communication	10	6	1

Parental preference to name a school on a child’s EHCP is an important factor to take into consideration. In 2014 -2015 **“SEND tribunals relating to ASD stood at 35%, out of the tribunals heard 86% of cases are won by parents**, and this figure does not take into account the number of cases that are conceded before a hearing commences. **KCC ranks fifth highest of local authorities with the most registered appeals”.**<sup>52</sup>

**“Our tribunal figures and the requests for statutory assessment, especially for children on the autistic spectrum** indicate that we need to work harder to gain parental confidence in their child’s needs being met”<sup>53</sup> (Education Plan for SEN 2013-2018)

<sup>50</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 10.21

<sup>51</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 3.8

<sup>52</sup> Special Needs Jungle website SEND tribunal figures

<sup>53</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, Final SEN 2013-2018

**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are**





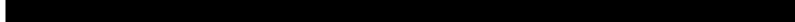
KCC have commissioned all places at Aspire, parental preference confirms that they would name Aspire as their first choice. The survey results show demand for places to initially be as follows:


<b>Year Group</b>	<b>2017 Children with EHCP</b>	<b>2017 Currently under assessment</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2018 Currently under assessment</b>
Reception	10	3	4	These children are currently 2 years and will not be in the system until assessment
Year 1				
Year 2				
Year 3	18	7	21	Not available
Year 4				
Year 5				
Year 6				

The survey is continuing as we promote the new school. The local SENCo and Specialist Teaching Service have been contacted to gather further information of children in their cohort who are likely to meet criteria, including early years providers.

The survey confirmed that the majority of potential pupils lived in the Swale area, but also gained interest from Canterbury, Dartford, Tonbridge, Maidstone and Medway.

**Local Authority Support**

Meetings have been held with  to confirm the top up fee required ensuring the long term sustainability whilst the school is in the early stages of growth.

**“I can confirm we have identified the need for further primary places for ASD (set out in the County Council’s Commissioning plans) and we expect to purchase all**

**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are of the primary places at Aspire Free School during the first year (16) and rising to 40 places in the following year, with effect from September 17.”**

Kent County Council

KCC recognise the direct need for the Aspire Free School. In their 2015-2019 Commissioning Plan for Education<sup>54</sup> they confirm that the number of young people with an EHCP with ASD identified as the primary need has increased significantly over the past four years, by 65%. **We anticipate these trends continuing. Therefore, we will need to continue to commission provision in these areas**, whilst decommissioning provision in areas of decreasing need.<sup>55</sup>

The table below shows how the trends in Kent have risen for young people with ASD as their primary need.

Primary Need	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	5 year +/-
ASD	1490	1680	1849	2271	2457	967

The table below shows the Statemented pupil Primary need by year group in Kent (2014)<sup>56</sup>

Primary Need	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ASD	108	133	129	111	157	162	198
SLCN	52	56	57	71	71	71	83

**The wider community**

The proposal has been well received in the wider community; three Members of Parliament have written letters of support as well as local and county councillors. (Appendix D-H)

\_\_\_\_\_ states:

**“This proposed additional provision in the Swale area would save money for the Council as there would be less need to transport children with special educational needs outside their district in order to access the support they need. This would also benefit the children themselves and the local community.”**

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf](http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref 10.4

<sup>56</sup> Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent, 2015-2019, ref figure 10.5

**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are**

Gordon Henderson, MP for Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey:

**“I believe the application by Grove Park Academies has much to commend it, particularly because it would mean the new school would become part of a very good multi-academy trust.**

**Recent data published by Kent County Council in its Education Commissioning Plan shows Swale has the highest number of SEN pupils of any district authority area in Kent and the Aspire School, if built, will go a long way in meeting that increasing demand.**

**It will also help reduce the massive cost to the public purse of transporting youngsters from my constituency to existing special schools in Kent and beyond. Current estimates suggest that Kent spends nearly £20 million annually on home to school transport for children with special educational needs.**

**Grove Park has a proven history of success with children who have additional needs and has an excellent track record since becoming an academy. I believe the Trust’s experience and knowledge, combined with the enthusiasm and commitment of the Aspire team, provides a strong foundation for this much needed new facility and by sharing good practice and resources will help ensure a top quality provision for those of our children with special needs.”**

Helen Whately, MP for Faversham and Mid Kent:

**“Grove Park has a proven history of success with children with additional needs and has an excellent track record as an academy. Their experience and knowledge combined with that of the Aspire Team offers a fantastic opportunity to create a new school that will benefit many children in my constituency and beyond.”**

Christi Rehman, MP for Gillingham and Rainham (Medway Authority)

**“Although the school is located in Swale, and is under the auspices of Kent County Council, this would be a much needed option for parents and carers in Medway. The Grove Park Academies Trust has already received several interests from parents in Medway for their children to attend the proposed school.**

**Issues like education regularly cross constituency and county boundaries. Further educational provision for children to attend special schools would be a very welcome development for my constituents in Gillingham and Rainham.”**

Appendix A – Newsletter sent to Grove Park parents

Appendix B – Information supplied directly to parents via survey and on social media

Appendix C – [REDACTED]

Appendix D – [REDACTED]

Appendix E – Gordon Henderson, MP for Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne



**E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the are**

Appendix F – Helen Whately, MP for Faversham and Mid Kent

Appendix G – Rehman Christi, MP for Gillingham and Rainham

Appendix H – [REDACTED]

Appendix I – [REDACTED]

Appendix J – Additional support

Appendix K – CVs

Appendix L – Site information

Please tick to confirm that you have provided evidence as annexes:

**E2 – valid evidence of need for non-statemented pupils/pupils without an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- use the space provided below;
- include evidence as annexes; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

**E2 – valid evidence of need for non-statemented pupils/pupils without an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

Add information about pupils demand if places.

## Section F – capacity and capability

### F1 (a) Skills and experience of your team

All applicants will need to complete this section, but you will give us different information depending on which type of group you are. Please refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

If you are a sponsor with at least one school, or a MAT with at least two schools, and you have a letter or email from your RSC office saying how many free schools you have capacity to open, you need to:

- Tell us **who (a named individual) is in charge** during pre-opening and provide their CV.

If you do not meet the criteria set out above, please:

- complete the table below; and
- provide a short commentary on your plans to manage the pre-opening project.

You must complete a separate line for each member. Please identify individuals who will be company members, trustees, the chair of trustees, members of the pre-opening team and if applicable, the local governing body, including the chair if they have been identified.









[Add lines as appropriate]









## F1 (b) Skills gap analysis

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please set out any skills gaps that you think exist within your group and how you intend to fill them. Please:

- complete the table below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

<b>Skills/experience missing</b>	<b>Where is the gap?</b> i.e. pre-opening team, trustees, local governing body	<b>How and when do you plan to fill the gap</b>
Marketing and PR	Trustees	Aspire pre opening team have some experience and will need to look to recruit to the Local Governing Bodies
Legal Support	No legal Trustees or Governors	Need to appoint and agree the Trusts Solicitors
Project Management	Some experience from Trustees	Give consideration to PMES to find a suitable provider

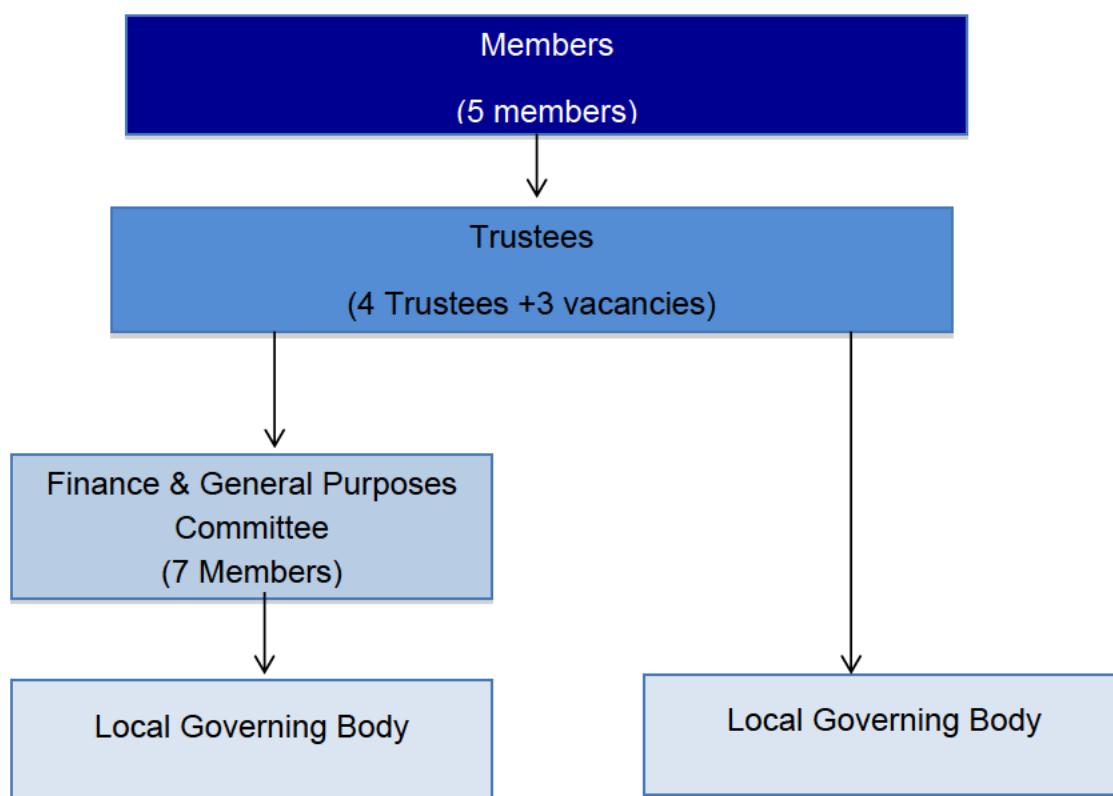
[Add more lines as appropriate]

## **F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**

All applicants will need to complete this section in full for each school they wish to open.  
Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

### **F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**



The Trust has a wide range of knowledge and the existing trustees are experienced in the expectations and responsibilities that come with running an Academy. Whilst Grove Park Academies has a wide range of skills, we will work to ensure that the recruitment of new Governors provides a full and extensive range of skills to meet the demands required for specialist provision. As part of the recruitment process the MAT will need to market both schools within the local community and reach out to local businesses and educational establishments to attract the best possible people.

**F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**

**Meeting Schedule**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
Members	Two times per year
Full Trust Board	Four Times per year
Local Governing Boards	Six times per year (once a term)
Finance Committee	Six times per year (once a term)
Standards/School Improvement Committee	Three times per year

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Senior Leadership Team**

In the first two years both schools will be run by existing members of Grove Park Primary School with addition of a Head of School and experienced teachers overseen by the Executive Headteacher. The SLT will have responsibility for ensuring the development of the curriculum and learning environment and establish a school that replicates the ethos of the Trust. They will monitor the quality of learning and the outcomes for the pupils, ensure the day to day running of the schools are effective and adequately resourced to deliver high quality learning for all pupils in the Trust and remain accountable to the local community, the LGB and the Trustees.

**Members**

The Trust currently has five members as the Headteacher has stepped down in line with new regulations.; The new fifth 'Member' has been appointed to strengthen the link between the two schools prior to pre opening.

The Members will be responsible for the appointment of Trustees and additional Governors to the local boards. The Members will conduct a skills audit to identify any gaps in the skills and knowledge of existing governors, to ensure we have the best balance of skills.

The Members and Trustees will have access to the committee and Local Governor reports, noting the content and any subsequent action they may be called on to comment or act. The terms of reference will ensure that whilst Members may be called to intervene in certain situations the Local Governor bodies and committees will have clear delegated powers.

The Board has an accomplished Clerk and Company Secretary/Business Manager to guide and direct the business at all meetings, they ensure deadlines and information are readily available in advance of meetings and regular contact is maintained.

## **F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**

### **The Board of Directors/Trustees**

Current levels of expertise include:

- Finance including extensive Academy and EFA knowledge
- HR and employment Law
- Education and the curriculum and data
- Local issues and concerns
- Local Authority knowledge
- Admissions and Equality
- Analytical skills

The Trustees will have two core functions to provide strategic direction and financial probity to the MAT. This will involve existing trustees and new Trustees will be appointed prior to pre opening. The key priorities for the Trustees will be:

- Ensure a strong leadership team led by the Executive Headteacher
- Work with the Members to ensure there is a balance of highly skilled Governors on each local board
- Develop protocols for reporting that are consistent across the Trust which ensure the information is shared and communicated clearly
- Oversee the financial capacity of each school and maintain a clear risk register that identifies any threats to the Trust
- Have structures in place to monitor standards and outcomes for all pupils
- Devise a three year financial and development plan
- Support the Leadership Team in the recruitment of the highest quality staff.

### **Local Governing Bodies (LGB)**

With the expansion of the Trust to two schools LGB will be formed for each school, the membership will include Elected Governors and Trustees. The Chair of each board will be self-nominated and elected annually by the governors. The Headteacher of each school will be a LGB member appointed by the Executive Headteacher and Members.

### **Committee Structure**

The board of Trustees will meet four times a year and take reports from the Finance and General Purposes, Standards and Local Governing Boards. The committees will have sufficient numbers and delegated powers to promote efficient decision making and encourage creative and appropriate decisions for each school.

## **F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**

### **Finance and General Purposes' Committee (FGP):**

The FGP will assist the Trustees in all financial decisions and planning for the MAT, this will include financial planning, monitoring, probity and risk management of resources and the running of the Trust. This includes the monitoring and review of the accounts and the agreed MAT budgets for the coming year, personnel issues and premises. They will report any recommendations to the full board of Trustees, which will include the annual acceptance of the accounts, appointment of the auditors and all requirements stipulated through the Companies Act and the DFE/EFA requirements. This will include any declaration of business interests or conflicts of interest as stated in the Financial Handbook.

The committee will have agreed delegated powers with regards to decision making, including the expenditure limit. Whilst the Trustees may delegate these powers to the committee all Trustees have responsibility to act in the best interests of the Trust.

The function of the auditors will be to monitor the Trusts financial controls on an annual basis; in addition [REDACTED] provide 'Responsible Officer' visits.

### **Standards' Committee**

The committee will have responsibility to evaluate the quality of provision, ensuring the highest standard is maintained. This will involve an evaluation of:

- The impact of teacher on pupil outcomes
- Analysis of performance information to show progress and tracking systems to support the data
- The provision to ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met in both schools
- The impact of the school improvement measures in place

### **Recruitment**

It is anticipated that by year 3 from initial opening each school will have a Head of school under the direction of the Executive Headteacher, [REDACTED]. However, given the initial start up size of the special school the Head of School appointments will not be in post until the school grows; this will ensure financial security in the long term. Grove Park Primary School has sufficient leadership capacity to ensure that leadership and management of both schools will be effective

The Trust will ensure a staff recruitment plan is in line with the growth of the new school and reviewed during each phase. The job descriptions will be set in accordance with the Equalities Act and under the advice of HR support. The recruitment process will follow procedures established in the Trust under the guidance of HR and the Trusts Personnel Service; contract of employment will adhere to systems already in place.

The appointment of high quality staff at all levels will be essential to the success of the new school and existing provision at Grove Park. All staff must share the ethos and have the

**F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school**

determination to work together across the Trust ensuring positive outcomes for our pupils. Safeguarding protocols will be followed at all levels and in accordance with the safe recruitment procedures and legal requirements.

Staff will be recruited using established recruitments sites on line, local and national press. The interview process will include members of the SLT, with safe recruitment training and Trustees with HR and employment law experience.

**Conflict of interest**

Members, Governors and SLT will be required to declare any potential conflict of interests as they become known; such declarations will be required at the outset of all meetings. This will ensure that the principles of openness, transparency are adhered to at all times. In order to ensure such conflicts cannot occur, it will not be possible for any one party to have decision making powers or a deciding influence in a situation where they, a member of their family or close friend would benefit in any way. All decisions in the Trust follow clear and agreed procurement procedures. Governance at every level will work to the highest standards and follow the clear responsibilities stipulated in the articles of Association and Funding agreements

**F3 – independent schools only: a good educational track record and credible plans for meeting the standards of the state sector**

This section is for independent converters to the state sector only. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

**F3 – independent schools only: a good educational track record and credible plans for meeting the standards of the state sector**

[Add text here. Table expands]



#### **F4 – Independent schools, including special institutions that are privately run only: a good financial track record and credible plans for meeting the standards of the state sector**

This section is for independent converters to the state sector only. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

<b>F4 – Independent schools, including alternative provision institutions that are privately run only: a good financial track record and credible plans for meeting the standards of the state sector</b>
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[Add text here. Table expands]
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#### **F5 – Independent schools only: an appropriate, well-maintained, and secure site**

This section is for independent converters to the state sector only. Please:

- use the space provided below; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

<b>F5 – Independent schools only: an appropriate, well-maintained, and secure site</b>
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[Add text here. Table expands]
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## **Section G – accurate financial plans that are consistent with the rest of the application, demonstrate financial viability, and are based on realistic assumptions about income and expenditure**

All applicants will need to complete this section but you will give us less different information depending on which type of group you are.

Please

- complete the Excel spreadsheet (where necessary);
- add any commentary you want to include in the space provided below, for example, explaining the costs of centrally provided services (we do **not** want you to provide a commentary on the whole budget, just particular areas you want to highlight); and
- refer to the relevant section of the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

### **Section G – budget planning and affordability**

The school is due to open in September 2017 and the funding plan highlights the expected staffing costs and other expenditure. Kent County Council (KCC) has agreed the top up funding in the budget plan and this has been set to allow the school to grow and become financially stable.

KCC has a clear formula used for special schools and the ASD pupil rate is [REDACTED] they then use the formula to calculate the allocation to each school. They have considered all the factors surrounding the proposed new special school and have worked on the basis that we will need [REDACTED] in year 1; therefore, the top up fee for year 1 is [REDACTED] per pupil and [REDACTED] in year 2. These figures decrease as we become more financially viable. In reaching the decisions about Aspire the KCC accountant has benchmarked us against similar Kent special schools. There are no deficits in any year of planning.

There is an agreed lump sum of [REDACTED], with an adjustment from year 2 in accordance with the KCC funding formula. We have a guarantee from KCC that they will work with the school to ensure we can reach our full growth and therefore adjustments will be made to the funding plan to ensure this happens, for example of for any reason we do not reach the predicted numbers. However, the head of the SEN department of KCC, Julie Ely is confident that the placement offer is realistic for the current need.

#### **Context**

The Aspire Free school propose a co-educational specialist school, admitting 112 pupils aged between 4-11, with an EHCP/Statement of SEN. The pupil's primary need must be

## **Section G – budget planning and affordability**

ASD/ASC or SLCN. There may be co-morbidity such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, sensory processing and developmental co-ordination disorder. The money allocated for this type of need is £15, 408 from Kent and figures are based on this.

Swale is the second most deprived ward in Kent and SEN rates in Swale are now higher than in Thanet, which is the most deprived area. The FSM and SEN rates are all outlined in section C1; and highlight the need for more specialist provision in Swale. The financial plan is based on the assumptions made below and assumes experienced teachers and significant resources for the cohort of children with ASD as their primary need.

### **Benchmarking**

The benchmarking has been set against similar provision; namely, Laleham Gap, Margate.

### **Assumptions**

The budget has been set on the basis of a number of assumptions:

- The pupil numbers are based on the figures in D1 and in line with commissioned agreement by KCC (Year 1 total 16, year 6 total 112)
- 8 children per class, Key Stage 1 will have 3 TAs, Key Stage 2 will have 2 TAs per class
- Free School Meal (FSM) children, 3 at the start rising to 25 in year 5
- Children in Care (CIC) none, although this is unlikely it is also unpredictable
- Recruitment based on [REDACTED], this can potentially rise to [REDACTED]
- Resources including ICT [REDACTED] per pupil per year
- Therapy costs [REDACTED]
- Amenities (Water, energy and rates) [REDACTED] per pupil per year

The agreed funding formula provided by KCC for year 1 is [REDACTED] decreasing to [REDACTED] by year 7; this is based on the funding formula for Kent special schools and is line with similar provision.

The budget has been set in accordance with the curriculum outlined in D1 and the staff structure in D3. Clearly, the staffing costs are in line with pupil numbers and if these were to decrease then there would be a reduction in expenditure.

In year 1 if the school faces a 30% reduction of income [REDACTED] this would be achieved by reducing resources, therapy, teachers, TAs, site manager, premises expenses and head of school to [REDACTED].

In year 2 if the school faces a 30% reduction of income [REDACTED] this would be achieved by reducing resources, therapy, teachers, TAs, site manager, premises expenses and head of school to [REDACTED].

## **Section G – budget planning and affordability**

In year 3 if the school faces a 30% reduction of income ( ) this would be achieved by reducing resources, therapy, teachers, TAs, site manager, premises expenses and head of school to

In year 4 if the school faces a 30% reduction of income this would be achieved by reducing resources, therapy, teachers, TAs, site manager, premises expenses and head of school to

In year 5 if the school faces a 30% reduction of income ( this would be achieved by reducing resources, therapy, teachers, TAs, site manager, premises expenses and head of school to

The figures clearly demonstrate that we could sustain the financial running of the school with reduced numbers.

In terms of salaries we will use the teachers' pay and conditions for teaching staff and Kent Range for all other support staff, these conditions will be in line with the pay conditions across the Trust.

All staff have been entered at the same pay range relevant to the post, this may change but this allows for the recruitment of highly skilled and experienced staff.

### **Income**

We have not included any extra income in the budget, however, we anticipate running a breakfast and after school club, the facilities will be let for other local groups and training courses for other providers locally. As part of the catering, which will be in house, will also eventually generate additional income.

### **Contingency**

In the budget planning stage we will allow for unforeseen expenditure across all areas, particularly in salaries, however, most budget areas will have a relevant contingency amount added and are based on a variety of assumptions, some of which are listed above.

## **Section H – premises (use Excel spread sheet)**

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- complete the Section H tab in the Excel spread sheet; and
- refer to the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

## Annexes

This section will need to be completed by **all** applicants. Please:

- Provide CVs of key individuals, any letters of support and maps.
- The annex is excluded from the page limit but should be submitted as part of your application, i.e. as one Word document.
- refer to the relevant section of the background information and glossary document, and the assessment criteria booklet for what should be included in this section.

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