

**ASPIRE**  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

**"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."  
- Henry Ford**

## A Message from Kate

Week commencing 31st March 2025

As we come to the end of the spring term, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a busy and productive few months. From the dedication of our staff to the unwavering support of our governors, and of course, the enthusiasm and hard work of our children, this term has been a testament to the strength of our school communities. Thank you all for the part you play in making Aspire and our schools such positive and nurturing places to learn and work.

Education continues to evolve at pace, with ongoing discussions around curriculum reforms, the growing focus on AI in the classroom, and the challenges of school funding remaining high on the national agenda. In particular, the sector-wide conversations about teacher workload and recruitment highlight the importance of valuing and supporting our staff—a priority that remains central to Aspire. Despite these challenges, the commitment I see in our schools is inspiring.

As we head into a well-earned break, I hope everyone finds time to rest and recharge. The summer term will bring new opportunities, as well as the excitement of end-of-year celebrations, transitions, and planning for the future. During the summer term, Mrs Jones and Mrs Stevens will be working one day a week as Senior Trust Leads, supporting our schools alongside myself as we start the journey with Shine. For now, though, I simply want to express my appreciation for all that you do. Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable break.

Kate Watson

## Aspire Connected

Thank you to Ella Tuxford, Deputy Head Teacher at Oak Tree and Aspire's ECT Lead, for creating the first Aspire Newsletter for ECTs! It's packed with valuable tips and guidance—just click the picture link to take a look.

We're always looking for new ways to strengthen our networks across Aspire and enhance support for our staff. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you!

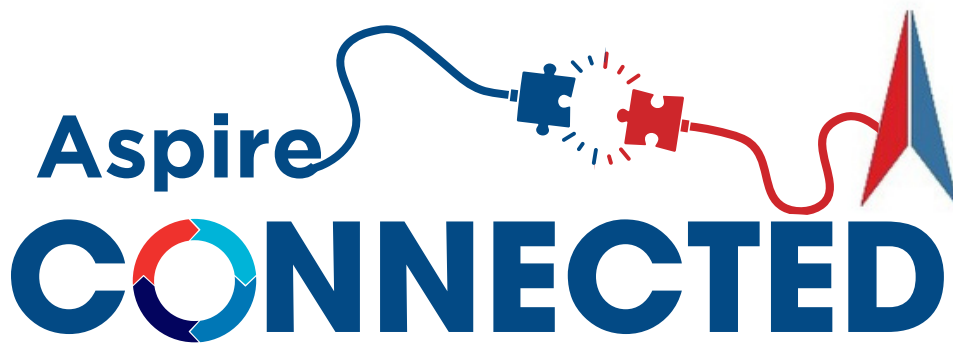


## Aspire Together

Young Voices was once again a fantastic event for our Aspire schools, bringing together our talented young singers for an unforgettable evening of music and celebration! With careful planning, Aspire leaders secured the same venue, the same night, with seats close together—ensuring our choirs could share this amazing experience as one big Aspire family. The atmosphere was electric, our Aspire choirs sang their hearts out, showcasing their enthusiasm, dedication, and love of music.

It was truly inspiring to see our pupils come together as part of this spectacular event, making memories that will last a lifetime. Just look at the excited Gunthorpe choir arriving at Sheffield Arena, ready to take their place in the show! A huge well done to everyone who took part—you are all shining stars! #AspireChoir





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## Aspire Dedication

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A dedication to Amanda Hardy, the much admired and appreciated cross-country coach from St Peter's who has sadly passed away following 25 years of dedication to St Peter's children.

Amanda began volunteering as a cross-country coach nearly 25 years ago until health issues forced her to pause. Over the years, she inspired countless children, with parents and former pupils still speaking fondly of her impact.

Her influence extended beyond school; one pupil progressed to represent England in running, while another, now pursuing long jump, credited Amanda as their inspiration in a school publication. Her dedication went beyond competition—she took joy in seeing children, even those new to running, take to the start line on a cold Saturday morning. A successful runner herself, representing Wales in her youth and competing in marathons throughout her life, she served as a role model for aspiring athletes. Thanks to her enthusiasm, cross-country sessions often saw large turnouts, with many eager to give running a try.

## The Curriculum and Assessment Review Interim Report

Published on 18 March 2025, presents an overview of the current state of education and outlines the next phase of the review process. The report highlights the importance of a well-rounded curriculum, ensuring strong foundations in reading, writing, and maths, while also promoting arts, sports, and vocational subjects. It also emphasises inclusivity and real-world readiness. Additionally, the assessment system is being evaluated better to reflect children's strengths across a broad curriculum. Following the report's release, the Education Secretary confirmed that primary school tests will remain a core component of the assessment framework. The final report is expected in autumn 2025, providing a comprehensive roadmap for curriculum and assessment reforms. Please see Gov.uk for more information.

## Opportunity to Shape National Education Policy

The DfE is inviting support staff to join its Support Staff Reference Group, offering an opportunity to contribute directly to national education policy. This group will provide a platform for teaching assistants, administrative teams, IT staff, pastoral support, and other essential school staff to share insights, offer feedback, and engage with policymakers. By joining, members will collaborate with like-minded professionals, challenge and refine policies, and have a direct line to Ministers and DfE officials. This is an excellent chance for Aspire support staff to have their voices heard at a national level. [To learn more and apply, visit the GOV.UK page on the Support Staff Reference Group.](#) Applications close at 11:59pm on Monday 28 April 2025.

## Celebrating our amazing Governors - Nominations open now!

The National Governance Association's Outstanding Governance Awards 2025 offer a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the dedication and expertise of governors, trustees, and governance professionals who make a vital impact on our schools. These awards recognise outstanding governance in four key categories, showcasing best practices that contribute to the success of our education system. This is a great opportunity for school leaders to highlight the individuals and teams driving positive change in governance. Nominations are open until Monday, 14 April 2025. Further details: [National Governance Association.](#)



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## Celebrations across Aspire

- Sir John Sherbrooke has been busy hosting numerous fund-raising events to raise money for one of their children to have a new wheelchair, including holding a disco, a raffle and a cake sale. As a result of this, he has now received the remainder of the cost via a charitable sponsorship which could only be applied for once a certain amount of 'own funding' was secured. The SJS community and children are extremely proud to have achieved this together and are looking forward to seeing him in his new chair.
- Last Thursday, Archbishop Cranmer CE welcomed a TV crew into school after they heard about the outstanding work in supporting children with food allergies—from staff training to inclusive practices. Mrs. Hodgson took part in the filming, highlighting their commitment to keeping all children safe. The report aired last Thursday, you can see it [here](#) if reading Aspire Connected digitally. The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation (NARF) has also launched Allergy School, a free resource designed to help schools improve awareness and response to allergies, including anaphylaxis.



[Find out more by clicking here.](#)

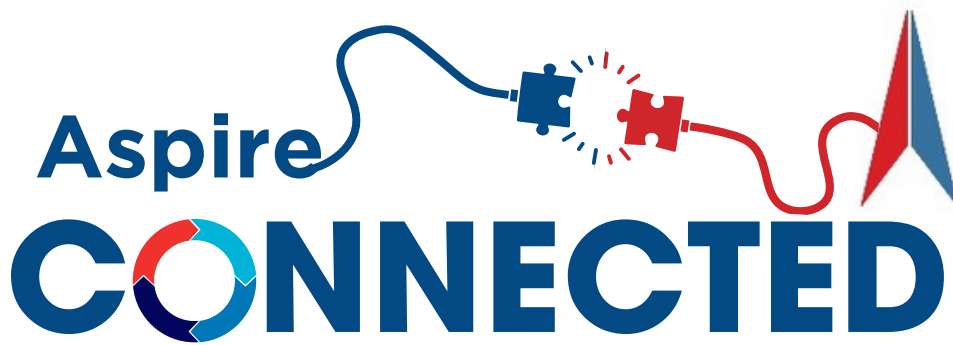


- Listen Up Conference. The conference was well attended by Aspire church schools, with ABCA, Gunthorpe and Langar all either going as observers or participators. Mrs Brown said of the event: Today some of our worship and wellbeing group travelled to Trent Vineyard church to attend Listen Up 2025. Listen up is an event led by children who are invited to present on topics that they are passionate about or lead acts of worship throughout the day. Our children had a fantastic day, they loved hearing from the different groups and came away full of ideas excited and eager to return next year.

- The girls' and boys' hockey teams at Kirkby Woodhouse Primary School have achieved remarkable success by securing the County Championship titles! This accomplishment highlights the school's dedication to sports and the students' exceptional talent and teamwork. Kirkby Woodhouse Primary has a strong tradition of excellence in sports, as evidenced by their boys' football team previously winning both district and county championships. The recent hockey victories further demonstrate the school's commitment to fostering excellence among its pupils no matter what they do! Well done!



- Well done to St Peter's who have received the Bronze ProVeg award for school dinners, in collaboration with Let's Go Zero.
- Something you want to celebrate and shout out about across Aspire, let us know!



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## And finally for now...

With the rising cost of living and ongoing financial pressures, we know that every little saving helps. Working in education is not only rewarding in terms of shaping young minds and making a difference, but it also comes with a range of external benefits and discounts that can help ease some of these financial burdens. From essential purchases to leisure activities, there are numerous ways for those working in education to save money—yet many of us may not be fully aware of these perks or take full advantage of them.

At Aspire, we deeply appreciate the dedication and hard work of all our staff. We recognise the challenges you face, and we are incredibly grateful for the passion and commitment you bring to our schools every day. As a small token of our appreciation, we want to ensure you are aware of the benefits and discounts available to you. Below are just a few schemes you might want to explore:

- **Blue Light Card** – Since August, teachers can now sign up for the Blue Light Card, which provides access to discounts across major retailers, restaurants, travel, and more. There is a small fee to register, but many educators find the savings well worth it. [Find out more click here](#)
- **Discounts for Teachers** – This free-to-join platform offers fantastic savings on everything from shopping and holidays to insurance and utilities. In times of rising costs, these discounts can be a great help for household budgets. If you haven't signed up yet, it's definitely worth checking out! [Explore the offers here](#)
- **Tickets for Good** – A newer discovery for some of us, this platform provides free and discounted tickets to live events, concerts, and theatre performances exclusively for those working in public service roles, including educators. With entertainment often being one of the first things cut from budgets, this is a great way to still enjoy cultural experiences at a reduced cost. [Register for access here](#)
- **Union Membership Benefits** – Many education unions, such as NEU, NASUWT, and Unison, offer exclusive benefits to members. These include free and discounted CPD opportunities, legal and financial advice and support, insurance coverage, and additional discounts on shopping, travel, and entertainment. Unions also provide vital support in challenging times, helping members navigate workplace concerns, financial difficulties, and professional development. If you're not already a member, it's worth exploring how union membership can support your career and wellbeing.

We know that external challenges, from economic pressures to changing policies, can make working in education more demanding than ever. That's why it's important to make the most of the benefits available to you. Do you use any other discount platforms or have any recommendations to share? Let us know, and we'll feature them in a future edition. Also, if you've personally benefited from any of these offers, we'd love to hear your experiences!

As always - Thank you for everything you do - we couldn't do it without you. Happy saving!