

# Aspire CONNECTED

**ASPIRE**  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

## Aspire Spring 2026

January 2026

Welcome back, and happy New Year to everyone across Aspire Multi Academy Trust. We hope you all enjoyed a restful and refreshing Christmas break, with valuable time spent with family and friends. After what has been another busy term, we trust the holiday period provided a chance to pause, recharge, and return feeling ready for the months ahead.

As we begin the Spring term, there is a real sense of momentum across Aspire. This term brings fresh opportunities for learning, collaboration, and continued growth for our pupils, staff, and wider school communities. We remain committed to maintaining high standards, supporting one another, and ensuring the very best outcomes for all. We also look ahead with excitement as we continue our work towards the forthcoming merger with Shine.

As we come together, Aspire Multi Academy Trust and Shine Multi Academy Trust will merge to form a new organisation called Aspire and Shine Education Trust. This name reflects the pride we have in the journeys and values of both trusts, keeping their names at the heart of our future while clearly expressing our shared purpose: education. It represents our commitment to nurturing every child and supporting every member of staff, so that together our schools can continue to be places where children are encouraged to aspire, shine, and thrive.

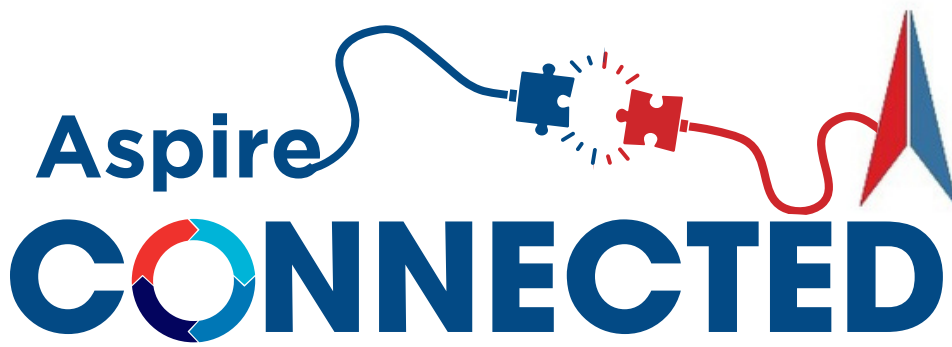
This is an important and positive step in our journey, one that will strengthen our collective capacity, broaden opportunities, and further enhance the educational experiences we provide. We are grateful for the ongoing professionalism, dedication, and engagement of everyone involved as we move forward together. Thank you, as always, for your continued hard work and commitment. We wish you a successful and fulfilling Spring term.

Warm regards, Kate Watson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Aspire Multi Academy Trust

**BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS**

## Looking ahead for Spring...

The Spring term will see the national conversation about primary education continue to develop, with ongoing attention to curriculum, assessment and accountability across the sector. There is likely to be further discussion about how schools balance core knowledge with broader opportunities for personal development, wellbeing and inclusion, including for pupils with SEND. We anticipate a growing emphasis on pupils' wider experiences as well as academic outcomes. In this evolving landscape, Aspire will continue to engage thoughtfully with emerging guidance and policy, while keeping a clear focus on supporting colleagues to provide the best possible education for every child.



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## Archbishop Cramner CofE Academy

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We are pleased to share that Archbishop Cranmer Church of England Primary Academy has been named in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide 2026, ranking 159<sup>th</sup> nationally and 6<sup>th</sup> across the East Midlands. Inclusion in this highly respected Good Schools list reflects sustained strong outcomes and year on year performance and recognises the ambition, care and high expectations that underpin daily life at ABCA.

This national recognition celebrates the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm and character of our pupils and the strong partnership with families, and it is a proud moment for our school community and the wider Aspire Trust.



## Gunthorpe CofE Academy

We are proud to share that Gunthorpe C of E Primary School has been recognised by the Department for Education as a higher performing school for attendance within its group of similar schools, with overall attendance and/or persistent absence outcomes amongst the strongest in its comparison group.

This means Gunthorpe is now named in national reports as an example that other schools can contact to learn more about effective approaches to improving attendance, reflecting the hard work of pupils, families and staff in promoting strong habits. This is a significant achievement at a time when only a small number of schools in England have returned to pre-pandemic levels of attendance, and the school will continue to refine its practice so that excellent attendance remains a sustained strength.

## Across Aspire

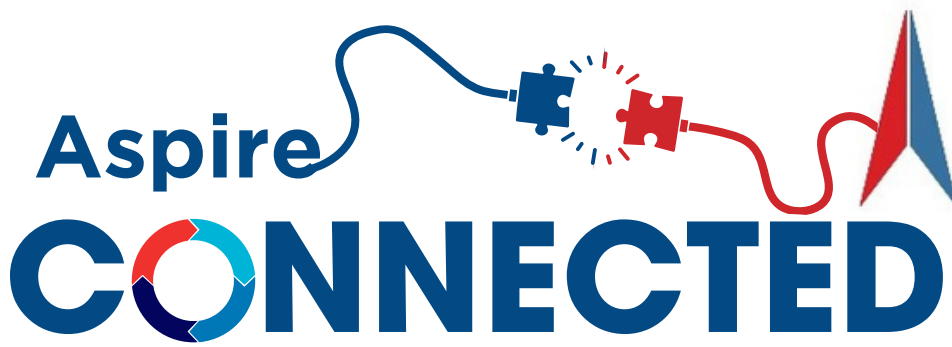
We are delighted to share that we successfully secured £1,200 in funding from the Burhouse Bursary, which will be shared between the eight schools attending Young Voices this month, and will fully support the Young Voices subscription costs. This is a fantastic opportunity and a wonderful example of how we continue to remove barriers and create opportunities for all our pupils.

Our Aspire schools will attend Young Voices at Sheffield Arena on 30 January, joining the largest children's choir concerts in the world and taking part in a truly electrifying experience. Events like this perfectly reflect our commitment to being a community of participation and a culture of opportunity, enabling children to find their voices, build confidence, and feel part of something extraordinary while fostering a lifelong love of music and performance.



## Spring Key Dates

Key dates for the Spring Term 2026 include the half-term break running from Monday 16 to Friday 20 February, and the end of term on Friday 27 March. The Easter period then follows, with Good Friday on 3 April, Easter Sunday on 5 April and Easter Monday on 6 April, marking important moments in both the national calendar and the Christian year. During the term there are also valuable opportunities to enrich the curriculum, including British Science Week from 6-15 March, with the theme 'Curiosity: what's your question?' and World Book Day on Thursday 5 March, alongside Pi Day on 14 March, all of which offer engaging ways to celebrate reading, STEM and wider learning with our pupils.



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## Children's Mental Health Week 2026

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Children's Mental Health Week takes place from 9-15 February and has been held annually since 2015, led by Place2Be to empower children, amplify their voices and support positive mental health across the UK. The week is now a well-established national event, with schools and colleges taking part each year and accessing a wide range of free, high-quality resources to support learning and discussion.

This year's theme, "This is my place", highlights the importance of belonging something that both Aspire Multi-Academy Trust and Shine Multi-Academy Trust actively champion. It provides a valuable opportunity for schools, staff, families and carers to come together, start meaningful conversations and help children feel seen, valued and connected.

As we continue to come together through our merger, this focus on belonging feels particularly meaningful, reinforcing our shared values and our collective continuing commitment to creating safe, inclusive and supportive environments for every child.

We would love to receive details, photos and examples of how your school community is recognising Children's Mental Health Week, as well as the wider ways you support wellbeing throughout the year. We would love to share and celebrate the great work taking place across our schools in future editions of Aspire and Shine Connected.

Add your school to the map!  
Each year Place2be have a map showing how lots of schools are taking part - make sure you add your school!



**Place2Be's**

**CHILDREN'S  
MENTAL HEALTH  
WEEK**

**9-15  
FEB  
2026**

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk>