

ASPIRE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

# HEAD OF PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

---

We are seeking a truly exceptional Head of School to lead our Aylesbury Vale Blueprint Pupil Referral Unit. This is a fantastic opportunity to join an ambitious and innovative trust, where you will have the opportunity to create meaningful and lasting change in the lives of some of the most vulnerable students in Buckinghamshire.

**We change lives. Our work matters. Join us.**

1. WELCOME FROM THE CEO
2. BLUEPRINT
3. THE ROLE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL
4. WHY WORK FOR ASPIRE?

5. LEADING WITH LOVE
6. JOB DESCRIPTION
7. PERSON SPECIFICATION
8. HOW TO APPLY

For more information, or to arrange a visit or conversation with our Executive Headteacher, please contact [hr@aspireap.org.uk](mailto:hr@aspireap.org.uk)





## WELCOME FROM DEBRA RUTLEY, CEO

*Debra Rutley has led Aspire since 2012, during which time it has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted four consecutive times. Debra is also a National Leader of Education.*

Thank you for your interest in this role, and I am delighted that you are interested in joining Aspire as our Head of School at Blueprint.

I am exceptionally proud of the work that we do at Aspire. Over the last 20 years Aspire has grown from a single Local Authority PRU, to an Academy Trust comprising of a variety of diverse schools and educational services that account for the majority of Alternative Provision in Buckinghamshire. We have an excellent track record of delivering education that is responsive to, and meets the needs of the population of young people that we serve.

This is an exciting time to be working in Alternative Provision. Our students, and the challenges they face, are finally starting to receive the attention they deserve from policy makers, think tanks and the wider public. As a leader at Aspire, you will be an advocate for our young people, and as an outward facing Trust, we want to provide you with a platform from which you can amplify their voices to create meaningful change.

Aspire is a great place to work, and as our Head of School at Blueprint you will help us to make it even better. Work with us to ensure that all of our staff and students are and feel valued, and where everyone understands how their day to day work improves the life chances of the disadvantaged young people and communities that we serve.

We change lives. Our work matters. Join us.

Debra Rutley, CEO

# BLUEPRINT

## A PURPOSE-BUILT SECONDARY AP SCHOOL

Aylesbury Vale Blueprint is a purpose-built alternative provision school in Aylesbury. We take secondary students who have been permanently excluded, and offer placements to those who are at risk of exclusion. Increasingly, we are also finding ourselves supporting students with complex needs and EHCPs for SEMH who come to us to allow time for appropriate specialist settings to be found.

Students come to us, usually for a 12-week placement, while we work with them, their families and their mainstream school, to identify strategies that will help them manage their emotions and be successful at school. Sometimes our assessments indicate that mainstream is not the right place for a student, and in this case, we will work with them, their families and the local authority to help them move into a specialist setting.

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

Our aim at Blueprint is to help students rediscover a love of learning, to help them learn and use strategies to regulate their emotions and manage their behaviour, and to help them identify and work towards a positive destination for their next steps in education and life.

We offer a wide curriculum, including a core academic offer of English, Maths, Science, Art and Humanities GCSEs, and we also have a number of dedicated vocational spaces for Motor Vehicle Studies, Construction, Music, Cooking, and Hair and Beauty.

Blueprint is our largest site, currently employing 33 members of staff including teachers of both academic and vocational subjects, and an experienced team of support staff.

## THE ROLE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL AT BLUEPRINT

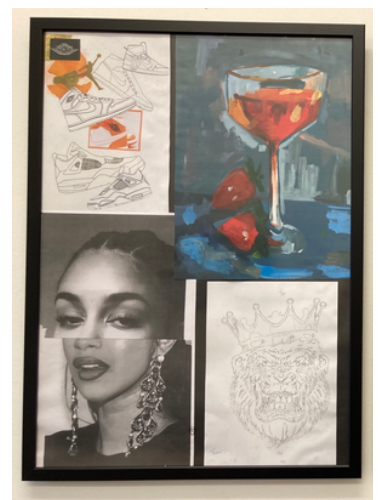
This is a rare opportunity to join the Senior Leadership Team of an outstanding AP Trust. We are seeking to appoint an inspirational leader who is creative and innovative, upholds ambitious standards and possesses a clear sense of accountability.

The Head of School at each of our sites is responsible for supporting the Executive Headteacher in the leadership of Aspire Schools and for the day to day leadership and management of one of the Aspire sites. Each of our Heads of School ensures that our young people are working towards positive outcomes in terms of placement, education and social and emotional support.

The successful applicant must constantly model Aspire's vision and values and uphold high levels of integrity and standards. They will also be able to build positive relationships with students, colleagues, parents and Trustees alike and to inspire and work alongside a welcoming and dedicated staff team.

We believe that young people who have been excluded need a nurturing and loving approach, need to feel valued and cared for, and need to have teachers who believe in them. We know that working in AP is not always easy. We want to find a leader who can be calm in the face of challenging behaviour, and who will always see the best in a young person, finding something to love in them, no matter what.

We have high expectations of our young people, in terms of their behaviour, social development, and academic achievement. We know that young people who have been excluded often have complex backgrounds, and/or a number of unmet special educational needs. When they receive the right support, they are capable of great things. We are looking for someone who will help them discover extraordinary things about the world, and about themselves. Could this be you? If so, we would love to hear from you.



# WHY WORK FOR ASPIRE?

## OUR STAFF WELLBEING CHARTER

At Aspire, staff wellbeing is a high priority: we do our jobs most effectively when we are well and happy, and when we practise self-care. One of the responsibilities of our leaders is to build the culture and practical systems that support and protect staff wellbeing, as well as that of students.

We believe that staff wellbeing is most likely to be high when:

- young people are at the centre of every decision
- all voices are heard and valued
- we are determined to achieve genuine equity and commit to this journey
- we are all learning and we value and treasure this process
- we are valued as humans first, educators second
- we have the resources we need to do our jobs - and can ask for them if we do not
- we are consulted on the decisions which affect our working lives
- we are trusted to make important decisions
- we can talk openly about our struggles without fear of stigma
- we support in every direction
- we face daily challenges and take time at the end of the working day to resolve them, learn from them and move on
- we learn - together - from our daily challenges
- we follow-up and do what we say we will do
- we are honest about what we cannot control.

## WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

**A staff wellbeing representative at each of our schools.** Someone who is responsible for organising staff wellbeing events and activities, and ensuring staff wellbeing is considered at all stages of school planning.

**High quality CPD, from experts in their field.** We know that wellbeing is highest when people feel that they have the skills to do their job well, and that the school is investing in them.

**Leaders that are considerate of workload.** When our leaders introduce new policies or processes, they first ask, what can we stop doing to generate the time for this?

**A real commitment to flexible working.** A large number of our teachers and senior leaders work part time. We have staff who work three or four days a week so that they can study for a Masters, pursue their career as a musician, or care for family.

**A belief that working in education should not consume your whole life, and must be compatible with having a family.** We know that being a parent, or having other caring responsibilities, is important, and takes time. We support staff who need this, and we do not value "presenteeism".

**Email and communication policies that support flexible working,** allowing staff to work at times that suit them, and not expecting anything from anyone outside of school hours.



## LEADING WITH LOVE

Leading with Love is fundamental to the vision and values of Aspire Schools. It is what makes us unique and a special place to work.

The approach has been developed by our CEO, Debra Rutley, based on experience, research, and professional encounters with experts working in the fields of leadership, education and positive psychology. You can read Debra's piece for *Impact*, the journal for the Chartered College of Teaching, here: <https://impact.chartered.college/article/all-you-need-is-love/>

### ***Leading with Love is both a leadership strategy and a leadership framework***

To 'lead with love' is to be deliberate and intentional in one's planning and interactions. It is not a leadership 'style' or a 'trait' that either comes naturally to you or does not. Instead, it is a conscious set of decisions about how you will 'be', how you will 'lead' and how you respond to others. To lead with love is to understand the way that your body and mind responds automatically to certain situations so that you can interrupt that cycle, take a step back and ask yourself: how do I want to be in this moment?

### ***There is no place for fear in an organisation fuelled by love***

'Leaders who project strength before establishing trust run the risk of eliciting fear, and along with it a host of dysfunctional behaviours.' (Cuddy, Kohut and Neffinger, 2013)

Research suggests that it is actually warmth that creates effective leadership, and acts as the 'conduit of influence', facilitating trust and the communication and absorption of ideas, and it is through very simple non-verbal signals that this can begin to be created: a nod, a smile, an open gesture that shows a colleague you are pleased to be in their company and are attentive of their concerns. In this way, leaders are able to show they are present, that they notice their colleagues and that they care.

### ***Relationships are at the heart of what we do when we lead with love***

"Too often relationships can be the by-product of decisions taken with other priorities in mind. They're often neglected, undermined or put under intolerable pressure." (Relational Schools)

To lead with love is to prioritise what it is to be human, and the opportunity to build and nurture high-quality and meaningful relationships is at the very heart of that. However, we cannot leave the formation of them to chance, and we must provide staff and students with the time and space they need to develop and nurture these relationships. We need to embrace the messiness and vulnerability of what it means to be human and this takes courage. It is not a fluffy concept, but a deliberate effort to think consciously about all that you do, and the impact that you have on other people.

# **JOB DESCRIPTION - HEAD OF SCHOOL - BLUEPRINT**

**Pay: Leadership Range 10-18 (£58,959 - £71,729)**

## **Purpose of the role**

- To provide professional leadership and management for Aylesbury Vale Blueprint, in a way which ensures a high quality of education and support for all students.
- To assume the role of DSL for Blueprint.
- To deputise for other members of the SLT when absent and in such circumstances to be responsible for the day-to-day organisation, management and conduct of Aspire in accordance with the current School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, Trust policies, the Board of Trustees and applicable legislation.
- To assume responsibility for specific areas of strategic leadership across a number of Aspire schools as agreed with the Executive Headteacher.

## **Key Accountabilities**

### **Culture and Ethos**

- Lead with love.
- Keep children and young people at the heart of everything you do.
- Work with mission integrity for the benefit of all within the school community.
- Develop and sustain a calm, safe and purposeful learning culture in the school.
- Develop the respectful and inclusive ethos of our Trust.
- Engage with the Trust vision and values.
- Always be a learner: engage with reading and research, best practice and new ideas from other schools, and other forms of professional development.

### **Leadership and Management of the School**

- Work with the Executive Headteacher to shape the school in line with Aspire's strategic vision in all areas.
- With the support of the Executive Headteacher, accurately evaluate all areas of the school's provision.
- With the support of the Executive Headteacher, use self-evaluation to shape school development plans that will lead to improved outcomes for young people and staff.
- Lead the implementation of school development plans.
- With the support of the Executive Headteacher, ensure that the school complies with statutory and non-statutory requirements from the DfE, Ofsted and Local Authorities.
- Ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- Manage staff as per the school line management structure, and ensure every member of staff receives effective, regular line management.



- Delegate effectively to the Senior and Middle leadership team in school.
- Develop positive relationships with staff, students, the local community, external stakeholders, parents, carers and families.
- Deputise for the Executive Headteacher when required.
- Meet with/communicate with parents/carers when a pupil situation becomes more serious or when relationships with a parent/carer are known to be difficult.
- Responsible for liaison and partnership working with local schools - eg. managing reintegration, agreeing the increase of provision.
- Accountable for all aspects of site operational management.

### **Safeguarding**

- Assume the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school.
- Ensure that all students feel and are safe in school.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is carried out properly and completely by everyone in the school community.
- Report to the Executive Headteacher and the Strategic Safeguarding Lead on Safeguarding in the school.

### **Behaviour and Attendance**

- Ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to behaviour, that is in line with Aspire's strategic approach, and that leads to a calm and purposeful school environment.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to ensure that all students receive the behaviour support they need, leading to all students making improvements in their behaviour over the time they are with Aspire.
- Ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to attendance, that is in line with Aspire's strategic approach, and that leads to attendance being above national AP averages, and to all students improving their attendance over the time that they are with us.
- Report to the Executive Headteacher on behaviour and attendance data, strategies and impact.

### **Behaviour and Attendance**

- Ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to behaviour, that is in line with Aspire's strategic approach, and that leads to a calm and purposeful school environment.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to ensure that all students receive the behaviour support they need, leading to all students making improvements in their behaviour over the time they are with Aspire.

- Ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to attendance, that is in line with Aspire's strategic approach, and that leads to attendance being above national AP averages, and all students improving their attendance over the time that they are with us.
- Report to the Executive Headteacher on behaviour and attendance data, strategies and impact.

### **Teaching, Learning and Curriculum**

- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team at the school to ensure that the planned curriculum enables all students to make progress in their academic and social/emotional development and to achieve excellent outcomes and is in line with Aspire's strategic curriculum aims.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team at the school to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good, leading to positive outcomes and academic progress for all students over the time that they are with Aspire.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to implement quality assurance systems to ensure that evidence is in place demonstrating the quality of planning, teaching and learning over time.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to ensure that all staff know about students' individual learning needs, that all teaching responds to those needs, and that all staff and parents are meaningfully engaged in the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle.
- Implement systems for tracking and monitoring student progress and achievement, and ensure swift intervention when students are not making expected progress.
- Work with the other Heads of School to ensure that the timetable supports all teachers and students to achieve high quality teaching and learning and a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identify training needs and put in place strategies and support to ensure that all staff in the school are continually improving.
- Hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and learning and implement performance and capability processes when required to ensure that no student experiences poor quality teaching and learning for an extended period of time.
- Report to the Executive Headteacher on the quality of teaching and learning, student progress data, qualification and post-16 outcomes.
- Provide the Executive Headteacher with Termly and Annual progress reports to update the Trustees.
- Provide a monthly data-driven review to the Executive Headteacher on student progress (to include attendance, exclusion, behaviour, academic progress, CP)

### **Special Educational Needs**

- Line manage the SENDCo to ensure that the school provides outstanding quality first teaching to all students, and has a high quality intervention offer to further support those students with more complex SEND.
- Ensure that SEND is considered fully in all aspects of school development and improvement planning.
- Ensure that students with EHCPs receive at least the provision that they are entitled to under their plan.

### **Personal Development**

- Ensure that there is a clear and effective approach to students' Personal Development.
- Lead the Senior and Middle leadership team to ensure that all students receive provision that includes work towards personal development outcomes, and that a record is kept to celebrate their successes in this area.

### **Data and management of pupil information**

- Lead the implementation of school policies regarding assessment and reporting throughout the school.
- Ensure that the data and personal information collected is accurate and used well, to improve provision for students and drive school development work.
- Ensure that data collection and pupil information management do not add unduly to staff workload.

### **Financial Management**

- Effectively manage the allocated budget for the school, keeping accurate records.
- Ensure the efficient and effective deployment of the budget, so that all spending leads to improved outcomes for students.
- Responsible for spending the Pupil Premium Allocation in school, for tracking the impact of this budget, and for compiling the PPG impact report.
- Report to the Executive Headteacher on school spending and impact.





## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Qualifications

- Good Honours First Degree or equivalent
- Qualified Teacher Status
- Evidence of professional study in relation to students (desirable)

### Experience

- Outstanding classroom practitioner
- Experience of working with students with learning, challenging, emotional or behavioural difficulties
- Leadership and management at senior level
- Experience of working with or within mainstream schools (desirable)

### Knowledge

- Knowledge of current secondary practice, including the National Curriculum and educational developments.
- Knowledge of legislation in the field of education and Special Educational Needs
- Knowledge and experience of devising, developing and monitoring programmes to support the needs of young people
- Knowledge and experience of team leadership

### Skills

- Able to prioritise, plan and organise yourself and others
- Able to collaborate with other agencies
- Able to establish trusting relationships with professionals
- Able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Able to collate, analyse and interpret pupil data to inform school development
- Able to collaborate effectively with the wider community to promote the PRU

### Personal Qualities

- Confident and calm personality
- Creative, dynamic approach anticipating and solving challenges
- Able to motivate, inspire and challenge others
- Positive role model

### Other Factors

- A commitment to Equal Opportunities
- Driving licence essential. as is access to a vehicle.

## Skills

- The ability to prioritise, plan and organise yourself and others.
- Ability to work efficiently and accurately, particularly under pressure, to deadlines and using own initiative.
- Effective partnership working skills – able to build and draw on the strengths of others to generate outstanding results.
- Skilled in developing a culture of outstanding performance and supporting improvements in standards, in teaching and learning and in behaviour.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, including excellent report writing skills.
- The ability to collate, analyse and interpret complex data to inform school development.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence: with the ability to build strong working relationships with trustees, local headteachers/Principals and other stakeholders; and to always be approachable to staff at all levels.
- Excellent IT skills, including the ability to use social media to enhance the Trust's reputation and improve pupil/students' learning.

## Personal Qualities

- Highest levels of integrity and a commitment to highest levels of effort, endeavour and compassion.
- Confident and calm in difficult situations.
- Loving and warm personality.
- Creative, dynamic approach anticipating and solving challenges.
- Able to motivate, inspire and challenge others.

## Other Factors

- A commitment to Equal Opportunities.
- Drivers Licence essential as is access to a vehicle.



# HOW TO APPLY

If you would like any more information, or want to arrange a visit or informal conversation with our Executive Headteacher, please contact our Human Resources Team on [hr@aspireap.org.uk](mailto:hr@aspireap.org.uk).

To apply for this role, please complete the Aspire application form, and submit it along with a personal statement explaining why you are the right candidate for this role. Applications should be sent to [hr@aspireap.org.uk](mailto:hr@aspireap.org.uk)

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

**Closing date: 26 November**

