

Aspire and Shine CONNECTED

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

Autumn Term 1

September 2026

Welcome to a new academic year

Welcome to the autumn edition of Aspire & Shine Connected and to our first full academic year together as

Aspire & Shine Education Trust



The beginning of a new school year always brings a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. Across our 15 schools, children have returned to classrooms, new pupils and staff have been welcomed, and school communities have quickly settled back into the familiar rhythms of learning. I would like to thank everyone whose hard work, care and attention have made the start of the year such a positive one.

At a time when the wider educational landscape continues to present both opportunities and challenges, it is important that we remain focused on the things that make the greatest difference to children: high-quality teaching, strong relationships, regular attendance and a genuine sense of belonging. These priorities are neither new nor complicated, and we know that they depend upon the skill, consistency and commitment of everyone working across our schools.

This year, we will continue to strengthen inclusion and ensure that every child is known, valued and supported to succeed. We will also keep celebrating the richness of school life beyond academic outcomes, from sport, music and the arts to residential, clubs and community events. These experiences build confidence, character and curiosity, creating memories that children carry with them long after they leave primary school.

Official Name Change: Aspire and Shine Education Trust

We are delighted to share that, following formal approval from the Charity Commission on Thursday 10 September, our new name is now official.

We can now use Aspire and Shine Education Trust across all documents and communications.

This marks an important and exciting milestone in our journey together. Our new name represents the coming together of both trusts and the shared future we are building as one organisation.

Thank you for your patience while we awaited formal approval.



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Our first Aspire & Shine Conference

One of the most important moments of this term will be our first conference as Aspire & Shine Education Trust, taking place on Friday 16 October at Scotholme Primary and Nursery School.

The theme of the conference is Connection, reflecting our commitment to bringing colleagues together, sharing expertise and building strong professional relationships across our new Trust. It will be the first time that staff from all 15 schools have gathered as one organisation and will give us an opportunity to celebrate the distinctive identity of each school while recognising all that connects us.

Our shared vision:

Be Courageous. Be Caring. Become...

Be

will sit at the heart of the day. It expresses our belief that children and adults flourish when they are encouraged to aim high, care for one another and continue to learn and grow. The conference will also provide valuable time for colleagues to learn together, make new connections and begin shaping the next chapter of Aspire & Shine. Much work is continuing behind the scenes on planning the day, and we will share more information with you nearer the time.

As we look ahead, our strength will come from combining the knowledge, experience and character of all our schools. We have much to learn from one another and much to look forward to. I hope this first term gives everyone across our Trust a real sense of optimism, connection and belonging.

Our shared vision: celebrating what makes each school unique

Our new Trust vision—Be Courageous. Be Caring. Become...—provides a shared sense of purpose across Aspire and Shine Education Trust.

Alongside this, each school is developing its own Be... statement to express what makes its identity, ethos and community distinctive. These statements are not intended to replace existing school visions or values, but to complement and strengthen them.

This approach enables us to be united under one Trust vision while recognising and celebrating the individuality of every school. It will also help new schools joining ASET to retain their distinctiveness while feeling part of something bigger.

We hope to share and celebrate each school's chosen statements at our Aspire and Shine Conference in October.

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Take Care Shout Outs

Our Take Care Shout Outs recognise members of our school communities who have gone above and beyond to support others or make a positive difference.

By the end of the last academic year, I had received more than 70 nominations. These celebrated contributions ranged from leading a "Hedgehog Friendly Campus" and making meaningful changes to support wildlife and sustainability, to a Chair of Governors visiting the school every week to listen to children read.

Nominations can be made for anyone within our Trust community. So far, we have celebrated teachers, teaching assistants, kitchen staff, governors, school leaders and members of the central team. Whether it is a significant achievement or a thoughtful act that might otherwise go unnoticed, please continue to share these examples with me.

Receiving a Take Care Shout Out provides a genuine wellbeing boost and reminds people that their efforts are seen and appreciated. Just as importantly, the nominations help us celebrate the kindness, commitment and care demonstrated across Aspire & Shine every day. Just email me with anything you notice; I love to read them.



News shared from our schools

We love hearing about the fantastic things happening across our schools, and this month Ironville and Codnor Park Primary School has certainly been busy!

To celebrate National Fitness Day, the whole school got moving with a sponsored Commando Joe-style Mile Obstacle Course. Children completed nine laps of the playground, taking on tyre runs, army crawls, hurdle jumps and other challenges along the way. This was followed by the school's annual Danceathon, with children and staff joining in with the Cha Cha Slide and Macarena – a great way to have fun while promoting the importance of physical activity for both physical and mental wellbeing.

The school also had another fantastic achievement to celebrate, with ELSA Lindsey Hosie raising an incredible £1,260 for Macmillan through a cake sale. WOW what a brilliant fundraising effort for a very worthwhile cause.

Well done to everyone at Ironville and Codnor Park and please keep sending in your school news so we can celebrate and share what is happening across Aspire & Shine each term.