The Vision of the Aspirations Trust

What are we about?

Aspirations Academies share a common vision, common values and a common purpose, with each Academy operating as an individual school, serving the local area, meeting the needs of its pupils and reflecting the leadership style of the Principal.

Our Vision

What we want to achieve:

Our vision is to deliver an authentic education for the 21st century for children from the age of 2 to 18. This requires the curriculum to allow for the development of the knowledge, skills and qualifications required for today's highly competitive, fast-changing world. Children in Aspirations Academies learn in a challenging, engaging and supportive environment.

Aspirations has a duty to prepare our young people for success in this future world. This is being done through developing an approach to teaching and learning in which:

- All students achieve at least expected academic progress and high levels of attainment in national qualifications
- All students acquire knowledge to be remembered and constantly built upon cumulatively from Early Years to the Sixth Form to deepen their understanding
- The Aspirations Principles are embedded in all aspects of each academy
- There is a clear focus on the eleven future skills (see later)
- Our wellness curriculum is in place for all students and staff
- There is a strong focus on literacy, at all ages, as the key to future success
- Our No Limits curriculum drives an authentic education for the 21st century
- Our Challenge and Engagement lesson planning toolkit remain an essential feature of learning
- Our education is fully inclusive for all students
- Employability and good citizenship are the main drivers of why we do what we do
- All students develop high levels of self-worth and self-confidence

Aspirations Principles:
- The three Guiding Principles underpin the learning in each academy:
    - Self-worth
    - Engagement
    - Purpose

These are the basis of the Aspirations Trust. If people feel good about themselves, they can achieve anything, if they are engaged in what they are doing and see a purpose then they will achieve their dreams.
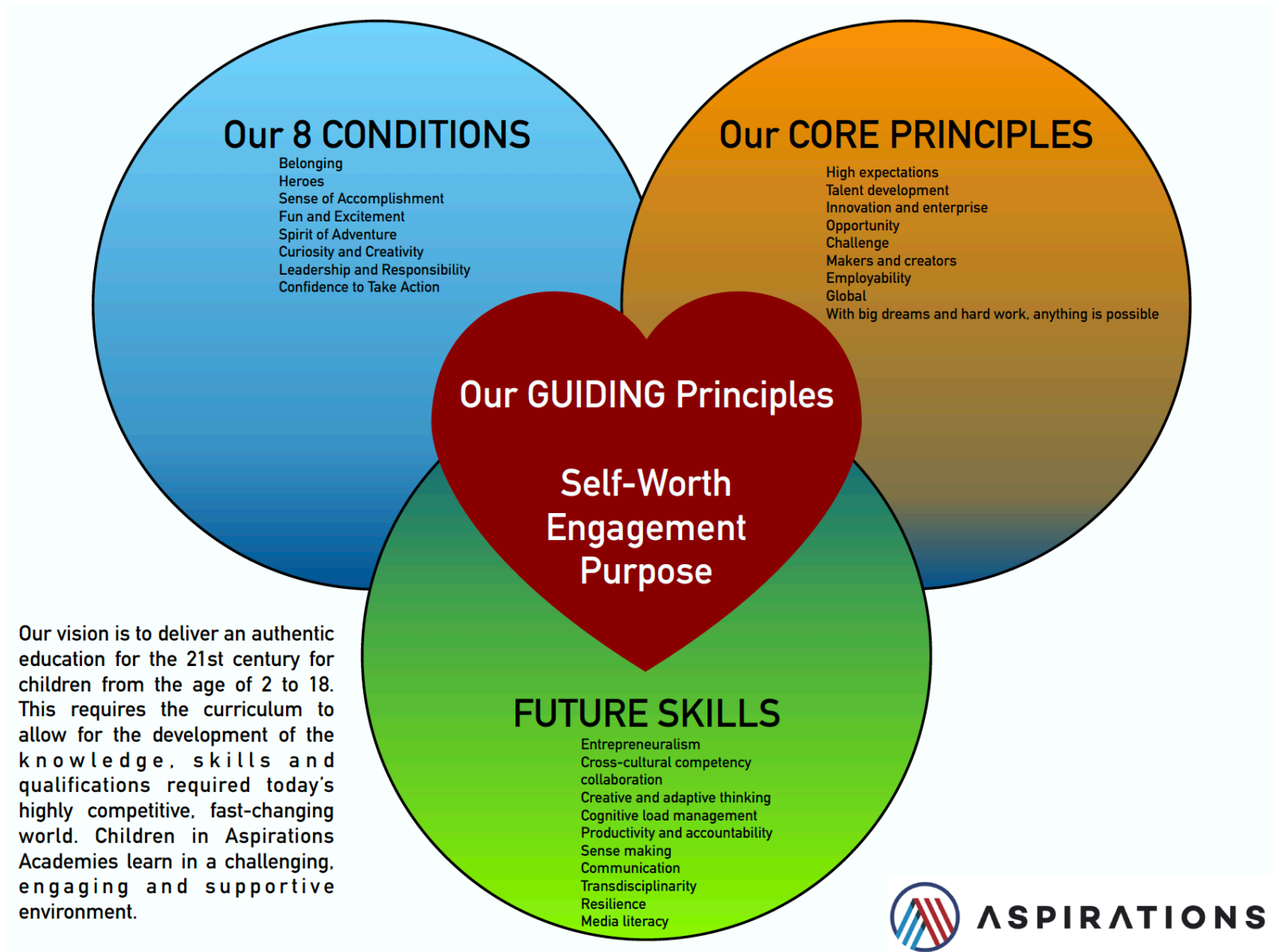
The Aspirations Framework

The 3 Guiding Principles are supported by 9 Core Principles and the 8 Conditions that make a difference to raising student aspirations to provide an Aspirations Framework to guide the work in achieving the Aspirations vision.

- The Nine Core Principles are:
    - High Expectations - Being the very best you can be in your school and community
    - Opportunity - Matching your interests with activities that will help you to leave school well-rounded and confident
    - Challenge - Making your learning exciting and relevant to the real world
    - Talent Development - Enhancing your natural strengths and abilities so you thrive in school and beyond
    - Innovation and Enterprise - Supporting your creativity by encouraging you to ask 'Why?' and 'Why not?'
    - Makers and Creators - Being a creator, not just a consumer, of technology in our digital world
    - Global - Having the cultural awareness needed to communicate in our interconnected world
    - Employability - Equipping you with the skills and abilities you'll need to excel in our ever-changing world
    - With Big Dreams and Hard Work, Anything is Possible - Aspirations means to dream about the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams.

- The 8 conditions that make a difference to raising student aspirations:
    - Belonging
    - Heroes
    - Sense of Accomplishment
    - Fun and Excitement
    - Curiosity and Creativity
    - Spirit of Adventure

- Leadership and responsibility
- Confidence to Take Action

The Aspirations Framework should be embedded in all operations of the academy. They should drive the curriculum and teaching and learning processes.

Our 8 CONDITIONS
Belonging
Heroes
Sense of Accomplishment
Fun and Excitement
Spirit of Adventure
Curiosity and Creativity
Leadership and Responsibility
Confidence to Take Action

Our CORE PRINCIPLES
High expectations
Talent development
Innovation and enterprise
Opportunity
Challenge
Makers and creators
Employability
Global
With big dreams and hard work, anything is possible

Our GUIDING Principles

**Self-Worth
Engagement
Purpose**

Our vision is to deliver an authentic education for the 21st century for children from the age of 2 to 18. This requires the curriculum to allow for the development of the knowledge, skills and qualifications required today's highly competitive, fast-changing world. Children in Aspirations Academies learn in a challenging, engaging and supportive environment.

FUTURE SKILLS
Entrepreneuralism
Cross-cultural competency
collaboration
Creative and adaptive thinking
Cognitive load management
Productivity and accountability
Sense making
Communication
Transdisciplinarity
Resilience
Media literacy

ASPIRATIONS

The table below is a checklist for leaders on ensuring they are implementing the vision and Aspirations framework.

	Aspirations: 16 essential elements of an aspirations academy (A combination of the Core Principles and the 8 conditions that make a difference)	How does your academy rate in having these features in place?				
	Self-worth	No sign of it	In the process of being put in place	Emerging	In place and starting to have an impact	Fully in place having a big impact
1	**Individuals are valued for their uniqueness** and the strengths of each individual student and staff are developed and valued.				1	
2	**High Expectations** - Being the very best you can be in your school and community					
3	To create a real sense of **belonging** there is a clear focus on individual needs but also in working together as a team. (One of the 8 conditions)					
4	Children are 'put in the way of success' as frequently as possible **(Sense of Accomplishment -** One of the 8 conditions**)**					
5	All staff model at all times the highest expectations **(Heroes -** One of the 8 conditions**)**					
	Engagement					
6	**Opportunity** - Matching your interests with activities that will help students to leave school well-rounded and confident					
7	Challenge - Making your learning exciting and relevant to the real world - using the 'No limits' curriculum approach (**Fun and Excitement** - One of the 8 conditions)					
8	**Talent Development -** Enhancing students natural strengths and abilities so they thrive in school and beyond					
9	Innovation and Enterprise - Supporting students creativity by encouraging them to ask 'Why?' and 'Why not?' (**Curiosity and Creativity** - One of the 8 conditions)					
10	Students are actively encouraged to learn from their mistakes or failures (**Spirit of Adventure** - One of the 8 conditions)					
	Purpose					

11	**Makers and Creators** - Being a creator, not just a consumer, of technology in our digital world. Students are given opportunities to use the Creator spaces and other technologies to develop their creativity.					
12	**Global** - A programme of events is in place for all phases which is developing the cultural awareness needed to communicate in our interconnected world					
13	**Employability** - There is a range of opportunities to give students and understanding of possible career paths. All lessons are planned to equip students with the skills and abilities they will need to excel in our ever-changing world					
14	Skills that prepare students for working life are actively developed through the curriculum and wider opportunities (The eleven future skills - see below - **Confidence to Take Action** - one of the 8 conditions)					
15	Opportunities to allow students to lead are sought actively both within the classroom and across the academy (**Leadership and Responsibility** - One of the 8 conditions)					
Aspirations						
16	**With Big Dreams and Hard Work, Anything is Possible -** All students are encouraged to develop a growth mindset and metacognitive skills					

11 critical skills you will need to succeed at work in 2020 and beyond

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The ability to operate in different cultural settings

In this globally connected world, a worker's skill set could see them posted in any number of locations—so they need to be able to operate in whatever environment they find themselves. This primarily demands an ability to adapt to changing circumstances and an ability to sense and respond to new contexts. Cross-cultural competency will become an important skill for all workers, not just those who have to operate in diverse geographical environments. Organisations increasingly see diversity as a driver of innovation. Research now tells us that what makes a group truly intelligent and innovative is the combination of different ages, skills, disciplines, and working and thinking styles that members bring to the table. Diversity will therefore become a core competency for organisations over the next decade. Successful employees within diverse teams will need to be able to identify and communicate points of connection (shared goals, priorities, values) that transcend their differences and enable them to build relationships and to work together effectively.

ENTREPRENEURALISM

The ability to meet an unsatisfied demand or to radically improve the performance of something.

Entrepreneurs produce solutions that fly in the face of established knowledge, and they challenge the status quo. They are risk-takers who pursue opportunities that others may fail to recognise or may even view as problems or threats. Entrepreneurship is closely associated with change, creativity, knowledge, innovation and flexibility-factors that are increasingly important sources of competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world economy.

COLLABORATION

The ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a team, physically and virtually.

An essential feature of the 21st century workplace is the ability to work together as part of a team. Working in teams enables people to be quicker and more effective in their work, as compared to people who work on their own. Collaboration also makes people more responsive, which raises motivation levels, especially when the team is working virtually.

Connective technologies make it easier than ever to work, share ideas and be productive despite physical separation. But the virtual work environment also demands a new set of competencies. As a leader of a virtual team, individuals need to develop strategies for engaging and motivating a dispersed group.

CREATIVE AND ADAPTIVE THINKING

The ability to think and develop solutions and ideas.

Job opportunities are declining in middle-skill level jobs, largely due to automation. Conversely, there are an increasing number of job opportunities in both high skill, high-wage professional, technical and management occupations and in low-skill, low-wage occupations such as food service and personal care. Jobs at the high-skill end involve abstract tasks, and at the low-skill end, manual tasks. What both of these categories of tasks have in common is that they require "situational adaptability"— the ability to respond to unique unexpected circumstances of the moment. Tasks as different as writing a convincing legal argument, or creating a new dish out of set ingredients both require novel thinking and adaptability. These skills will be at a premium in the next decade.

COGNITIVE LOAD MANAGEMENT

The ability to discriminate and filter information for importance. This involves all aspects of perception, thinking, reasoning, and remembering.

A world rich in information streams in multiple formats and from multiple devices brings the issue of cognitive overload to the fore. Organisations and workers will only be able to turn the massive influx of data into an advantage if they can learn to effectively filter and focus on what is important. The next generation of workers will have to develop their own techniques for tackling the problem of cognitive overload. For example, the practice of social filtering—ranking, tagging, or adding other metadata to content helps higher-quality or more relevant information to rise above the "noise." Workers will also need to become adept at utilising new tools to help them deal with the information onslaught.

PRODUCTIVITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Productivity is the ability to create a product whilst accountability is taking a role in the creation of a product and taking responsibility for the performance of the product.

Productivity is the ability to create a product using these skills: setting and meeting goals, prioritising needs, managing time, working ethically, collaborating and cooperating with colleagues and clients. Productivity is increasingly important as it is an important way in which success and failure are established in the working world. Increasingly quality is important. Being productive in the 21st century means being able to produce a product of a certain quality within a given timeframe. Accountability and productivity are interconnected. Accountability is taking a role in the creation of a product and taking responsibility for the performance of the product. People are held accountable for the actions they take to complete a task.

SENSE-MAKING

The ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding how and why ideas connect.

As smart machines take over rote, routine manufacturing and services jobs, there will be an increasing demand for the kinds of skills machines are not good at. These are higher level thinking skills that cannot be codified. These are called sense-making skills, also referred to as critical thinking, skills that help us create unique insights critical to decision making. As we renegotiate the human/machine division of labor in the next decade, critical thinking or sense-making will emerge as a skill workers increasingly need to capitalise on. In essence, critical thinking requires you to use your ability to reason. It is about being an active learner rather than a passive recipient of information.

COMMUNICATION

The ability to connect to others effectively, to sense and stimulate reactions and interactions.

Socially intelligent employees are able to quickly assess the emotions of those around them and adapt their words, tone and gestures accordingly. This has always been a key skill for workers who need to collaborate and build relationships of trust, but it is even more important as we are called on to collaborate with larger groups of people in different settings. Our emotionality and social IQ developed over millennia of living in groups will continue be one of the vital assets that give human workers a comparative advantage over machines.

TRANS DISCIPLINARITY

The ability to access, analyse and synthesise information across several disciplines (subjects).

Many of today's global problems are just too complex to be solved by one specialised discipline (think global warming or overpopulation). These multifaceted problems require transdisciplinary solutions. While throughout the 20th century, ever-greater specialisation was encouraged, the 21st century has seen transdisciplinary approaches take centre stage. We are already seeing this in the emergence of new areas of study, such as nanotechnology, which blends molecular biology, biochemistry, protein chemistry, and other specialties. This shift has major implications for the skill set that knowledge workers will need to bring to organisations. The ideal worker of the future is "T-shaped"—they bring deep understanding of at least one field, but have the capacity to converse in the language of a broader range of disciplines. This requires a sense of curiosity and a willingness to go on learning far beyond the years of formal education. As extended lifespans promote multiple careers and exposure to more industries and disciplines, it will be particularly important for workers to develop this T-shaped quality.

RESILIENCE

The flexibility to manage change and to remain stable in demanding situations. The ability to overcome setbacks and challenges.

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

MEDIA LITERACY

The ability to use and develop content that uses all media forms.

There has been an explosion in user-generated media that dominates our lives over recent years that now increasingly dominates what happens in the workplace. Workers will increasingly need to become fluent in all forms of media, keeping up-to-date with changes, and should be able to critically "read" and assess their content. Workers will also need to be comfortable creating and presenting their own visual information. As immersive and visually stimulating presentation of information becomes the norm, workers will need more sophisticated skills to use these tools to engage and persuade their audiences.

Screenshot

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

AN ASPIRATIONS EDUCATION IS BUILT ON THESE VALUES

1 SELF-WORTH

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Being the very best you can be in your school and community.

2 ENGAGEMENT

OPPORTUNITY

Matching your interests with activities that will help you to leave school well-rounded and confident.

CHALLENGE

Making your learning exciting and relevant to the real world.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing your natural strengths and abilities so you thrive in school and beyond.

INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

Supporting your creativity by encouraging you to ask 'Why?' and 'Why not?'.

3 PURPOSE

MAKERS & CREATORS

Being a creator, not just a consumer, of technology in our digital world.

GLOBAL

Having the cultural awareness needed to communicate in our interconnected world.

EMPLOYABILITY

Equipping you with the skills and abilities you'll need to excel in our ever-changing world.

4 ASPIRATIONS

WITH BIG DREAMS AND HARD WORK, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Aspirations means to dream about the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams.

ASPIRATIONS