



## **THE AURIGA ACADEMY TRUST - BUSINESS PLAN**

### ***Ready for the future – now***

We are delighted to introduce the business plan for The Auriga Academy Trust. The Trust was founded in October 2016 in order to provide outstanding education for young people with special needs in the Richmond and Kingston area. Our focus will be on becoming a nationally recognised centre of excellence that operates within the highest possible standards and serves our local community.

We have assembled an extremely talented, experienced and committed group of people who will guide us on a journey that promises to be innovative, ambitious, exciting and very rewarding for all our young people, their families and everyone who is on board. We will be relentless in our pursuit of excellence because our young people are at the heart of everything we do and we believe that is the best way to give them the education and support they deserve.

Our school communities have already told us that what they value most is that our young people are prepared as much as they can be to become independent, active adults. Therefore, our theme of '*ready for the future – now*' runs through everything we do and everything we plan to do.

We hope that the following pages will give you a clearer idea of what we plan to do and how we plan to serve our community. Like the Trust it reflects, this plan will be reviewed and evolve over time.

**Harry James**  
**Chair**

**John Kipps**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

**March 2017**

### **Background**

#### *Why are we doing this?*

The Children and Families Act 2014 includes significant education reforms for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It includes extending the provision to 25 years of age, and giving young people and their families greater choice in decisions. These reforms are being implemented across the boroughs of Richmond and Kingston at a time when the number of children and young people with statements of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is increasing at more than twice the rate of increase in the total school population. This growth in need is similar in surrounding boroughs.

Over recent years local special school provision has failed to keep pace with the demand and need, meaning almost 400 children from Richmond and Kingston who need a special school place now have to travel significant distances to schools in the non-maintained sector. Local families are clear they would prefer good local to distant provision and the creation of The Auriga Academy Trust, and the opportunity to propose new local free schools, is in part a response to this stated family preference.

Our creation has been strongly supported by both Councils who, in addition to improving the experiences of local children, are focused on the lower operating costs of the maintained school sector, and reduced SEND transport costs.

We are determined to provide a level of education, care and support that ensures we become **the** choice for local families with children who have special needs.

## **Values and Vision**

*At the core of our organisation are positive human relationships. This is about the ethos of the Trust, it is about what we do and the way we do it, it is about the way we treat people, it is about our expectations and the expectations we have of others. And far from just words on a piece of paper; as part of our governance process we will monitor the ethos of the Trust ensuring that it can be clearly seen on a day to day basis at every level. Our values and aims are;*

- For all young people to make outstanding, measurable progress; both towards individual academic targets and as a whole person functioning in her or his community with confidence and high self-esteem.
- We value the integrity, contribution and views of all pupils, staff and families and we aim to involve them in decision making at all levels.
- To develop each young person by matching high expectations with specialised and appropriate teaching and support.
- To provide access to a fun, flexible and personalised creative curriculum in which meaningful learning opportunities are provided in real life contexts.
- To develop and enhance the communication skills of each young person by using multi-modal means such as sign, symbol and voice output as appropriate.
- In order for our young people to receive outstanding education they must receive outstanding teaching and care. We will set the highest possible standards for our staff whether it is leadership, teaching or therapy, and we will use creative and research led methods to achieve our aims.
- We aim to be an integral part of the local community and will seek to form partnerships to further this aim.

## **Leadership and governance**

*How will the Trust be run and governed?*

Central to the philosophy of the Trust is that we provide a service for our local community, therefore we have taken the conscious decision that responsibility and accountability should remain at a local level. It is also important that the schools that make up the Trust retain their unique identity and personality.

The governing bodies of the schools are now called Local Governing Boards (LGBs) and will operate in much the same way as they have done with a focus on providing the best possible education for pupils at that school. Each Head Teacher will be accountable to her or his LGB.

LGBs are accountable for the overall performance (academic and financial) of their school to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is comprised of representatives from each school (including parents) and additional independent trustees. The Board of Trustees also sets the strategic direction of the Trust (e.g. overall priorities and capital projects) and has ultimate financial responsibility. The Board of Trustees will also look at ways in which component schools can work together (e.g. shared training and resources) and at rationalising systems (e.g. IT, contracts) so that the Trust (and schools) get the best value for money.

There is also a further independent group called the Members (5). The Members have been recruited for their expertise and experience across a wide range of areas such as HR, finance, business management, SEND education and strategy. They can be likened to the shareholders in a company and will receive the annual report and accounts and will hold the Board of Trustees accountable for the overall performance of the Trust.

## **Communication**

*We value transparency very highly and we believe that the best way to demonstrate that transparency is through clear and open communication, and that the communication must be two way and include decision making at all levels.*

Our approach to communication and involvement will include;

- A Trust website that will post the following;
  - Profiles of trustees and Members
  - Dates of Board meetings
  - Minutes of Board meetings
  - A termly update by the Chair and CEO
  - The business plan (updated as appropriate)
  - A contact/feedback section
- An annual report and accounts that will be sent to all parents
- An annual general meeting to which all parents will be invited and the performance and plans for the Trust will be discussed. We will seek to make this an informative, interactive, celebratory and enjoyable event involving the whole school community.
- An open invitation for parents to attend Board of Trustee meetings as observers
- We will look to set up a parent group to meet with a group of trustees (possibly once a term) to discuss issues and plans and feed this back to the whole parent community.
- We will work closely with component schools to ensure that our communication is consistent and targeted effectively.
- We will seek to form partnerships with a number of organisations to ensure the smooth running of the Trust and that our services are as widely known as possible. These groups could include;
  - Local education partners (i.e. other schools)
  - Feeder schools and provisions (where our children are likely to come from)
  - Transition partners (where are children are likely to go to)

- Multi agency partners (health, therapy, social care etc.)
- Professional partners (e.g. Councils, police, DfE etc.)
- Community partners (e.g. local parent groups, local businesses, local providers)

## **Strategic plans**

*It is one of the core functions of the trustees to look at the future direction of the Trust over the short and longer term. Here we have identified some of the aims we have over the next 12 months, over the next five years and some that might take a little longer, possibly ten years.*

*Of course it is in the nature of longer term aims that they may change because of circumstances; but we intend to involve the school community in identifying those aims and turning them into reality.*

## **What we plan to do in the next 12 months**

- Expand Strathmore School, for young people with complex learning difficulties, to three campuses to provide;
  - 50 places (4-19) at St. Richard Reynolds site in Twickenham
  - 25 places (4-11) at The Russell School site in Petersham
  - 25 places (11-19) at the Grey court site in Ham
- Expand Clarendon School, for young people with moderate learning difficulties and additional complex needs (including autism) to include;
  - 50 primary places at the Buckingham road site
  - 32 places at the Twickenham Academy site
- Embed the academy structure bringing together the LGBs, trustees and Members and securing centralised systems to ensure robust policies and procedures are in place
- Secure a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the local authority

## **What we plan to do over the next 5 years**

- Expand Clarendon School to provide 90 secondary places at Richmond college
- Open a new, free school for young people with complex learning difficulties with a capacity for 100 places (7-19) including residential
- Open a new, free school for young people with moderate learning difficulties to provide 28 primary and 44 secondary places
- Maintain Clarendon School's Ofsted 'Outstanding' rating (possibly this year) and move Strathmore School from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'
- Retain the unique ethos of both schools and develop the ethos of the new schools
- Investigate employing our own therapists and providing therapy services to other users on a commercial basis

## **Longer term aims**

- Establish the Trust as a centre of excellence providing support for other schools
- Develop school based teacher training and strengthen links with teaching universities such as; Kingston, St. Mary's and Roehampton
- Introduce a Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship Scheme to develop our own TAs to the highest standard and provide valuable employment opportunities for the local community

- Look beyond 19. Although we aim to provide outstanding education for our pupils and prepare them as well as we can for an independent life, we want to facilitate that pathway by forging strong links with local businesses to provide work experience and employment. We will also consider setting up an enterprise (e.g. retail/café outlet) in an area such as Twickenham, to provide work experience and establish our presence in the local community.
- As part of 'look beyond 19', the Trust will seek to provide employment opportunities for young people with SEND.
- School buildings as 'Hubs'. If we are to be an integral part of the community, we need to share resources. There are a number of organisations, clubs etc. that provide valuable information and services for families with children who have special needs and who would benefit from using school buildings as a hub for local families.
- Income generation. In order to provide the Trust, and thus our young people, with extra opportunities and resources we need to generate extra income; therefore we will consider employing a fund raising manager on a fund/salary basis (i.e. they will need to generate their salary from the funds raised).
- We will consider expanding the Trust but only where there is a clear benefit to our existing young people and their families.

### **Finance and compliance**

*As we have emphasised throughout this business plan, transparency is extremely important to us, and this certainly applies to our finances and our statutory and non statutory obligations.*

Both Clarendon and Strathmore schools set their own school budgets. Both schools manage their own staffing structures and costs directly correlate to the staffing needs of individual pupils at each school. The trust operates a trust wide banding model to identify the specific funding requirements for a pupils needs and Service Level Agreements are set up with each pupil's Local Authority in order to facilitate a fair charging mechanism.

Additional financial pressures faced in the education sector clearly impact all schools and the Trust is addressing these by keeping Trust costs to a minimum; the CEO receives no additional remuneration over and above his Head Teacher position and as much compliance work is done 'in house' rather than through employing external consultants. In addition, The Auriga Academy Trust has facilitated cross-school shared resources in particular with regards to staff training and central back office functions such as finance and HR. The Trust's annual financial statements will be available on the website having been signed off by auditors and submitted to the DfE.

Given the Trust's plans for the future it is recognised that additional sources of income need to be identified and the Trust is actively seeking a corporate sponsor with whom it can form a working partnership.