

# 2025 Impact Report

Providing innovative, high-quality education, care and support, enabling children, young people and adults to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

Caring

Ambitious

Collaborative

Trusted

Innovative

# Who are Aurora

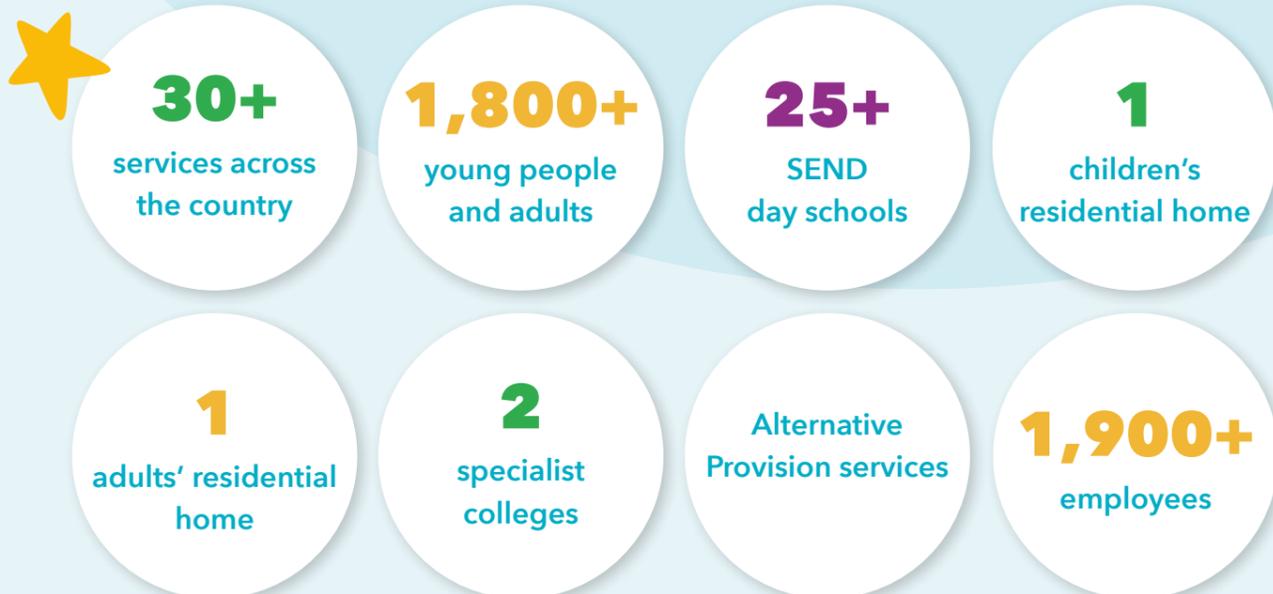
At The Aurora Group, we believe in giving people the opportunities they need to lead fulfilling, independent lives. Established in 2015, we're one of the largest providers of education, care and support services for children, young people and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



Across our network of innovative schools, colleges and residential homes, our dedicated and experienced staff work in collaboration with specialist teams of professionals to enable every young person to explore and develop their own unique talents, skills and abilities.

Over **96%** of our inspected services are rated **Good** or **Outstanding**.

We're also proud to be a certified **B Corp**.



Data reflects figures as of February 2026.

## Our Mission

To provide innovative, high-quality education, care and support, enabling all children, young people and adults to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

## Our Vision

To be trusted as the provider and employer of choice, transforming the lives of a growing number of children, young people and adults.

# Our Values

Each of our schools, colleges and residential homes retains its own unique identity while embracing and embodying The Aurora Group's core values:



**We are caring.** We understand that your experience in mainstream care and education may have been a difficult one. We take seriously our responsibility for the children, young people and adults in our care and are committed to making your time with us as positive and fulfilling as possible.



**We are ambitious.** We have high expectations of all our children, young people and adults, regardless of what barriers they may have faced in the past. We encourage them to expect more for themselves, while challenging employers and communities to understand and value their diverse needs and attributes.



**We are collaborative.** Everything we do, we do in partnership with you. We actively seek and listen to feedback from students, residents, parents, carers and staff, to find out what's working well, what we can do better, and how we can further develop all our services to benefit the people we work with.



**We are trusted.** Our business is funded by ethical investors. They understand that sustainable growth is possible only when we hold ourselves to the highest standards, by delivering consistently top-quality services to every single person we work with.



**We are innovative.** We begin planning for each individual's future the minute they walk through our doors. We tailor our approach to their unique needs, and are constantly looking for new opportunities to help them explore, enhance and employ their own skills, talents and abilities.

# Contents

<b>Who are Aurora</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our Values</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome from our CEO</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Quality Overview</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Children, Young People &amp; Adults</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Parent &amp; Carers</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>10 Year Anniversary</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Our Growth</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Driving Change</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Student Achievements</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Our Initiatives</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The Aurora Framework</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Our Universal Approach</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Careers &amp; Employability</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Therapy Approach</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Our Systems</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Our Awards &amp; Accreditations</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Our Staff</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Learning &amp; Development</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EDI)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Collaboration with the Community</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Aurora Net Zero</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Celebrating Sustainability</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Looking Ahead with our CEO</b>	<b>46</b>

# Welcome from our CEO

Reading the 2024 Impact Report before I joined Aurora provided a preview of the amazing impact we have across the group. I was inspired by the work, enabling children, young people and adults to fulfil their potential, and was excited to join the team. Therefore I am extremely proud to introduce Aurora's 2025 Impact Report (my first as CEO) and to celebrate the achievements of our people and the children, young people and adults we support.

Quality and trust are, and will always be, our anchors. In 2025, over 96% of our inspected services were rated Good or Outstanding; 85% of our students felt their teaching was good; 96% of parents and carers would recommend us and, we also received over 15 nominations and awards, including the Princess Royal Training Award.

Our most important impact is outcomes, so I am particularly proud that 100% of our 2025 leavers aged 16+ went on to education, employment or training. The quotes in this report really show what this means to people:

*"For the first time in his life, my child feels happy at school"*

*"We are finally seeing our son blossom again"*

These achievements are made possible by our skilled and compassionate teams, going above and beyond every day. Our people and culture are the foundation of what we do, so it is great to see even higher staff retention rates and that 83% of our staff feel motivated to do their best work. In 2025, more than £100k was invested through the Aurora Innovation Fund to empower staff

to innovate, while 90 colleagues earned nationally accredited qualifications through Aurora.

Aurora is an organisation that gets things done. This year, we opened three new schools and integrated R.E.A.L. Education's schools and Alternative Provision services into the group. By the end of the year, our schools, colleges and homes supported more than 1,500 children, young people and adults, a rise of more than 300 (25%) in just 12 months. Increasing our scale means that we can invest further in the infrastructure and support which enables our teams to deliver great services, such as the system and data enhancements described in this report.

As part of the Octopus Group, we are supported to always prioritise quality, think long-term and build trust. During 2025 we expanded our work advocating for children, young people and adults with SEND. As a trusted, evidence-based voice in national discussions, Aurora will help to ensure their interests continue to be represented.

Thank you to everyone in the Aurora community (staff, children, young people and adults, families, Local Authorities, partners and Octopus) for your contributions this year. I could not be more proud of what we have achieved.

**Kelvin Donald**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# Quality Overview

These results highlight the hard work and dedication of staff at our schools, colleges and residential homes to ensure a supportive and effective learning and caring environment.

**100%**

of our colleges are rated **Good** or **above** (compared to 89% nationally)

**100%**

of our children's homes are rated **Good** or **above** (compared to 83% nationally)

**100%**

of our Adult Services are rated **Outstanding** (compared to 2.2% nationally)

**95%**

of our schools are rated **Good** or **above** (compared to 90% nationally)

**96%**

of inspected services are rated **Good** or **Outstanding**



"Pupils flourish at this welcoming and inclusive school. This is because Aurora Hanley School places considerable emphasis on understanding each pupil and their specific needs."

Ofsted



2025 saw many positive Ofsted results, showcasing our commitment to quality education.

**Aurora Brooklands School** was recognised for efforts made by the school to develop its curriculum: *"pupils benefit from a curriculum that is tailored to their needs and interests. This helps pupils rebuild confidence. They achieve well and are proud of their accomplishments."*



**Aurora Hanley School** was recognised for 'Outstanding' education. Hanley received the highest possible grading for the 3rd time in a row. Grading the school as 'Outstanding', the inspectors said that by placing *"considerable emphasis on understanding each pupil and their specific needs, pupils were able to flourish at Hanley"*.



**Aurora Hedgeway School** was recognised for exceptional pupil development. Ofsted praised the school for equipping pupils with appropriate qualifications and accreditations, as well as work experience, that *"successfully maintains their education, training or employment after they leave the school"*.



**Aurora Poppyfield School** received an Ofsted 'Good' grading. Ofsted described the school as nurturing and inclusive, *"where pupils are supported to engage with learning in a meaningful and personalised way"*.



**Aurora Severnside School** was recognised for pupil development, with Ofsted rating it as 'Exceptional'. *"No stone is left unturned. A holistic approach, including the impressive work by the outreach team, means that pupils make demonstrable improvement in their attendance at school."*



**Aurora Wilden View School** Ofsted described the curriculum as ambitious and well-structured and said the school was able to identify the knowledge and skills pupils needed to learn at each stage of their education. *"Parents recognise and appreciate how the school has completely transformed their children's educational experiences, allowing them to thrive."*



# Children, Young People & Adults

Our children, young people and adults survey conducted in 2025 showed:



## Service Spotlight Aurora Foxes

Our 2025 children and young people's survey showed:



**"I like making new friends and meeting the staff who have been lovely to me."**

Student at Aurora Foxes

## Service Spotlight Aurora Keyes Barn School

Our 2025 children and young people's survey showed:



**"I rate my school 6 million out of 5! Because we have loads of fun trips and all the teachers make the lessons really fun."** Student at Aurora Keyes Barn School

# Parents & Carers

Our parents and carers survey conducted in 2025 showed:



*"I'm so glad my daughter goes to an Aurora school. The teaching staff and therapy staff go above and beyond to give the children an education, life skills and emotional literacy. Staff ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to socialise as well as learn, so there is a real balance when it comes to learning and navigating life as an autistic young person. Most importantly, my daughter is happy there!"*  
**Parent, Aurora Hedgeway School**

*"When I got the call from our caseworker to say my child had been given a place, I cried tears of joy and relief. After such a long journey, it felt like a huge weight had been lifted. For so long, we have watched her work so hard to keep up while quietly struggling with anxiety, sensory challenges and the effort of masking. Knowing she is now in a specialist setting, with staff who understand autism, ADHD and dyslexia, gives us real reassurance."*  
**Parent, Aurora Vincent House School**

## Service Spotlight

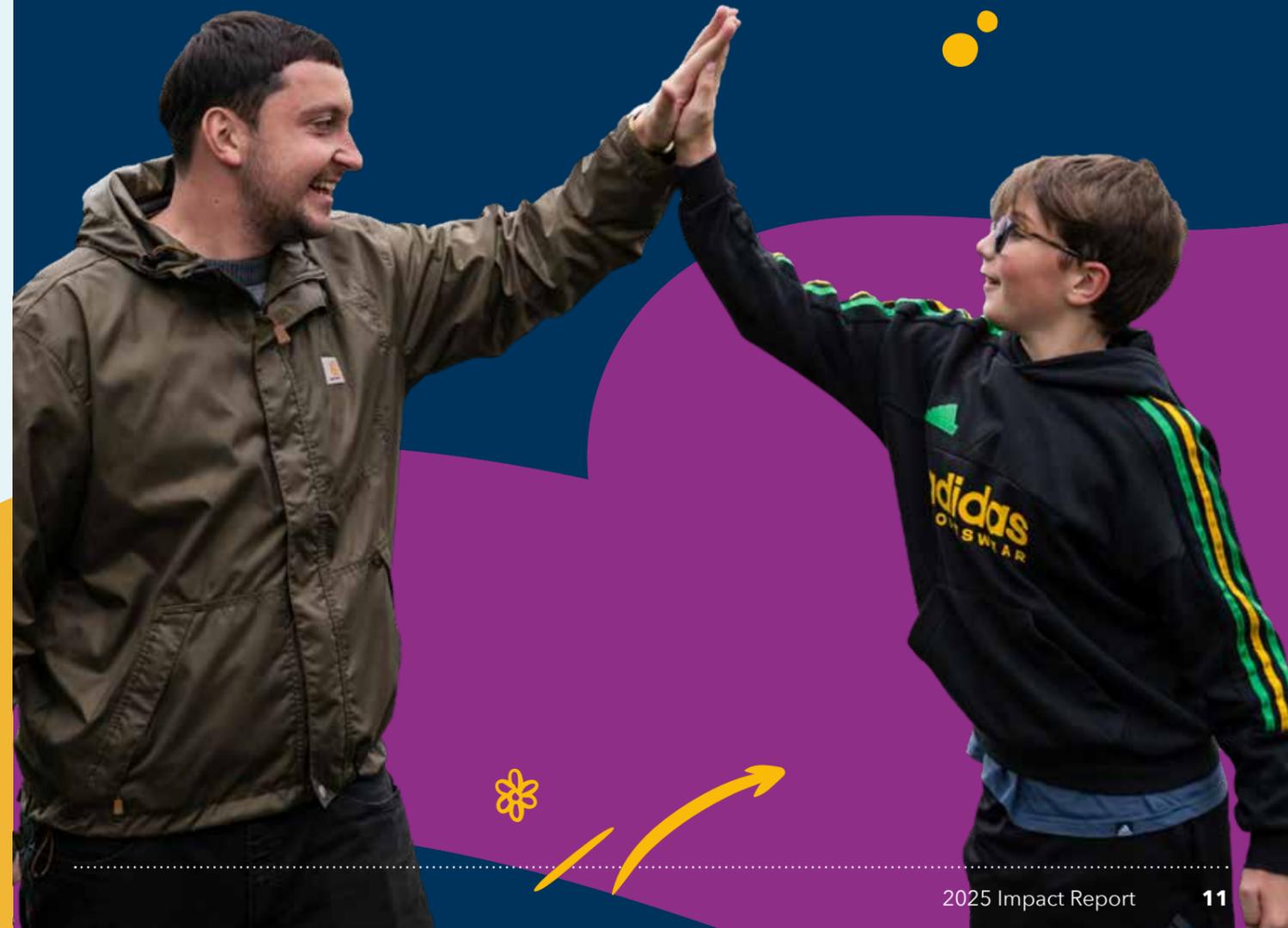


**White House School**  
*"My child has flourished since attending White House School, we cannot believe the difference in him."*

**Summerfields School**  
*"She loves coming in every day and returns home full of excitement about her day."*

**Ivy Lane School**  
*"My child has come on so much and is so much happier and settled since starting Aurora Ivy Lane School."*

**Fairway School**  
*"For the first time in his life, my child feels happy at school."*



# 10 Year Anniversary

It's been 10 years since Aurora first embarked on its mission to provide innovative, high-quality education, care and support so that children, young people and adults with SEND thrive and fulfil their aspirations.



In September, we celebrated our 10th anniversary, reflecting on the positive impact Aurora has had - and continues to have - on the lives of thousands of people.

Guided by our core values: caring, ambitious, collaborative, trusted and innovative, Aurora has grown to become one of the UK's largest providers of specialist education, care and support services.

Aurora CEO Kelvin Donald, who took up the role in June 2025, said: "It's been a great privilege to join Aurora just as we reach this incredible milestone. We can all be very proud of what Aurora has achieved in the past 10 years through our unwavering commitment to quality, and ensuring our young people are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential."

"During the past 10 years, we've improved thousands of lives and in the next 10 years, we should touch 10 times as many."

"Everyone at Aurora is eager to begin the next chapter as we continue to raise the bar, delivering the highest quality services to meet the needs of those we serve."

That Aurora is able to grow so fast and so successfully is largely due to its funder Octopus, whose vision aligns closely with Aurora's mission. Octopus said: "It's been our privilege to be part of their journey - helping to unlock sites, provide strategic input, and support their continued growth and innovation."

Aurora Board Director Shay Ramalingam, who worked for Octopus at the time, said the name Aurora came from the idea that when you get lots of elements together something beautiful happens. "That's certainly proved to be true," he said. "Aurora has delivered beyond my wildest expectations and its future couldn't be any more exciting."

**"It began with a small team with big ambitions and a big heart."**

**Aurora Strategy Director  
Dan Slater**



As part of our 10 Years celebration, teams across Aurora got creative in how they marked the occasion. From tea parties and darts tournaments to scenic walks and breakfast clubs, here's a look at just some of the ways our colleagues marked our 10th anniversary.

## Finance Team

The Finance Team proved they're just as accurate off the spreadsheets as they are on them. To celebrate the milestone, they headed to Flight Club for a competitive round (or three) of darts.



## Business Development, Marketing and Communications Team

The Business Development, Marketing and Comms team spent an evening at Spinners in Reading. They split into two fiercely competitive groups for an elimination-style darts game.



## R.E.A.L. Education SLT and Head Office

At R.E.A.L. Education, which was purchased by Aurora in May, a special breakfast club was hosted by staff.

Operations Director Adrian O'Malley said: "It was a great opportunity to get everyone together to celebrate the 10 years and thank the team for the efforts so far with integrating R.E.A.L. with Aurora. We even had a birthday cake!"



## Aurora Hedgeway School

Hedgeway went all out with a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, complete with games, a visit from the ice cream van, and even a silent disco.

Elm Class had a brilliant afternoon filled with sweet treats, dancing and lots of laughter. Maple Class also celebrated in style, enjoying a High Tea Party with cakes, treats and plenty of smiles.



# Our Growth



## Transforming the lives of a growing number of children and young people.

In 2025, we celebrated another year of exciting growth across The Aurora Group. We successfully opened **three brand new schools** to provide high-quality education, care and support across the country. These were Aurora Ryefields School in Derby, Aurora Chaldon School in Surrey and Aurora Vincent House School in West Sussex, and together they are already making a huge difference to the lives of over 100 children and their families. We also expanded Aurora Meldreth Manor School and Ivy Lane School to increase the number of children and young people that can benefit from their wonderful settings.

As well as this, we acquired R.E.A.L. Education, a high-quality SEND education business in the East Midlands, operating two registered schools as well as providing Alternative Provision (AP) - which is a new area of growth for us as a group.

### New schools opening in 2026:

We continue to be ambitious around growth as we look to support more children and young people across the country with SEND and work in partnership with local government to ensure all children and young people can thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

We're currently planning to open four new schools in Autumn Term '26:

- **Linemere** in North Somerset
  - **Brampton Valley** in Leicestershire
  - **Coalville** in Leicestershire
  - **Peartree** in Great Malvern
- With more to follow in 2027.

We're also hoping to expand our AP provision. We are excited by the positive impact these new services will have in their local communities.

**In 2025 we supported over 1,500 children, young people and adults in our registered services (not including AP), and this has increased by over 300 (+25%) over the last 12 months.**

### R.E.A.L. Education

R.E.A.L. Education joined our growing community of schools, colleges and care services in May this year.

R.E.A.L. Education, located across the East Midlands, supports over 400 children and young people with additional learning needs, in two schools rated Good by Ofsted and an Alternative Provision service.

Strategy Director Dan Slater said: *"This is great news for the staff, students and families of R.E.A.L. Education. There are many benefits to being part of The Aurora Group, including opportunities for staff to extend their knowledge and progress their careers, and further investment in facilities for students."*



### Aurora Ryefields School

Aurora Ryefields School provides academic and therapeutic support for up to 72 autistic young people and has attracted interest from parents within the city and across Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

Headteacher Paul Foxtan said: *"All our students have a primary diagnosis of autism and associated Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. We're committed to delivering positive outcomes for them and creating the appropriate environment to meet their needs."*

### Aurora Vincent House School

Aurora Vincent House School, in Horsham, provides a nurturing and inclusive environment designed specifically for neurodivergent learners aged 11 to 16. Such has been the interest from local parents that many of the young people starting at the school come from within a three-mile radius of the school.

Headteacher Rob Walton said: *"Our school is very much about being neuro-affirmative, which means celebrating our students' differences and creating the right environment so they can flourish both mentally and academically."*



### Aurora Chaldon School

A specialist secondary education provision offering a calm, nurturing environment for autistic students aged 11 to 16 with associated social communication, sensory and emotional regulation difficulties.

Principal David Thomas said: *"Aurora Chaldon School supports autistic young people, providing an environment where they can thrive, achieve, build positive friendships and follow their passions into their next stages of education and training."*

# Driving Change

Throughout 2025, we didn't just follow policy developments – we shaped the conversation.

## Driving change and strengthening Aurora's voice in 2025

By deepening our understanding of the Government's proposed SEND and education reform, strengthening parliamentary engagement, and sharpening our organisational messaging, we positioned Aurora as a trusted voice of our sector in national discussions.

Through proactive tracking of policy changes, strategic stakeholder relationships, and clear, evidence-based messaging, we raised awareness of Aurora's work and ensured our priorities were heard where it matters most.

- ★ **Influencing the agenda:** Keeping Aurora ahead of the curve and ready to respond to the Government's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and Schools White Paper.
- ★ **Bringing policy to life:** We hosted eleven cross-party MP site visits, giving parliamentarians a first-hand view of Aurora's impact. Six visits generated local media coverage, amplifying our story in communities.
- ★ **Building champions:** We cultivated strong relationships with 11 local MPs, securing their ongoing support to champion Aurora's priorities in Parliament.
- ★ **Speaking with one voice:** We developed Aurora's key messages and policy positions, enabling confident, consistent engagement with Government and DfE.



## Local Authorities

*"It was brilliant to be able to come and officially open Aurora Chaldon School and see the great work staff are doing to equip young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with the skills they need to succeed. I particularly enjoyed meeting pupils and hearing about the journey they've been on and how this new specialist school is making such a positive difference to their lives."*

**The Rt Hon Claire Coutinho - East Surrey MP**

*"It was a great pleasure to revisit Aurora Beeches School to meet pupils and staff. It was particularly interesting to hear from some of the pupils directly about how the school was making a real and important difference to their lives and learning."*

**Mr Simon Hoare - North Dorset MP**

*"Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and schools like Aurora Cedars are helping to make that a reality."* **Mr Warinder Juss - Wolverhampton West MP**

*"Too many families in Horsham have told me about a SEND system that simply isn't working for their children. Aurora Vincent House School represents the kind of specialist provision we desperately need more of across West Sussex."* **Mr John Milne - Horsham MP**

We work with

**92**

local authorities  
across England

Aurora's  
Net Promoter Score  
(customer satisfaction  
and loyalty) is

**100**

vs the Education sector  
average of 51 across  
England

# Student Achievements

**281**

Entry Level  
qualifications  
achieved

**207**

Functional Skills  
qualifications  
achieved

**192**

KS3+/other  
qualifications  
achieved



**137**

GCSEs achieved

**19**

A levels achieved

**82**

BTECs achieved



*"This has been an amazing school for my child. He has been open to opportunities he wouldn't have otherwise had in another school."*

**Parent, Aurora Hanley School**

*"This school is a fabulous learning environment and doesn't just provide children with the ability to learn through their subjects but to learn how to develop their social skills too."*

**Parent, Aurora Eccles School**

*"My child has transformed since attending this school. You have all done a wonderful job at making him feel safe and secure. In the whole of my child's educational life, he has never wanted to set foot in a school and has always had an awful experience resulting in him not being able to attend mainstream. We are finally seeing our son blossom again."*

**Parent, Aurora Fairway School**

*"My child has grown in confidence since starting at Aurora Brooklands School and he is now prepared for his next stage at college."*

**Parent, Aurora Brooklands School**

# Our Initiatives

As part of our ongoing commitment to innovation and improvement, we're proud to showcase some of the initiatives that have made a significant impact across our organisation, empowering staff and enriching the lives of those we serve.

Since it was launched 18 months ago, **Aurora's Innovation Fund has handed out more than £150,000** to support enterprising initiatives that have a positive impact on our children, young people and vulnerable adults, our staff team, environment or local communities.

In the past year alone, the fund has paid out around £100,000 across our services to support new and ambitious ideas. These have included setting up valuable environmental projects, providing sensory equipment, supporting community events and school trips, funding cutting edge educational technology and broadening our curriculum in exciting new ways.

## Among the initiatives to receive support this year were:

### A sensory garden at Aurora Beeches School



Higher Level Teaching Assistant Paula Davies said: "Our pupils came up with the idea almost 18 months ago and together we put some ideas down on paper. It will be a great opportunity for our pupils to create a nurturing space that offers meaningful learning opportunities."



In 2025 over  
**£100,000**  
invested in innovative projects

### An activity residential for KS3 and KS4 pupils at Aurora Wilden View School

Interim Deputy Head Daniel Stanier said: "An experience like this can be highly beneficial for SEMH students as it offers a supportive environment where they can build confidence, develop social skills, and strengthen emotional resilience."



### A Kitchen Garden at Aurora Foxes

The college's NVQ Assessor Emma Lethaby said: "The project aims to teach our students practical life and employability skills, promote sustainability, improve mental health and wellbeing, and engage our learners with the wider community through meaningful, real-world learning."



## Other initiatives supported by the Innovation Fund in 2025 include:

- ★ Wildlife box construction with integrated cameras embedded into Design and Technology lessons at **Aurora Eccles School**
- ★ SMART tables at **Aurora Woodlands School** to support hands-on, interactive learning
- ★ A kart kit to enhance mechanics provision at **RIS Mansfield**
- ★ The introduction of a STEM curriculum at **Aurora Brooklands School**
- ★ Digital Audio Workstations to enhance music education at **Aurora Wilden View School**



The Innovation Fund encourages ideas and initiatives from the 1,500+ children, young people and adults supported by Aurora.

12-year-old Phoenix, a pupil at **Aurora Poppyfield School**, successfully secured funding to establish a football team at the school after hearing his brother talk about the fun he was having playing football at his mainstream school.

Phoenix said: "I didn't think it was fair that just because I'm autistic and attend a specialist school I wasn't able to have the same experiences as my brother - so I decided to apply to do something about it."

Phoenix plans to make a video promoting his idea to other services in the hope they will be inspired to form their own teams.



# The Aurora Framework

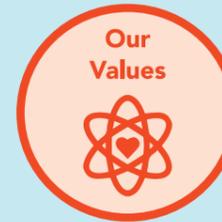
## Building excellence: The importance of The Aurora Framework

In our ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional services and outcomes, we've developed a comprehensive framework that underpins our practice and drives improvement across our organisation. This framework is built on six key foundations:



Each of these elements plays a crucial role in shaping our day-to-day operations and fostering a culture of excellence.

The relevance of this framework to our daily practice cannot be overstated. It serves as a roadmap for continuous improvement, guiding our efforts to achieve excellence. By aligning our actions with these foundational elements, we create a cohesive and effective approach that drives meaningful change.



Our core values guide our culture and inform our actions. By embodying these values in our daily practice, we create a positive environment that encourages care for each other, collaboration, trust, innovation, and ambition for all. Living our values strengthens our organisational identity and enhances the relationships we build with our children, young people, adults, families, and the wider community.



At the heart of our framework are our people - the dedicated staff who bring our vision to life. By investing in their professional development, providing support, and fostering a collaborative environment, we empower our team to thrive. This not only enhances job satisfaction but also leads to improved service delivery and better outcomes for those we serve. Every interaction and initiative contributes to a supportive atmosphere where everyone can excel, and our children, young people and adults can reach their potential.



A dynamic, well-structured curriculum is essential for effective learning and development. Our framework emphasises the importance of a curriculum tailored to meet the diverse needs of our students while reflecting our values. We provide high-quality curriculum elements that leaders can adapt to their cohort, regularly updating them to ensure relevance and impact, helping students develop the skills necessary for future success.



Strong governance provides the necessary oversight and accountability that drives our organisation forward. Our framework highlights the importance of transparent decision-making and strategic planning. By encouraging a culture of support and challenge, we ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities, leading to improved efficiency and effective resource allocation.



The framework emphasises the importance of universal interventions to support all students, regardless of their individual needs. Through proactive strategies that promote wellbeing and engagement, we create an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. This approach benefits individuals and promotes a sense of community and belonging. By utilising data and insights, we can tailor interventions to better support each student, leading to improved outcomes and wellbeing.



Led by skilled clinicians, our clinical approach enhances and complements our universal strategies. By developing bespoke packages for each child, young person and adult, we address their holistic needs. This foundation emphasises the importance of evidence-based practices and informed decision-making to ensure the best possible outcomes for those we serve.

# Our Universal Approach



## The impact of Thrive within our Aurora schools

The Thrive Approach is a programme designed to support children's social and emotional development through neuroscience, attachment theory, and play-based activities. It helps adults respond effectively to children's needs and fosters positive learning environments for academic success.

### Aurora schools using the Thrive Approach have seen:

- ★ Better student outcomes
- ★ Improved parent-school relationships
- ★ Higher staff morale
- ★ Improved attendance
- ★ Fewer classroom disruptions
- ★ Stronger academic results

The Thrive Approach creates supportive school environments by helping students manage emotions, build social skills, and succeed academically. Its whole-school strategy leads to calmer classrooms, lower anxiety, supports positive behaviour and emotional responses and stronger staff-student-parent relationships by addressing students' underlying needs.

### Improved attendance

Attendance has shown a positive trend over a three-year period, rising from 82.6% in October 2023 to 84.5% in October 2025—a growth of 1.9%.

*"Key to the successful implementation of Thrive across the group has been the skilled leadership from our Principal who has taken on and driven the project forward. This has been rooted in the strongest of foundations, the Aurora values, skilled, caring and experienced staff, clinical offer, and strong governance. These key factors have collectively supported the success and impact of Thrive throughout the group."* **Sharon Pearson, Chief Operating Officer**

### Insights from students, families and staff:

Drawing from first-hand accounts and student testimonials, the impact of Thrive is evident in multiple key areas of social, emotional, and academic development.

*"Thrive will help me in the future...It helps me with my feelings...I feel safe".* **Samual, Student**

### Comments from parents following Family Thrive courses:

*"A great course that has helped me to not only help in the growth of development of my children, but also myself."* **Parent**

*"As well as the valuable information on Thrive, these six weeks have been beneficial in making connections with other parents in similar situations, we will miss our group chats each week!"* **Parent**



**Elklan accreditation** represents a whole-setting, embedded approach to meeting communication and interaction needs, including those specified in pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Rather than functioning as a time-limited intervention, it underpins everyday practice across all Aurora settings.

All staff hold Level 3 Elklan accreditation in Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and/or Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), with practice further strengthened through Level 4 training delivered across a year-long programme. This culminates in an external audit and the awarding of Communication Friendly Status (CFS).

The impact of Elklan is most clearly seen in sustained, whole-school improvements, including increased pupil engagement, stronger emotional regulation, greater access to learning, and reduced time out of class. While these outcomes cannot be attributed to Elklan alone, the accreditation provides a consistent, evidence-based framework that strengthens staff confidence, ensuring quality communication support and cohesive practices across all of our settings.

# Careers & Employability

Within our schools and colleges, we ensure that students are equipped with the information, experiences, and support they need to make well-informed decisions about their future careers.

Service	Education	Employment	Training	EET	NEET
Beeches School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Boveridge College	55%	42%	3%	100%	0%
Brooklands School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Cedars School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Eccles School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Fairway School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Foxes	21%	79%	0%	100%	0%
Hanley School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Hedgeway School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Meldreth Manor School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Redehall School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Sevenside School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Woodlands School	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%

**100%**  
of leavers aged 16+  
went on to education,  
employment or  
training

**NEET**  
(Not in Education,  
Employment, or  
Training) was

**0%**  
for leavers  
aged 16+



## Maija, 2025 graduate

Maija graduated from Aurora Foxes in July 2025. Soon after, in August, she began working at the Hilton Kensington as part of the Front of House team. She currently works 10 hours a week, with plans to increase her hours over time.

### What does Maija do at work?

Maija's role involves a range of hospitality tasks, including; clearing and cleaning tables, polishing cutlery and glasses, preparing tea and coffee and taking customer orders. Her favourite part of the job is making coffees, and she takes pride in providing great service to guests.

### What kind of support has Maija received at her new job?

Maija works with a very supportive team at the Hilton Kensington. Her colleague Lubo works closely with her day-to-day, and her managers Patricia and Maria offer guidance and encouragement. She also receives travel support through Access to Work, which helps her get to and from her job. In the future, Maija hopes to travel independently.

### How does Maija get to work?

Maija's commute involves taking the bus to the train station, followed by a short walk to the hotel. She enjoys the independence of travelling into London for work.

### Foxes qualification outcomes

**100%**

of 2025 graduates  
achieved their  
**Employability Skills**  
qualifications

**100%**

of 2025 graduates  
achieved their **Level 1 and Level 2 Food Hygiene** qualification

**100%**

of 2025 graduates  
achieved their **NVQ Level 1 in Hospitality and Catering** qualification

**100%**

of 2025 graduates  
achieved their **Entry Level 3 Introduction to the Hospitality Industry** qualification

### What are Maija's future goals?

Maija is really enjoying her role in the Front of House team. In the future, she would like to try working in other areas of the hotel to continue building her experience and hospitality skills and one day she would like to have her own flat.

"Maija's experience was a joyous one from day one! She had tremendous support from all the staff, which led her into paid employment at the Hilton Kensington. She is working alongside a very supportive network of staff and we are so proud of her progress." Maija's mum

# Therapy Approach

## Advancing clinical practice and professional growth at Aurora

### Investing in Therapy Assistants through apprenticeships

Aurora continues to strengthen its clinical workforce by investing in the development of therapy assistants through apprenticeships in Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy and Speech. These programmes combine structured academic learning with hands-on clinical practice, enabling assistants to expand their skills while remaining embedded within service delivery. This approach enhances the quality and consistency of therapeutic support, improves staff retention, and reinforces a culture of continuous professional growth across services.

### Clinical interventions and governance via Engage

The integration of the clinical interventions and governance function within Engage represents a significant advancement in clinical oversight, transparency, and strategic planning. The platform enables:

- ★ A centralised view of current and historical clinical interventions, including specialist and targeted provision, at both individual student and class level.
- ★ A comprehensive narrative of each student's clinical journey, underpinned by accessible and relevant documentation.
- ★ Termly governance data to analyse trends, monitor effectiveness, and inform service development.
- ★ Real-time caseload management, supporting efficient resource allocation and forward planning.
- ★ Clear visibility of therapeutic input within classrooms, strengthening collaboration between therapists, teachers, and support staff.

Together, these capabilities enhance clinical governance, support safe and effective practice, and strengthen Aurora's ability to evidence impact.

### Electronic clinical notes: Strengthening collaboration and continuity

The rollout of electronic clinical notes across therapy teams has streamlined documentation and significantly improved interdisciplinary communication. Therapists can securely access and update records in real time, reducing duplication and ensuring continuity of care. This digital approach enhances inspection readiness and ensures that therapeutic input is consistently recorded, accurate, and easily retrievable.

### Occupational therapy and psychology CPD Days: Building expertise and confidence

Aurora delivered dedicated continual professional development (CPD) days for Occupational Therapy and Psychology teams, led by internal clinical experts. These events provided workshops, peer learning, and reflective practice opportunities, supporting the sharing of expertise across services. Feedback highlighted increased confidence, renewed professional motivation, and enhanced understanding of emerging therapeutic approaches. CPD remains a core element of Aurora's commitment to clinical excellence and staff wellbeing.



### Core values in action

Aurora's therapy approach is underpinned by innovation, collaboration, and investment in professional development. By strengthening our workforce, embedding robust digital systems, and promoting shared learning, we continue to enhance the quality, consistency, and impact of care for children, young people, and adults across our services.



# Our Systems



## Introduction of AI into The Aurora Group

Artificial Intelligence (AI) remained a defining theme throughout 2025 and continues to be a significant focus for 2026. During the year, we introduced the Group AI Policy, and Aurora Eccles School participated in the NASS (National Association of Special Schools) AI in Education pilot scheme, which concluded in summer 2025.

The Group AI Working Party, was established to review AI developments, assess opportunities, and identify tools that can enhance our services. As a result of this work, we deployed Microsoft Copilot in its standard form across our Microsoft 365 environment and approved our first education-focused AI solution, TeachmateAI.

## R.E.A.L. Education Systems Integration

We successfully onboarded eighteen R.E.A.L. Education services into the Group's standard infrastructure. This work involved migrating each site from the legacy Ubiquiti environment to Cisco Meraki, standardising security, safeguarding controls, network segmentation, and centralised management. The site-by-site cutover approach ensured minimal disruption while bringing all locations onto a consistent and compliant technical footing.

In parallel, the Microsoft 365 migration for R.E.A.L. Education has now been fully completed. This creates a single, governed environment for collaboration and data management, reduces operational and security risk, and significantly improves consistency and supportability across the R.E.A.L. Education estate.

## Mailbox Optimisation

Work continued through 2025 to reduce mailbox sizes by tightening storage limits, monitoring usage, and improving user awareness. Overall, our footprint has dropped

despite the mailbox count rising. With the addition of **464 more mailboxes**, as of January 2026 the Group is storing **573 GB** less email data than the same period in 2025.

This supports four strategic outcomes:

- ★ **Governance & Compliance:** Less historic email retained, helping meet data-retention obligations and GDPR data-minimisation requirements.
- ★ **Security:** Reduced volume of stored sensitive information lowers the impact and risk of cyber incidents.
- ★ **Performance:** Smaller mailboxes improve Outlook stability and reduce support issues linked to sync failures and file corruption.
- ★ **Cost & Environmental Efficiency:** Lower storage demand decreases energy consumption and delivers operational cost savings.

## Exam Account Management

The previous model of using a single shared exam account across all services was no longer suitable for the Group's scale or varying exam requirements. A new, more robust process has now been developed, enabling the creation of individual candidate accounts for exams. Working closely with services and conducting extensive testing, the team designed a solution where exam staff submit required restrictions via a Microsoft Form, triggering automated workflows that generate the accounts and issue login details directly to the requester. This new approach significantly strengthens data integrity, increases flexibility, and delivers a far more resilient and scalable exam account system across the Group.

## JAMF - Apple Device End Point Management System

As part of ongoing improvements to our systems, we are currently evaluating Jamf Mobile Device Management as a new solution for managing Apple devices across the Group. Jamf is a long-established and proven platform that would provide significantly stronger control over app deployment, user management, and device update governance. Adopting Jamf would enhance the effectiveness, consistency, and security of management for all Mac, iPad, and iPhone devices in use across the organisation.



## Beyond 2025

### Cyber Security

Our cyber security agenda for the year is focused on strengthening the Group's capability to detect, contain, and respond to emerging threats. Core priorities include improving visibility across our technology environment, tightening identity governance, and enhancing alignment with key regulatory and industry standards such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and Cyber Essentials.

To support these objectives, we're reviewing the performance of our current cyber security partner while also assessing alternative providers. The aim is to secure a partner capable of delivering robust 24/7 SOC (Security Operations Centre) services alongside continuous security advisory support.

In parallel, we plan to expand internal capability by appointing a full-time security analyst.

## Service Desk Improvements - HaloITSM

HaloITSM was approved and purchased in 2025, with implementation planned for spring 2026. The platform will modernise and streamline IT support across the Group by improving ticket management efficiency, enhancing response times, and increasing visibility of IT requests. Its advanced reporting and automation features will deliver a more consistent and effective support experience.

In addition, HaloITSM's AI capabilities will further reduce workload and enhance the service desk by automatically grouping related tickets, generating ticket summaries, prioritising issues through AI-driven triage, auto-categorising incidents, creating knowledge articles, enabling AI-powered self-service and virtual agent support, and using Emotion AI to monitor customer sentiment.



## Student Account Automation - Engage\Entra

Following the completion of the iTrent integration, work has now progressed to automating the management of student accounts. Using Engage as the authoritative data source, the team have developed automated processes to update student account details and disable accounts when appropriate. Moving forward this will also create accounts once we're happy with the testing phase which is currently happening with R.E.A.L. Education. This automation will improve accuracy, reduce manual administration, and support more efficient account lifecycle management across the Group.

# Our Awards & Accreditations

We're proud of our awards and accreditations, which recognise the achievements of the Aurora community. We strive to be the best in what we do, and our awards and accreditations are testament to our achievements.



Over  
**15**  
awards and  
nominations  
in 2025



PRINCESS ROYAL  
TRAINING AWARD  
2025



## Princess Royal Training Award

"It was such an honour for one of our training programmes to be recognised for its quality and for the real difference it's making to our colleagues. It's been a team effort to bring together the evidence that underpinned our submission." Darren Goodenough, Head of Learning and Development

In 2025, several of our services were recognised for their exceptional achievements, highlighting our commitment to excellence in education, innovation, and inclusivity:

**Aurora Summerfields won the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Award.** Assessor Alison Williams noted: "Aurora Summerfields stands out as a thriving, highly inclusive, and successful specialist setting, firmly rooted in strong values that guide every aspect of its practice. Leaders and staff place great emphasis on understanding each pupil's individual needs, disabilities, and interests."

Principal Tracy Whitehurst added: "This accolade underscores our commitment to providing a truly inclusive education where every pupil is valued. We're happy to support other schools through sharing our approaches to inclusive practice."

**Aurora Eccles and White House School won the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award** for the second year running. Jenny, Head of Humanities, said: "I'm super proud of all the work the pupils are doing, and have done, to make our schools more eco-friendly."

**White House School were awarded the Social Impact Schools Award, SuperKind,** a leading accreditation for citizenship and social action. The programme provides a framework and resources for teaching active citizenship, character development and social action in an easy and meaningful way. They were also Highly Commended in the 'School Dog of the Year' award for the services provided by Millie, their resident therapy dog.

**Aurora Hedgeway School received two brilliant accolades; the Woodland Trust Green Tree Gold Award and the Level 5 RHS Gardening Schools Award.** Cheryl Hall, Outdoor Learning Coordinator, said: "It's been a lot of hard work and determination which could not have been achieved without the legendary students and their superb teaching assistants. I am so proud of every single person who has participated!"

Other award successes at Aurora Hedgeway School:

- ★ Food for Life - Bronze Award
- ★ Eco-Schools Green Flag with Distinction
- ★ International Eco Schools Award - Merit
- ★ Modeshift Award
- ★ School Games - Silver
- ★ South Gloucestershire Food and Nutrition Award

More award successes across our schools:

### Aurora Cedars School

- ★ Thrive
- ★ Social Impact Schools Award, SuperKind
- ★ Speak Out, Stay Safe Certification

### Aurora Wilden View School

- ★ Thrive

### Aurora Fairway School

- ★ Social Impact Schools Award, SuperKind



# Our Staff

Staff feedback in 2025 showed:



## Celebrating staff

Aurora's employee recognition scheme: The scheme allows staff to nominate colleagues for exceptional work, with monthly winners receiving £50. Up to sixteen winners are selected each month, including nominations from colleagues, Service Managers, and Operations Directors.

"I am incredibly proud of the Aurora staff team who continue to passionately support our children, young people and adults each day, living our values and helping us to achieve our mission. It has been great to welcome our R.E.A.L. colleagues into the Aurora family and the many new staff who have joined to enable us to open our new and exciting services and continue the great work of our existing ones. I am particularly proud that we continue to develop our staff with award winning training and high numbers of our employees achieving recognised qualifications to develop their careers and further enhance the learning experience of those we support." **Jane Jarvis, People Director**

## Enhancing benefits and wellbeing

We're committed to supporting our staff and ensuring their wellbeing. In 2025, we made significant improvements to staff benefits and implemented initiatives that promote a positive and supportive working environment:

- ★ **DoctorLine** - access to an online, 24 hours a day, GP service
- ★ **Salary Increase** - above inflation pay increase of 4%

# Learning & Development

2025 marked another positive year for our in-house Learning and Development team.

86

learners enrolled on an internally funded and delivered qualification

100

learners underwent a specialist external training provider's programme

Over 90

learners gained a National Accredited qualification through Aurora

Provided over 18,000 online compliance courses

Over £130,000 invested in apprenticeships

## Developed new qualifications and programmes

### Teaching Degree Apprenticeship

This year the Government launched a brand new Teaching Degree Apprenticeship. This is the first of its kind, enabling a learner to gain a BA (Hons) Degree through Apprenticeship Levy funds. We're working alongside several universities on this programme where three new learners a year will take part in the three-year scheme.

This year, one of the teacher accreditation organisations we work with changed its entry criteria so that Specialist Educational School applicants had to have a recognised SEND qualification. We applied to an awarding body to enable us to deliver this training. This year alone we've had **over 35 learners starting, due to start or who have completed this qualification.** To the best of our knowledge, we're still one of the very few organisations who offer this nationally recognised qualification.

*"Feedback we've received from those taking part in the programme has been that they've felt more confident about performing additional tasks they wouldn't have done before, including running supervised teaching sessions."*

**Head of Learning and Development, Darren Goodenough**



## External recognition for our work

### British Training Awards nomination

Finalist in the British Training Awards 2025 in the Retraining/ Upskilling Initiative of the Year category for their Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools programme.

### Princess Royal Training Award

The Aurora Group was one of 57 organisations to receive a Princess Royal Training Award in 2025. The award recognised the success of a training programme, run by the Learning and Development team, that supported teaching assistants.

Aurora's Head of Learning and Development Darren Goodenough, who received the award from the Princess Royal at a ceremony in London, said the training programme not only improved classroom support for their young learners but had generated a new talent pipeline of teaching assistants.



## Highlights

- ★ Nominated for a British Training Award
- ★ Delivered seven core qualifications across four nationally recognised awarding bodies with 'outstanding' feedback from all our external awarding bodies
- ★ Launched a new appraisal system
- ★ Refreshed our Moodle learning platform
- ★ Supported the development of our new SharePoint pages
- ★ Gained a Princess Royal Training Award

## What our staff think about our programmes

96%

feel the course will make a **significant** difference to their career

*"I can't speak highly enough of Bethany, her support for me during the course was at the highest level. Professional all the way with constant support a every level. I couldn't ask for a better mentor."*

*"Zara was wonderful and helped in every way she could. Multiple times I had to cancel/rearrange meetings and she was really understanding and made it work."*



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

**At The Aurora Group, we're committed to adopting a diverse and inclusive environment for all our students, residents and staff. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a key focus.**

**Our commitment** - We're committed to creating a workplace where every member of staff feels valued, respected and able to contribute fully, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.

## Why EDI matters

When we prioritise equality, diversity, and inclusion, we:

- ★ Build stronger teams with different perspectives and experiences
- ★ Create a supportive environment where everyone can do their best work
- ★ Better understand and meet the needs of our students and their families
- ★ Set an example of the inclusive values we want to see in our services

## How we're making a difference

**Recruitment and retention** - We're actively working to attract and welcome people from diverse backgrounds. Our improved onboarding process ensures new staff feel supported from day one.

**Professional development** - Our EDI group meetings give staff the knowledge and tools to work inclusively. We share best practices across our schools and services.

We have four services that have attained the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) and ten services working towards it.

## Our ongoing commitment

EDI is not a one-time project. We're continuously learning, listening, and improving. We'll track our progress, celebrate our successes, and be honest about where we need to do better.

## Aurora's commitment

We want every Aurora school to achieve IQM recognition. The award focuses on learning and achievement in its widest sense, celebrating diversity and inclusion as opportunities for growth.

**Workplace culture** - We encourage staff to share their stories and experiences through myAurora (our intranet), helping us learn from each other and build understanding across our teams.

**Support and adjustments** - We work with the Business Disability Forum and use staff feedback to remove barriers and provide the support people need to thrive at work. We gained Disability Confident Level 1.

**Voice and representation** - We collect EDI data to understand our workforce better and identify where we need to improve. This helps us make informed decisions that benefit everyone. We've continued our EDI WorkBuzz surveys to get feedback from all employees.



## Together we can build a workplace where everyone belongs.

Some of our achievements and initiatives to date include:

- ★ Enhancing our website and intranet to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and user experience for diverse audiences
- ★ Improving our onboarding process for all new employees
- ★ Gaining Disability Confident Level 1
- ★ Expanding the number of services attaining the Inclusion Quality Mark
- ★ New inclusive features in Teams and Outlook: name pronunciation and pronouns
- ★ Supporting and encouraging staff to share their EDI stories on myAurora, our staff intranet, bringing to life the personal impact of EDI through individual experiences. Topics included celebrating Black History Month and AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) Awareness Month, alongside reflections on living with ADHD, anxiety and depression

## What this means for staff

- ★ Fair treatment in recruitment, development, and progression
- ★ A workplace that respects and values your identity and background
- ★ Support if you face barriers or need adjustments
- ★ Opportunities to contribute to our EDI work and share your perspective
- ★ Clear processes for raising concerns if you experience discrimination or exclusion



# Collaboration with the Community



## Together with Aurora

Together with Aurora focuses on making a positive impact by supporting charities that align with our mission and values. As a B Corp accredited company, we aim to contribute to communities through meaningful partnerships. The programme is supporting two UK charities for three years, Dogs for Autism and Wilderness Foundation UK, with each charity receiving £25,000 annually.



### Pupils at Aurora Wilden View school were paid a special visit by Dogs for Autism

Over the past year, the Aurora Wilden View School has raised £1,565 for the charity.

The visit coincided with the school's Scarecrow Festival, which brings the local community together for a day of autumn fun, featuring creative scarecrow designs, pumpkin decorating, games and plenty of sweet treats.

Wilden View Business Manager Kathryn De Freitas said: "We organise several festivals throughout the year where we raise money for a worthwhile cause. This year we chose Dogs For Autism.

"We're really proud of the incredible amount the students raised. It's been lots of fun coming together as a community and doing something positive for a charity with whom we share a common goal, supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities."

Dogs for Autism is a charity that provides assistance dogs, at no charge, to autistic people who would significantly benefit from the support. It's mission is to have a positive impact on the lives of autistic people and empower them to achieve their goals, echoes much of the work we do here at Aurora.

Through our partnership with Dogs for Autism, Aurora has sponsored a puppy that will be trained to become an assistance dog. The puppy is called Aurora and was named by staff following a vote. She's a Labrador Retriever and was born on 20 August 2025. All Dogs for Autism's puppies benefit from one-to-one sessions with one of their experienced trainers and weekly puppy classes.

The charity's Fundraising Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, Laura McCreadie, said: "Aurora is a gorgeous puppy who's already settled in well with her puppy raiser, beginning to respond to her name and already learning how to sit.

"Thank you so much for your support in helping us towards our goal of transforming the lives of families who are affected by autism."

# WILDERNESS FOUNDATION UK

The Wilderness Foundation runs environmental education, conservation and outdoor therapy programmes, helping young people and adults reconnect with society, themselves and nature. Their programmes highlight the positive impact of wild nature on personal and social wellbeing, harnessing the power of the wilderness and nature to transform vulnerable lives, and empowering people to conserve nature.

Wilderness Foundation UK's vision - to harness the positive power of the wilderness to change lives and the positive power of humanity to save wilderness - aligns closely with our responsibility as a certified B Corp and our commitment to environmental sustainability.

### Volunteers get back to nature at Aurora Rowan School

An intrepid team of volunteers from Aurora spent the day at Rowan School over October half term clearing some of the site's ancient woodland and planting spring bulbs. They were joined by David Wilkinson, Project and Development Officer at the Wilderness Foundation UK, one of our two official charities.

Thanking all the volunteers for their support, Aurora Operations Director Phil Jonas said he left energised by spending time outside in the woods and working alongside a great team.



Thanks to Aurora's support, Wilderness Foundation UK has been able to grow its education team enabling the charity to connect more young people with nature.

Jo Roberts - Wilderness Foundation CEO said "We are so grateful to our new support from Aurora who understand the critical importance of education and opportunity for all. Through our partnership we are able to take education and engagement outside - into the natural world - growing a new generation of young people who come through our programmes passionate and excited about the wonders of nature, understand the challenges of climate and need for green space, whilst also improving their own knowledge and wellbeing. Together in the partnership we can make a joint contribution to people and nature and the funding opens doors for us to maintain and grow what we do well for the good of all life."

"The background to the Wilderness Foundation UK and hearing about their work really helped me understand their mission and how Aurora is so closely aligned to their values," he added.



# Aurora Net Zero

**This year we're proud to celebrate meaningful progress in reducing our environmental impact across our education and care settings. As a Group, we have reduced our carbon intensity by 10.36% tCO<sub>2</sub>e, supporting the UK's ambition to reach net zero by 2050 under the Climate Change Act 2008.**

We're investing in the future of our environments by upgrading our building portfolio with heat pumps and solar technology, moving to green energy, and working with more sustainable suppliers.

Our commitment to environmental responsibility has been recognised through the achievement of Green Flag and Eco-Schools status, empowering those we support to be active participants in positive environmental change.

Looking ahead, we remain passionate about building on this momentum – continuing to reduce our environmental impact, embedding sustainability into everyday practice, and creating healthier, more resilient environments for learning, care and life. We're excited to continue this journey with a passionate and committed team in 2026 and beyond.

Moving all of our electricity suppliers to one green supplier has made the biggest impact.

## Environmentally friendly suppliers

We've chosen a single supplier for our cleaning products and the environment is at the heart of this. Arrow County Supplies produce plant based, eco-friendly products which are much better both for the planet and our people. A carbon calculation has been done on the swap of just one cleaning product at Aurora Ivy Lane School to a plant-based alternative. So far three kilogrammes of carbon dioxide have been saved. As we roll out the new products to all our sites, this will increase, and we can update this certification to cover the whole The Aurora Group.

## Estates team in hot pursuit of net zero with new heating supply in Norfolk

Our latest net zero installation is to dramatically improve the carbon footprint of Aurora White House School in Norfolk.

We've replaced the old oil-guzzling boiler with a new hybrid air source heat pump and gas boiler system. Air source heat pumps pull air from the outside, then use it to heat a special refrigerant liquid. As it warms up, the liquid turns into gas. The warmth is compressed to increase its temperature, and this provides heat for our building. Once the gas has transferred its heat, it cools down, becoming liquid again.

Steven Browning, Regional Facilities Manager said: *"I'm so pleased we've been able to switch the heating supply at White House to make use of a far greener system, and I look forward to seeing the environmental savings over the next few months. Every saving adds up and helps us on our journey to reduce our carbon footprint as a business."*

We're always looking at our services to make improvements to their energy consumption. Ways to do this include upgrading the building shell, increasing thermal efficiency through insulation and changing methods of heating and cooling.



## Green Energy

**We now have our first three schools fitted with a photovoltaic (PV) system to supply them with green energy.**

Aurora Eccles School has new modular buildings complete with PV panels and thermal insulation resulting in a net zero multiple classroom. We've seen a 13% reduction in energy use from January 2022 to December 2024 since having the PV panels introduced.

Aurora Redehall School has seen a 22% reduction in the same period because of their use of PV panels, and we've also just installed them in our new school, Aurora Ryefields School, in Derby.

## Aurora Eccles and White House School earns Green Flag recognition

Efforts to promote sustainability and raise environmental awareness among their school communities have earned Aurora Eccles and White House pupils an Eco-Schools Green Flag for the second year running. Jenny Pearce, Head of Humanities at Eccles School, said the Green Flag accreditation was important because it not only validated the excellent work undertaken by pupils during the past academic year but also provides encouragement to them to continue achieving great things.



# Celebrating Sustainability

## The Aurora Zero Hero Scheme

The Aurora Zero Hero scheme, launched in 2024, is an initiative designed to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions made by staff in supporting the organisation's commitment to sustainability and achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

The scheme encourages all staff to take action towards reducing their carbon footprint and promoting ecofriendly practices, both individually and collectively.

Staff members can be nominated by their colleagues for their efforts in sustainability. A Zero Hero is selected and awarded £50 each month. These awards celebrate actions such as innovative recycling projects, upcycling materials, promoting biodiversity, or organising sustainability-focused events.



## Our Zero Heroes include

**Nichola, Group Procurement Manager,** took on the challenging task of moving the procurement of our cleaning materials to a sustainable provider. This was no easy feat and required extensive collaboration with all our services, ultimately achieving significant savings on CO2, plastic, and petroleum.

**These heroes demonstrate the power of creativity and collaboration in driving us toward our Net Zero goals.**

**Laura and Karen, Housekeepers at Aurora Hedgeway School,** were nominated for their amazing contribution over the past two years towards our Net Zero by 2030 aspirations. They've been working tirelessly at Hedgeway School to support a wide variety of sustainability initiatives. From food waste management programmes to sourcing and providing clothes for the recycling programme, and training staff on recycling practices, their efforts have had a significant, positive impact on attitudes and contributions to sustainability at Hedgeway School.



*"There has been such good work this year that I have chosen a winner from our Central team and one from our Services. I love reading the impact individuals are having on a day-to-day basis across the group and in their own school, college, or home."*

**Sharon Pearson, Chief Operating Officer**

# Looking Ahead with our CEO

**Aurora transforms thousands of lives by helping children, young people and adults find pathways to reach their potential and live full, happy lives. However, young people with SEND are still three times more likely to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and we know people in employment are twice as likely to be happy.**

We have a fantastic opportunity to expand and extend our impact over the next few years and it is important that we do. That is the focus of Aurora's new strategy, which I am excited to launch in 2026. Our strategy will be founded upon, and continue our investment in, our 'Superpowers':

**People & Culture:** We aim to be the employer of choice in the sector. Attracting, developing and retaining the best people, then empowering them to deliver. I am continuously struck by the strength of Aurora's culture. We will work hard to ensure our values remain a key strength and continue to shape how we operate.

**Quality & Trust:** We've put quality first for the past 10 years and will continue to do so. As part of the Octopus Group, we're fortunate to be supported to invest in quality and to think long term. Acting with integrity has earned the trust of our key stakeholders, such as Local Authorities. They can trust us to do the right thing, and that's one of the key reasons why they want to continue working with us.

**Dynamic, Tenacious & Innovative:** We're an organisation that gets things done, and we are willing to explore new ideas and innovative approaches that help us achieve our mission.



We're great at what we do, but we are also never satisfied or complacent. Therefore a key pillar of our strategy will be to continue to improve what we do, with a laser-focus on outcomes and destinations, maximising the impact we make for children, young people and adults across our services. Improvements might include: more support for sharing best practices between services (such as the upcoming maths curriculum event); further

investment in innovation via our Innovation Fund; investment in our technology and data infrastructure; improving our central systems and processes to provide even better support to our services; and automating repetitive tasks so staff can focus on what matters most. We'll also adjust to the new Ofsted framework, the Schools White Paper and the impact of AI on education and the broader environment.

In 2026, we'll expand our impact by opening four new schools, and work has already started on a further four to follow in 2027. Each one will enable us to reach more children, young people and adults, while 'growing well' will mean the whole group benefits from increased scale and re-investment in our core.

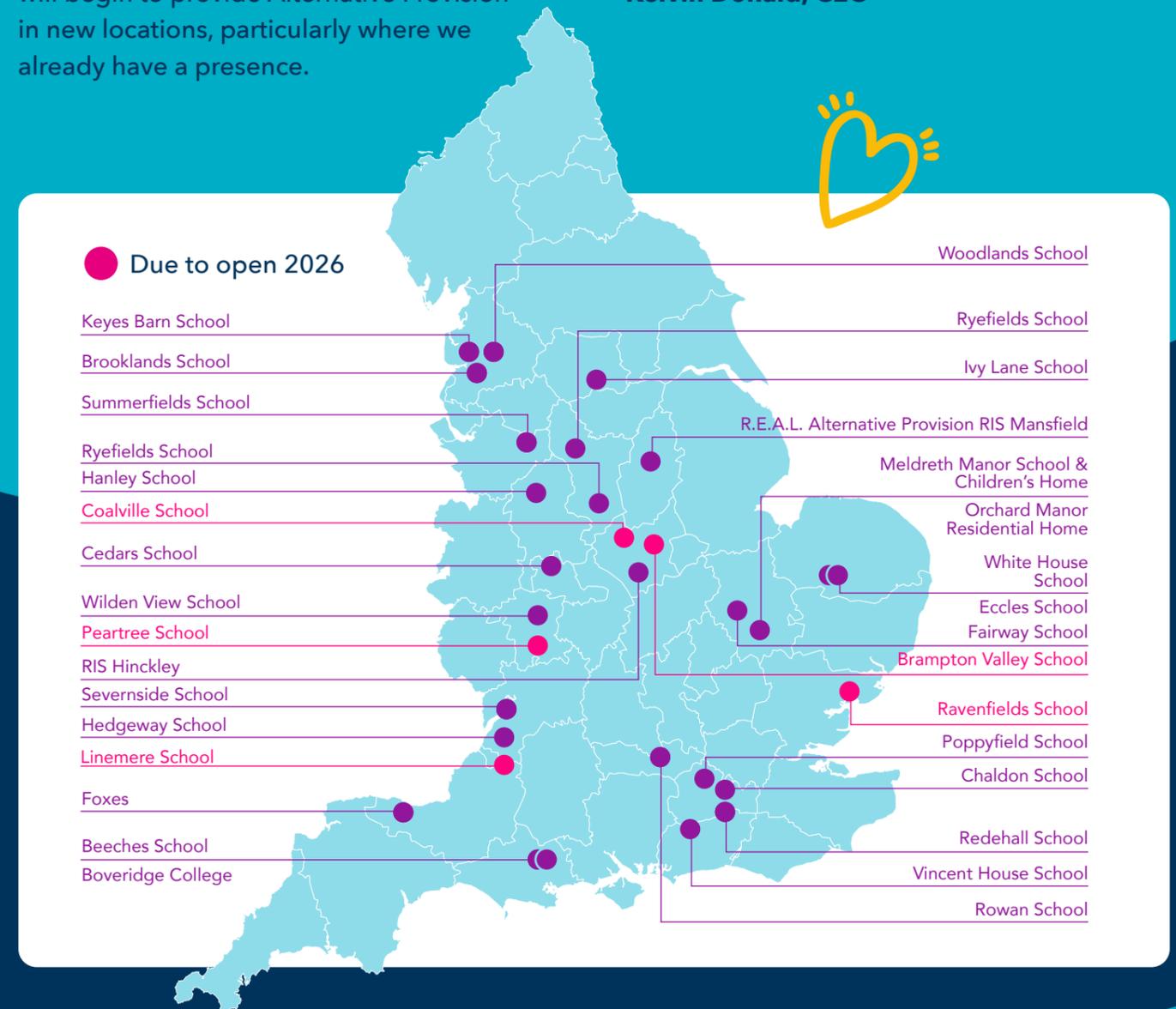
As one of the largest providers of education and care in the country, Aurora's voice matters. We will continue to engage the Department for Education and broader policy makers on the issues which matter most to children, young people and adults with SEND, and their families.

R.E.A.L. Education has added significant new capabilities to The Aurora Group. This year we will begin to provide Alternative Provision in new locations, particularly where we already have a presence.

We expect the white paper will expand the SEND support required in mainstream schools and we want to maximise the benefit of any changes for children and young people with SEND. Therefore, we're also preparing to develop new services to support mainstream schools. Beyond this, we'll continue to assess opportunities to develop new services which are sustainable, complementary to our existing services and (most of all) valuable to the groups we serve. Given the urgent need to bridge the gap to employment, I'm particularly excited to expand our partnerships with partners like Hilton, to create opportunities and pathways to employment.

Aurora has an exciting year ahead!

**Kelvin Donald, CEO**





[theauroragroup.co.uk](http://theauroragroup.co.uk)



020 3617 0170



[info@theauroragroup.co.uk](mailto:info@theauroragroup.co.uk)



AuroraGroupUK



The Aurora-Group



the\_auroragroup

**Caring**

**Ambitious**

**Collaborative**

**Trusted**

**Innovative**

Registered address: Aurora Care & Education Opco Ltd, Unit 13, Twigworth Court Business Centre,  
Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester GL2 9PG. Company No. 9768784