

# **ASTRA School-Centred Teacher Training** **10** **YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

December 2023

Dear Alumni/Parents/Guardians

## **Graduate Opportunities in Teaching**

I am writing concerning training opportunities for new entrants to the teaching profession. As a school, we have a strong commitment to the development of the next generation of teachers, and each year welcome a number of trainee teachers to Elmtree Infant and Nursery School on placements, a number of whom have gone on to work within our own school. Trainees have included former students, parents and members of the local community who are keen to develop a career or second career in education.

Elmtree Infant and Nursery School works in partnership with [Astra School Centred Initial Teacher Training](#) to provide training for new teachers. Astra training is designed to blend theory and practice, with both carefully structured school based training and a focus on helping trainees develop an up to date knowledge and understanding of pedagogy in their specialist subject or phase. Trainees are supported both by an in school mentor and a team of highly qualified and experienced tutors. All courses offered by Astra lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and most applicants also study for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), an internationally recognised qualification with a more demanding academic requirement.

Astra offers training positions both in primary and in secondary schools. Most trainees take a full time route lasting ten months, though it is possible to study part time over two school years. At primary level, there are a number of options available, leading to Qualified Teacher Status and a PGCE. Applicants must be graduates and in possession of GCSE Maths, English and Science or equivalent. Those with equivalent overseas qualifications are also welcome to apply.

At secondary level, Astra provides training in Science (with a specialism in Physics, Chemistry or Biology), Maths, English, Modern Foreign Languages (with a specialism in French, German and/or Spanish), History, Geography, RS, Computer Science, Design Technology, Music, Art, Dance and Drama. Applicants must be graduates and in possession of GCSE Maths and English or equivalent. The degree - or at the very least A levels - should be in the intended subject or a closely related area of study. Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses, often funded and lasting between eight and forty eight weeks, are also available to those who graduated more than five years ago.

Here at Elmtree we offer through Astra places in Early Years and Key Stage 1.

Funding for teacher training is available via a number of routes. As a postgraduate course, subject to various residency requirements, applicants are eligible to apply to the Student Loans Company

for support both with course fees and living expenses. At primary level, a number of salaried positions are available to those with significant classroom experience, perhaps as a teaching assistant or similar. At secondary level, many subjects attract significant bursaries of up to £30,000.

Astra itself is an innovative and non-profit organisation which collaborates with approximately sixty local primary, secondary and special schools across Buckinghamshire and beyond. Partner schools come from both the maintained and independent sectors and include selective, non-selective and comprehensive schools.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that over the last ten years, over 550 new entrants to teaching have qualified via Astra, and that they have come from many different backgrounds prior to teaching. A number have been new or recent graduates, while others have switched careers after many years in a different field. [Now Teach](#), which works alongside Astra, offers expert advice and support to career changers considering entering teaching.

Do contact Astra if you would like to know more. The main contact email is [hello@astra-alliance.com](mailto:hello@astra-alliance.com) or phone on 01494 787573. More information can be found on the [DfE train to teach portal](#), and applications can be made via [DfE Apply](#), open to all current final year university students, as well as those who have already achieved their degrees.

Yours sincerely



**Mrs Whitehill**  
**Headteacher**