



# Secondary Update



## Autumn 2025 – Contents

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Welcome to the autumn edition of the *Secondary Update*.

I hope you have had a restful summer and return with renewed energy for the year ahead. As we begin a new academic year, we find ourselves at a moment of both reflection and opportunity. The 2025 GCSE results have landed, and while the absence of Progress 8 data may present a challenge for some of you, the overall initial picture is positive, albeit that the data is as yet unvalidated. Hampshire schools have shown steady improvements in Basics at 4+ and 5+, and the gender gap is the smallest it has ever been. These outcomes are a testament to your leadership, your teams' dedication, and the unwavering commitment to pupil success.

This year's publication reflects the breadth of work happening across our schools – from curriculum innovation and climate action to AI integration and inclusive practice. Each article offers insight into how schools are responding to national priorities while staying rooted in the needs of their communities.

We continue to see the importance of embedding Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) into the Graduated Approach. The revised guidance reminds us that inclusive, high-quality teaching is not just about targeted support – it is about creating environments where every learner can thrive. Whether through visual timetables, communication-friendly classrooms, or universal scaffolds, these strategies are helping us build more equitable and resilient schools.

Sustainability remains a key theme. The Climate Unity Project's Small Worlds exhibition was a powerful reminder that creativity can be a catalyst for change. With over 400 artworks from 38 schools, the project showcased how small actions – when made together – can have a big impact. Looking ahead, the Climate Unity Pupil Conference in January 2026 will mark five years of pupil voice and action. With a fully virtual format, it promises to be an inclusive and inspiring event for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils across Hampshire.

Artificial Intelligence is also making its mark. Congratulations to Oakmoor School for achieving the Bronze Award from the Good Future Foundation. Their work shows how AI can be used not just for efficiency, but for creativity, inclusion, and deeper learning. The recent Senior Leaders' AI Workshop highlighted how Hampshire schools are using AI for lesson planning, admin tasks, and student support. The launch of the Hampshire AI steering group will help shape future guidance and ensure safe, effective use of AI across our schools.

We also celebrate the work happening in PSHE/RSE. Over 500 staff have accessed fully funded training this year, and the development of the Hampshire PSHE/RSE Pledge is helping schools demonstrate their commitment to pupil wellbeing. The updated statutory RSHE guidance, published in July, introduces new content on suicide prevention, sexual harassment, and online safety. Schools have until September 2026 to implement changes, and our autumn network meetings will support leaders in planning and consultation.

Music education continues to thrive in Hampshire, despite staffing and financial pressures. The recent needs analysis highlights the importance of collaboration, technology, and inclusive pathways. With strong GCSE and vocational outcomes – particularly for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Pupil Premium pupils – schools are encouraged to offer both options and to publish updated School Music Development Plans. Support is available through the Music Hub, lead schools, and strategic guidance.

Finally, our HIAS secondary networks remain a cornerstone of professional development.

These subject-specific sessions offer timely updates, collaborative opportunities, and practical strategies to support school improvement. Whether you are leading English, science, PSHE, or tackling educational disadvantage, these networks are designed to empower your leadership and strengthen your teams.

As always, your leadership matters more than ever. Whether you are navigating curriculum reform, supporting staff development, or championing pupil voice, your role is central to shaping the future of education in Hampshire. This publication is a celebration of your work – and a reminder that we are stronger when we share, collaborate, and innovate together.

Thank you for all that you do.

**Jean Thorpe**

County Education Manager, HIAS

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# GCSE results 2025

## Looking ahead with purpose

As the summer break draws to a close and the school gates prepare to open once again, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment. The 2025 GCSE results have landed, and with them, a renewed sense of purpose and reflection. For headteachers across the country, this is not just a time to analyse outcomes – but to lead with vision, resilience, and optimism.

## GCSE results 2025: a return to stability

This year's results mark a significant milestone. According to Ofqual, the 2025 GCSE outcomes reflect a continued return to pre-pandemic grading standards.

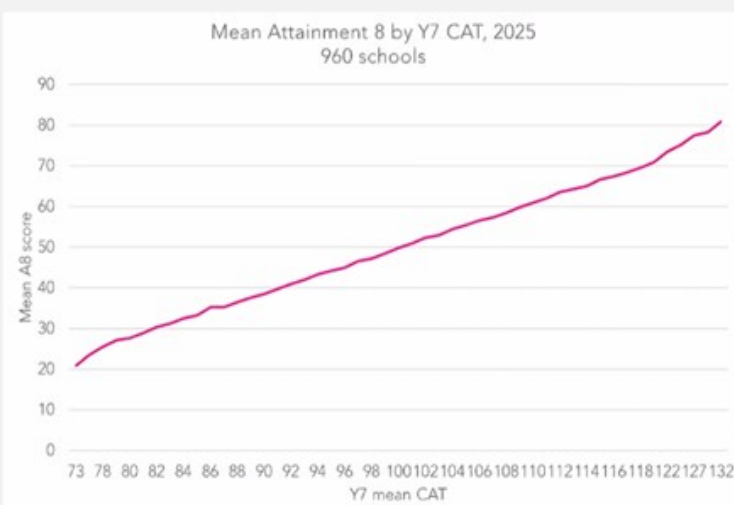
The proportion of top grades (7/A and above) has stabilised at 21.6%, down from the pandemic peak but consistent with 2019 levels. Meanwhile, 66.5% of entries achieved a grade 4/C or above.

The BBC highlighted that while some students and schools have faced challenges – particularly in areas still recovering from the long-term impact of Covid-19 – the overall picture is one of resilience and recovery. Vocational qualifications also saw strong performances, with many students opting for blended academic and technical pathways.

As a result of no Key Stage 2 scores for this cohort, or that of 2026, we are without Progress 8 data. The FFT webinar on results' day shared some interesting analysis including that the gender gap is the smallest it has been since records began and via the use of CAT data versus Attainment 8 data (960 schools) the following trend was seen (FFT webinar; 21.08.25).

### In the absence of KS2 data, we've used CAT data to calculate "CAT8"

fft education  
datalab  
research • analysis • evidence



| Y7 mean CAT | mean A8 score |
|-------------|---------------|
| 90          | 38.5          |
| 95          | 44.3          |
| 100         | 49.8          |
| 105         | 55.4          |
| 110         | 61.0          |

Average 2024 A8 in state-funded mainstream schools: 47.1

## Celebrating progress in Basics at 9-5

A special commendation goes to the schools where a sustained focus on improving **Basics at 9-5** has come to fruition.

These improvements are the result of strategic leadership, high-quality teaching, and relentless commitment to student success. Your efforts are making a tangible difference in the life chances of young people.

You will have noted from the County Education Manager, Jean Thorpe's update on results day our position currently (before validation and subject to change).

- **Basics 4+:** in 2024, Hampshire County Council (HCC) had a published outcome of 65.2%. Provisional 2025 data suggest this is **65.6%**.
- **Basics 5+:** in 2024, HCC had a published outcome of 44.9%. Provisional 2025 data suggest this has increased to **45.5%**.
- **Attainment 8:** in 2024, HCC had a published score of 45.4. Provisional 2025 data suggest this is **45.6**.
- **English – best grades 9-4:** in 2024, 73.9% of the cohort achieved a grade 4 or higher. Provisional 2025 data suggest this has remained at **73.9%**; national is currently reported as being at 70.6%.
- **Mathematics grades 9-4:** in 2024, 71.5% of the cohort achieved a grade 4 or higher. Provisional 2025 data suggest this is at **70.8%**; national is currently being reported as being at 71.9%.
- **Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium:** in 2024, **39.1%** of the cohort achieved a Basics grade of 4 or better, and an Attainment 8 score of **33.2**. Provisional 2025 data suggest this is at 39.9%, and 32.3.

## Hampshire priorities: equity and excellence

As we look ahead, Hampshire's shared priorities remain clear:

- **further improve Basics at 9-4**, particularly for pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium. This remains a key equity issue, and your leadership is vital in closing this gap
- maintain a watching brief on outcomes in mathematics, ensuring that all pupils – especially those at risk of underachievement – receive the support they need to succeed.

You will of course have your own in school priorities based on your analysis and evaluation. If you would benefit from additional guidance or support in these areas or others, please do not hesitate to contact your Leadership and Learning Partner (LLP) or School Improvement Manager (SIM).

## Your leadership matters more than ever

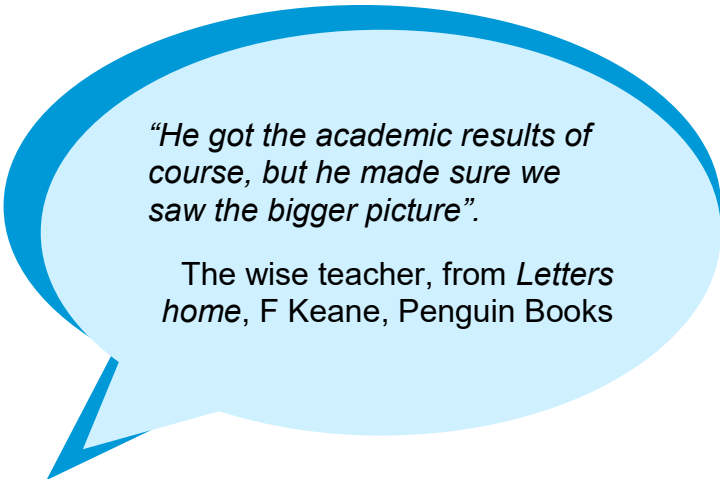
As a headteacher, you are the compass for your school community. The results are a testament to the hard work of your staff, the determination of your students, and the unwavering support of families. But they are also a call to action.

This year, your leadership will shape how your school:

- **builds on academic recovery** with a renewed focus on literacy, numeracy, and curriculum depth.
- **supports wellbeing** by embedding mental health strategies into everyday practice.
- **drives equity** by ensuring every child – regardless of background – has the opportunity to thrive.
- **inspires staff** through professional development, collaboration, and a shared sense of mission.

# Performance and Progress Group

The Performance and Progress Group (PAPG) meets on Thursday 6 November 2025 and Thursday 26 March 2026 in which Hampshire's results compared to national results will be shared, along with key themes and priorities for the region this year. We will again be sharing best practice from Hampshire schools and beyond. Please do contact me should you wish to suggest an additional agenda focus.



*"He got the academic results of course, but he made sure we saw the bigger picture".*

The wise teacher, from *Letters home*, F Keane, Penguin Books

## A year of possibility

Let this be a year of possibility. A year where we do not just return to normal – but redefine it. Where we lead not just with data, but with heart. Where we remember that behind every grade is a story, a journey, and a future.

To every headteacher: thank you for your courage, your commitment, and your belief in what education can achieve. The road ahead may be complex, but it is also full of promise – and you are exactly the leaders we need to walk it.

### Tania Harding

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GCSE Business is becoming increasingly popular in England. In 2025, there were 137,924 entries for GCSE Business, representing a 9.7% increase from 2023. Overall entries for Business in England grew by 41% between 2019 and 2024. This makes Business the fastest-growing large-entry subject at GCSE level in 2025. In this article, we will explore the continuing subject development journey at The Burgate School in Fordingbridge, which has approximately 1,100 students on roll and a sixth form provision. Leaders here describe Business as much more than a subject – it is a launchpad for life. The thriving department, led by Karen Billingham-Bright, since 2018 sees the team bring over 45 years of combined experience and a shared passion for making business education relevant, rigorous, and inspiring.

## Curriculum leader overview

It was a privilege for Kate to come and visit the Burgate School and Sixth Form and meet with myself and the department teachers as well as Year 10 Business students. I have been teaching Business for 16 years at both GCSE and A-Level and am passionate about the value of the subject. I feel this should be a course that all students should be taught at GCSE as it provides students a foundation for further studies and a career in business. As a department we understand that the students we teach have changing needs and we value the importance of curriculum planning and adapting our teaching so our students can achieve their full potential. We build strong relationships with our classes by continuously updating resources, so the needs of the students we teach are met. Taking this approach makes the course interesting and relatable, therefore our students enjoy their learning and often carry on their journey with business into further education.

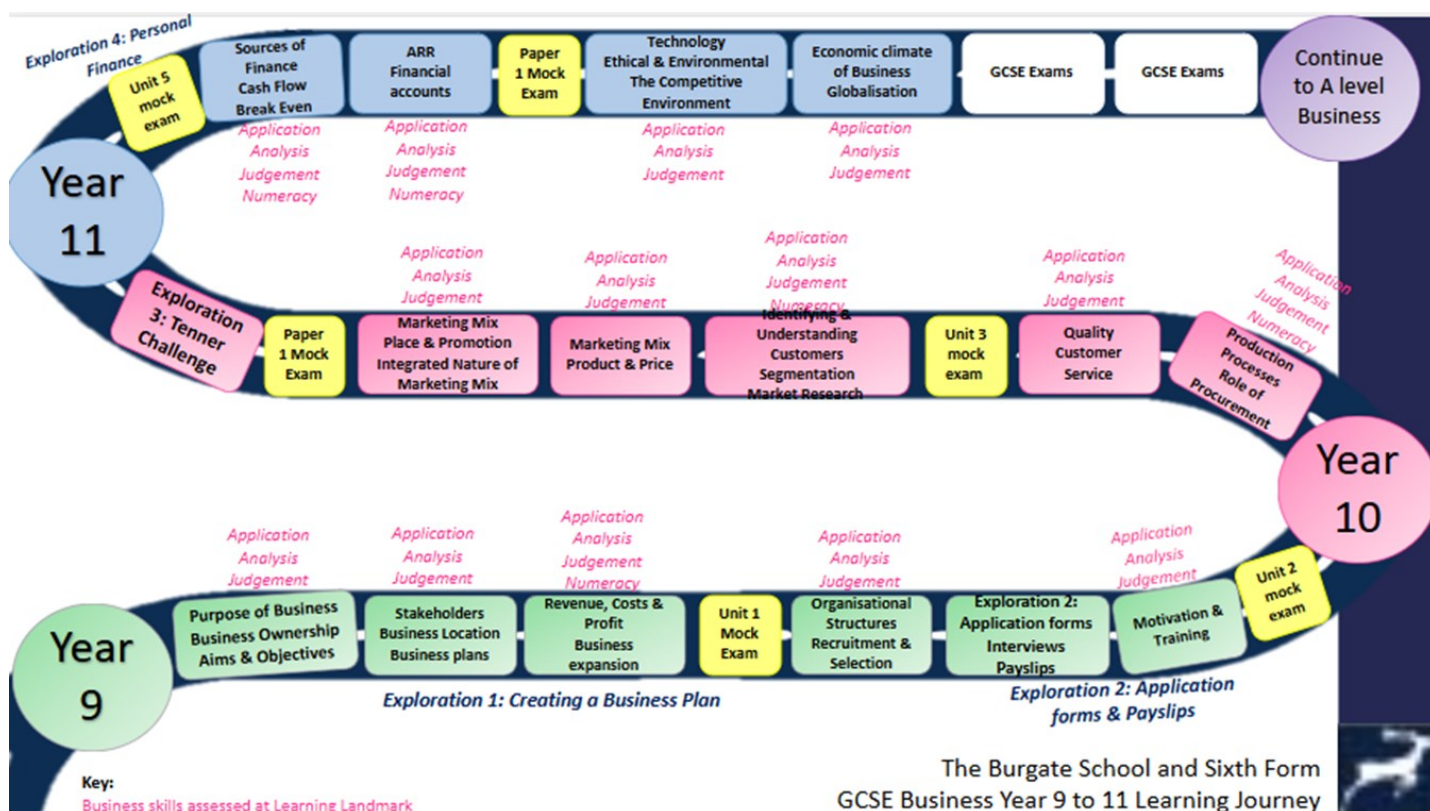
## Curriculum and departmental organisation

The business department consists of a team of three subject specialists, all of whom have been at the school for over 15 years. The department's success is reflected in its popularity: three Year 11 GCSE classes and two A-Level groups in 2024, with ALPS scores consistently placing students in the top 25% nationally. The team's approach is rooted in adaptive teaching, student voice, and real-world relevance. An Ofsted subject inspection in 2012, when the department was led by Allen Billingham-Bright highlighted the outstanding teaching and curriculum organisation within the department. The team has maintained this reputation with students and parents and is committed to continuous improvement through feedback and reflection on student needs and interests.

A three-year Key Stage 4 programme of study allows for in-depth exploration of subjects and opportunities to apply knowledge practically. For instance, concepts like payslips and taxation are taught with real-world applications to engage students. Planning is shared among teachers to maintain consistency; especially as other teachers hold middle leadership roles in other subjects and year groups. The team explains that the curriculum sequence has been carefully designed to match contextual needs and student maturity. An example given was the last topic of GCSE taught is exchange rates. The leader described how they know it is a concept students struggle with, so it is taught last to ensure it is fresh in their learning for their exams and they are more likely to be ready for it, building confidence. Karen describes it as: *"We don't teach in the order 'we should'; instead, we adapt our planning based on what we know about our pupils"*.

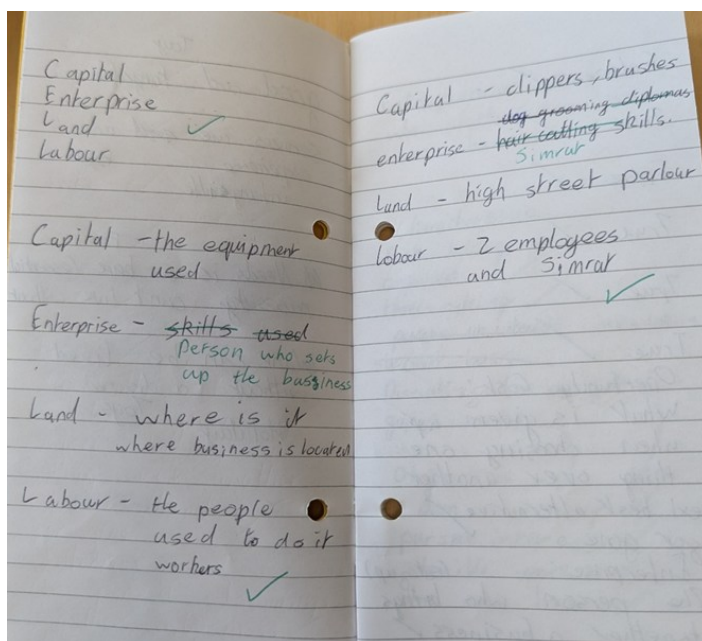
Feedback from students has proven invaluable, and the team regularly uses student voice to inform curriculum development and delivery. Recently, it was noted that students required more support with long-term recall and memory, leading to adaptations in teaching activities to enhance further recall and interleaving of concepts.

# The curriculum overview for Key Stage 4



## Adaptive teaching

To sustain excellent exam results in Business Studies, several effective strategies have been implemented. Lessons are consistently chunked, enabling better comprehension, while Year 10 students utilise knowledge books for recall quizzes, fostering self-directed learning. Structured case studies teach students how to highlight key points and enhance their answers. Pupils are encouraged to organise their work in folders, supported by homework booklets issued each term whilst in Year 12, the inclusion of more timed essays addressed student preferences. Questioning techniques have been refined to check memory and further develop understanding, while assessment feedback focuses on concise, actionable insights using model answers and live worked examples. Adaptive teaching, with deliberate practice and tailored examples relevant to class interests, ensures pupil engagement. Exam techniques, including stretch-and-challenge tasks and a banned words display, develop precision and performance.



An example of a knowledge book.

## Explorations

During the three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum at The Burgate School, students engage in *Explorations*. These are practical, real-world learning experiences embedded within the Business Studies curriculum to deepen students' understanding and engagement.

These activities are strategically placed throughout the GCSE and A-Level learning journeys and include:

- **creating a business plan** – students develop their own business ideas and learn how to structure and present a viable plan
- **application forms, interviews and payslips** – pupils engage with real-world employment processes, enhancing their understanding of recruitment and personal finance
- **the *Tenner Challenge*** – a hands-on enterprise project where Year 10 students create, market, and sell products, applying business concepts in a live school environment
- **personal finance** – focused on managing money, budgeting, and understanding financial products, this exploration builds essential life skills.

These explorations are designed to reinforce theoretical knowledge through application, foster entrepreneurial thinking, and prepare students for future careers and financial independence. One of the most popular is the *Tenner Challenge*, which takes place during Year 10 summer term 2. The challenge is a hands-on enterprise project, giving students the chance to create and market real products, culminating in presentations to school leaders and governors. Pupils described it as much more than a project, building confidence, promoting their creativity, and encouraging commercial awareness.

## What did students say?

A group of Year 10 students were conferenced during the visit to the school. All expressed their appreciation for the subject, highlighting the relevance to real-world applications and future career aspirations. They particularly enjoy how the lessons are made engaging such as through opportunities for team discussions, and the abundance of case studies, such as driverless cars and iPhones, which make the content relatable.

Students feel that the course prepares them for employability and leadership roles, inspired by their teachers' passion for business.

They recognise that impactful projects like the *Tenner Challenge* will teach them about importance of adaptability in business planning. Students especially praised feedback from teachers, including live marking which they see as helping to refine their skills and be able to apply the mark schemes effectively. Recap activities, chunking the introduction of new knowledge especially the introduction of keywords, and practical exercises such as calculations were also praised for enhancing understanding and retention of course material.

With thanks to **Karen Billingham-Bright**, Leader of Business, and Year 10 business students for their time and openness in sharing their reflections of the subject.

### Kate Broadribb

School Improvement Manager, for Eastleigh, New Forest and Test Valley, Secondary Inspector/Adviser and Subject Lead for Geography, HIAS

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### References

- 1 [www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/GCSE-Project-and-Entry-Level-Trends-2024.pdf](http://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/GCSE-Project-and-Entry-Level-Trends-2024.pdf)

## You and your music department: singing from the same hymn sheet

As we enter a new academic year, and we eagerly await the DfE curriculum and assessment review, we are provided an ideal opportunity to review the bigger picture for music in your schools. This article collates findings from our own needs analysis research, FFT data and national publications to review the key areas of priority for our music departments and how they can be supported to achieve their aims. There is also a range of useful links for you and your music department at the end.

### Needs

In the autumn term of last academic year, The Hampshire Music Education Hub (<https://hantsmusicub.org.uk/>) sent a comprehensive needs analysis form to our secondary school music departments. We received responses from 70% of schools, which provided us with a representative sample of the situation of music in our secondary schools.

One of the key, yet not at all surprising, findings is that most schools do not have two or more music teachers at their school. Most schools have one full time music teacher, and another part-time specialist, or a non-specialist to support. In a subject that demands so much outside of classroom lessons, this can create pressure on subject leaders and limit opportunities for subject-specific collaboration. From the responses we found that 52% of subject leaders were able to attend the county subject network meetings. However, 13% expressed they were supported by their schools to attend our free afternoon network meetings at Hampshire Music Education Hub. We would like to connect with more music leads and ask that senior leaders support your staff in attending the termly network meetings whenever the opportunity arises.

The needs analysis also showed us some common key areas of need across many schools in the county:

- families' finances is an increasing barrier, having a significant impact on the uptake of instrumental lessons, as well as involvement in workshops, ensembles and other extra-curricular activities
- this, as well as national concerns around primary music provision, is leading to a steep decline in numbers of instrumental learners
- music technology is an area for further development, with many responses stating that teachers feel ill-prepared in terms of training and/or resources in their departments
- teachers would like to be offered more local subject network meetings
- many colleagues, especially one-person departments, feel isolated and in need of more subject-specific training and support.

These are areas that we would like you to address in your schools. Please remember that we are available for support in all of these areas, and more (links at the end of this article). For example:

- we provide very reasonable instrument hire and provide great value for money with our instrumental and vocal tuition. We are also establishing more low-cost ensembles, including new training ensembles in the New Forest and Alton areas
- we provide exciting and wide-ranging visiting group music tuition offer, including Rock 2 The Beat, as well as the option to request teachers to lead ensembles
- we provide music technology workshops, resources and online training. Jordan Nyari (our music technology specialist) can be booked in for school consultation visits, too
- we offer free half-day network meetings at our base in Winchester in the spring and summer terms, as well as collaboration opportunities at our Hub Conference in the autumn term. Our secondary lead schools (The Mountbatten School for the south and The Wavell School for the north) are also developing wider links for schools in their local areas
- as well as the above networking events, you can arrange curriculum visits from our advisers. If you currently buy in any of our services, then the first two-hour consultation is absolutely free.

## Moving forward

As mentioned, The Mountbatten School and The Wavell School made a great start over the first year of our secondary lead schools programme. Moving into the second year, they will be sharing good practice in a variety of areas and delivered in a variety of ways. Please do encourage your music department to get in touch with them for advice or to set up collaborative opportunities.

One specific way that The Mountbatten School and The Wavell School could help is towards Key Stage 4 planning, pedagogy and achievements. Hampshire continues to be above average for achievement in GCSE music, and we have many success stories with schools running vocational equivalent courses. We should take confidence in this and, with all of the support available, you should feel empowered to promote Key Stage 4 music further in your schools. An APS of 5.4 against the national average of 5.1, and Grade 4+ of 78% against the national average of 73%, shows how well our schools and students performed in GCSE music last year.

| Qualification type<br>(number of learners)                 | APS        | Against<br>Nat. Ave. | Grade 4+   | Against<br>Nat. Ave. | Grade 5+   | Against<br>Nat. Ave. | Grade 7+   | Against<br>Nat. Ave. |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>GCSE Music (676)</b>                                    | <b>5.4</b> | <b>+0.3</b>          | <b>78%</b> | <b>+5%</b>           | <b>65%</b> | <b>+5%</b>           | <b>33%</b> | <b>+5%</b>           |
| <b>Non-GCSE Music<br/>combined (237)</b>                   | <b>4</b>   | <b>+0.2</b>          | <b>69%</b> | <b>+10%</b>          | <b>35%</b> | <b>+3%</b>           | <b>8%</b>  | <b>-2%</b>           |
| <i>Music Non-GCSE (132)<br/>BTEC Music Practice</i>        | <i>3.8</i> | <i>-0.2</i>          | <i>63%</i> | <i>=</i>             | <i>30%</i> | <i>-4%</i>           | <i>9%</i>  | <i>-2%</i>           |
| <i>Music Tech Non-GCSE (105)<br/>NCFE Music Technology</i> | <i>4.2</i> | <i>+6%</i>           | <i>75%</i> | <i>+20%</i>          | <i>39%</i> | <i>+9%</i>           | <i>7%</i>  | <i>-1%</i>           |

Vocational qualifications continue to be debated amongst music leaders, with the administration workload required and what can seem like an unending tinkering with specifications, but there is no doubt of the benefits gained through offering them. I already made a case for schools allowing special considerations for departments to facilitate running both the GCSE and vocational equivalent in a previous publication (<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/SecondaryUpdate-Summer2024.pdf>). Positive evidence for this approach has been bolstered by the FFT data from 2024 examinations. The below table shows that achievement gap for Hampshire students with SEND in GCSE music is -0.7 (over half a grade), but only -0.1 for vocational music. The achievement gap for Hampshire Pupil Premium students taking GCSE music is -1.3 (over a whole grade), but only -0.4 for vocational music.

| Pupil group   | GCSE<br>APS | GCSE 4+ | GCSE 5+ | GCSE 7+ | Voc.<br>APS | Voc. 4+ | Voc. 5+ | Voc. 7+ |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| All students  | 5.4         | 78%     | 65%     | 33%     | 4           | 69%     | 35%     | 8%      |
| SEN           | 4.7         | 57%     | 48%     | 26%     | 3.9         | 68%     | 34%     | 2%      |
| SEN gap       | -0.7        | -21%    | -17%    | -7%     | -0.1        | -1%     | -1%     | -6%     |
| Pupil Premium | 4.1         | 58%     | 42%     | 12%     | 3.6         | 70%     | 27%     | 2%      |
| PP gap        | -1.3        | -20%    | -23%    | -21%    | -0.4        | +1%     | -8%     | -6%     |

This shows how much more inclusive this option is to students and is just one of the reasons that we encourage schools to look in to running both GCSE and vocational music options. This is not just an isolated opinion, but is actually supported by the government's national plan for music education:

*“DfE has committed to retaining key high-quality vocational qualifications at Key Stage 4, recognising the distinct and important role they play in supporting students to develop different skills from the GCSE, eg music technology. Industries which value these qualifications are encouraged to do more to work with young people, schools and Hubs to highlight how taking such courses can open up pathways to future musical careers.”*



*All secondary schools should be offering qualifications at this level. Where needed, they should discuss this with their Music Hub, which may be able to support them in identifying course providers for interested students.”*

We encourage music leaders and line managers to reflect on the strengths of your music department and discuss where the priorities for improvement are. The School Music Development Plan (SMDP) is the perfect tool to allow you to do this, as well as to inform parents of what musical opportunities your school provides. **Your school should have published a SMDP on your website for the previous academic year, which should now be reviewed.** An updated plan should now be agreed and published for this academic year, reflecting the key priorities you have discussed and established with your music department. We have provided guidance and exemplars in our Secondary music blog (<https://hantsmusic.org.uk/secondary-schools/>), and our lead schools are available for further support.

Please make use of the links and get in touch with Yvonne Postlethwaite, as our incoming Strategic Lead for Schools and Curriculum, with any requests for information or support.

Email: [yvonne.postlethwaite@hants.gov.uk](mailto:yvonne.postlethwaite@hants.gov.uk).

## Resources and contact information

- Secondary music resources: <https://secondary.hantsmusic.org.uk/resources/>.
- Secondary music blog: <https://secondary.hantsmusic.org.uk/blog/>.
- Instrument hire: [www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hampshiresmusic/instrumenthire](http://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hampshiresmusic/instrumenthire).
- Area ensembles: <https://hantsmusic.org.uk/area-ensembles/>.
- County ensembles: <https://hantsmusic.org.uk/county-ensembles/>.
- Music technology/production: <https://musicproduction.hantsmusic.org.uk/>.
- Hub Conference: <https://hubconference.hantsmusic.org.uk/>.
- Lead schools: <https://hantsmusic.org.uk/lead-schools/>.
- National Plan for Music Education: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education)
- School Music Development Plan: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template)
- The Wavell School (lead school for the north): [anna.drake@wavell.hants.sch.uk](mailto:anna.drake@wavell.hants.sch.uk)
- The Mountbatten School (lead school for the south): [musicdepartment@mountbatten.school](mailto:musicdepartment@mountbatten.school)

### Dave Jones

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/).

# Climate action planning

## Background

By September 2025 all schools and colleges in England are expected to have a climate and sustainability strategy that outlines the short and long term plans for schools to address four main areas. (DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy Policy Paper 2023, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems)).

- Achieving net-zero across the educational estate by 2035.
- Increasing resilience across the educational estate to cope with impacts of climate change.
- Improving biodiversity across education sites.
- Improving the education and awareness of students and helping with green careers.

When looking at education and awareness there are some subjects where topics are directly in the Key Stage 3 and, or Key Stage 4 curriculum but for many others the links between nature, the environment and sustainability are at best indirect. The expectation from the Department for Education (DfE) is that all subjects will, to some extent contain and refer to environmental issues. One of the challenges therefore is to baseline current activities across the curriculum in order to understand where to look for opportunities to include environmental content. The second challenge is to try to understand the quality of the teaching and to then help focus the effort into areas where the perception is that there is a need to improve.

## Baselining current activities and understanding

To start the process The Wavell School compiled a simple baseline questionnaire for the directors of curriculum. The objective of the benchmarking was:

- 1 at a practical level, to make the survey as quick and easy to complete as possible based on qualitative opinions
- 2 to understand how many subjects included anything about climate change, nature or sustainability in their standard curriculum (the Department for Education expectation being that that would be 100%)
- 3 to understand the confidence of the heads of department that their teams had the knowledge and understanding to accurately address the topics
- 4 to understand what sources of information were being used (and by implication the reliability of the information being shared) when looking at the main topics.

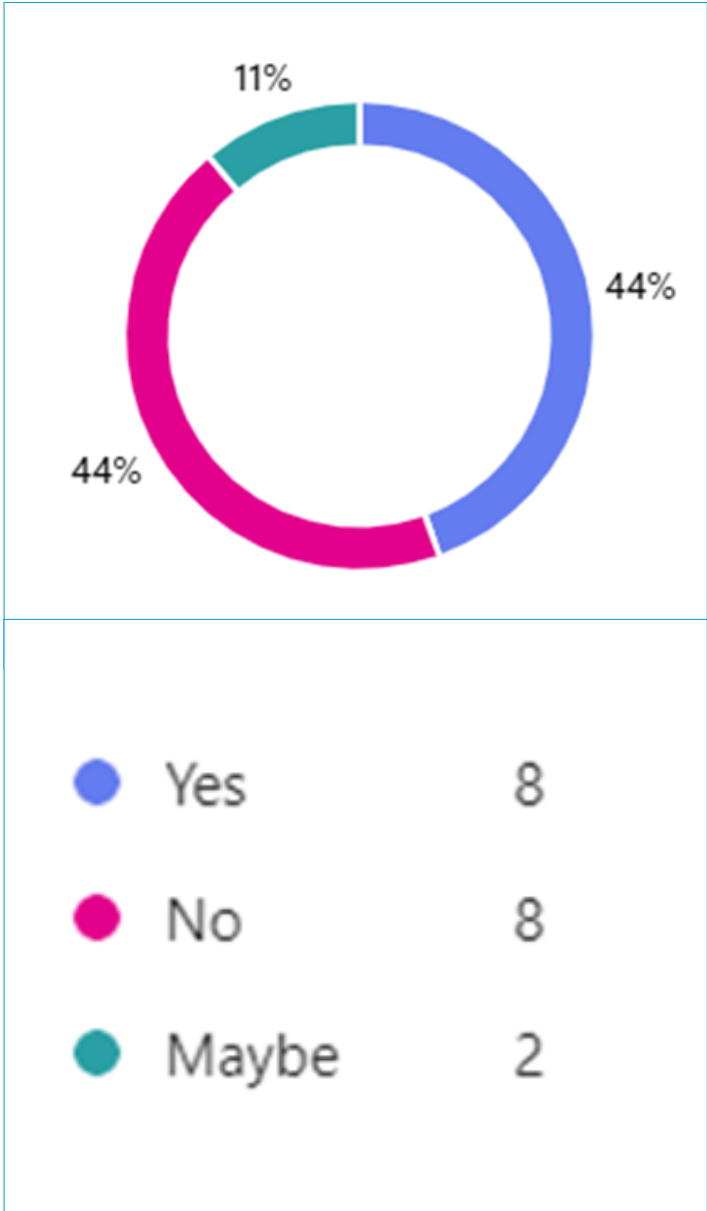
## The survey

To achieve (1) the survey was only sent to directors of curriculum and the focus was on their perception and understanding as the staff that have the intimate knowledge of their curriculum and the best perception of the quality of teaching being delivered in their subject. In total the questionnaire was 32 questions long (too long to include everything) and went into detail looking at specific issues, sources of data, whether the individuals or the subject were interested in helping more.

Despite the length it was designed to be really quick to complete and as a result has a 100% completion rate. The average time to complete was just over four minutes, for a number of subjects it was less than one minute, most of the others about six minutes.

Where there are separate subject leads the survey was done for each subject by the lead if this was the preference of the director of curriculum and is most likely to be done this way for science and the design and technology subjects.

## Some results



**Figure 1: Subjects teaching climate/sustainability/nature.**

The first thing to establish is if the subjects think they do anything, If they did not then the survey finished. For those that did it branched into the three areas the DfE are interested in, climate change, sustainability and nature with each of these areas investigated separately.

The first question asked: *“Do you teach any lessons (or include content focussed on) nature (ecosystems and biodiversity) climate and the effects of climate change or sustainability and protecting the planet for future generations?”* The result for The Wavell School showed about half of DCs thoughts they taught something in one of the areas. The DfE expectation is that in the future this will be 100%. Obviously, this is useful as a baseline and from an environmental plan perspective gives an immediate action as it will be possible to increase the number over time. It is also nice to be able to track these changes and report progress, which, without the survey we would not be able to do.

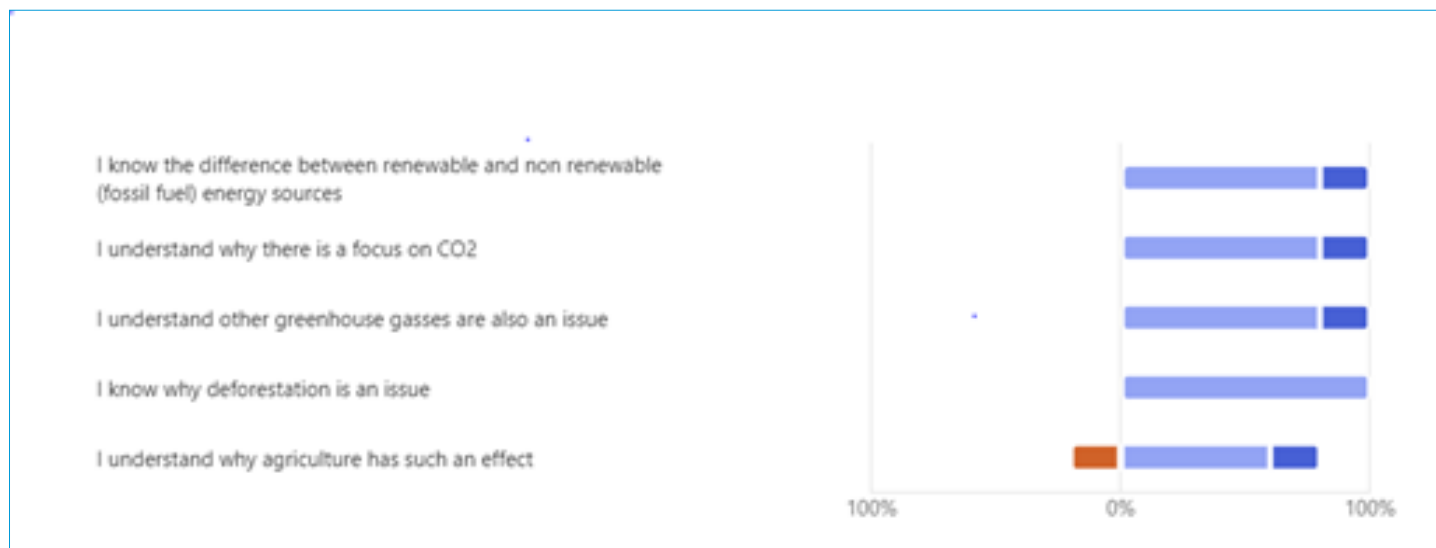
## Turning baselines into actions

The answer to the question also created an action to share the National Education Nature Park resources that include Key Stage 3 lesson ideas and resources to the three subject leads that have free, pre-planned lesson resources available to them but do not teach any environmental lesson in their curriculum today suggesting an opportunity to consider adapting lessons or activities. It is important to note that the planned action is not to change the curriculum, it is just to share the resources and the opportunity and then to track if any changes are made.

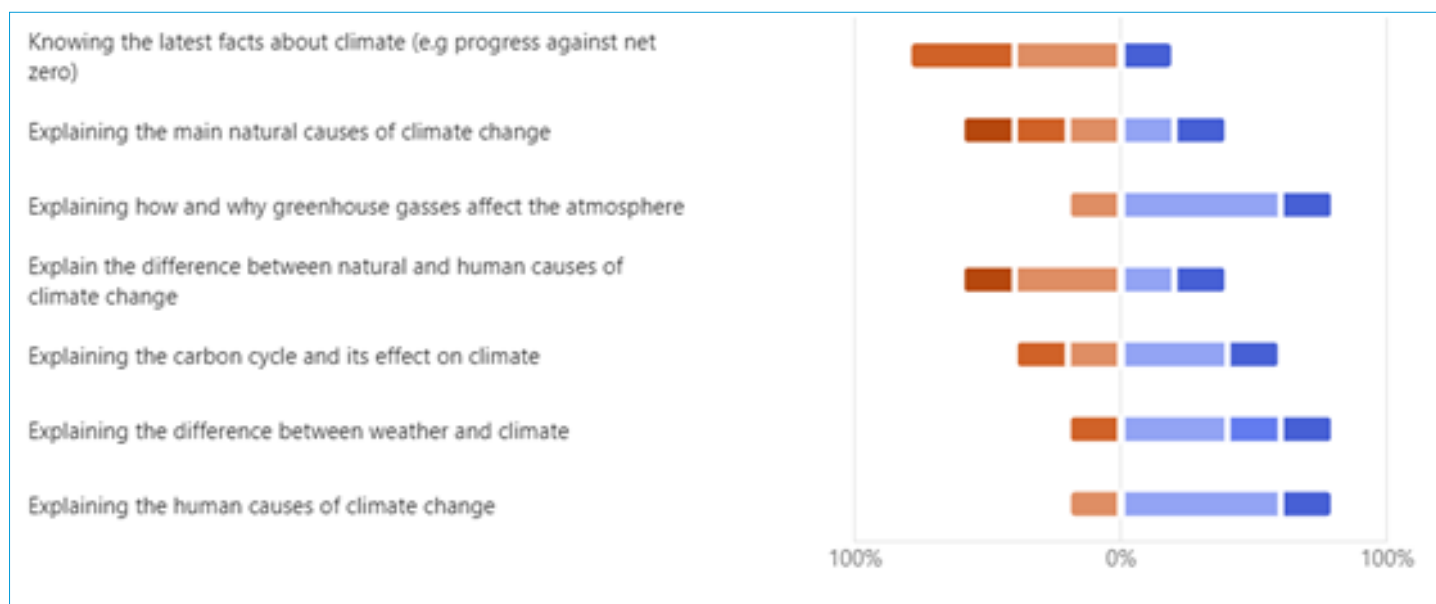
When looking at the confidence of heads of department the survey did not ask for factual information it just asked for confidence levels about a number of areas that are known to be in different curriculums. The confidence levels related to classroom teachers and the year groups taught. The intention is to identify the priority areas to support teachers in building knowledge and understanding and therefore quality teaching in a complex and fairly controversial area. Ideally DCs and all staff teaching would feel confident and secure in their knowledge as this will allow them to challenge misconceptions and also to explain the trade-offs and challenges.

- Uneasy - I know a little more than the students but not much
- Lacking confidence There areas I don't feel I know enough about but my general knowledge is good
- I am OK with most of the content - specially for the year groups I teach
- Confident - I may lack a few of the latest details but feel confident I can teach this content
- Very Confident- I follow the detail closely, understand the issues and keep lesson update every year
- I don't need to teach this in my curriculum

**Figure 2: Confidence level on facts and science.**



**Figure 3: Causes of climate change.**



**Figure 4: Science and facts confidence.**

Figure 2 shows the confidence levels descriptors related to climate change science and figure 3 shows the result. Ideally both of the charts would be blue! The fact that figure 4 is not, allows immediate actions for the action plan. For example, an action providing a shared data set

across subjects that updated with the latest figures from reliable sources each year should increase confidence in teaching lessons, as would a second action delivering clear explanations in lesson templates that explain key concepts.

The actions also make sense from an efficiency perspective and teaching and learning perspective, the data changes so fast it is really easy to accidentally reinforce misconceptions by using old data (especially from text books). Both actions are then included on the action plan and then when resurveyed we can see if the solution implemented helped. If it did we will continue doing what we did, if not we will try something different.

There is one caution when surveying qualitative opinion data. Increasing expertise often increases uncertainty as you are aware of the complexity and the things you do not know. The measure does not show you the quality of teaching and learning. There is an implied assumption that confidence is the same as quality but it may be that in the future this assumption may need testing.

## Next steps

The survey provides a baseline and some insight that will allow us to track improvements whilst also helping to prioritise actions that will provide the most help and support to the staff, and by implication the students. Over time the survey will be refined, and it is likely the focus of the questions will change a little, but the basic metrics will stay the same and it should provide a platform for continuous improvement. The plan is to survey once a year at the start of January, this gives a little time to implement actions and also to plan for the next academic year. We are also reviewing and adapting the DfE climate literacy 2024 research report to use this as a basis to start tracking student attitudes and understanding probably for Year 9s and possibly Year 11s.

**Adam Denton**

Head of Geography, The Wavell School

## Resources

- 1 Climate literacy amongst school leavers – research report: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67616fecf666d2e4faef3972/Climate\\_Literacy\\_School\\_Leavers\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67616fecf666d2e4faef3972/Climate_Literacy_School_Leavers_2024.pdf).

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/).

# Education Research Practice Network



University of  
**Southampton**



## Who are we and what do we do?

Education research is increasingly prominent in the work of schools and teachers with evidence informed pedagogy and practice forming the backbone of credible teacher professional learning. It can be tricky, though, for teachers to find and access high quality research evidence and to know how to apply this in their specific context. This process is often very much a one-way street with barriers such as lack of time for busy teachers and difficulty accessing research which is often hidden behind paywalls.

This was the inspiration behind the creation of the Education Research Practice Network (ERP N). ERP N, based at Southampton Education School, University of Southampton, is a network which connects teachers and researchers, supporting genuine exchange and co-construction of knowledge to shape practice. We facilitate the communication of high-quality education research to teachers and leaders in schools.

Our vision is to support schools and teachers to be research informed by understanding how that research was generated and what it means for their practice. At ERP N, we open up education research so teachers, TAs and school leaders can access evidence informed professional development across a broad range of areas, from effective teaching and learning to school leadership at all levels.

## What makes ERP N different to other popular education research distributors?

ERP N is a key knowledge broker between educational research and teachers in schools where there is a genuine dialogue between research and practice. However, ERP N also provides a shared space for teachers and researchers to work collaboratively, with teachers developing research literacy and skills. ERP N supports teachers not to simply access and understand education research but to become researching practitioners by taking an active part in building the educational knowledge base.

ERP N also draws upon the extensive expertise from the research centres at Southampton Education School; Centre for Research in Inclusion (CRI), Leadership Educational Effectiveness and Policy (LEEP) and Maths and Science Education (MaSE). The work of ERP N is also underpinned by the expertise of our researching practitioners in teacher education. As an Education School in a Russell Group university, the research we produce has global significance and impact. We want this impact to be felt just as powerfully in our local region by using research outcomes to support and develop educational practice for schools in our area.

# What is going on at ERPN?

So much! We have an evolving programme of in-person events and online development opportunities for teachers and schools. Our inaugural conference in summer 2024 offered a taster of a wide variety of our research and practice innovations. Our subsequent thematic conferences explore areas of priority as identified by local schools; most recently SEND and Inclusion, which drew upon our research expertise in Inclusion including sessions on resourced provision, autistic children's voices, school belonging, inclusive pedagogies and complex behavioural challenges.

Autumn 2025 will see the launch of our seminar series exploring a wide range of topics to support teacher knowledge of education research and how this can inform their practice. Also coming soon is our *'in conversation with...'* podcast in which we chew over knotty educational issues with experts in education research and in teacher education.

A key aim of ERPN is to support teachers to be able to access, understand and apply education research outcomes to their practice. Our researcher in the spotlight series allows teachers to see beyond the research journals and find out more about the person behind the work, de-mystifying the process and giving insights into the work of the researcher. Our regular research bites provide key summaries of important research and its implications for practice.

We also have a broad programme of teacher CPD that is underpinned by robust and high-quality education research from Southampton Education School and beyond. We offer a suite of Master's Level credit bearing modules in:

- inclusive education
- effective teaching and learning
- pedagogical innovation
- leadership and management
- mentoring and staff development
- digital pedagogies.

We also offer non-credit bearing short courses in the following areas:

- peer coaching
- mentoring and developing beginner and early career teachers
- developing criticality and reflective practice
- unpacking education research
- becoming a researching practitioner

ERPN are thrilled to have provided CPD for local authority (LA) schools, trusts and independent schools in our region since our launch in 2024. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with my favourite comment being *"this has been some of the most positive and stimulating CPD I've received in my 20 years teaching"*.

## How can you get involved?

Check out the [ERPN website](#) for full information about our research activity and our teacher CPD offer. Here you can also find out about our formal study options at Southampton Education School – including our Masters Education (online) programme which is aimed at serving teachers and education professionals – and PhD opportunities.

Follow us on LinkedIn [ERPN Linkedin Page](#).

You can sign up to our distribution list at [erpn@soton.ac.uk](mailto:erpn@soton.ac.uk) or get in touch to enquire about any of our activities.

### Rachele Newman

Principal Teaching Fellow and Director of Teacher Professional Learning, Southampton Education School

Rachele Newman is Principal Teaching Fellow and Director of Teacher Professional Learning at Southampton Education School, University of Southampton. She is a research active teacher educator with particular interest in teacher identity, autonomy and professional agency. [rachele.newman@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rachele.newman@soton.ac.uk)

## Embedding OAP into the graduated approach

The relaunch of the revised guidance for *Ordinarily Available Provision and SEND Support* has happened at a point in time when the children accessing education are changing. Much has been surmised as to the changes in need which have been and continue to be seen. Therefore, it is unlikely to be a single factor contributing and instead a combination of: increased understanding, medical advances, the impact of Covid, greater availability of information and a generation where digital devices and alternative means of communication are the norm (to name but a few).

The concept of the graduated approach is not a new one but previously this has been used more to focus on targeted and specialised intervention for special educational needs and disabilities. However, incorporating ordinarily available provision into the approach means that resources and strategies already being used become universal and therefore refine and strengthen the model.

OAP is the provision made available in every part of an educational establishment for every person, every day. In doing this a more inclusive learning environment can be established which enables all to succeed. We are far more informed and know that there may be challenges or vulnerabilities being experienced that we do not know about or even see the effect of in our education settings. Therefore, having a strong and consistent ordinarily available provision means that all can thrive through proportionate universalism.

As well as supporting inclusion, taking this approach also reduces reliance on external resources, promotes equity by embedding scaffolds and support in everyday practice, builds staff capacity and resilience and encourages proactive problem solving and early intervention.

OAP would not necessarily be everyone's first choice of terminology. However, due to the use in the *Code of practice 2015* and the fact that it refers to more than just teaching, it is an appropriate choice of phraseology. As outlined in the guidance materials, ordinarily available provision is about high quality inclusive teaching and pedagogical approaches but is also extrinsically linked to the environment and cultural conditions created as well. Someone can be an expert practitioner but if the conditions for learning are not in place through the other aspects of provision, then success will not be as likely.

The guidance materials aim to provide the practical information about the approaches to take whilst also providing some information about the rationale and principles for the strategies. There are times when it does not seem that particular strategies are working but on closer analysis this is often less about the approach and more about the understanding of its principles, and therefore implementation.

## Visual timetables

Visual timetables are a regular feature of many classrooms. However, unless used with fidelity to the approach, they are unlikely to have the impact which is intended.

A visual timetable is a way of supporting someone to predict what is happening next. It is a concrete representation of time and a sequence of events and so enables the user to know the things that must happen and the order of these. In order for them to have maximum impact they should explicitly be referred to at the start and end of a section, as something is completed this section should be removed and things should not be changed around as this can induce anxiety which the schedule was previously managing.

# Communication friendly environments

This sort of environment ensures that speech, language and communication skills are planned for. This will relate to the physical environment, the strategies used by adults and opportunities that children have to practise communication skills.

Environmental considerations will link to the use of visuals (timetables, cues, vocabulary walls). As with visual timetables, the use of these resources should be taught explicitly. The classroom environment should avoid clutter and equipment should be labelled with both a word and stage appropriate visual. Seating should be arranged so that there is an encouragement to work and communicate together. Additional resources to support with language should be available if needed. Background noise is managed to promote listening and thinking. Routine should be clear, explicit and consistent.

Strategies used by adults should include the use of concrete resources prior to the abstract. Using visuals and dual coding as the norm. Providing time for processing and ensuring that instructions are concise and chunked, considering the use of working memory at all times.

Explicit opportunities to develop communication skills are the norm including talking partner activities where ideas are rehearsed and formulated before wider sharing. Structured group activities where there are opportunities to talk different roles when communicating. Uses of sentence starters and word lists can promote with these activities.

Therefore it is important to hold in mind that the suggested strategies are all evidence proven. This means that if something is not having the expected impact than that could be an indicator or adaptation needed to the approach, rather than a complete change in approach.

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- 1 [https://hants.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/CSCommunications/EdUXu7VIR9ICpb-XeCse\\_kQBsdJ4RrPm6qvZdLBtSNERkg?e=kIV3sS](https://hants.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/CSCommunications/EdUXu7VIR9ICpb-XeCse_kQBsdJ4RrPm6qvZdLBtSNERkg?e=kIV3sS)
- 2 Education Endowment Foundation (2020). *Special educational needs in mainstream schools*. [online] Education Endowment Foundation. Available at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send>.
- 3 Speech and language UK (2024). *Creating a communication supportive environment: primary*. [online] Speech and Language UK: Changing Young Lives. Available at: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/educators-and-professionals/resource-library-for-educators/creating-a-communication-supportive-environment-primary/>.

# Growing greener futures

## The Burgate School's Eco-Team sustainability journey

At The Burgate School in Fordingbridge, environmental action is much more than a curriculum topic, student eco-leaders are transforming the school's approach towards environmental issues and inspiring pupils, parents and teachers with their work. Since launching the *Burgate Zero-Carbon 2025* initiative in 2021, the school's eco club has become a beacon of sustainability, earning a *Distinction* in the Eco-Schools Green Flag Scheme and setting a high bar for student-led environmental leadership.

The team recognise five key areas of action and support which has helped their success:

- support from the leadership team
- eco club take the lead
- cross curricular support
- local groups and organisations
- national organisations.

Meeting weekly in the school's greenhouse, the eco club, has tackled a wide range of projects that combine scientific inquiry, practical action, and creativity. Their work includes:

- **hedge planting:** in partnership with the Woodland Trust and the Hampshire Hedge initiative, students planted native species like oak, hawthorn, and dogrose to create habitats for local wildlife
- **the kitchen garden:** renovated raised beds now grow strawberries, herbs, potatoes, and more – some of which are used in GCSE food tech lessons. A newly planted apple tree, supported with textiles scraps, adds to the school's soul space
- **thermal imaging:** students used thermal cameras to identify heat loss around windows and doors, helping to inform energy-saving strategies

- **swift boxes and callers:** a grant from the New Forest National Park Authority funded the installation of swift boxes and an audio caller to encourage nesting swifts on the school site



- **hidden nature survey:** pupils explored overlooked corners of the school grounds to document biodiversity, discovering lichen in tree bark and raspberry bushes near the sixth form building
- **vegware research:** the team investigated biodegradable alternatives to plastic, including cutlery and plates made from vegetable starch
- **Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel:** nearly 3,000 student journeys were recorded, highlighting the carbon-saving benefits of walking, cycling, and bus travel.

## School infrastructure

Supported by school leaders, the club has benefited from investment in solar panels, energy-saving lighting, and electric vehicle charging points. Solar panels have been installed generating 264268 kWh per year saving 56,340 Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is approximately the same energy saved as 37 average sized houses use.



These energy savings are complemented by cross-curricular educational links, ensuring that sustainability is deeply embedded within the school experience. Subjects such as geography, science, English, food technology, and the creative arts contribute to raising environmental awareness. For instance, students have explored the impact of greenhouse gases on climate through geography, biology and chemistry lessons, while recycled materials have been creatively repurposed in art and food technology projects. Year 7 students engage with environmental issues during drop everything and read (DEAR) sessions, focusing on impactful short stories.

## Environmental enquiry

The club also addresses local concerns, such as assessing the disadvantages of building on water meadows and proposing innovative solutions like natural drainage systems. Students have conducted river water surveys, revealing the overall health of local waterways, and traffic comparisons between Ringwood and Salisbury. The team calculated vehicle emissions data collected through number plate surveys in the school car park.

This has enabled the group to explore the school carbon footprint and seek to look at solutions to promote sustainable transport.

Awareness campaigns are another vital aspect of the eco club's work. Students use newsletters, social media platforms, and noticeboards to reach a wider audience. Their participation in the Winchester eco conference allowed them to engage in activities such as pond-dipping, lichen investigations, and workshops addressing climate change and ocean plastic removal. Partnerships with local environmental groups, including Hampshire Swifts, Fordingbridge Greener Living, and The Green Gram, have further amplified their impact.



| Lesson two                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | War on Waste                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Task:</b><br/>Watch the video about food waste and make notes about all the things that you feel about the waste of food.</p>                                                                                                                                                         | <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8gw-CioloE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8gw-CioloE</a></p>                                                                 |
| <p><b>Discuss as a group.</b></p> <p><b>Task:</b><br/>Design a meal you can make out of all the waste you saw in the video and on this ppt slide. Write it as a recipe and as a class we can create a 'wasted' food recipe book to raise awareness to other year groups and your peers.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Stretch and Challenge:</b><br/>Design a campaign people can get behind to raise awareness of the wastage</p>                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Stretch and Challenge:</b><br/>With the cost of living rising, how is this even more of an issue for people?</p>                                                       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Extension Task:</b><br/>Create some funky and exciting packaging to promote wonky veg that explains why the consumer should pick the waste veg over a perfect one.</p> |

An example of lesson materials in food technology.



Through these collaborations, students contributed to the creation of community signs and projects like a garden and orchard, enhancing communal spaces.

The club's involvement extends to national and global efforts, such as contributing data to the RSPB birdwatch initiative to protect wildlife. The recent Green Careers Week saw webinars integrated into lessons, providing students with insights into career paths that align with sustainable practices. These activities help broaden students' perspectives and inspire long-term dedication to environmental stewardship.

## What next?

Looking ahead, the eco club plans to implement new projects that further enhance their contribution to sustainability. These include acquiring specialised bins for waste separation, installing water butts to collect rainwater for the garden, and exploring greywater collection

systems for buildings. By continuing to innovate and expand their efforts, the eco club offers a compelling example of how small, meaningful actions can lead to significant change, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility across Hampshire schools.

Thank you to **Kirsten Bate, Eco-Leader and the Eco-Team** for sharing their inspiring journey in promoting sustainability. The team will be involved in the student Climate Unity Virtual Conference on Wednesday 28 January 2026. See the following article in this edition for further details of how to get your students involved.

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# Climate Unity Project



## HIAS Climate Unity Conference 2026 – celebrating five years of pupil voice and action!

**Save the date – 28 January 2026, 9am – 12.30pm**

**Now in its fifth year**, the HIAS pupil Climate Unity Conference continues to empower young voices across Hampshire to take action on climate change. Following on from the success of the 2024 virtual conference with over 4000 pupils attending, the 2026 event will be **fully virtual**, enabling **maximum participation from Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils** across the county.

**Date:** Wednesday 28 January 9am – 12.30pm.

**Location:** Online – accessible to all schools via Teams.

**Audience:** Years 5-8.

This dynamic (and free) conference will feature:

- **interactive workshops** led by environmental organisations helping students to explore solutions to climate change including Final Straw Foundation, The David Sheperd Foundation and the Ministry for Eco-Education

- **inspiring inputs** from pupil sustainability groups showcasing their work
- opportunities for pupils to **collaborate, share, reflect, and take action** on climate issues in their communities
- a designated **teacher space** for further support and signposting.

The virtual format ensures that schools of all sizes and locations can join in, making this a truly inclusive and impactful event. Whether your pupils are just beginning their sustainability journey or are already leading change, this conference offers a platform to learn, share, and be inspired.

Let's unite for climate action and continue to empower the voices of our pupils across Hampshire!

Full details including how to register will be provided via a schools' communication later in the autumn term.

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# The Climate Unity Project 2025: small worlds: little things make a big difference

This summer, The Winchester Gallery was transformed into a vibrant and thought-provoking space thanks to the Climate Unity Project's latest exhibition, *small worlds*. Now in its fifth year, the project brought together 51 artists, 38 schools, and a wide range of community groups to explore how creativity can help us respond to climate change. The theme – *little things make a big difference* – was brought to life through hundreds of artworks that filled the gallery with colour, texture, and powerful messages.



The exhibition was a celebration of activism – where art meets activism. It showed how creative expression can be used to raise awareness, share ideas, and inspire action. Visitors were greeted by over 400 floating globes, two-dimensional artwork, bold textile banners, and sculptures made from natural, recycled, and compostable materials. Every piece was made with care and purpose, encouraging people to think about the materials we use and the impact we have on the planet.

Artists and students worked with everything from leaves and petals to plastic wrappers and bottle caps. Even the netting used to hang the artwork had been salvaged from a previous exhibition and will be reused again in a local garden. These thoughtful choices sparked important conversations in schools about sustainability, waste, and how we can all make more environmentally conscious decisions.



One of the highlights of the exhibition was the collaboration between artists Sue Freestone and Helen Northcott and the Winchester Litter Pickers. Together, they turned collected rubbish into sculptural artworks that challenged visitors to rethink the value of discarded materials. Another standout feature was the series of Story Globes created by artist Joe Ross, which featured handwritten messages from students. These messages, like “*we need to be kind to the world*” and “*if enough of us challenge, I think things will change*” – offered a moving insight into how young people feel about the future of the planet.



The exhibition also included an interactive installation focused on Winchester's green spaces. Developed in partnership with the University of Southampton, this part of the project invited visitors to reflect on their personal connections to nature. People were asked what green spaces mean to them, what they hope these spaces will look like in the future, and to share their favourite memories of time spent outdoors. Their responses were turned into a digital map, creating a shared archive of environmental hopes and experiences.

*Small worlds* did not try to provide all the answers. Instead, it created a space for reflection, imagination, and connection. It reminded everyone who visited that art can be a powerful way to talk about climate change – not just through facts and figures, but through feelings, stories, and creativity. Most importantly, it showed that small actions, when made together, really can make a big difference.

Please find a short video showcasing all the work on HIAS Moodle here:

<https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/course/view.php?id=294>

It is now reflection time for what happens next, please join us, when we have a plan!

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# Artificial intelligence

## Moving forward with artificial intelligence

### Highlights from the Hampshire senior leaders' AI workshop and next steps for schools

During June, headteachers and senior leaders from across Hampshire gathered at the Winchester County Council offices for an engaging briefing event dedicated to artificial intelligence in education. Supported by members of the artificial intelligence (AI) steering group and education leaders of AI the session provided practical insight, up-to-date sector guidance, and inspiring case studies, all focused on ensuring AI can be safely and effectively adopted in our schools, keeping the *human in the loop* at all times.

### Building AI understanding

Delegates heard an overview of the national picture, including the latest DfE guidance on the safe and effective use of generative AI in education<sup>1</sup>. Key principles highlighted were robust data privacy, transparency, staff responsibilities, human oversight, and the need for schools to be proactive in educating pupils about deepfakes and potential risks. The recently published DfE toolkits and the UK Government's AI playbook were shared as essential resources for establishing school policies. The session stressed the importance of accountability, and continuous reflection on how AI is used to enhance teaching, workload management, and support pupil learning.

### Case studies: AI in action in Hampshire schools

The morning featured inspiring contributions from leaders at Priestlands School, Swanmore College, Cornerstone Church of England Primary School, and Barton Peveril College who reflected on their first-hand experiences of implementing AI in both classroom and administrative contexts.

- **Lesson planning and resource creation:** AI tools such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot are already supporting teachers in planning lessons, generating differentiated resources, and providing tailored feedback. Several schools reported significant time savings and improved lesson preparation.
- **Administrative tasks:** AI is being used to compare and summarise school policies, draft reports and create surveys.
- **Barton buddy:** Barton Peveril College described its strategic investment in bespoke AI solution. For example, their *Barton Buddy* system is an AI digital assistant that supports students: <https://barton-peveril.ac.uk/college-life-introduction/artificial-intelligence-at-barton-peveril/>.
- **Staff development:** training and CPD for staff were stressed to be at the heart of successful AI adoption. Swanmore College's research-based courses have built staff confidence and led to 65% of teachers using AI regularly to support their work.
- **Pupil voice and acceptable use:** schools shared how they involve pupils in understanding AI, with clear acceptable use policies, surveys, and information about how AI can – and should not – be used in coursework.

## Establishing the Hampshire AI steering group

As part of a commitment to safe, effective, and innovative AI use, HIAS is pleased to announce the establishment of a Hampshire AI steering group.

This group will bring together school leaders, digital leads, and policy experts to:

- monitor developments in AI technology and policy
- share best practice from across the county and beyond
- develop model policies and toolkits for safe and responsible AI use
- support schools in professional development and risk management.

The steering group will be instrumental in shaping future guidance for all Hampshire schools and ensuring that the voice of school leaders continues to inform county-wide strategy.

## Next steps: support for schools

Phil Bagge, Computing Inspector/Adviser is collating support materials for Hampshire schools on AI which will be shared via Moodle Open Resources. The materials will include national guidance documents, as well as drawing on county experience from the AI steering group:

- policy templates and responsibilities for leaders and staff
- safeguarding, privacy, and data protection considerations
- equitable access and digital skills for all pupils
- strategies for managing workload and supporting teaching
- ongoing training and support for staff and pupils.

Schools are encouraged to start by identifying their own key challenges and to collaborate with the steering group and HIAS for support. Further updates and resources will be shared in upcoming HIAS communications and via the Leadership area on the HIAS Moodle.

If you require any support for developing AI or indeed reviewing its use in your school, please contact us.

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- 1 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education/generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-education).

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/).

# AI and the Good Future Foundation

## Bronze Award for Oakmoor School, AI Quality Mark

### Navigating AI in education

AI is no longer a distant concept – it is part of our daily lives, from the headlines we read to the tools we use in classrooms and homes. But with all the noise surrounding AI, it can be difficult for teachers and leaders to know where to begin. What is truly relevant for schools? And how can we ensure AI is used both responsibly and effectively?

That's where the Good Future Foundation<sup>1</sup> (GFF) steps in. Their clear, structured approach has helped schools like ours, Oakmoor School in Bordon, move beyond the hype and focus on what really matters: practical, meaningful integration of AI in education.

### A framework for progress

The Good Future Foundation has developed a comprehensive framework that explores every area of school life where AI can make an impact. Each domain is broken down into clear, accessible descriptors, allowing schools to self-assess their current practices and identify actionable next steps.

Schools submit evidence of their progress, which is then reviewed by a GFF assessor. Based on this evaluation, schools can earn Bronze, Silver, or Gold awards – recognising their stage in the AI journey and celebrating their commitment to innovation and improvement.

### Support that makes a difference

We have been fortunate to work closely with Dan and Esther from the Foundation, whose guidance has been both inspiring and grounded in real-world classroom experience. They have helped us reframe AI not as a challenge, but as a powerful tool for creativity, inclusion, and deeper learning.

A special thank you goes to our assessor, Laura, whose thoughtful feedback and supportive approach made the process not only manageable but genuinely motivating. Her insights provided a clear, encouraging path forward.

### Looking ahead with confidence

AI can feel overwhelming at first – but with the right support, it becomes an exciting opportunity for growth.

We are delighted to have been awarded a Bronze Award for all the great AI practice which is taking place in school, across departments and teams. We now look forward to further embedding the excellent work. Thanks to the Good Future Foundation, we are not just adapting to change – we are embracing it with confidence and purpose.

**Fabien Massonnet**

Head of Computing, Oakmoor School

### References

- 1 [www.goodfuture.foundation](http://www.goodfuture.foundation)

# PSHE/RSE

## PSHE/RSE training

It has been an exciting year for PSHE/RSE within Hampshire in our journey to ensuring that the teaching of PSHE/RSE is the best it can possibly be so that young people know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. A key initiative this year has been the offer of providing fully funded PSHE/RSE training for staff from Public Health England to all secondary schools in Hampshire. Schools were able to choose from training that focused on sexual health and contraception, domestic abuse and vaping or they could have all three training sessions if they wished. Over the course of the autumn and spring terms the training reached over 500 members of staff in Hampshire secondary schools. The focus of the training was the implementation of these content areas in lessons and on the use of teaching strategies such as knowledge retention and dialogic talk to engage young people in the topics.

The training was informed by the biannual Health and Wellbeing Surveys for staff which are sent out to schools by Public Health. The 2025/2026 surveys will be released after October half-term. The more responses received, the more robust the data, and the more tailored support for schools can be in the future.

You can register your interest now to get reminders about the survey, and to be sent the link in October/November by emailing the following address:

[healtheducation@hants.gov.uk](mailto:healtheducation@hants.gov.uk).

In addition, you can learn more about the results of the last survey via this link:

[www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/hampshirehealthineducation/aboutus](http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/hampshirehealthineducation/aboutus).

## PSHE/RSE Hampshire Pledge

We have been developing, in collaboration with Public Health England, a Hampshire Pledge for PSHE/RSE education. During the development of the pledge we worked with colleagues leading PSHE/RSE in Hampshire schools to make sure we covered all elements that make for an effective PSHE/RSE curriculum. Several of the commitments on the pledge relate directly to the statutory RSE guidance such as the designated time in the curriculum to deliver the subject. But there is also a commitment in the pledge around staff training which research tells us is vital to the successful teaching of PSHE/RSE topics.



The poster is titled "Our school commits to the" followed by the "HAMPSHIRE PSHE PLEDGE" logo, which includes a stylized hand icon. Below the title, a purple box lists five commitments, each preceded by a white checkmark. The commitments are: 1. deliver a curriculum covering all aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, including statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), that is preventative, builds over time, and matches children and young people's developmental stage and real-life experiences; 2. provide lessons that develop skills such as assessing and managing risks, decision-making, building healthy relationships, working collectively on problems, and openness; 3. ensure that teaching in the classroom is enjoyable, inclusive, relevant, empowering, trauma-informed, and respects the rights of children and young people; 4. recognise PSHE is a specialist subject to teach, that requires sufficient training and protected time for staff; 5. work with our pupils/students, families and leadership to uphold an ethos and culture that values PSHE and the benefits it has for children and young people's wellbeing, safety, and success. Below the purple box, there is a QR code and text: "Find out more about the pledge and why it is important to you and the children, young people and families you work with, at Hampshire Health in Education. hants.gov.uk/healtheducation". At the bottom, the Hampshire County Council logo is on the left, and an illustration of a man and a woman looking at a laptop is on the right. The background of the poster features various icons like a heart, a brain, a lightbulb, and a speech bubble.

**Our school commits to the**

**HAMPSHIRE PSHE PLEDGE**

**We will:**

- ✓ **deliver a curriculum covering all aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education**, including statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), that is preventative, builds over time, and matches children and young people's developmental stage and real-life experiences
- ✓ **provide lessons that develop skills** such as assessing and managing risks, decision-making, building healthy relationships, working collectively on problems, and openness
- ✓ **ensure that teaching in the classroom is enjoyable**, inclusive, relevant, empowering, trauma-informed, and respects the rights of children and young people
- ✓ **recognise PSHE is a specialist subject to teach**, that requires sufficient training and protected time for staff
- ✓ **work with our pupils/students, families and leadership to uphold an ethos and culture that values PSHE** and the benefits it has for children and young people's wellbeing, safety, and success

Find out more about the pledge and why it is important to you and the children, young people and families you work with, at Hampshire Health in Education.  
[hants.gov.uk/healtheducation](http://hants.gov.uk/healtheducation)

**Hampshire County Council**

Schools can sign up to the Pledge and this will then give them access to the PDF of the poster which can be displayed on screens within school buildings and on websites. The email address to sign up to the pledge, or for more information, is:

[healtheducation@hants.gov.uk](mailto:healtheducation@hants.gov.uk)

There is also a *Commit to the Pledge* button on the following webpage:

[www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/hampshirehealthineducation/PSHE](http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/hampshirehealthineducation/PSHE)

## Smoke Free Hampshire 2030



I recently attended the *Hampshire Tobacco Control Alliance* Conference where progress towards the ambition of being smoke free in Hampshire by 2030 was reviewed. So far there has been some noticeable reduction across Hampshire for people smoking and work continues in this area. As the alliance moves forward, they have identified three key priorities with the third priority being the most pertinent for education:

### Preventing vaping and smoking uptake in children and young people

Within this priority there are four key objectives:

- develop children and young people prevention programmes, with a focus on vulnerable young people more at risk of taking up smoking and vaping
- provide training to professionals working with young people to support them in preventing uptake and encouraging young people to remain smoke and vape free
- reduce prevalence rates and decrease the availability of both tobacco and vaping products amongst children and young people

- develop smoke and vape free campaigns in collaboration with children and young people, raising awareness of the harms and support available.

Education will play an important role in helping to achieve these objectives and the delivery of PSHE/RSE lessons about vaping remains pivotal to ensuring that young people have all the facts about the dangers of taking up vaping.

One of the mentioned objectives is to reduce availability of vapes and in order to achieve this objective two trading standards officers have been contracted to Public Health England with the sole purpose of finding places where young people are being sold vapes in Hampshire.

If you have any information about the illegal sale of vapes to children and young people then you can report it via this phone number:

Tel: 03009996999

or via the website:

[www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk](http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk).

Please share this phone number and website widely with staff in schools.

Finally, please find below a link to the support website to help people who want to quit smoking.

<https://smokefreehampshire.co.uk/>

## RSE/RHE statutory guidance

We have been waiting now for nearly two years for the updated RSE/RHE guidance to be finalised. This has now been consumed into the overarching curriculum review and therefore we expect an update sometime before the autumn term alongside the rest of the review.

If your PSHE leader has not yet attended our termly network meetings then please pass my email address to them:

Email: [helen.dear@hants.gov.uk](mailto:helen.dear@hants.gov.uk)

In the autumn network meeting on the 4 November we will be looking closely at the new guidance and what this means for the curriculum within schools. Schools will be able to book a place on the network via the Learning Zone.

# DfE RSHE guidance update

The updated RSHE guidance, published on 15 July 2025, will become statutory from 1 September 2026. It replaces the 2019 guidance and reflects the evolving social and digital landscape affecting young people.

## Key changes and expectations

### Curriculum content

- Suicide prevention: new content for secondary schools, requiring a clear plan and staff training.
- Sexual harassment and violence: strengthened guidance to support schools in addressing misogyny.
- Online safety: expanded focus on digital harms, including pornography, image sharing, and online relationships.
- LGBT content: schools must teach the facts and law, but must not promote a particular viewpoint.

### Age appropriateness

- The DfE rejected fixed age limits for topics, instead reinforcing professional judgment and developmental appropriateness.
- Schools are encouraged to consult parents and tailor delivery to their community's needs.

### Parental engagement

- Emphasis on transparency: schools must clearly communicate RSHE content and policies to parents.
- Parents remain the primary educators, and schools should work in partnership with them.

## Implementation timeline

- Schools have until 31 August 2026 to update policies and curriculum.

## Review cycle

- The DfE will now conduct a technical review every three years and a full content review every six years.

## Action points for leaders

- Review and update RSHE policies and curriculum in line with the new guidance.
- Engage governors, staff, and parents in consultation and planning.
- Ensure staff training, particularly around sensitive topics like suicide prevention and sexual harassment.
- Audit current provision to identify gaps and areas for development.

The primary and secondary PSHE/RSE network meetings in the autumn term will be looking at these changes in more detail as well as looking at what needs to happen with the statutory policy.

PSHE/RSE leaders can book on to the network meetings in the usual way via the Learning Zone.

### Helen Dear

School Improvement Manager and Secondary Inspector/Adviser for RSHE, HIAS

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/).



Hampshire  
County Council

Improvement and  
Advisory Service

## Empower Your Subject Leaders with HIAS Secondary Networks 2025/26

**Support your school's improvement journey with high-impact, subject-specific professional development.**

The Hampshire Improvement and Advisory Service (HIAS) offers a comprehensive suite of Secondary Subject Leadership Networks designed to equip subject leaders with the latest insights, strategies, and collaborative opportunities to drive excellence in teaching and learning across the county.

### Objectives of the subject networks:

- **National and local updates:** Stay informed on the latest national developments, including the forthcoming DfE curriculum and assessment review, and how these translate into strategic priorities for schools.
- **Hampshire's approach:** Gain insight into HIAS's county-wide strategies, including the embedding of Ordinarily Available Provision to support inclusive practice.
- **Subject-specific expertise and leadership:** Deepen pedagogical knowledge and leadership skills tailored to each subject area.
- **Collaborative practice:** Share and learn from best practice across Hampshire schools, building a strong professional network of subject leaders to jointly problem solve.
- **Impactful CPD:** Equip subject leaders to lead improvement confidently and effectively within their departments.

### Subjects Covered:

Art • Design and Technology • English • Geography • History • Mathematics • MFL • Photography • PSHE/RSE • Science • Tackling Educational Disadvantage (TED) • SENDCo Updates • Performance & Progress Group (PAPG)

### Flexible Formats:

- Half termly sessions for maths and English, termly for all other subjects
- Blended delivery - subjects run a mix of face-to-face and virtual options
- Afternoon sessions; to reduce the impact of cover requirements. (English offers full day sessions)
- Booking Made Easy
- Book via the Learning Zone using subject-specific keyword searches
- Automated calendar invites sent via ESS or Learning Zone accounts

Any questions regarding booking please contact the team at: [htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk](mailto:htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk).

For bespoke support or questions, contact:

**Jean Thorpe**

[jean.thorpe@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jean.thorpe@hants.gov.uk)

County Education Manager

For booking information go to:

[tinyurl.com/LearningZoneGuidance](https://tinyurl.com/LearningZoneGuidance)

Use the key word search or course name to search for this learning item in our catalogue.

[hants.gov.uk](https://hants.gov.uk)

# Courses

Details of our upcoming courses and networks are provided below. Visit our [Moodle courses page](#) for our full catalogue of professional learning opportunities.

## How to book

All training can be booked via the Learning Zone. To search for a specific course, type the keywords provided in the *Find Learning* box, then click *See Classes* for details of available dates and times.

## Learning Zone guidance

Visit our Learning Zone Moodle information page for [Guidance on accessing the Learning Zone and managing bookings](#).

## Need help?

To speak to a member of the HTLC bookings team, please contact:

Email: [htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk](mailto:htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk).

### Learning Zone downtime – book training via our online form

A reminder that the Learning Zone will be unavailable for bookings from **6pm on 24 September to 8am on 2 October** due to planned upgrade work.

During this time, schools can request training bookings using our [online booking form](#). Bookings will be processed once the Learning Zone is back online.

## Secondary Disadvantaged Network

Supporting secondary school leaders in developing meaningful, research-informed strategies to tackle educational disadvantage and to securely embed these strategies into day-to-day practice.

Sessions offer the chance to share best practice and impact, with leaders learning from wider schools' successes to address identified areas of need. Sessions are adapted and responsive, focusing on bespoke areas identified by the group.

### Sessions will provide the opportunity to:

- access national and local updates
- engage in discussion about strategy and implementation
- explore research evidence and guidance materials and what these mean in practice
- share strategies across schools, working together to explore strengths and next steps
- experience bespoke training in response to identified needs
- network with other school leaders to enable ideas, questions, and approaches to be shared across schools.

### Learning outcomes:

- to secure understanding of local and national updates and the latest research evidence
- to gain understanding of the practical approaches being used by school leaders to drive improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- to develop an effective pupil premium strategy based on research evidence
- to collaborate and network with colleagues.

 4 November 2025

 *Autumn Secondary Disadvantaged*

 Sub £95 / SLA £55 / Full £114

## In-Year Admissions Project for Secondary Schools (Blended)

This programme aims to support secondary schools in developing effective approaches to support pupils who join the school as part of an in-year admissions process with the goal of enabling better Key Stage 4 outcomes. Many schools have reported an increase in in-year admissions and the many challenges that this can bring, and the project brings the opportunity to collaboratively problem solve, working together to create increasingly effective transition approaches and ongoing support. This multi-disciplinary proactive approach is critical to meet the complex needs of many pupils who are in-year admissions – from the outset, if schools are to achieve success and rapid integration. Learning about the experiences of these pupils is also key to understanding the wider needs of all pupils and implementing whole school strategies to improve outcomes and experiences for all.

### The project is a collaboration between:

- HIAS disadvantage and SEND inspector/advisers
- The Hampshire School Admissions Team
- The Virtual School
- Educational psychologists
- The Attendance Team
- The Specialist Teacher Advisory Service (STAs Team)

*The course price entitles each school to bring up to three delegates to the session. Please **register one teacher only on the Learning Zone**. On confirmation of your booking, you will receive a link to register your additional delegates.*

 11 November, 8 December 2025, 11 March 2026 (Part 1) and 7 July 2026 (Part 2)

 **Admissions Project**

 Sub £470 / SLA £205 / Full £564  
\*Split between two financial years

## Implementing an Effective Pupil Premium Strategy with a focus on Pupil Progress Review Meetings: A Practical Workshop

After well-received sessions in Autumn 2024, leaders have requested further opportunities to engage in practical workshops focused on developing and implementing an effective pupil premium strategy. Leaders will reflect on the impact of the current pupil premium strategy, developing and refining approaches to ensure effective implementation and meaningful impact.

Leaders have also asked for a focus on effective implementation of pupil progress review meetings, and so this course offers the opportunity to explore this area in greater depth, unpicking what the HIAS Pupil Progress Review Guidance means for practice in your school.

***For maximum impact, two people should attend from each school. The aim is that leaders attend with a colleague to facilitate an open dialogue about the school's specific context. This may be a leader, governor, teacher or teaching assistant who has a strong understanding of disadvantaged pupils in the school's specific context.***

 19 November 2025

 **Effective Pupil Premium**

 Sub £235 / SLA £120 / Full £282

## Excellent Middle Leadership in Secondary Schools

The Excellent Middle Leadership Programme is for established or new middle leaders or any teacher looking for a middle leadership role in the next two years. This is a brand new course developed by experienced senior and middle leaders with strong records of success in a range of school environments. It is aimed at any teacher who is new to Middle Leadership or who is aspiring to become a Middle Leader in the near future. The course structure includes a mix of half termly full and half day sessions at a professional conferencing facility as well as an optional half day coaching or mentoring session in your school.

### The course content covers:

- your vision and how to achieve it
- building Middle Leadership capacity in schools
- leadership and management styles
- balancing the strategic intent with day-to-day operations
- establishing and maintaining a high performing team
- managing the performance of teachers
- professional relationships, HR and Employment Law relevant to your role
- managing difficult conversations
- curriculum sequencing and pedagogy
- a project undertaken by you in school on any aspect of school improvement relevant to your role and your school.

### There will be a range of sessions including:

- sessions led by established and successful middle leaders
- workshop style sessions to focus on an aspect of your own professional development and your in-school project.

There is an optional additional coaching support offer (three hours total). If you take this option, you will receive three one to one coaching and mentoring sessions during the course. Each session will last for one hour and can be either virtual or in person. Focussing on an aspect of your professional development specific to your role in your school or your project.

### This programme will enable delegates to:

- explore the place of vision and inspiration in highly effective schools
- be challenged in their view of leadership, developing a greater understanding of transformational and transactional leadership
- develop greater clarity in the need for relentless insistence on refining the quality of teaching and learning
- develop a robust understanding of efficient management of systems and structures
- sharpen their own leadership and strengthen the quality of the curriculum

### Participants will have the opportunity to:

- visit other schools to experience first-hand the impact of successful leadership
- listen to, and reflect on the leadership journeys of new and experienced middle leaders
- receive high quality training, delivered by a HIAS inspector and successful current middle leaders
- undertake a high impact improvement project in their own school
- reflect and use current thinking and research on highly effective leadership.



8 October, 5 November, 11 December 2025, 4 February and 30 March 2026



*Excellent Leadership*



Sub £445 / SLA £210 / Full £534

## Secondary Performance and Progress Group (PAPG)

The Secondary Performance and Progress Group (PAPG) is a very well attended network meeting that meets twice a year for comprehensive updates and discussion on matters of mutual interest to secondary school headteachers and senior leaders, particularly concerning improving outcomes, performance data and the curriculum.

All senior leaders are welcome to attend PAPG and contribute to the forum.

Meetings will be led by HIAS data and curriculum leads and will also draw upon HIAS teaching and learning, and subject expertise.

### Key features of the meetings:

- to share crucial updates including changes to national policy, Department for Education (DfE) performance indicators and Ofsted frameworks
- changes in outcomes to performance indicators both locally and nationally are shared, and implications evaluated
- discussion around how schools are setting targets and measuring progress
- focus on improvement in outcomes for ALL pupils, particularly those in key vulnerable groups.

 6 November 2025

 *Autumn PAPG*

 Sub £65 / SLA £25 / Full £78