



Primary Update



Summer 2026 – Contents

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Editorial



Welcome to the summer term 2026 edition of *Primary Update*. As we approach the end of another school year, this issue brings together a variety of articles from across the curriculum, alongside features detailing aspects of wider school provision.

This edition brings together contributions from colleagues across the HIAS team, including specialists in MFL, English and music. Within their articles, inspectors and advisers draw on their expertise to share insights, direct readers to additional resources, and outline practical approaches to support high-quality classroom practice.

We begin with a focus on computing, exploring the growing importance of cybersecurity, including practical guidance to support all school staff in helping pupils understand and apply effective online safety measures. We also showcase the range of workshops, exhibitions and guest speakers experienced by pupils from across Hampshire who attended the Climate Unity Conference 2026.

In addition, we consider school improvement through a scientific lens, offering insights into how principles from science can inform and strengthen effective practice across the curriculum.

Resources to support professional development are included in a number of articles. Leaders are invited to join the 2026/27 *Movement for all* cohort with the opportunity to explore sensory circuits and fundamental movement skills. Through our EMTAS article, schools can read about the new bitesize training videos which are now available and apply for the Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit.

As is typical in the summer term, attention turns to securing a successful start for pupils entering the Early Years. This edition provides practical guidance and signposting to support effective transition planning, helping schools to ensure children are well prepared for this important stage in their education.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any comments on the publication or wish to make any suggestions for future articles.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles and updates.

Lindsay McCarthy

Primary Phase Inspector/Leadership and Learning Partner (LLP), HIAS

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Cybersecurity in primary schools starts with all the adults



Image source: Microsoft 365.

I have a bit of a dream. My dream is that every adult in a primary school models good cybersecurity. Not just teachers. Learning support assistants, office staff, lunchtime staff, senior leaders, governors, everyone. During the years a child spends in primary school, they should see adults making sensible digital choices every single day.

We often focus on what we teach in lessons. Lessons matter. They help children understand the world and think things through. But children also learn powerfully from what they see us do.

I learnt that sharply as a new dad. Not long after my two adopted children came to live with us, I was fiddling with the wax from a Babybel cheese and threw it into the air to catch it. Instantly, both my children, two and four years old, started lifting their knives and forks to throw them into the air. I had to go and put myself on the naughty step. Children do not always do what we say. Very often, they do what we do. That lesson matters for cybersecurity.

Narrate the good habits

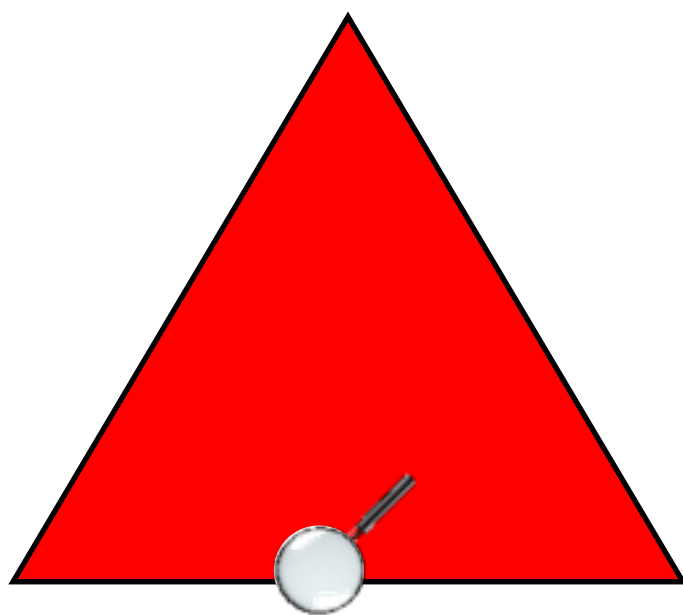
Imagine a teacher stepping away from their laptop. Rather than just walking off, they lock the screen and say aloud:

“I’m locking my computer because there is information on here that should stay private.”

That simple act teaches several things at once. It shows that privacy matters. It shows that security is normal. It shows that locking a device is not about distrust; it is about responsibility.

With younger pupils, you would simplify the language. With older pupils, you can be more explicit. Either way, children begin to see that sensible security is part of everyday life.

Passwords are private



Schools often tell pupils not to share passwords. That message becomes stronger when adults model it too.

Children should hear adults say:

“We all have our own passwords.”

“We do not share them.”

“If we think someone has seen one, we change it.”

Even a simple password refresh can become a learning moment. Perhaps a pupil was standing too close while a password was typed. Rather than making a drama of it, calmly explain that passwords can be changed if needed. This teaches children that security is not panic, it is routine. It also helps them understand that passwords are personal. At school, there is rarely a good reason to share your password with anyone else.

Logged in does not mean invited in

Many pupils will at some point find a device left logged in by someone else. That moment is a test of culture. Do they open files, snoop, type silly messages and change work? Or do they say:

“Miss, someone is still logged in.”

That second response does not happen by accident. It grows in schools where adults have consistently modelled respect for accounts, files and privacy. Children need to know that another person’s account is still another person’s space, even if they forgot to log out.

Cameras, tablets and consent

Cybersecurity is not only about passwords and networks. It also includes how we use devices with cameras, microphones and recording tools. Before taking a photo or recording someone, ask first.

“Is it all right if I use your picture in this class project?”

That tiny moment teaches about consent, respect, and the responsible use of technology. It also reminds pupils that just because a device can capture something does not mean it always should. Adults should model this too. If we expect pupils to ask permission, they should see us doing the same.

When something goes wrong

Good schools also build calm routines for digital problems.

A child sees an upsetting image... A strange message appears... A website opens something unexpected.

The key message should be simple: ***tell a trusted adult straight away.***

If pupils know they will be helped rather than blamed, they report problems quickly. Quick reporting often stops small issues from becoming larger ones. That confidence matters.

Cybersecurity is not only technical

Some schools think cybersecurity primarily falls to backups, filtering, firewalls, and IT providers. Those things matter greatly. But many problems begin with human decisions.

- A rushed click on a fake email.
- A password written where others can see it.
- Sensitive information sent carelessly.
- A warning ignored.

Strong cybersecurity comes from the meeting of good technical systems and good human habits.

Have your staff received any cybersecurity training beyond the same video they have watched year after year? All staff need to know about common threats and the simple human actions we can all take to prevent them. It is much easier for adults in the school community to model and teach about good cybersecurity practices if they have received up-to-date training.

Cybersecurity is a safeguarding issue

When schools are cyber-attacked, people sometimes imagine it is only about inconvenience. A bit of lost data and address here and there. It can be far more serious than that. Schools hold sensitive information about children and families. Addresses. Medical needs. Safeguarding concerns. Court orders. Family circumstances. Details that must be protected with great care.

That is why cyber security is not separate from safeguarding. It is part of safeguarding.

A culture children carry forward

If pupils spend years in a school where adults lock screens, respect privacy, ask consent, report concerns and talk openly about sensible choices, they carry those habits with them. They become more thoughtful users of technology at secondary school and at home. That is the real prize.

And I still have that dream. That every adult in every primary school models good cybersecurity, talks it through with children, and helps make safe digital habits part of everyday school life. Why not join me to make that a reality?

Phil Bagge

Computing Inspector/Adviser, HIAS

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Join our half day course.

We are running a practical half day cyber security course for primary schools.

You do not need technical expertise to manage cyber risk effectively. Cyber-attacks against schools are rising, and many incidents start with everyday staff actions rather than technical failures.

This course provides primary schools with the clarity and confidence to reduce risk, respond quickly, and meet growing expectations around cybersecurity.

Schools will take away session plans to engage different members of the school community as well as ways to keep cyber security in mind in the long term. Help will be provided to update or write a cyber security plan.

Most importantly, it helps schools see that cyber security is not just an IT issue. It is a whole school issue.

Search and book on the Learning Zone using keyword search: [Cyber Security](#)

Price: Sub £70 / SLA £50 / Full £84

Dates: 12 November 2026, 28 January 2027

Early Years

All about transitions – settling and thriving

Transitions are commonplace throughout a child's educational journey – whether **horizontal transitions** across key points in the day, or **vertical** as they *move up* through the school to their next stage in education. Managed well, they prepare us to cope with future change and to be resilient in the face of uncertainty and unexpected events.

YEARLY WEBINAR

How did you support children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or with vulnerabilities, to make a smooth transition into Year R?

SURVEY ✓

- Extra opportunities to visit
- Additional Communication
- Meeting with parents
- Extra visit to children in their settings
- Individualised resources shared
- Additional communication

Clare's Series

Think back to how you felt when you started a new job, or even now when travelling on your own to an unfamiliar place for the first time. All adults and children can experience intense emotions at times of transition, ranging from excitement to anxiety, often triggering **the same physiological response** in the body: an increased heartbeat, shallow or quick breathing, adrenaline release, heightened alertness and the common feeling of *butterflies* in the stomach. Change or starting something new for the first time can have lasting impact, imprinted by those strong emotions and physiological responses.

Supporting children at times of transition is more important than ever with our renewed focus on helping all children attend school well and thrive in their education setting.

In **early years there has always been a strong focus on supporting transition**, and there are some key aspects which can inform whole school approaches to support all children, but most importantly, those most vulnerable to poor outcomes or those who may struggle with transitions on a daily basis. The foundations of successful transitions in early years are built on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirement for each child to have a named **key person**. This requirement is essential – this is due to the importance of the strong attachments that are fundamental to young children's wellbeing, brain development and effective learning and development outcomes.



Transitions

Transition

Welcome to the Transition section of our Moodle. This section contains a wealth of resources, clips and advice on supporting children.

As children move from their strong attachments with their primary caregivers, they need the security of developing new strong **secondary attachments** with trusted adults in school when they enter Year R. The key person is essential in supporting transition for both the **child and caregivers**. The transfer of those strong emotions – imagine an *emotional contagion* – from caregiver to child and vice versa, is an important factor in the transition process and its success. The concept of the **Triangle of Trust** is often referred to in strong effective relationships between child, key person and caregiver.

This describes where:

- the child sees that their carer likes the key person, the key person likes their carer, the child is reassured that this is a safe person and a safe place
- the carer sees that the key person likes their child, their child likes the key person, the carer is reassured that this is a safe place for their child.

Key points taken from *Birth to Five Matters*

Transition is a **process**, not an event.

- 1 High quality transitions recognise the importance of **feeling known**.
- 2 Some children are particularly **vulnerable** at times of transition.

- 3 Transitions are opportunities for **professional dialogue**.
- 4 The key person makes essential **connections**.
- 5 EYFS transition includes **moving from EYFS to Key Stage 1**.

Services for Young Children (SfYC) Moodle resources to support transition

What Hampshire expects PDF:

https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/pluginfile.php/36858/mod_resource/content/2/What%20Hampshire%20Expects%202024.pdf

Hampshire Expects: Transitions - Transition is a process not an event.
Poor transition processes and information may be followed up by the Early Years Advisory Team

Hampshire County Council

Transition Timeline

Hampshire Expects: Transitions - Transition is a process not an event.
Poor transition processes and information may be followed up by the Early Years Advisory Team

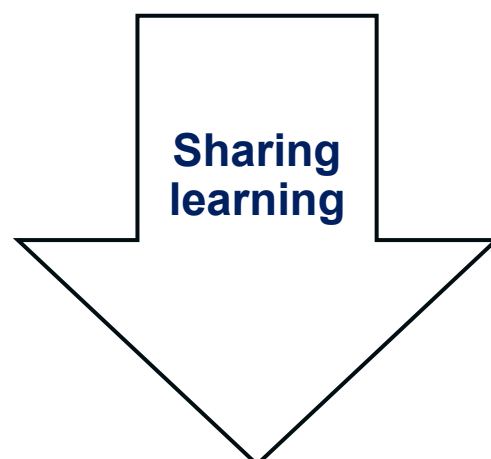
Hampshire County Council

To ensure continuity in learning and development for all EYFS children, all providers are to pass on the following essential information during any transition to a new setting.

<p>Commentary around the child's experiences</p> <p>The following can be shared in any format such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from an electronic system, such as Tapestry or the setting's own system. • An overview of the child's development, beginning with their strengths. • The child's completed 2-year-old progress check, and any information gathered from the Health and Development review carried out by the Health Visiting team. • A meeting/professional discussion to share accurate information about children's progress and attainment. <p>Assessments must demonstrate if the child is on track with typical development and should include parental contributions</p>	<p>Good practice for schools, settings and childminders will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identified transition champion who will be the key point of contact for all stakeholders throughout the process. • A visit to the child in their current setting. • Regular opportunities for the child and family to become familiar with new adults, children and environment. • A key person to be allocated to the child and family as soon as possible to start building positive relationships. • Attendance at all transition meetings by all stakeholders. • Additional opportunities to meet with parents during a home visit, virtually or during a telephone conversation. <p>Providers are advised to have a clear Data Protection/Information Sharing policy and to seek independent legal advice where necessary. The following links provide helpful guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing - advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services • HSCP record-transfer-faq-for-educational-settings • Transfer of CP records flowchart for educational settings • Send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
<p>Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, Interests and Motivation:</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting/professional conversation to share information about the uniqueness of the child. • The setting's own record of the child / all about me form. • A copy of the child's completed 2-year-old progress check. <p>Whatever the format, it must include parental contributions</p>	
<p>Additional information for children where there are any concerns or vulnerabilities.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding or Child Protection information. • Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including developmental delay, speech and language, physical development, behaviour/emotional wellbeing, and mental health needs. Please refer to the 'Supporting transition to Year R for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)' guidance on the Transition section of Moodle: https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/ • Children in Care/Looked After Child information (CiCLAC) including Children in Care Plans (CCIP). • Unique family needs or circumstances. <p>You must share how you have supported the child and any effective strategies</p>	

Hampshire County Council

Services for Young Children Early Years Advisory Team



“I recently attended a transition webinar delivered by Hull City Council focusing on the move from Year 6 into secondary school. Initially, I was unsure how relevant this would be to developing best practice for earlier transitions; however, the background to how the county arrived at a universal transition offer was both refreshing and thought-provoking.

Emerging during the pandemic, when schools and settings were working more collaboratively online, the local authority introduced a county-wide ‘transition week’, now affectionately known as the transition residential, during which all children move up a year for the penultimate week of term.

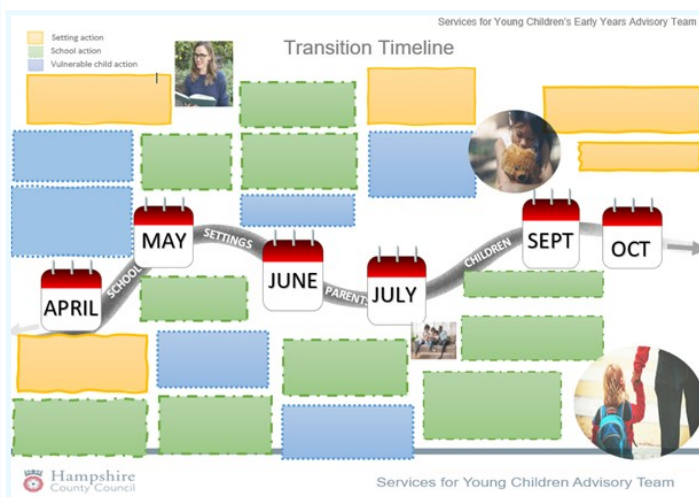
This immediately prompted reflection on current Year R practice, where many primary schools offer whole-class stay-and-play sessions at the start of the week, followed by dedicated one-to-one stay-and-play sessions for parents and children. This approach, now embedded for three years, has enabled meaningful dialogue about children’s individual needs and has been associated with reduced exclusions, stronger attendance and improved pupil satisfaction.

Anecdotally, schools and settings report more effective communication and collaboration. In a system where numerous nurseries feed into multiple primary schools, and onwards to secondary settings, this clear, consistent and shared model for essential aspects of transition processes, felt impactful and has prompted further questions about how universal, aligned approaches could support smoother transitions at earlier stages.”

Kim Taylor
District Advisory Teacher

Some children are particularly vulnerable at times of transition

There is no doubt that children who need additional support to transition into Reception successfully are likely to need additional support as they move up through the school, into Year 1 and beyond. Here are some useful tips on supporting transitions for vulnerable children, that are pertinent for entry to Year R but could also be adapted for older children in need of support.



Editable transitions roadmap from SfYC Moodle: map your transition processes into Year R and beyond

“Moving from a place or situation in which children feel ‘known’ into one in which they feel ‘unknown’ can raise insecurities about having their entitlements and needs met. While some children have the resilience to cope with change, others are more vulnerable to uncertainty.”


Birth to Five Matters.

Transition top tips (taken from SfYC Moodle)
making the unknown, known:

- 1 **use visuals** to support transitions, before, during and afterwards. Where children are anxious, cognition is impaired, and rather than relying on the complexities of processing and using spoken language, a visual support is an impactful approach to communicating a need or a direction. Visuals make the world a less confusing place, and a safer place to be

- 2 **prepare and rehearse for new situations** before they happen through books, stories and role playing. Create your own **photo books** or even a more formal *Social Story* (from Carol Grey). Alternatively, look at the Hampshire Libraries website for books to share as the key adult connects with a child at a time of anxiety www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/kids-zone/whenabookmighthelp/education-and-learning

Photo Opportunity
Take a photo of the child with their family, to be displayed for the child's first day (or invite the parent to email a photo).



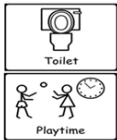
- 3 **create a map of transition experiences** agreed by all stakeholders, in a simple plan or profile to accompany the child through school. **Collaborate** with the child, families and other key adults, to have a *whole child* approach and a robust understanding of the child's view and experience to inform plans
- 4 **create a video tour of the class** and share it with the children and their families, here is an example from a Hampshire school, log in to Moodle to view this: <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/mod/url/view.php?id=6721>. Children can rewatch the video you create, as many times as they need to

Keeping it familiar

Allow time to have conversations with previous setting / practitioner.

Duplicate and / or use resources the previous setting successfully used. E.g. social stories; 'now and next' boards; visual timetable; use same symbols/language where possible; play therapy; bucket time.

Learn how the child responds. What are their favourite activities? What are the challenges? What strategies have worked previously? Are there any activities that the child finds calming? How do they communicate their needs best?



- 5 **capture strategies** and replicate these. Pass on **resources** the child uses in class. These could be packed in a bag or suitcase by the child at the end of the year and physically taken by them to their new classroom
- 6 **have photos of the child in situ** when the child starts in their new class to create a sense of belonging, ensure any individualised visuals and calm spaces are in place and ready to go.

This could be individual photos by coat pegs, or a class display of the children with their families, for example

- 7 **a little piece of home in the setting** – ask caregivers to provide photos of key people, pets from the child's home life so there is a sense of permanence whilst the child is away from home, or a sense of ongoing connection for older children who continue to struggle with separation. Keep these in a special box or bag

Scrap Book

Invite families to create an 'All About Me' book with their child. Include photos of family members, pets and any photos of places of interest.



- 8 **prioritise visits** to the new classroom/adults and key areas (eg big playground, junior dining hall, forest school) – these can be little and often, suited to the needs of the individual child. This could be visits just with a key adult, or with a small group of friends too. Caregivers should be involved too so they understand what challenges or barriers there may be in the new environment and can listen and talk through worries with children at home
- 9 **establish routines** early on after children join a new class and try to mirror routines from the receiving class or setting – routines enable children to understand what is happening and what will come next, reducing fear of the unknown. Using visuals to support understanding of the flow of the day (timetable) is a permanent visual reminder of what is to come

10 allow time for a child to settle and adjust – when scaffolds and strategies have been implemented to support transition, allow them to remain available throughout the year. Enable the child to access these consistently and easily, even when it seems they do not need them. Children may learn to internalise their distress and anxiety as they get older, leading adults to believe those scaffolds are not needed – however, children need to have these available in the long term so they can return to them at times of distress and anxiety.

Alongside vertical transitions we must consider how we can support children who find daily **horizontal transitions** challenging – how can we sensitively guide them through the physiological responses they may encounter each time they go through a daily transition. Ensuring children are well supported through these will help them to feel secure, develop their independence, and build routines that support learning and emotional wellbeing. The *Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) in the EYFS – a how-to guide*, asks us to reflect on how many transitions children are asked to go through within a day and whether they have time to become fully absorbed within an activity before needing to go through another transition.

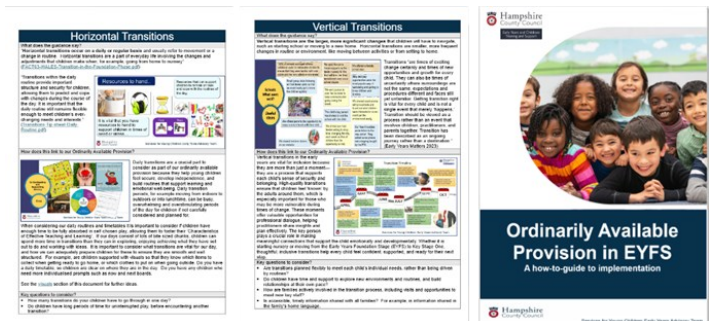


During the transitions children do need to engage in, how can we ensure children are fully supported and understand what they need to do? For example, can we provide visual supports. Do we also know which children will need a more individualised approach to transitions, for example a now and next board or advanced warning when needing to transition away from a preferred activity. Ensuring all children are fully supported through these smaller horizontal transitions, helps us to ensure their emotional regulation and wellbeing throughout the day.

In summary, high-quality transitions are not a one-off event but an ongoing, relational process. By embedding early years principles across the school, we can ensure all children – particularly the most vulnerable – feel known, safe and ready to thrive.

Useful resources to support transition

- OAP in EYFS – a how to guide (<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/51c859b18f.html#page/22>) – sections on horizontal and vertical transitions.



- Dealing with change and transitions toolkit: Mentally Healthy Schools www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/dealing-with-change-and-transitions-toolkit/.
- Information Sharing – Hampshire SCP www.hampshirescp.org.uk/professionals/toolkits/information-sharing/.
- Course: Transitions, SfYC <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=137>.

- If you require access to SfYC Moodle, please contact SfYCMoodle@hants.gov.uk.
- Transitions a unique perspective 2026 – Spring 2026, SfYC transitions webinar slides <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=137>.
- What Hampshire expects document <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=137>.
- Transition into School, Transitions, SFYC <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=137>.

Support, advice and training from SfYC with a focus on transitions:

- training course: Moving on up – taking the principles of EYFS into Key Stage 1
- training course: Inclusion in Year R – All about transitions and assessment
- termly networks: Supporting Transitions for vulnerable children into Year R
- termly EYFS profile events
- Help for Year R Teachers – supporting vulnerable children in Year R, SFYC – videos, links and resources to support provision and transitions <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=262>.

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Implementing the key messages from the DfE *Writing Framework*: best practice for primary school leaders



Over the past two terms, the HIAS English team has shared key messages from the Department for Education (DfE) *Writing Framework* through district headteacher meetings and subject leader core provision, prompting professional reflection on how writing is taught and led in primary schools. As schools move from familiarisation to implementation, it is increasingly clear that securing improvement in writing requires headteachers and subject leaders to champion a disciplined yet humane approach: one that recognises the inherent complexity of learning to write, prioritises secure foundations and nurtures pupils as confident, purposeful writers. This article aims to support school leaders by translating the key principles of the *Writing Framework* into practical considerations for implementation, offering clear guidance on how the framework can inform curriculum design, classroom practice and strategic leadership across the school.

Recognising the complexity of learning to write

The DfE *Writing Framework* positions writing as **“one of the most cognitively demanding skills pupils are required to master”**, and successful implementation begins with leaders recognising and communicating this complexity. Writing requires pupils to manage transcription, sentence construction, composition and the writing process simultaneously, placing heavy demands on working memory. Headteachers should therefore champion carefully sequenced teaching that breaks writing down into its constituent parts and avoids overloading pupils too early. This means prioritising depth over pace and ensuring all staff understand that progress in writing is not linear and cannot be accelerated simply by increasing expectations or output.

Securing transcription through consistent, high-quality teaching

The framework is unequivocal that fluent handwriting and secure spelling are non-negotiable foundations for effective writing. Where transcription is not automatic, pupils’ cognitive capacity is consumed by letter formation or spelling choices, leaving little space for composition. Best practice requires daily teaching of handwriting from Reception, delivered consistently and extended into Key Stage 2 where pupils have not yet achieved fluency. Spelling should be taught explicitly in short, regular sessions and linked meaningfully to writing tasks. For leaders, this demands a whole-school commitment to transcription, resisting the temptation to deprioritise it once statutory phonics outcomes have been met.

Placing oral language and sentence knowledge at the centre

A key message within the *Writing Framework* is that written language develops out of spoken language, and that pupils must understand how sentences work before they can write effectively. Strong implementation requires teachers to plan systematically for oral rehearsal, sentence construction and meaningful talk prior to writing. Sentence-level instruction should be explicit, carefully scaffolded and taught as a vehicle for meaning rather than as an exercise in grammatical compliance. Headteachers should ensure that classroom practice consistently builds pupils' confidence in crafting and manipulating sentences, particularly for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those who need the most support.

Shifting the focus from quantity to quality

The framework gives schools clear permission to move away from an overemphasis on the volume of writing produced and instead prioritise quality and control. Effective implementation involves reducing pressure on pupils to generate extended pieces frequently, and instead allocating time to refine sentences, improve cohesion and develop vocabulary precisely. Leaders should support teachers to judge progress by the clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of pupils' writing, rather than by the length of pieces in books. This represents a cultural shift for many schools and requires sustained professional dialogue to embed confidently.

Teaching writing as a deliberate, taught process

The *Writing Framework* reasserts that writing is a process involving planning, drafting, revising and editing, not a single-lesson outcome.

Best practice implementation demands that teachers model each stage explicitly, demonstrating how writers make choices, rethink ideas and improve clarity. Editing should be taught as a meaningful act focused on improving communication, rather than reduced to surface-level corrections. For headteachers, this means ensuring that curriculum planning allows sufficient time for rehearsal and redrafting, and that writing sequences are not collapsed into one-off tasks that prioritise pace over learning.

Making audience and purpose explicit

The framework stresses that effective writing depends on pupils' understanding of why they are writing and for whom. Successful implementation requires teachers to establish audience and purpose clearly at the outset of writing tasks and to return to these factors throughout teaching. Pupils should be taught how tone, structure and language choices shift depending on context. School leaders should look for evidence that this understanding is being developed consistently, and that writing tasks are purposeful rather than abstract exercises produced solely for assessment.

Using model texts to develop, not constrain, writers

The thoughtful use of high-quality model texts is a central feature of the framework, but implementation must go beyond imitation. Best practice involves analysing texts for structure, sentence patterns, vocabulary choices and cohesion, and then supporting pupils to apply these features independently. Headteachers should ensure staff avoid formulaic outcomes where all writing looks the same and instead promote teaching that builds authorial choice and confidence. Model texts should act as mentors, not templates.

Supporting pupils who need the most help without reducing ambition

The *Writing Framework* is explicit that pupils who struggle with writing should receive additional support while remaining entitled to the full curriculum. Effective implementation focuses on removing barriers to transcription and sentence construction while preserving high expectations for ideas and content. Intervention should be timely, precise and aligned with classroom practice, rather than relying on simplified tasks or reduced expectations. For leaders, this requires careful monitoring to ensure support is enabling access, not limiting aspiration.

Writing as a whole-school and cross-curricular responsibility

Writing is positioned within the framework as a gateway to learning across the curriculum, requiring deliberate and coherent practice beyond English lessons. Best practice implementation ensures that expectations for handwriting, spelling and sentence quality are aligned across subjects, while recognising that high-quality writing outcomes depend on prior explicit teaching. Headteachers should support staff to plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply writing skills in foundation subjects, without assuming transfer will occur automatically.

Leading writing with expertise, coherence and culture

Finally, the framework makes clear that sustained improvement in writing depends on strong leadership. Implementation is most effective when headteachers foster a culture where writing is discussed professionally, taught deliberately and valued as a craft. This involves developing staff expertise through coaching, collaborative planning and shared reflection, using the framework as a tool for evaluation rather than compliance. Leaders should monitor not only attainment data but also indicators such as pupils' independence, writing fluency and confidence over time.

Emma Tarrant

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New Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) bitesize training videos now available

We are pleased to share that a new series of EMTAS bitesize training videos are now live on the EMTAS Moodle. Developed in response to the ongoing challenge of finding time for professional learning in busy school environments, these short videos offer a quick and accessible way for staff to build confidence and deepen understanding in key areas of EAL support. The videos form part of a wider project to refresh and restructure our free Guidance Library. The aim is to make it easier for school staff to locate information quickly, develop skills in manageable steps and revisit essential guidance whenever needed.

They can also be woven into induction for new colleagues or viewed individually whenever staff find a few minutes to pause and refresh their thinking. Visit the *Guidance Library on the EMTAS Moodle* to explore the new bitesize videos. We would welcome your feedback and any suggestions for future topics you would find helpful. You can contact us at EMTAS@hants.gov.uk.

Guidance Library on the EMTAS Moodle: <https://emtas.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=58>,

Astrid Dinneen

EMTAS Specialist Teacher Adviser

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Three main sections of the Guidance Library have already been updated: *Supporting New Arrivals*, *Use of First and Other Languages* and *EAL and SEND*. Each video focuses on a practical theme designed to support everyday work with pupils and families. All content can be accessed at any time, and further topics will be added over the coming months. These resources are designed to fit seamlessly into the rhythm of school life. None of the videos lasts more than five minutes, making them ideal for use during staff briefings or in-house continuing professional development (CPD).






Talk-Rich Teaching – classroom practice meets research

The *Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit* emerged out of a collaboration between the EMTAS Specialist Teacher Advisor Team, Professor Naomi Flynn of the University of Reading and colleagues in a number of Hampshire schools. It was funded by a British Academy Innovation Fellowship awarded to Professor Flynn who has worked alongside EMTAS for many years. The project focused on two groups of children: multilingual children, aka children with EAL, and children of Traveller and Showmen heritages. Whilst it pre-dates the publication of the new Ofsted inspection framework in November 2025, it dovetails with the latter nicely due to Ofsted’s renewed focus on oracy. The new inspection framework talks about “...[extending] pupils’ language and vocabulary, both spoken and written...” as being the gold standard in terms of the curriculum offer. It goes on to say that inspectors will consider the extent to which “all pupils are explicitly taught how to communicate effectively through spoken language (oracy), articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through speaking, listening and communication”. If you are wondering what this blend of oracy and great EAL teaching might look like in your classroom, then the *Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit* could be for you. Read on to find out more about it.

The first stage of the project involved a scoping exercise. We talked to staff in schools about what they would like to get out of an online toolkit, and they told us:

- it must dovetail with other school priorities to avoid *overwhelm*
- it should not demand staff meeting time or course attendance
- it must be quick-read quick-wins (one side of A4)
- it must be easy to access (one click)
- it must include guidance for different levels of language proficiency
- it must include activities suitable for EAL and Traveller learners and how to adapt planning to include them
- it must be focussed on quality first teaching
- it must include guidance for learning support assistants (LSAs).

Drawing on schools’ responses we designed what was to become the *Talk-Rich Teaching Toolkit*. It was to be an online resource, accessible on demand, and light on reading to minimise the demand on practitioners’ time. It was vital to us that the guidance was research-informed, and so, through much conversation and shared thinking, we defined five underpinning principles:

		school belonging, an over-arching principle that ideally takes priority over changes made to teaching practice
		talk-rich
		inquiry-led
		collaborative
		small group.

In terms of content, the Toolkit comprises four sections as follows:

The Toolkit explained	Getting started with the Toolkit	Learning and teaching with the Toolkit	Toolkit oracy resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of talk-rich teaching. • The benefits of oracy. • The role of school belonging. • How the Toolkit links with the EMTAS EAL and Traveller and Showmen Excellence Awards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started – leadership teams. • Getting started – teachers. • Getting started – EAL and GRT leads. • Getting started – learning support staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oracy approaches for all learners. • Oracy for learners who are new to English. • Oracy for learners with some English proficiency. • Oracy for learners with developing competence in English. • Oracy for Traveller and Showmen learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Padlet of resource links. • Think talk sentence starters. • Let’s talk sentence starters. • Oracy lesson videos.

The Toolkit was introduced to the participating schools via online meetings with schools in October 2024. School-based colleagues next agreed how they might want to work with it. They were encouraged to make it their own so that it aligned with their current priorities, and to consider small-step changes to their practice that they would be able to sustain over time.

Having chosen which principles to work with, in the spring term of 2025 school staff introduced into their practice small shifts designed to promote increased pupil talk in the classroom. The most popular strategies chosen were:

- using sentence stems (starter phrases) to support dialogue
- reducing group sizes to four to promote active discussion
- turning learning objectives into learning questions to make lessons inquiry-led
- focussing on intentionally reducing teacher talk.

After spending a term trying out their small step changes, and reflecting on the driving principles, practitioners reported on what they noticed in the summer term of 2025. Here are some of their observations on the impact of the small step changes they made:

- teachers appreciated understanding the *why* of implementing oracy, and being given *permission* to design talk-based activities rather than worrying about written *evidence*
- multilingual learners grew in confidence to take part in small group conversations using new vocabulary
- multilingual learners were better able to articulate the questions they needed to ask when they did not understand things
- traveller children were better engaged in small group teaching
- learners were better able to listen and offer opinions

- teachers found that in saying less and working with groups, they became better active listeners. They said misconceptions were being picked up and addressed more quickly, because they were listening into children's conversations rather than having children put their hands up and taking responses from just one or two
- headteachers appreciated the ways in which Toolkit content could be adapted to local need and matched to school priorities.

If you are interested in gaining access to the Toolkit, there is a simple two-step/no-cost process:

- 1 each individual wanting to access the Toolkit completes this short survey (<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/reading/the-talk-rich-teaching-toolkit-follow-on-project>). The wording on the first page explains everything
- 2 contact EMTAS Resources Manager Julie Yates (julie.yates@hants.gov.uk) and let her know that you have completed the survey. Julie will send you an email with a username and password for the Toolkit.

Once you have seen the Toolkit, do get in touch with EMTAS@hants.gov.uk if you would like any help getting started with choosing your first strategy to try out in your classroom, whether it is sentence starters or running a dictogloss activity. We would love to hear from you.

Professor Naomi Flynn

University of Reading

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EMTAS Team Manager

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The Climate Unity Conference 2026

On Wednesday 28 January 2026, over 4000 children attended the Hampshire Climate Unity Virtual Conference from 74 schools across Hampshire. During the conference, children from Years 5-8 participated in a range of engaging, practical workshops and explored sustainability initiatives locally and globally.

Our first presentation came from the wonderful Eco Team at The Burgate School. Team members shared the story of their sustainability journey and showcased their inspiring ideas for making the school site more environmentally friendly. It was also encouraging to hear how the school has partnered with the wider community, gaining support from local businesses and taking part in meaningful projects with local charities.



Members of the Eco Team at The Burgate School showcased the fantastic work they have been doing at school including the development of their kitchen garden.

Next, the children participated in a film and stills safari from the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation in the African Savannah. The children loved meeting Wilton, a ranger from Painted Dog Conservation in Zimbabwe and were able to ask him questions about his work. The workshop received enthusiastic feedback from both children and teachers including:

“Wilton, you have inspired the whole class thank you!”

“You’re my best inspiration to save the wildlife!”

Following this, the children saw the amazing artwork from the *Small Worlds: Little things make a big difference* exhibition. The children saw samples of work created by 38 Hampshire schools including two-dimensional artwork, textile banners and 3D globe installations. All pieces were created using sustainable and repurposed materials. Later, in the teacher space part of the conference, the teachers were told about an upcoming 2026 Climate Unity art project in partnership with the Hampshire Music Service.

I then had the privilege of running a workshop on the conservation of seahorses in The Solent using resources from the Final Straw Foundation. The children learned about the habitats that seahorses rely on in our local waters and explored why seagrass plays such an important role in their survival. We talked about the risks facing seahorses in The Solent including boat mooring, dredging, pollution and climate change.

The children were then challenged to either design a seahorse habitat or explore causes and possible solutions using a set of challenge cards. We ended the session by sharing ideas about how these threats could be reduced. It was inspiring to hear the thoughtful solutions the children suggested. Their ideas included reducing litter to prevent plastics reaching the ocean, choosing organic produce to help limit pesticide use and creating boat free zones across parts of The Solent.



Many children designed their own seahorse habitat using what they had discovered about the local species.

The next workshop was delivered by The Ministry of Eco Education and focused on how Forest Green Rovers has become the most sustainable football club in the world. Using football as an engaging hook, the session introduced children to the club's sustainable initiatives which include renewable energy, eco-friendly clothing, plant-based food and environmentally conscious pitch maintenance. The children were encouraged to think about their own energy use and food choices at home and at school. They also explored what their school uniforms are made from and learned more about sustainable materials.

To close the conference, teachers took part in a dedicated session designed to support them on their sustainability journey. They heard from Climate Ambassadors, Let's Go Zero, the Ministry of Eco Education and Pupil's Profit, each sharing the guidance and practical help they offer to schools. The teachers were also introduced to the new Climate Unity Moodle and the HIAS sustainability support available for schools: <https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/course/index.php?categoryid=106>.

The conference was a real success and it was wonderful to see such positive comments from the children and teachers. Thank you to everyone that was involved:

"Thank you for a brilliant morning!"

"Thank you so much for all the links and information. My students left with so many ideas today, and now I feel like I can support them in future projects."

As HIAS Subject Inspector/Adviser, I am always looking for opportunities to make strong links with the geography curriculum. The conference offered a range of topics that can be explored further by children back in the classroom. Sustainability is a key geographical concept and the topics of climate change and sustainability are to be included in the 2028 National Curriculum for geography. For example, children could learn about the impact of plastic pollution on the seahorses living in The Solent and then conduct a litter survey on the school site or local area during geography fieldwork.

Exploring climate change and sustainability through the impact on animal habitats, both locally and globally, is an effective way to help younger children understand these concepts. It also provides a natural link between the geography and science curriculums. These activities can be included within geography place studies at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

If you would like further advice on how these topics can be embedded within the primary curriculum, please do get in touch.

Emma Groves

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Modern Foreign Languages

Culture and engagement in primary MFL

The National Curriculum for Key Stage 2 languages includes a broad set of principles and programmes of study, which can frustratingly leave curriculum planning wide open to interpretation. Of course, the Curriculum and Assessment Review (DfE, November 2025) placed Key Stage 2 MFL at the centre of a “*broad and rich curriculum*” and emphasised the need for diversity to be reflected in the curriculum. Whilst we await more guidance including a core content for primary languages, the longstanding thread of a “*liberation against insularity*”, exposing pupils to a variety of cultures remains central to the curriculum. With the new white paper championing social, cultural and emotional development alongside mutual respect, it is clear that the cultural aspect of teaching languages in primary school remains a key priority. Pupils need to see the relevance of learning languages and appreciate the differences and similarities of the target language culture with their own. So with all the time pressures and constraints on the primary MFL curriculum, how do we ensure that culture remains relatable and engaging?

For many schools, Bastille Day on the 14 July is the perfect opportunity to crack out the croissants, decorate the dining hall and make some colourful bunting. In the past I had pupils making guillotines out of lollypop sticks, although I certainly would not do that again due to the resulting mess across the classroom! It could be the perfect opportunity to hold a French *Bake Off*



Image source: Microsoft 365.

competition or to encourage children to research different French cities or regions. Perhaps a café set up on the playground at lunchtime, would give older pupils the chance to serve as waiters. What better way to practise, “*je voudrais*” and “*s’il vous plait!*”. Whatever you do, involving as many adults and children as possible can create memorable experiences and create a real reason to continue learning French.

Including culture in the languages curriculum has never been easier, with the internet giving access to numerous videos showing French towns, schools, cafes and more. Sites such as *Easy French* use subtitles and context to make the language accessible. It is amazing how children soon spot the differences and similarities of a French high street – cars driving on the right, yellow post boxes and café terraces ready to serve lunch in the sunshine.



For Spanish, how about a video of the *Tomatina* to inspire the children when learning Spanish? Spanish festivals are vibrant and exciting, so what better way to promote and celebrate the language? Visiting a school website in a Spanish speaking country can reveal differences in dress code, subjects studied and school facilities; these can also be a great starting point for a class discussion when studying the topic of school. Perhaps each pupil could research a different Spanish speaking country and produce a fact file to share with their peers.

Stories and songs have always been popular in English and can be surprisingly easy to understand in French or Spanish. Learning colours using *Elmer* or food items in the story of *The very hungry caterpillar* can bring the language to life and encourage choral repetition of key words. Most children’s books are available on YouTube with audio and subtitles to aid listening and reading skills.

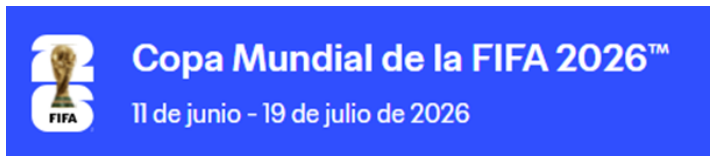


Many are available in bought schemes such as Language Angels or Kapow, but there are book suggestions on the HIAS Moodle in the Languages section. Choral reading and repetition not only brings the language to life, but is also an engaging way to practise phonics and intonation, thus improving confidence.



Sports events such as the Olympic Games and the upcoming World Cup offer a great excuse to get pupils engaged in considering the global significance of the Spanish speaking world. The 2026 FIFA World Cup website contains lists of all the participating countries, a calendar of matches, team statistics and short videos about the host cities. With the website set to Spanish or French, this is a perfect starting point for introducing or reinforcing countries or colours in the target language, for example. Classes could create a chart to regularly update scores whilst practising numbers.

The European Day of Languages takes place on 26 September each year. Organised by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the celebration encourages people of all ages to learn languages and celebrate the diversity of people and languages across Europe.



Many schools use this day, or another around the autumn term to promote languages across the community. There are many suggestions of activities, as well as posters and resources on the EDL website: <https://edl.ecml.at/en/>.

Something as simple as a class challenge to count to 10 in another language, share something of their home language or culture or learn a poem or song in a different language can create a buzz around language learning at the start of the school year.

Finally, the key is to start small, but to keep conversations around languages, cultures and diversity alive and relevant. Keep an eye on our HIAS Moodle resources and our termly MFL network meetings, where ideas for culture and engagement in primary languages are often shared. For more information and to receive regular updates, please contact me. I am also able to offer in-school support with curriculum development, assessment and quality assurance.



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Music

Learning through music: supporting wellbeing, life skills and readiness to learn

Many schools are finding that when we treat music as a *tool* for learning – not just a subject – children practise the very behaviours that help them thrive: connection, communication, confidence and regulation. Music provides a flexible, child-centred way to develop the whole child and strengthen classroom readiness. This article shares practical approaches you can adapt for your own context, with examples drawn from local practice.

“The aim is to meet pupils where they are, adapt in the moment, and help them find a space, a place and a voice.”

Liz Davies, Strategic Lead for Inclusion,
Hampshire Music Service.

Why learn *through* music?

Across Hampshire, schools are discovering that music does not only belong in the music lesson – it can be a powerful vehicle for pupil wellbeing. Hampshire Music Service highlights two complementary strands in music education:

- **learning about music** – delivering the music curriculum and developing instrumental skills
- **learning through music** – using musical activity to support personal development of holistic skills.

In practice, many schools find that learning through music supports the very conditions children need to access learning across the day – particularly for pupils who are vulnerable, neurodiverse, or at risk of disengagement. Music can help pupils feel secure, included and ready to participate.



Hampshire
County Council

Music Service

Learning about Music

Inclusive, broad and balanced music curriculum
Accessibility to learning
Opportunities to communicate, explore, express and develop creativity

Curriculum
teaching

Listen 2 Me

Learning through Music

Holistic approach using music to support wellbeing
Focus on building of life skills
connection, communication, interaction
Self confidence and self esteem
Self worth and identity
Readiness to learn

Music Linc

Good Vibrations

Tunnel

Sounds Aloud

Music Makers

Bespoke

It offers predictable routines, shared enjoyment and multiple ways to communicate, which can be particularly helpful for pupils who are still developing attention, regulation and interaction skills.

“The shy become confident. The agitated become calm. The quiet become heard.”

Vaughan Fleischfresser.

What learning through music looks like day to day

Learning through music is typically child-centred and responsive, while still being purposeful and structured. This approach flexes to pupils' energy, sensory load and emotional state, and adults respond in the moment – following a child's lead, setting clear boundaries, and providing just enough scaffolding to help them succeed.

Although this work can feel therapeutic, it remains firmly rooted in education. It is practical, strengths-based and goal-focused, with an emphasis on helping pupils build skills that transfer into classrooms, the playground and wider learning. The most successful work is also joined up: targets are co-planned with SENDCOs, teachers and LSAs, and strategies are modelled so they can become part of everyday school practice rather than something that sits in isolation.

Hampshire Music Service: practical provision schools can draw on



Hampshire Music Service offers a range of targeted programmes that can stand alone or sit within a wider support plan for pupils.

Good Vibrations provides structured small-group work, typically over 10 weeks, to develop social communication through rhythm games and creative collaboration. Sessions maintain a consistent structure, which helps pupils feel safe, and a built-in workforce development model, where staff observe, shadow and gradually take the lead so that practice is embedded beyond the life of the project. Musical games, songs and activities provide the vehicle for teamwork, exploring ways to share, turn-take, make eye contact and connect with others while having fun and help to reduce barriers to learning. Schools commonly report improved stronger collaboration and reduced anxiety, supporting pupils to return to class calmer and more ready to engage.

“Exactly what some of our highest need pupils need to support sensory wellbeing, attention and focus... a brilliant intervention.”

Headteacher

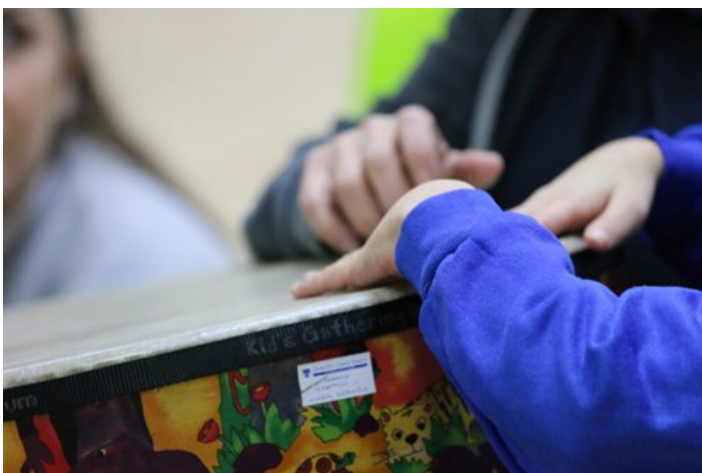


For pupils who need individualised support, **MusicLinc** offers one-to-one work, often supporting autistic and neurodiverse learners who may be developing sensory tolerance, shared attention, following instructions and emotional regulation. MusicLinc uses a holistic, child-centred approach to facilitate communication, social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills. Practitioners work closely with familiar school staff so that approaches can be applied consistently and transferred into classroom routines.

For older pupils where disengagement is becoming a risk, the **Tunnel Project** provides bespoke one-to-one or very small-group work, typically from Years 5-6 upwards. Sessions are shaped flexibly around the young person's interests and motivations and often use accessible instruments and technology such as iPads, keyboards, guitars and voice. The focus is on rebuilding trust, strengthening identity and re-igniting motivation – key foundations for returning to learning and school routines.



Learning through music can also support specific learning priorities. **Sounds Aloud** is a small-group phonics intervention for Years 2-4 that combines reading, spelling and writing with rhythmic and melodic learning so that key patterns are reinforced through memorable musical experiences. Schools have reported increased motivation and stronger written output, with some pupils making accelerated progress.



Early transition support is also available through **Music Makers**, designed for *rising fives* and their families who may need additional support during a time of change. Running across the summer term and into the autumn, sessions bring children

and parents into school for themed musical play that can connect with early language, maths and healthy living. The project continues in the autumn, where buddying can help participating children take on confident *expert* roles, strengthening belonging and relationships across the cohort, with children demonstrating greater confidence and ability to settle into their new phase of life.

“This is our most settled cohort to date... children arrived really confident.”

Headteacher.

“My little one is very shy – meeting children from his class made a massive difference.”

Parent.

Alongside structured programmes, Hampshire Music Service can provide **bespoke one-to-one or small-group provision** tailored to particular pupils, including adapted approaches for children with additional needs.



Schools can also access **Sound Gateway**, a developing loan library of adaptive instruments and music technology that supports inclusive access to music-making and widens participation.

Why this matters for school leaders now

Primary leaders are balancing ambitious curriculum expectations with an increasing focus on inclusion, wellbeing, belonging and participation. Many schools are therefore looking for earlier, more inclusive support that strengthens engagement and helps pupils develop the skills they need to succeed. Music can play a distinctive role here. When pupils make music together, they build relationships, practise communication and experience successful interaction in real time. This can strengthen confidence and self-esteem, deepen connection to others, and develop life skills children carry with them as they grow, helping them feel safe, included and ready to learn – and, for some, it can be a powerful pathway back into learning.

Find out more

To explore Hampshire Music Service's Alternative Provisions, please contact **Liz Davies (Strategic Lead for Inclusion)** at liz.davies@hants.gov.uk

Visit the **Hampshire Music Education Hub** website: <https://hantsmusic hub.org.uk/inclusivity/>.



Yvonne Postlethwaite

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Physical education

Would you like to join the *Movement for All* project?

The Hampshire PE Team is seeking schools that would like to be involved in the next phase of the *Movement for All* project, funded by Public Health.

The project offers schools a half day one-to-one session with a member of the Hampshire PE Team, alongside training in Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and Sensory Circuits – fully funded by Public Health.

In 2025/26, the project funded work with 70 schools across Hampshire. The majority were primary schools, but it also included a special school and a secondary school, supporting the development of PE and physical activity. The programme was highly valued by participating schools, with 60% providing feedback. Of these, 80% reported that, as a result of the programme, they had made changes to how they teach PE and how they include children with additional needs in physical activity.

Comments from schools included:

"I personally found the morning we spent together so beneficial. I have been teaching for over 20 years, and I can't recall a more useful session of CPD for PE."

"I just wanted to take a moment to say how truly inspired I was by the training you delivered. Sensory SEN CPD has been on my five-year development plan, but I could immediately see the SEMH benefits for so many of our children. I know several colleagues have already started putting ideas into practice. There is so much to take away and reflect on – thank you...I've even found myself researching more in my own time, which I don't have much of, so you must have been a very inspiring trainer."

"Thank you for coming in yesterday. The training on both sensory circuits and FMS was extremely useful and enlightening in terms of how we can support our children. We would like to raise awareness among parents about the benefits of sensory circuits and are already considering how to share this message and create a dedicated sensory circuits area within our school. The FMS training was also very valuable for staff in supporting children during PE lessons. As a subject leader, it has given me a clearer understanding of how to adapt our curriculum to address gaps in FMS, particularly given the changing needs of children entering our school."

The Hampshire PE Team also offers training in gymnastics (including inversions), dance, inclusive PE, lunchtime supervisor training, playground leaders (aimed at Year 5/6 pupils), and outdoor and adventurous activities. Additionally, one-to-one support is available for new PE subject leaders.

For more information, please visit:

www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/participation-lifelong-learning/physical-education/professional-development

To be part of the 2026/27 cohort, please contact: PEandSport@hants.gov.uk

Jodie Bascombe

Development Manager for Physical Education

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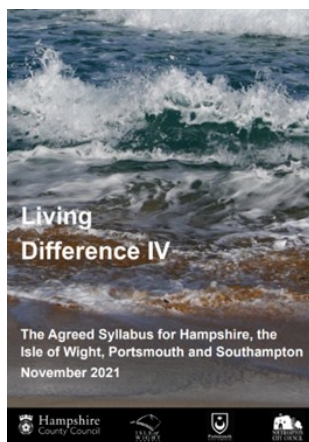
Religious education

Reimagining RE: what comes next for the subject?

This article provides a helpful overview of the next steps for RE, including the statutory review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton; *Living Difference IV* and the proposals for RE to be placed in the National Curriculum from 2028. It also explores the help and resources that are available to support your school in planning, teaching and assessing RE, both on the RE Moodle website and from the RE Centre.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus, *Living Difference IV*

In November 2025, The Hampshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) voted to undertake a review of the RE Syllabus, *Living Difference IV*. The SACRE is required to undertake a review by law every five years and the last review concluded in 2021. On this occasion, the SACRE voted to undertake a light touch review and to conclude the review early this year.



This review was concluded in March 2026. I conducted the review with Chris May, the Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Adviser, Laura Blair, the RE Centre Manager, the Hampshire steering groups for RE and members of the SACRE, including those who formed the Agreed Syllabus Conference for RE in Hampshire.

We also conducted the review alongside the SACRE advisers for the Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth and met regularly to discuss the Syllabus.

All four SACREs voted to readopt *Living Difference IV*. Following the review, there are some very small additions in the text which mainly refer to the Ofsted 2025 framework and the Ofsted 2024 Subject Report for RE and also a very few changes in wording, but the Syllabus remains the same for your planning, teaching and assessment.

This means that you can be reassured to know that nothing changes for your RE with regard to the Syllabus and nothing will change for the planning and pedagogy for teaching RE in your school.

National plans for RE

In addition to local news, plans for the future of RE nationally were revealed in the November 2025 Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report for England which stated:

“The Review believes that RE should be moved to the national curriculum to improve access to high-quality provision and prevent further diminishment...We believe a staged approach to reform is the most appropriate way forward”.

P.109.



A working party was formed to consider this proposal in the spring term and meetings have been held with all key organisations in RE during this period, so this review is now underway. We will keep you informed on the next steps with this proposal through our newsletters and networks during this year and next year.

Ofsted references to RE

In the meantime, the Hampshire SACRE and RE advisers continue to monitor Ofsted reports for mentions of RE, both nationally and locally. You will be interested to know that **almost half of the Ofsted inspections for English primary schools** mention RE in some way in the new Ofsted framework, almost always in the personal development and wellbeing section. Learning about religion and beliefs is therefore increasingly recognised as an important element of pupils' personal development.

How can we help?

To help you teach RE to the highest standards, we are fortunate to have one of the very few RE centres for teachers in England. The centre provides support with RE planning, resources, artefact boxes, books, visuals, story sacks and teaching packs on a wide range of religions. These are all available to help support you in teaching high quality RE, so please get in touch with your requirements.

If you would like further advice on developing your RE curriculum in school or specific advice on planning and assessment, please contact me for a visit or book onto one of our training courses available on the Learning Zone.

We hope this update provides reassurance and confidence as you continue to develop high-quality RE in your school.

Justine Ball

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Laura Blair

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Science

Exploring the place of science in whole school improvement

Science is not usually the subject leaders turn to when discussing whole school improvement. Conversations about raising standards often focus on reading, writing and mathematics, with science viewed as something to protect once other priorities are secured. Yet in schools where teaching and learning are strongest, science often tells a different story. High-quality science provision rarely exists in isolation; instead, it sits alongside strong curriculum thinking, effective classroom talk, purposeful assessment and confident teaching across subjects.

This is because science places particular demands on classroom practice. It requires clarity about what pupils are learning and why, careful sequencing of ideas over time, explicit vocabulary instruction, and opportunities for pupils to reason, explain and test their thinking. Where these elements are secure, science lessons are purposeful, coherent and intellectually challenging. Where they are not, science has a way of exposing wider issues – such as activity-led teaching, superficial coverage or limited progression – that may be less visible in other subjects. As a result, science can provide valuable insight into the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Why science so often reveals the bigger picture

Science has a particular ability to expose strengths and weaknesses in teaching because it depends on pupils making sense of ideas that are not always visible or immediately intuitive. Concepts such as forces, electricity or adaptation rely on precise explanations, well-chosen models and deliberate sequencing. Pupils must connect new learning with what they already know, use technical vocabulary accurately, and explain their thinking with increasing confidence.

When these elements are weak, the impact on learning is quickly apparent.

Effective science teaching therefore depends on clarity of intent and strong alignment between curriculum planning, classroom practice and assessment. Where this coherence exists, practical work deepens understanding rather than replacing it. Where it does not, science lessons can become busy but shallow, with activity taking priority over learning. In such cases, science highlights issues that often exist more widely across the curriculum, offering insight into how securely knowledge and skills are being developed over time.

What strong science teaching tells us about effective practice



Strong science teaching makes visible what effective practice looks like across subjects. It requires teachers to be clear about the knowledge pupils are expected to retain, to introduce vocabulary deliberately, and to check understanding rather than assume it. Practical activities are used purposefully, supporting pupils to test ideas and refine thinking rather than simply follow instructions.

This case study example illustrates how science can surface wider issues in pedagogy and curriculum thinking. When leaders use science as a test case for clarity and coherence, improvements often extend beyond the subject itself.

Case study: practical commitment, limited impact

In one primary school, science teaching appeared engaging, with regular practical work and well-established routines. However, pupils were unable to articulate key concepts or apply prior learning securely. Assessment focused largely on task completion, and vocabulary development was inconsistent. This pattern was reflected elsewhere in the curriculum, where learning activities were not always sharply aligned to intended outcomes. Strengthening clarity of intent in science planning led to more focused teaching, improved assessment for learning and greater coherence across subjects.

What science can tell us about teaching across the curriculum

Weaknesses in science are rarely isolated. More often, they reflect underlying issues in curriculum design and classroom practice that affect learning across subjects. Because science relies on clear explanations, effective use of talk and secure progression of knowledge, difficulties become visible quickly when these elements are underdeveloped.

Patterns such as activity-led lessons, over-reliance on worksheets or limited assessment for learning are frequently evident beyond science, including in foundation subjects, extended writing or mathematical problem-solving. Viewed in this way, science can act as an early indicator of curriculum coherence and teaching quality. Paying close attention to how science is taught and learned therefore provides leaders with valuable insight into the effectiveness of the wider curriculum.

Implications for leaders

For leaders, the implications are clear. Science should not be viewed solely as a statutory subject to be protected when time allows, but as a meaningful lens through which the quality of education can be evaluated. Scrutiny of science provision – through curriculum review, lesson visits or discussions with pupils – often reveals how well curriculum intent is understood and enacted across the school.

Because science places high demands on explanation, sequencing, vocabulary and assessment for learning, it highlights strengths and weaknesses that may be less immediately apparent elsewhere. Used strategically, science becomes not an additional pressure but an opportunity: a way of strengthening coherence, consistency and ambition across the primary curriculum.

In my work with schools, this often begins by looking at science as part of the wider curriculum rather than in isolation. Support typically focuses on helping leaders and teachers strengthen curriculum thinking, secure progression over time and build confidence in teaching and assessing science effectively. Because the demands of science mirror those of high-quality practice across subjects, this work frequently supports wider developments in classroom talk, assessment for learning and curriculum coherence. Used in this way, science becomes a natural starting point for reflective, school-led improvement.

Raising standards by looking sideways

Science may not always sit at the centre of accountability measures, but it has a powerful role to play in shaping the quality of education pupils receive. When leaders look closely at science teaching – how knowledge is sequenced, how pupils are supported to explain their thinking, and how learning is checked – they often gain insight that extends far beyond a single subject.

The challenge is to use science intentionally: not simply to secure statutory coverage, but to reflect on curriculum coherence and teaching quality more broadly. In doing so, leaders can learn from science to strengthen practice, raise expectations and improve learning across the primary curriculum.

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The Virtual School

Relational practice in Hampshire schools: learning from the ARC pathway



Across Hampshire, primary schools engaged in The **Attachment Research Community (ARC)** pathway are demonstrating powerful, relationally-driven approaches that are reshaping how pupils, especially those with attachment needs, trauma histories, or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) are supported to thrive.

The ARC vision emphasises creating attachment aware, trauma informed schools, where relationships, safety and emotional connection underpin children's capacity to learn. The work emerging from the ARC Pathway, supported by Hampshire Virtual School illustrates how schools are making this vision a reality through trauma-sensitive environments, collaborative problem-solving and commitments to belonging.

This article draws on four recent ARC Pathway case studies from **Rownhams St John's CofE Primary School, Bosmere Junior School, Vigo Primary School and Great Binfields Primary School** which illustrate how schools are embedding relational principles deeply and sustainably. Although each school's project focuses on different elements of provision, several key themes emerge:

- connection before correction
- trauma-informed, consistent practice
- shared staff understanding and confidence
- family centred support
- improved pupil wellbeing, belonging and participation.

These examples demonstrate how Hampshire schools are using the ARC principles to transform culture, not just policy.

1. Relationships *ARE* the intervention

Whether addressing behaviour, EBSA, or transition, each school emphasises the centrality of strong, attuned adult-child relationships; connection is the foundation for emotional regulation, engagement and attendance.

Connection is not a soft extra, it is the mechanism through which regulation, attendance and learning improve.

2. Staff need ongoing, structured training

All schools invested heavily in professional learning on attachment, trauma and regulation. Upskilling staff increased confidence and reduced stress. Consistency across adults matters as shared strategies, shared language and shared expectations build security. Children thrive when adults act as one team.

3. Consistency creates safety; explicit teaching of emotional regulation, routines and social skills

Shared scripts, common language, and clear expectations (for staff as well as pupils) create trauma-informed environments designed for emotional regulation and a sense of calm. These environments reduce stress, strengthen co-regulation, and enable children to feel competent and safe enough to learn.

Rather than assuming children should know better, schools are teaching the skills needed for success.

Children need these foundations to succeed academically, socially and behaviourally. This explicit teaching is central to trauma-informed practice and reduces reliance on adult regulation over time.

4. Families are key partners

Parents' emotional needs must be supported if children are to re-engage with school confidently. Schools highlighted the importance of regular communication, flexibility, and non-judgemental guidance especially where parents experience their own anxiety or trauma as children rarely experience anxiety or trauma in isolation. Cross-agency involvement including MHST referrals, transition co-ordination, and parental support is embedded across the case studies.

Whole school consistency is strengthened when everyone holds the same relational mindset, consistent communication, shared expectations and knowledge of what works. Supporting the *whole family* is often necessary for change.

5. Data and relational insight

Schools used data (attendance, behaviour logs, transition notes) alongside relational understanding to identify vulnerability early and intervene proactively.

Improvements reported across the schools include:

- significant increases in attendance for those more vulnerable pupils
- enhanced emotional regulation, with children better able to use strategies, recover from dysregulation, and recognise their feelings
- improved peer interaction, turn-taking and communication across all schools
- reduced disruption, with calmer classrooms and greater staff confidence, due to proactive planning around triggers and consistent relational responses
- more independent engagement in learning, supported through visuals, structure and secure attachments.

The cumulative effect is stronger, as it creates a more emotionally literate school community.

How ARC supports this work

The Attachment Research Community provides:

- a structured framework for schools to evaluate practice
- evidence-informed guidance on relational, trauma-responsive approaches
- opportunities for schools to collaborate, learn, and build confidence in whole school cultural change.

The ARC Pathway is enabling schools to apply research meaningfully, ensuring that relational practice is not a bolt-on but a way of being. The audit tool captures the work that schools are already doing and the wider professionals that are engaged, for example Primary Behaviour Service (PBS), Hampshire Educational Psychology Service (HEPS), SEN Advisory team. Schools may have also engaged in the work of Kit Messenger, Thrive, or Louise Bomber as well as using the needs analysis tools Reach2Teach or the PEP toolkit.

Additionally, as well as a number of individual webinars with an attachment and trauma focus Virtual School offer a three day train the trainer *Supporting Trauma and Attachment Aware Relational Settings (STAARS) programme*. Previously known as Attachment and Trauma Aware Settings (ATAS), the programme has been rebranded to reflect the central importance of relationships in all aspects of our work.

The programme is led primarily by Hampshire Virtual School, with specialist input from the PBS and HIAS SEN advisers on day two.

Virtual School have purchased membership for all Hampshire schools and settings to join ARC as we are passionate about the foundations of a relational approach and the impact it can have on our most vulnerable children.

Over 270 schools and settings have now signed up to ARC, although we understand it needs more than sign up and it is about evaluating your current provision using the audit to look at your development plan which should map the wider school development plan.

A relational approach also sits at the heart of the Hampshire approach to inclusion.

Conclusion

Hampshire schools are demonstrating a commitment to relational education. Through ARC's framework and the drive of school leaders, teachers and support staff, children with the highest levels of need are receiving provision that is relational, evidence-informed and genuinely transformative. These case studies offer practical, inspiring examples of how schools can embed attachment and trauma informed practice into everyday systems. They are building learning environments where every child feels they belong, where families are supported, and where staff feel confident to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. Small, relational interventions can create big changes. This is relational practice in action, and it is reshaping outcomes across the county.

Further information

To view the case studies please see the Virtual School Moodle <https://virtualschool.hants.gov.uk/>.

If you have not joined ARC, please check with your designated teacher and senior leadership team (SLT) first that there is not already a school account and then complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=tdiBPwfuF0yGnB20OQGNm3kgH8kO8PNCm5QcLNW8LWpUN0RSUjdETVVMQIZUNIAyRzRNWjIVMVJOVS4u&route=shorturl>.

For further training from The Virtual School, please see our training brochure <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-college/training-brochure.pdf>.

Additionally, Virtual School have bought a Reach2Teach licence for all schools via their designated teacher. If you need further details about obtaining a license, please email the Virtual School inbox virtualschool@hants.gov.uk.

Michelle Nye

Head of Virtual School

Email: michelle.nye@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 Learning and Development team, please contact:

Email: cs.learninganddevelopment@hants.gov.uk

Primary MFL Subject Leader Network Meeting

MFL Primary Subject Leader Network Meetings will bring colleagues together to understand and share great practice in developing MFL in primary schools and to facilitate regular and meaningful collaboration.

Learning outcomes

- To provide support for the development of subject knowledge and curricula for MFL primary subject leads and teachers to consider when planning in the short, medium and long term.
- To introduce subject colleagues to one another and to begin developing strong and lasting collaboration at county and local level.
- To establish a sustainable model for connecting primary and secondary MFL subject leaders, with the aim of establishing an exciting culture of collaboration.

Agenda

Leading non-specialist MFL teachers

- What does a good lesson look like?

Running CPD for school staff

- Increasing confidence in MFL delivery.

Quality assurance

- Monitoring teaching and learning in languages.

Creativity and culture

- Ideas from Portsmouth City of Languages and suggestions for ideas at a school level.

 25 June 2026

 *Summer MFL*

 Sub £50 / SLA £25 / Full £60

Ofsted Briefing – Renewed Education Inspection Framework 2025

These termly briefings aim to deepen the knowledge and understanding of headteachers and chairs of governors in respect of the current Ofsted inspection framework. The sessions are particularly targeted at schools who are likely to be inspected within the next 6 months.

There will be opportunities to review information relating to the latest national and local inspection trends and patterns and consider implications for their own school. Additional input will be provided by headteachers of schools that have been recently inspected under the current framework (2025) and members of the Primary Phase Inspector team who support schools through the process.

A senior leader and chair of governors are invited to attend but do not need to book a place.

Headteachers who have booked a place will receive the course details, which they should share.

The course price entitles a school to three places at the briefing (the headteacher, senior leader and chair of governors).

 25 June 2026

 *Ofsted Renewed*

 Sub £315 / SLA £145 / Full £378

Primary Computing Conference 2026

This is the annual Computing Conference in Hampshire. An opportunity to hear from national speakers on the development of the computing curriculum as well as getting involved in discussions with colleagues to inform thinking and development.

Learning outcomes

- Opportunity to network with colleagues from other schools.
- Hear about good practice from national and local speakers.
- Consider other tools that can be used to enhance computing in your school.
- Training to support the development of subject knowledge.

 26 June 2026

 *Computing Conference*

 Sub £235 / SLA £85 / Full £282

Using Perspective Lite and Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Reports to Analyse End of Key Stage Outcomes 25/26

Understanding your school's end of key stage data using Perspective Lite and FFT reports.

Learning outcomes

- Awareness of key reports within Perspective Lite and FFT for the EYFS and primary phase.
- Comparing school outcomes with LA and national outcomes.
- Evaluating outcomes for key pupil groups.
- Generating reports to support school improvement and to report to key stakeholders.

 15 July 2026

 *Perspective Lite 26*


 Sub £95 / SLA £45 / Full £114

The Effective Headteacher Toolkit 26/27

The Effective Headteacher Toolkit (formerly 5 Fundamentals of Effective School Leadership) is a well-established LA approach to enhancing and refining the skills and effectiveness of experienced headteachers. The training has, to date, been attended by over 100 headteachers from across Hampshire and beyond.

This series of workshops for experienced headteachers looks at five fundamental aspects of successful school leadership. The sessions explore how to be a highly effective headteacher in a period of competing pressures on your time and resources.

The course fee is for two attendees from each school.

 15 September, 20 October, 17 November 2026, 10 February and 9 March 2027

 *Headteacher Toolkit*

 Sub £475 / SLA £405 / Full £570

Navigating the New Ofsted Framework and Developments in English: School Improvement Planning for Subject Leaders

This course equips English subject leaders with the knowledge and strategies to drive and sustain school improvement in line with the latest (November 2025) Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the DfE Reading and Writing Frameworks.

Participants will explore key developments in English teaching and learning and curriculum design, understand how inspection priorities impact subject leadership, and learn practical approaches to strategic planning for sustained improvement.

 17 September, 22 October and 7 December 2026

 *English Framework*


 Sub £205 / SLA £90 / Full £246

Developing an Irresistible Curriculum


Creating a culture of inclusion through effective curriculum design. This course will offer participants the opportunity to reflect upon and develop the curriculum offer within their own school, with the aim of making it truly irresistible.

We will consider what makes an irresistible curriculum and what are the core principles which need to be in place to make this happen. What are they? Are they really in place? How do we know?

Leaders will have time to think strategically about 'what's next' and 'why' for their own settings and learn from other settings and their approaches.

 17 September, 22 October 2026, 22 January, 18 March, 22 April and 11 June 2027

 *Developing Curriculum*

 **Part 1** Price: Sub £310 / SLA £210 / Full £372


Part 2 Price: Sub £155 / SLA £110 / Full £186

Total: Sub £465 / SLA £320 / Full £558

New to Subject Leadership (Primary)

This course is designed to support subject leaders by exploring the range of knowledge and skills required to address the specific challenges faced when leading a subject. Spanning six sessions, new subject leaders will have opportunities to focus on all aspects of strategically leading their subject within the context of their school.

The course fee is for two attendees from each school.

 21 September, 23 October, 26 November, 7 December 2026, 19 January and 2 March 2027

 *Subject Leadership*

 Sub £430 / SLA £315 / Full £516


Introduction to Computing Course for New Computing Leads 26/27 (Webinar)

A practical 2-day course for primary teachers.

A confidence building course for teachers who want a clear, modern understanding of primary computing and how to teach it well.

What you will explore

- What computing really includes at primary level, computer science, information technology, digital literacy, and AI.
- Practical ways to teach programming, including unplugged, block based, and real classroom examples.
- How we can start to teach about AI.
- How research on progression helps pupils build skills over time, not just complete activities.
- Approaches to classroom management, assessment, and inclusive practice in computing lessons.

 25 September and 2 October 2026

 *Computing Leads*


 Sub £470 / SLA £425 / Full £564

Five Fundamentals of Effective Classroom Practice 26/27

A series of whole-day training sessions for headteachers and leaders of teaching and learning.

The new Ofsted framework has identified leaders' impact on the development of teaching as a key area of focus. This training will develop school leaders' instructional leadership capacity and their effectiveness in developing the quality and consistency of teaching across all classes.

The course fee is for two attendees from each school.


 29 September, 14 October, 10 November 2026, 20 January and 15 March 2027

 *Five Fundamentals 2026*


 Sub £620 / SLA £465 / Full £744

Autumn 26/27 Primary Geography Leader Network Meetings

The primary geography network meetings support leaders to share good practice, reflect on current provision and gather practical and creative ideas for their own schools. Delegates will engage with up-to-date subject knowledge and effective pedagogical approaches, helping leaders to make informed decisions about curriculum design and teaching and learning in geography.

 30 Sept 2026	Fareham, Gosport and Havant area
1 Oct 2026	Basingstoke & Deane, Hart and Rushmoor areas
8 Oct 2026	New Forest, Winchester and Test Valley areas
12 Oct 2026	Virtual

 *Autumn Geography*

 Sub £75 / SLA £45 / Full £90
(price per session)

Block Based Programming in KS2 and KS3

This face-to-face course is designed for teachers working in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 who want to strengthen their understanding of how to teach block-based programming effectively. It focuses on practical classroom methodologies and teaching strategies, rather than just learning how to use a particular tool.

The main programming environments explored will be Scratch, micro bit and crumble but other block-based programming languages will be referenced where they help illustrate progression, pedagogy, or common teaching challenges.

Participants will explore different ways of teaching block-based programming, with a strong emphasis on why particular approaches work well for certain pupils and contexts.

 1 October 2026

 *Block Based*

 Sub £230 / SLA £145 / Full £276

End of Key Stage Assessment for Teachers New to Year 6 26/27

A comprehensive coverage of issues and information relating to end of Key Stage 2 assessment, including a detailed review of the statutory tests. A one-day course for teachers undertaking end of Key Stage 2 statutory assessment for the first time OR those who have not been in Year 6 since 2015.

 15 October 2026

 *New Year 6*

 Sub £255 / SLA £180 / Full £306