

The logo for ECM, consisting of the letters 'ECM' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark teal circular background.

Education
Getting a job done

A young girl with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a white school polo shirt and a dark grey skirt, is smiling and adjusting her pink and blue backpack straps. In the background, another child is partially visible, riding a bicycle.

2025-26

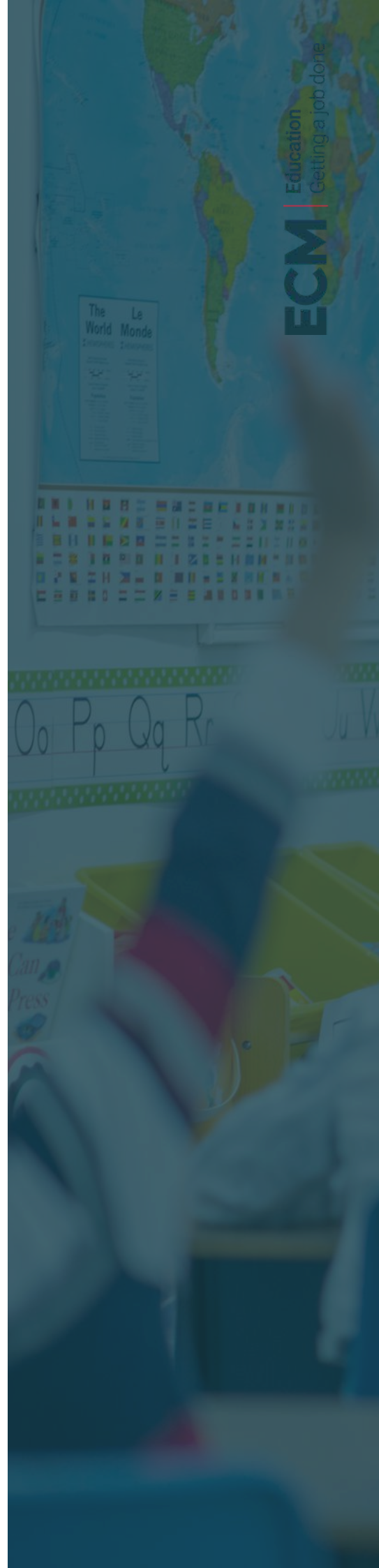
ECM EDUCATION ASSOCIATES

GETTING A JOB DONE

INSPIRING LEADERS AND IMPROVING
OUTCOMES, FOR SCHOOLS AND
ACADEMIES NATIONWIDE

MEET OUR ECM ASSOCIATES

Paul Ackers
Ray Biglin
Tony Birch
Cassie Blackwood
Laura Brown
Paul Buckland
Julie Cheung
Belinda Crowhurst
Catherine Cooke
Mike Dixon
Simon Dyson
Lesley Else
John Evans
Michael Gaskill
Daniel Gauld
Vicki Guest
Katie Hague
Donna Harris
Lisa Hesmondhalgh
Julie Hurst
Steve Lowe
James Marsh
Collette Mather
Mylene McGuire
Oliver McPhail
Shaun Miles
Karen Morris
Mark Mullin
Kevan Naughton
Tim Nelson
Kathy Nichol
Gillian Talbot
Alan Taylor-Bennett
Allan Torr
Liam Trippier
Colin Watson
Jeanette Westhead
Wendy Wheldon





PAUL ACKERS

Paul is an experienced senior leader within Primary Schools. He is in his twelfth year of headship and he is currently the head teacher of St Nicholas Catholic Academy in Liverpool. Prior to relocating back to the north west, he was an Executive Head and school improvement partner for the St Ralph Sherwin MAT with responsibility for school to school QA support, digital innovation and also, the development of subject leader expert groups across the Trust. Paul has also been a head teacher in Leigh, Derby City and Stockport, and he has worked across a number of local authorities in a school leadership and improvement capacity.

Paul has worked in a number of very contrasting school contexts in the north west and east midlands and has experience of leading a VA school, a stand alone academy and schools as part of a large Multi Academy Trust. He has a proven record of school improvement and has successfully led three schools through Ofsted inspections achieving 'Good' each time, the most recent in taking place in December 2022 where he took the school from Inadequate to Good. He has also led three schools through a Catholic Schools Inspectorate process (most recent May 2023) achieving both Good and Outstanding judgements. Paul's leadership has been described as being 'strong and transparent' and that his focus is on 'high ambitions for all pupils' and a 'passion for providing pupils with memorable educational experiences are 'highly effective'.

Paul is passionate about developing people and building relationships with communities. Throughout his headships, Paul has actively promoted opportunities to facilitate staff development. As a head in Leigh, he was a lead facilitator for an 'Aspiring Heads' initiative, which required him to plan and deliver a tailored program of activities to help develop the next generation of school leaders.

Paul's current school improvement position affords him the opportunity to work across a number of schools within the MAT, and he has responsibility for coordinating and sharing expertise amongst colleagues both primary and secondary through the innovation of curriculum subject expert groups where best practice is shared, collaborations formed and curriculums refined. He is also a coach and mentor for new head teachers and has carried out a number of QA visits for schools.

Paul has worked within settings in redesigning and refining their curriculums and has provided advice and solutions on how to promote pupil welfare and the raising of aspirations through the implementation of a character curriculum focus. He has supported schools in preparation for inspection and has represented the Trust on inspection for a number of schools. Paul has also supported the restructuring of staffing as to meet the needs of the school and pupils and has designed robust monitoring and QA systems.

PAUL'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Safeguarding
- Effective communicator
- EYFS
- Proven track record of school leadership in more than one school
- School improvement partner as part of a large MAT
- Curriculum development and design including the implementation of a character curriculum
- Coaching and mentoring expertise
- Strategic and financial planning
- Staff development
- Building relationships at all levels and with all stakeholders



RAY BIGLIN

Ray has worked as an Ofsted Lead Inspector in both the primary and secondary sectors. He has also worked as a school improvement adviser with Leeds Authority and as a lesson observer expert practitioner at Leeds City College—one of the largest further education colleges in the country. Ray currently works as a Lead Reviewer and QA assessor with Challenge Partners, an organisation providing reviews and school improvement advice for nearly 500 primary and secondary schools across the country. Ray also works as a school improvement partner for a large secondary school in the North East.

Ray has wide experience of working internationally, carrying out primary, all-through, and secondary school reviews in the Middle East, New York, and France. He is an accredited BSO inspector and was part of a team that carried out an inspection in Abu Dhabi. Since 2018, Ray has led or been a team member on 15 inspections in the Cayman Islands and has quality assured a large number of reports.

Between 2013 and 2017, Ray worked as an Education Challenge Partner across Norfolk, providing regular support and challenge to over 30 primary schools, resulting in significant improvement.

Ray can offer support in the following areas: preparing for Ofsted; lesson observation skills; teaching and learning; self-evaluation; curriculum development; post-16 provision; and management training for both middle and senior leaders.

RAY'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Ofsted Preparation
- Lesson Observation Skills
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Development
- Post-16 Provision
- Management Training for both Middle and Senior Leaders





TONY BIRCH

Tony is the Founding Director of Birch Education. This bespoke educational consultancy, founded in 2020, is dedicated to empowering individuals and teams, supporting them to develop sustainable and successful approaches. Focused on 'insight-analysis-growth', his recent commissions have included strategic planning, partnership development, and supported self-evaluations. He works with a range of organisations and is a facilitator on National Professional Qualifications for headship and executive leadership. He is also a Challenge Partners lead reviewer.

Tony is also a member of the 'development team' at the Association of Education Advisers (AoEA), fulfilling a range of roles that include candidate assessment and facilitating various training and development sessions. He is currently the 'Series Editor' for their collection of books documenting the role of the adviser. He is also the author of "Primary Education as a Whole: Sociocultural Perspectives for Leaders" (2022).

Previously, Tony worked for Bolton Council for more than 20 years where he managed an award-winning educational ICT team, served as a school improvement adviser, and Head of School Improvement before becoming Assistant Director and the lead for education and learning strategy. In his role in Bolton, he also took a secondment to the commercial sector, completed work as an Ofsted lead inspector, and served as an Additional Inspector on ICT surveys. Tony was involved in the governance of various organisations.

He is currently a Trustee at Woodbridge Multi-Academy Trust and chair of Woodbridge College, a post-19 SEND provision. Recently, he was Chief External Examiner for Manchester University's primary PGCE. Tony has a Ph.D. and is an accredited Neurolinguistic Programming practitioner. He is a Senior Associate of the AoEA and a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching.

TONY'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Evaluation and review
- Performance management
- Training and development
- Partnership review and development
- Facilitation
- Coaching
- Investigations and complaints
- Change management
- Organisational development





CASSIE BLACKWOOD

Cassie Blackwood has a wealth of experience specialising in leading early years. Cassie firmly stands for representing the highest standards in education and outstanding expectations for making a real difference and delivering incomparable and extraordinary education to all. Cassie now works as a consultant supporting early years and primary phase, running staff training and exhibitions nationwide.

For over 15 years, Cassie has worked in this capacity focusing on raising quality practice and empowering concrete philosophies for Early Years and Primary Education. Cassie works nationwide with many provisions including multi-academy trusts and wrap around care services.

Cassie works with headteachers to ensure that they fully understand why they need to improve and, above all, how best to improve. The welfare of young children remains at the heart of all work that she undertakes. Cassie delivers a wide range of EYFS training courses, covering today's frameworks and legislation and offers accredited forest school training.

In Cassie's most recent Ofsted report in leadership, her passion and skills were recognised as a particular strength, "Leadership and management is exceptional. The manager has a strong vision, determination, and passion to deliver the highest-quality outcomes for all children. She has high expectations of her staff and of what children can achieve."

Cassie specialises in SEND and is PEG trained to support schools that have children with percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy insertions. She can capture the salient

points of strengths and development areas succinctly and clearly to ensure that the proposed impact of any suggested actions will be measurable in terms of improving the life chances for the children.

CASSIE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Early years, safeguarding including Prevent
- SEND reviews
- Supporting EYFS leaders to raise quality and drive improvement
- Transforming provision from ordinary to extraordinary
- Curriculum model and innovation





LAURA BROWN

Laura has been a consultant with First4Maths since 2019. She is passionate about the teaching and learning of mathematics and has a desire to see all children grow, develop and achieve their potential as confident and engaged mathematicians.

Laura worked as a class teacher in Merseyside and Cheshire for 14 years, teaching across KS1 and KS2. She worked in a Cheshire West school from 2007–2019, where she held the role of Mathematics Subject Leader from 2009. During her role, she led many large, whole-school projects leading to a rise in progress and attainment.

Laura has been a consultant with First4Maths since 2019. She is passionate about the teaching and learning of mathematics and has a desire to see all children grow, develop and achieve their potential as confident and engaged mathematicians. Laura loves to share her enthusiasm and love of concrete resources (especially a bead string) with teachers as part of her consultancy role with First4Maths. She believes strongly in enabling and empowering teachers to feel confident and take ownership of the teaching of mathematics in their own classroom.





PAUL BUCKLAND

Paul was Headteacher at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Cumbria for seven years, the highest performing school in that county. During this time, Paul also worked as an Ofsted Inspector for four years until 2022 in the Northwest. Prior to this, he was Deputy Headteacher at North Halifax Grammar School, Calderdale for 10 years.

Paul's early career included experience in three comprehensives in North Yorkshire and Leeds, including time as Assistant Headteacher in Horsforth School. Paul has led two large Comprehensive English faculties but has extensive experience of deep dives in most subject areas. Paul has led on many areas of school improvement: CPD, Behaviour for Learning, Quality Assurance, student outcomes and attendance.

Paul is an advocate of the Mindsets philosophy and encourages students and colleagues to grasp every experience as a learning opportunity. Paul is a school improvement consultant with experience across many trusts and contexts in the North, in addition to being an Associate for ECM. Paul also coaches colleagues through NPQ programmes, writes for The Good Schools Guide and Teach Secondary and has his own blog, Tales from The Headteacher's Desk.

PAUL'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Leadership and management
- Ofsted preparation

- Making clear judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and supporting schools in working towards school improvements; teamwork and developing leadership across school, including robust self-evaluation, governance; safeguarding and headteacher appraisal





JULIE CHEUNG

Julie is currently the headteacher at Brownlow Primary School in Bolton. She has also taken on an executive headship for the local authority, supporting a 520 pupil primary school and providing stability in the absence of a substantive headteacher. She has led and supported this school through their recent Ofsted inspection.

Ofsted recognised that Julie provides strong leadership, 'The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well together as a team. They have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and the priorities for development.'

'The school is well-led and managed by a committed headteacher and deputy headteacher. They make regular checks on how well the school is doing, so they have a very clear idea of its strengths and what needs improving'.

Julie is passionate about establishing an effective ethos and culture and believes that the culture in a school is the secret ingredient to success. Julie believes that when shared beliefs and values are aligned, the whole school community is able to thrive.

Julie leads by example with integrity, creativity and resilience. She is able to effectively motivate, guide and advise staff, ensuring they are well supported and positive in carrying out their roles. This was recognised in the most recent Ofsted inspection. 'Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate all that leaders do to support their well-being and help them to manage their workload'.

As a leader, Julie demands ambitious standards, paying particular attention to what works well to raise educational attainment. She is able to undertake clear and rigorous assessments of the overall performance of a school in order to secure good quality teaching for all pupils.

Coaching and mentoring underpins all aspects of Julie's leadership. Through coaching sessions, she successfully facilitates structured conversations designed to provoke reflection and deep thought, helping staff identify their areas for improvement, maximising their strengths and finding their authentic leadership style.

JULIE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Leadership and management, in particular the development of middle and senior leaders
- Establishing an effective school culture
- Accountability Conversations
- Rigorous Self Evaluation
- Strategic School Improvement Planning
- Special Educational Needs
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Development





BELINDA CROWHURST

Belinda has worked in senior leadership roles for the past five years, following a 16-year career as an outstanding primary teacher and English subject lead. She took on the role of Associate School Leader at Reach South Academy Trust in 2019, where she supported strategic school improvement across 14 schools in Plymouth and Bournemouth.

Specialising in English, Early Reading and Phonics, she worked with senior and middle leaders to strengthen the quality of education and leadership, and undertook a key role in preparing schools for inspection. One of her most notable successes was reviewing schools' approaches to the teaching of reading, implementing an explicit approach to the daily teaching of reading in every school which focused on improving comprehension, fluency and automaticity. She also led all her schools in enhancing the quality of their early reading provision, working alongside the local DfE Hub to train teaching and support staff, support reading leaders to monitor progress, and improve fidelity to their chosen SSP. Over the course of two years, her work significantly improved the end of key stage outcomes in reading and the Phonics Screening Check in all of her schools. She supported five schools to secure favourable outcomes during inspection through support prior to and during the deep dive process in a range of subjects.

During her teaching career, Belinda worked as an English Subject Lead, English Adviser for Plymouth Local Authority, an SLE, and an Every Child a Writer Lead Teacher – her outreach work across the primary sector facilitating improvements in the provision of robust approaches to delivering reading, phonics and writing instruction, and Greater Depth writing – all of which contributed to improved pupil outcomes. In her recent capacity as a consultant, she has gone on to support school improvement in primary

school settings across the country, securing success in improving the capacity of middle leaders to lead their subjects. She deploys a thorough and focused approach to diagnosing the key issues using a range of evidence, implementing effective strategies, and then evaluating systems and processes. She remains keenly aware of the bespoke needs of each of the settings she works in.

Belinda has developed her school improvement work to include a focus on metacognition and pupil motivation – empowering pupils to become ‘assessment capable’ and working with schools to develop their use of effective feedback and assessment to improve pupil progress. She delivered virtual workshops on Visible Learning and Feedback at both the 2021 and 2022 World Education Summit, and continues to provide focused support to schools in using evidence-based approaches to maximise achievement.

Reviewing school effectiveness is a key part of Belinda’s work, and the support she provides to schools is varied. She works with senior leadership teams, hubs, and with individuals to support accurate self-evaluation, develop effective monitoring systems, and identify key areas of focus which she then addresses. She coaches teachers and middle leaders, delivers bespoke training to schools and trusts, and has worked extensively with schools and MATs to review their curricula in order to meet the needs of learners. The knowledge and experience she has gained through her work with the Local Authority, the National Literacy Trust, the DfE Phonics Hub, ECM and Osiris Educational, her extensive experience of Ofsted inspections, plus her dedication to undertaking self-directed CPD ensure that she maintains a sharp focus on key areas for improvement.

BELINDA’S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Belinda’s knowledge and expertise in delivering the primary curriculum, along with her ability to diagnose and clearly articulate key areas of focus, are a strength. She is adept at delivering training – her recent and varied experience in schools allowing her to respond to the needs of delegates and relate to the content of the materials. Feedback regarding Belinda’s work is always extremely positive. Feedback is often given in particular for the clarity and engaging nature of the CPD she delivers. Her commitment to promoting the positive impact of developing metacognitive strategies means she is at the forefront of the most recent research into improving pupil outcomes.
- **School Improvement:** She has significant experience of working with schools to identify their key areas of focus and is skilled in supporting staff to deliver improvements by helping them to develop robust strategic planning, monitoring and CPD. Her ability to form professional relationships and quickly secure relational trust from the people she works with is a strength.



CATHERINE COOKE

Catherine has demonstrated leadership in various contexts and is a very experienced primary headteacher, including in a multi-academy trust. She has extensive experience of school reviews, curriculum design, headteacher appraisals, and SEND. Catherine has a thorough understanding of the deep dive methodology and the expectations of the Ofsted framework. She has an education degree, the National Professional Qualification for Headship, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Attachment, Trauma and Mental Health.

Catherine also works for a local authority and teaching school as an associate school adviser and mentor and has trained aspiring leaders through national programmes such as NPQSL and NPQ SENCO.

As a qualified coach, Catherine has the skills and expertise to support leaders in balancing a sharp focus on strategic school improvement with the pressures of leadership. She has represented headteachers in a variety of contexts such as Schools Forum, specialist groups and was the chair of her local headteacher association for 2 years.

CATHERINE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Inspections and preparation
- Subject deep dives
- Curriculum development/design
- Subject leadership
- SEND
- Leadership coaching
- Understanding and managing challenging behaviour



MIKE DIXON

Mike is the Headteacher at Acresfield Academy, as well as an associate for ECM. He has been Headteacher at Acresfield Academy for 15 years, during which time he has moved the school from satisfactory to outstanding. The school achieved a second outstanding under his leadership in 2024. The school is a one-form entry primary school in Chester, with a nursery and resource provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and complex needs. As an associate for ECM Education, he supports school improvement, Headteacher appraisal, and carries out various training programmes. Mike enjoys working closely with senior leaders to help drive whole-school improvements in a manageable and timely way. This includes working with curriculum leaders and middle leaders to secure improvements and develop the leadership skills of staff.

Ofsted acknowledged the "outstanding leadership of the Headteacher" in the way he has "successfully driven the school forward." Since becoming an academy in 2019 and joining the Northwest Academies Trust, Mike has continued to drive improvements at the school to ensure that children's outcomes remain excellent, both in terms of their academic attainment and personal development.

Mike ensures that he presides over a school that is a happy and vibrant place to learn, with inclusive practices that meet the needs of all learners. Maintaining high standards is always a challenge for school leaders, but it is one that Mike is proud of achieving at Acresfield. He has been able to share his expertise with others by mentoring Headteachers and supporting their early development in the local area.

Mike's particular expertise lies in school improvement planning and robust self-evaluation; curriculum developments, including the wider curriculum and planning for

"deep dives"; making clear judgements about the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment; supporting schools in working towards school improvements; teamwork and developing leadership across the school; Headteacher appraisal, developing pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and supporting their personal development.

MIKE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Curriculum Development
- Inclusion
- Assessment
- Retrieval Practice
- School Improvement
- Self-Evaluation

As headteacher of Our Lady Star of the Sea, I cannot speak highly enough about the transformative impact Mike has had on our school. His dedication, expertise, and tailored approach to school improvement have been nothing short of exceptional.

Before engaging with Mike, our school faced several challenges, including declining student outcomes. However, through his comprehensive analysis and strategic planning, he provided us with a roadmap for positive change. Regular visits and support were instrumental in continually monitoring progress and writing an effective school self-evaluation, offering valuable feedback.

Today, I am proud to say that our school continues to be judged as 'good'—Ofsted Dec 2022. Test scores have risen, teacher morale is higher, and most importantly, our students are thriving. The expertise, professionalism, and unwavering support of Mike and ECM have been instrumental in our journey towards becoming a high-performing school.

I wholeheartedly recommend Mike to any school seeking a partner dedicated to fostering lasting positive change and achieving excellence.

Louise Finlay | Headteacher at Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School



Mike has been with us on our journey as our learning partner since our previous Ofsted inspection in 2017 to our most recent one in 2023. During this time, we have progressed from 'Good' overall to 'Good with outstanding features' as a result of his direct support in school.

Mike's insight has guided us in reviewing our curriculum and ensuring that it is appropriately progressive and meets the needs of all learners in our school, and that our assessments enable our most able learners to demonstrate their understanding.

Mike has also been pivotal in developing strong subject leadership within the school and enabling subject leaders to fully understand the vision and intent for their subjects. Pupil outcomes have been positively impacted in all areas of teaching and learning.

Alongside Mike's support with curriculum development, he has also coached less experienced members of staff in their role as new subject leaders. From this, their confidence and understanding of their roles has grown, and again, we have seen positive impacts on our outcomes for pupils as a result of this.

We look forward to continuing with ECM in our school development journey.

Lyndsey Colman | Headteacher at Scholar Green Primary School



SIMON DYSON

Simon was the headteacher at Highfields Academy in Nantwich for 14 years. Over the years, he has provided leadership support to several primary schools in his local area and has extensive quality assurance experience across a range of schools.

Simon is also an accredited leadership facilitator and has provided training for many aspiring leaders through the NPQML, NPQSL, and NPQH programmes.

Simon has been Chair of the Nantwich Education Partnership and during this time, implemented innovative approaches to school partnership work, examples being the employment of a SEND consultant and Family Support services. Simon's leading role in developing partnership working has been recognised by OFSTED: "Simon ensures that the school works in partnership with a range of schools, both within the Nantwich school partnership and further afield, to share good practice. You have lots of evidence to indicate that such partnerships help to improve the accuracy of the school's assessments of pupils' work, as well as the quality of teaching."

Simon has led his current school through the process of conversion to Academy status, increased the age range of his school, and also managed several large-scale premises development projects. Simon is currently the Chair of Governors at an outstanding secondary special school.

SIMON'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Strengths in Data Analysis, Monitoring, and Tracking of Assessment Data
- Understanding the Inspection Framework and Preparing for Inspection
- Expertise in the Inspection Process, including 'deep dives'; making clear judgments about the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment; and possessing in-depth knowledge about the process of converting to academy status
- Skilled in developing teamwork and leadership across the school and beyond, through robust self-evaluation, governance, safeguarding, and appraisal





LESLEY ELSE

Lesley Else joined ECM Education Consultants as an Associate Advisor in November 2016. Lesley has extensive quality assurance experience in schools. She holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and the Professional Qualification for School Inspectors (PQSI).

Before joining ECM, Lesley had over 20 years of experience in a range of teaching and senior leadership roles within primary schools, taking one from 'requires improvement' to 'good' and another from 'good' to 'outstanding'.

Lesley has extensive experience working within senior management, with a proven track record of improving schools and was instrumental in improving several schools in challenging circumstances within the Bradford area. Lesley works with many schools within Cheshire, Wirral, Staffordshire, and Bolton on all aspects of school improvement and has expertise in leadership and management, improving teaching and learning, and early years. She has led several training sessions for leaders and governors to ensure their schools are well-prepared for inspection under the new framework. She is passionate about providing the best possible support and advice through an inspector's eyes and ensures children are at the heart of all she does.

LESLEY'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- The Ofsted inspection Framework and preparing for Inspection.
- The inspection process, including 'deep dives'.
- Making clear judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment including early years.
- Supporting schools in working towards school improvements.
- Headteacher Appraisal.

Lesley provides challenge and support at a strategic level. Her knowledge and understanding of current issues in schools and the Ofsted framework ensures that we are forever moving in the right direction and providing the very best education for the children in school. Lesley understands the challenges that leaders face and is pragmatic with the advice she gives. She will often provide school with documents to read, these further develop our thought processes and often confirm our approach to teaching and learning. Lesley checks through our documents and development plans to ensure that they are rigorous enough and ultimately ensure that we raise standards in school. Lesley is a critical friend for the school and her visits to school always impact school development.

Vicky Chaterjee | Headteacher at Clarendon Primary School

I cannot recommend working with ECM for HTPM highly enough. I have found Lesley to be a fantastic support over the last seven years. As a new head, she was an invaluable support and has helped me to develop in my role. She is a critical friend who leaves no stone unturned and has ensured that we feel ready for our upcoming OFSTED inspection. She has worked closely with myself and SLT and supported my wider staff in the development of our curriculum.

Jo Procter | Headteacher at Christ the King Primary School



JOHN EVANS

John is one of the directors of ECM, which was established 14 years ago. He has 13 years of headship experience in two contrasting primary schools, where Ofsted identified him as an outstanding leader. John also has four years' experience as a local authority adviser and served as an inspector for Ofsted.

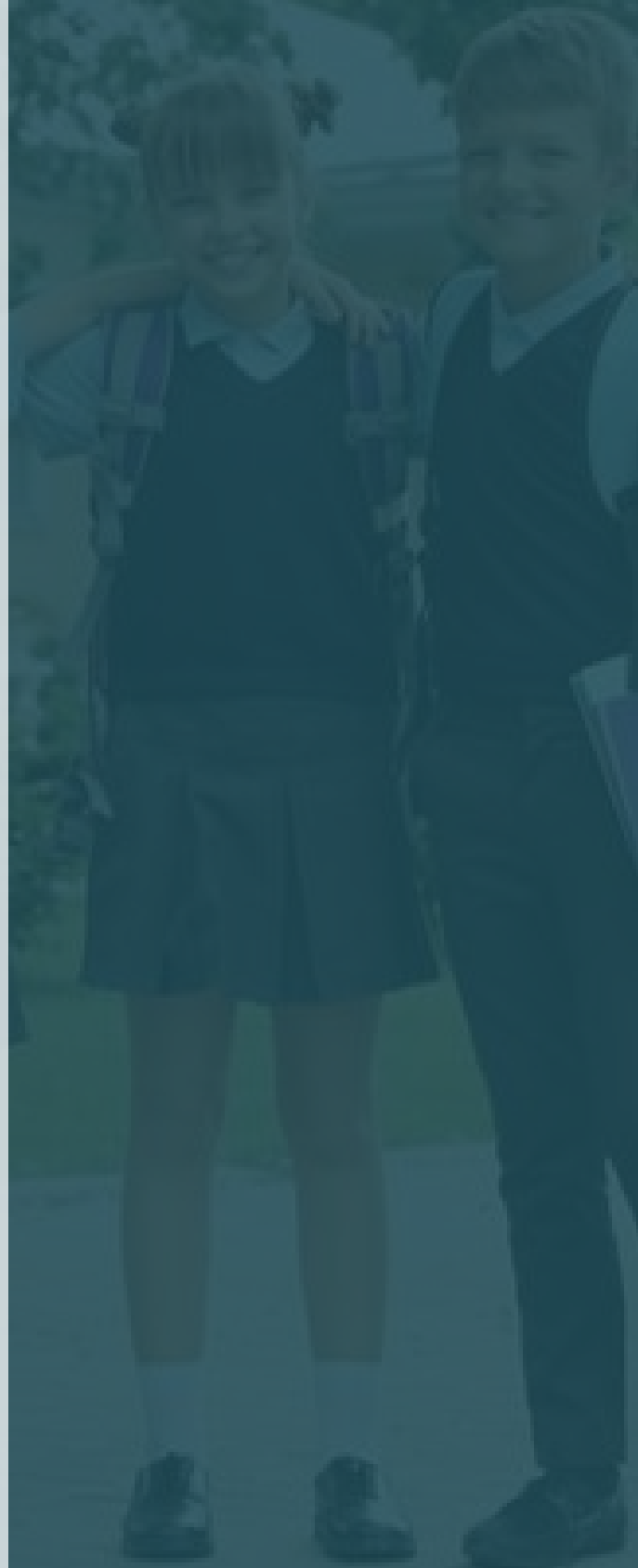
John has supported Multi-Academy Trusts, clusters, and consortia of schools in achieving their goals, as well as individual schools as a Leadership Partner across the country. He has a proven track record of contributing to sustained improvements in the schools he has worked with, many of which have successfully achieved 'outstanding' status during their inspection. John also writes the ECM Headteacher and senior leader termly briefings, in addition to leading on school reviews.

JOHN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- A supportive coaching style.
- Honest, trustworthy and experienced.
- Skilled at building confidence in colleagues in school, heads, subject leaders, class teachers and support staff.
- Up to date with all aspects of the new inspection framework and the inspection toolkits.
- Strengths in Curriculum development, assessment, attendance, inclusion, target setting, Ofsted preparation and strategic school improvement through self-evaluation and school impact planning.

Working closely with ECM over the last few years has supported leadership at all levels at Wolverham. The deep dive process we have followed in all subjects has helped leaders lead and monitor their subjects in a supportive way, ensuring the very best outcomes for pupils. John was available between visits to answer questions and provide ongoing support in the lead-up to our Ofsted inspection. Staff confidence has soared, and consequently, our inspection ran smoothly, with staff feeling prepared for the conversations and questions that came their way.

**Jenni Ogden | Headteacher
Wolverham Primary and
Nursery School**



Four years ago, we made the decision to work with ECM for support for the school. The impact has been tremendous across many areas. John has been the epitome of a critical friend. He has been able to bring an expert outsider's eye to all aspects of the school. The fact that ECM operates in so many schools means that whatever issue you are facing, he is able to draw upon good examples from other schools that have proven effective elsewhere.

We have hosted a visit from John three times a year. Before these visits take place, we always discuss issues around the school and the next steps for our development. This ensures that when John arrives, we have a clear focus that will have maximum impact.

The biggest impact that we have seen through these support sessions has been in how well all of our subject leaders have developed. Through John's coaching, the subject leaders are now able to discuss the intentions, implementation, and impact of their subjects in more depth and much more confidently. This was clearly seen during our recent OFSTED inspection. The work that the subject leaders had done with John meant they knew what was required within a deep dive and knew how best to present their information. John led the leaders (often in pairs) through each stage of a deep dive – modelling the process and discussing how to share our information most effectively.

The SLT and subject leaders have worked alongside John to look at many areas including the most effective ways of monitoring books and lessons; how best to collect, interpret, and present national, core subject, and foundation subject data; and how to most effectively collect pupil voice and prepare them for talking to adults other than school staff.

John has worked with SLT, subject leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, governors, and children. The difference between our OFSTED inspection before we started working with ECM and the one after was like chalk and cheese. All staff and governors felt confident throughout the two days - as did the children, who were used to talking with a "stranger" who was asking about reading habits or geography knowledge, for example.

After each visit, a concise report with manageable targets is always created, which has been great to share with governors, has fed into our SEF, and was shared with OFSTED. John also made himself available to speak to inspectors during the visit.

John also oversees the Headteacher Performance Management process in our school. Because he knows the school so well and is aware of areas for development, the targets set are always relevant and supportive of the school's development.

Kevin Manning | Headteacher at Elton Primary School



MICHAEL GASKILL

Michael has significant strengths and experience, including 22 years in headship and executive headship across eight local authorities for schools serving a wide range of communities.

Michael aims to demonstrate empathy, professional courtesy, and provide supportive, actionable feedback on every visit. His testimonials evidence his impact. Michael worked for Ofsted for six years, consistently earning outstanding feedback from HMI and schools alike. He is knowledgeable and skilled in the use of the inspection framework and in preparing for inspections; the inspection process, including 'deep dives', and in making clear judgments about the quality of education, leadership, behaviour, and personal development.

Michael has supported schools across the northwest for ECM and has consistently received outstanding feedback. He has had a significant impact in all aspects of school leadership, including teamwork, collaboration, and developing leadership across schools. His areas of expertise include robust self-evaluation, governance, safeguarding, and appraisal.

Michael's passion is improving the life chances of children through school improvement. He has done much valuable work with schools in challenging circumstances. Michael is a skilled trainer and coach with a productive history in supporting leaders to generate strategy and improve teaching, pupils' behaviour, culture, and ethos.

MICHAEL'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Headship
- Inspection Framework and preparing for Inspection
- Inspection Process
- Deep Dives
- Making clear judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- School Improvement
- Teamwork and developing leadership across school
- Self-evaluation, governance, safeguarding and appraisal

I have really appreciated the professional advice and support I have received from Michael Gaskill as our chosen School Improvement Partner. I have worked with Michael since October 2022 and I welcomed the time he took to understand the school context and life of the school. He has provided quality feedback and validated the work undertaken by the school and our progress towards whole school targets. His reports for governors were comprehensive and accurate whilst portraying the school in the best possible light. He has celebrated good practice and made recommendations in areas for development to ensure we challenge our pupils and offer a broad and a balanced curriculum that is fit for purpose backed up by concrete data.

He has supported myself as Headteacher through the performance management process to ensure targets are relevant, robust and appropriate and serve the specific needs of the school. This has had a direct impact on the leadership of the school and led to whole school improvement as reflected in the data for 2023. At the same time, Michael has been supportive and showed great empathy and understanding of the pressures that leadership entails and calls upon his vast experience of headship to develop good relationships with all the staff he has supported through the work undertaken during deep dive visits requested by the school.

**Janet McKinlay | Headteacher at St Mary's Primary School,
Middlewich**



DANIEL GAULD

Daniel is a serving Headteacher with experience of leading schools at all grades of the OFSTED framework. His current role is Head Teacher of a large primary school in an inner-city location, providing inclusive education for a diverse community.

Daniel has over 20 years' experience as a senior leader, and during that time, he has built up a wealth of practical skills that he uses to support and advise on school improvement and leadership. He looks to provide uncomplicated solutions to a range of issues facing school leaders, grounded in his own day-to-day experience of headship.

Daniel has represented schools on various LA groups, including In-Year Fair Access, High Needs Funding, The Children's Trust, School Forum, IT Procurement, and SEND Specialist Resourcing. He provides leadership support to a number of schools, focusing on improvements to teaching and learning, curriculum design, organisation of staffing, safeguarding, and financial management.

DANIEL'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Auditing school procedures such as compliance, governance, school improvement, safeguarding and financial planning.
- Streamlining school communication with stakeholders to enable leaders at all levels to deliver on school improvement without getting tied up with bureaucratic levels of paperwork.



VICKI GUEST

Vicki is an experienced and highly effective school leader with over 20 years' experience working across a range of primary schools in Bolton. She is deeply committed to school improvement and leadership development at all levels, with a strong track record of securing sustained improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes.

As a School Improvement Partner (SIP) for ECM Education, Vicki works with a range of schools across the North West. Her work includes leading high-quality Teaching and Learning Reviews, facilitating strategic planning with senior leadership teams and conducting robust headteacher performance management on behalf of governing bodies. Her focus is always on developing leadership capacity, strengthening classroom practice and driving tangible improvement in pupil outcomes.

Alongside her ECM role, Vicki serves as Executive Headteacher at Lostock Primary School and Director of Primary Education for Leverhulme Multi-Academy Trust. Under her leadership, Lostock Primary—where she was Headteacher for 11 years—was judged Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted in May 2024.

As Vice Chair of the Bolton Primary School Improvement Group, Vicki collaborates closely with headteachers and SIPs across the borough, promoting collective efficacy and the power of school-to-school support. Her career has spanned schools serving diverse communities, giving her a deep understanding of the local context as well as the wider education system.

With her experience, strategic insight and proven impact, Vicki is well placed to offer flexible, tailored leadership and school improvement support—whether through short-term intervention, peer support or longer-term partnership work.

VICKI'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Leadership development and capacity building at all levels
- Diagnostic school improvement work
- Strategic planning and curriculum leadership
- Driving sustainable improvement in schools requiring rapid change
- Building collaborative partnerships and promoting collective efficacy





KATIE HAGUE

Katie is currently the Executive Headteacher of The Orchards Federation in Bolton, consisting of a mainstream primary, a special primary, and a maintained nursery school. She has worked in a range of school improvement roles across various contexts. She has particular expertise in the inspection process, framework, and methodology.

During her 12 years of headship, her schools have improved considerably, as recognised by Ofsted and by the LA. All of her headships have been in schools that serve areas of high deprivation, with a large majority of EAL learners. Katie also took on an executive headship role for four terms in 2021, leading a school through a turbulent time and providing stability while making rapid improvements.

Katie has developed a staff team who are now supporting other schools through SLE work, moderation work, and secondments. She believes that collaboration across a range of schools is a powerful tool for staff development and school improvement.

Katie believes that every school serves a unique context and that the curriculum should reflect that. Ofsted (2021) recognised that “Leaders are ambitious for every pupil. The curriculum, the environment, and the extra opportunities that pupils receive enable everyone, including pupils with SEND, to benefit from a broad and rich learning experience. Across the school, leaders ensure that they secure pupils’ knowledge and broaden their horizons.”

Prior to her current role, Katie worked in schools in highly affluent areas, including the private sector. She also worked for the LA school improvement team, supporting a range of schools with curriculum development and delivering training. She has continued to work in quality assurance roles, believing that a transparent inspection process can support school improvement.

Katie is passionate about the importance of Early Years education and has been instrumental in the creation of an Early Years Improvement Group in her local authority, which she also chairs. She extended the nursery provision in her own school to accommodate 2-year-olds and has a strong understanding of the EYFS framework. Her school has a SEND High Needs Base for nursery children.

KATIE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Early Years, including nursery settings.
- Evaluating the quality of the curriculum offer and supporting EYFS leads in identifying strengths and areas of development for the whole staff team.
- Evaluating and improving the curriculum, including the deep dive process.
- The Ofsted Inspection Framework and preparing for inspection.





DONNA HARRIS

Throughout her career, Donna has been identified as a lead practitioner and an integral member of several senior leadership teams. Donna spent several years as a leading literacy teacher, deputy headteacher and time as an acting headteacher. She has a proven track record at developing the role of subject leaders and is currently the Primaries Science Lead across a multi-academy trust in the North West.

As a science consultant, Donna is passionate about raising standards and improving outcomes for children in primary science. Using her Chemistry degree from the University of York, Donna uses her thorough knowledge and understanding of science to inspire staff to deliver high-quality science lessons which result in outstanding progress for children. Donna's areas of specific expertise include developing a framework for teachers to enthusiastically, and confidently, deliver the science curriculum with working scientifically embedded effectively throughout learning.

Donna has recently been invited by the Standards & Testing Agency to join their KS2 Science Teacher Panel developing future KS2 science sampling tests.

Donna is committed to her role as a successful mentor for teacher colleagues. She has a particular interest in, and experience of, working with early career teachers across several local authorities.



KATE HURLEY

A former assistant headteacher, Kate taught at an IAPS Preparatory School in Devon for 13 years. Prior to working in the independent sector, Kate taught in the maintained sector as well as internationally in Italy and the USA.

With experience as a SENDCO, DSL, Operations and Compliance management in schools, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her current role as a freelance consultant and school inspector. She has a deep understanding of safeguarding in schools, especially in relation to safer recruitment and the single central register. She is also well versed in health and safety responsibilities and premises management in line with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations.

Kate has also written a performance management framework for both academic and non-academic staff; and holds a strong appreciation of the best practice approaches used by school leaders to navigate the management of a range of personnel. As a teacher panellist for the DfE's Teacher Regulation Agency, Kate has strong evaluation skills and always demonstrates impartiality and open thinking.

As an educator, Kate's specialisms are in the teaching of Early Years, Music, Drama and Computing. Having worked as a subject lead in these areas, Kate is skilled in subject leadership principles and the analysis of curriculum plans to ensure continuity of skill and knowledge progression across the primary age phase. Kate has developed a selection of online training modules for non-specialist teachers of subjects, as well as other CPD aspects. Kate is passionate about the value of extra-curricular enrichment opportunities and has extensive experience of developing programmes to engage learners and support achievement and pupil wellbeing.

Kate is objective and believes in rigorous evidence gathering to make informed and balanced judgements. She strongly believes in a collegial approach that supports robust triangulation of evidence for a fair outcome. Kate loves the process of inspection as it is both about celebrating pupil outcomes and achievements as well as indicating areas of development to refine a school's improvement focus. Working in the UK and as an overseas inspector has allowed Kate to have a well-rounded overview of how a wide variety of schools operate and how they can prepare successfully for the best inspection result.

KATE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Making clear judgements about pupil outcomes through assessing the quality of teaching and learning
- Supporting schools to prepare for an independent school (F23) inspection by carrying out cooperative audits and evaluations through a self-reflective approach
- Teamwork, and the development of leadership and management that includes creativity and inspiration, alongside stringent safeguarding and health and safety approaches, with a deep respect for equality and diversity





JULIE HURST

Julie is a passionate positive psychologist and coach, dedicated to cultivating effective leadership within educational settings. With her unwavering dedication to empowering school leaders and promoting growth, she has supported schools throughout the UK.

She is a strong believer in the power of positive psychology coaching to unlock strengths and potential, thus transforming individual and team performance. Not only does this impact performance, but clear coaching leadership helps foster a greater sense of teamwork and aids staff retention.

Through her deep understanding of positive psychology principles, she seamlessly integrates evidence-based strategies into her coaching sessions, fostering a safe and supportive environment that nurtures both personal and professional development.

She equips leaders with practical strategies for effective communication, team building, and conflict resolution. Her engaging and interactive teaching style ensures that leaders not only acquire knowledge but also gain the skills and confidence to implement these strategies in their day-to-day work.

Beyond her coaching work, Julie is an advocate for the use of positive education in schools and regularly works with entire staff bodies to bring the skills and practices of positive education into both the classroom and the staffroom, impacting both resilience and academic performance.

JULIE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Creating strengths-based leadership teams to build a positive school culture.
- Using the evidence base of positive psychology coaching to help leaders inspire and motivate both staff and pupils.



LISA HESMONDHALGH

Lisa is the Director of English for the Aspire Educational Trust, has recent experience as a primary headteacher and holds the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership. She has expertise in the inspection process, framework, and methodology and is an Evidence Lead in Education for the Aspirer Research School, as well as a consultant for ECM.

Until recently, she was the Headteacher at Peover Superior in Cheshire East for 9 years, a small mixed-age rural school. Prior to this role, she was an Assistant Head at a large two-form-entry primary school in Wigan and has also worked in a special school for children with complex needs, as well as being an Advanced Skills Teacher.

As Director of English for the Aspire Educational Trust, she oversees the strategic direction of English for 13 primary schools across a range of different contexts. This involves working with headteachers, senior leaders, and teachers to provide bespoke training and support in all areas of English, including Early reading, Phonics and Oracy. In addition to this subject specialism, Lisa is an experienced teacher with 28 years of service and has a firm understanding of the DfE Reading and Writing Framework.

She strongly believes that the inspection process supports school improvement and helps bring about better learning and teaching for more children.

Ofsted (2017) recognised that at Lisa's school, "Excellent leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Leaders, governors, and trust board members are very ambitious for the school and are highly committed to improving the life chances of pupils. As a result of their determination and drive, the school is a happy place where

pupils make excellent progress in their learning and grow in confidence." Through rigorous and effective systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, the school improved from Special Measures to Outstanding in four years and remains an outstanding school within the Aspire Educational Trust.

Working as an Evidence Lead in Education for the Aspirer Research School, she ensures she has an up-to-date knowledge of the most recent EEF guidance reports and has worked with schools from the primary and secondary sectors across the Northwest to ensure that systems and processes for the implementation of school improvement targets take account of research-informed practice. Much of this recent work has been to support the development of spoken language and oracy strategies in the classroom.

LISA'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Inspection process, framework, and methodology.
- Wider curriculum development and teaching pedagogy.
- English curriculum, teaching and assessment – Reading, Writing and Spoken Language including phonics and EYFS.
- Evidence informed practice from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Thank you so much for the time taken to get to know us on your visit and for your 'presence' - we really felt that you were with us and got under the bonnet of how our school works and what we need. It was so powerful to gain from your knowledge of literacy and specifically reading.

**Karen Graham | Headteacher
at St Catherine's Primary
School, Bolton**



“It has been a real privilege to work with Lisa across our Trust this year. Her depth of knowledge, particularly of the Ofsted framework, is second to none. She brings absolute clarity on what inspectors are looking for and how best to prepare, ensuring that we get the very best out of our leaders and, ultimately, the best outcomes for pupils.

What sets Lisa apart is her ability to coach staff at every level with warmth, empathy, and insight. She has been instrumental in building the confidence of our leaders and teams, ensuring they are well-prepared to lead in their areas and are clear on the strategic actions needed for ongoing improvement.

Her approach strikes the perfect balance between challenge and support. She holds leaders to account where needed, but always in a constructive and personable manner that brings people with her. Staff consistently comment on how much they value her input.

We are extremely grateful for the impact Lisa has made and would not hesitate to recommend her to other schools or trusts seeking expert guidance, genuine partnership, and tangible improvement.”

Nikki Patel | Deputy CEO Archbishop Temple Trust, Bolton

“Lisa was approachable, knowledgeable and supportive throughout the day. Her wealth of experience and understanding helped it to feel like a genuinely supportive developmental day rather than an 'inspection' activity. We learnt so much from her and staff were able to quickly identify next steps. I know that talking to other heads who have had Lisa, they have had a very similar, warm supportive visit. It was one of the best developmental days our team have ever had - thank you.”

Alexia Fox | Holy Family Catholic Primary School



STEVE LOWE

Steve has over 30 years' experience in education leadership. After a career in the mainstream, special and AP sectors, Steve is now an Independent Education Consultant; amongst his current work, he supports local authorities to quality assure Alternative Education Provision, provides SIP support to maintained special and mainstream schools, and works as a SIP for a large special school MAT.

Prior to his current role, Steve was a headteacher for 7 years at the Oxfordshire Hospital School, an all-through Special School providing education for young people with health conditions, including mental health, in hospitals and the community; the school taught over 800 young people each year. As headteacher at the OHS, Steve led the school to an outstanding Ofsted in 2023. Earlier in his career, Steve held various senior leadership positions in mainstream secondary schools in London and Reading, including over 10 years as a deputy headteacher in a large secondary comprehensive school in Swindon. Steve has also served as an associate headteacher in an EOTAS / PRU provision.

Embedded throughout Steve's approach to education are the principles of equity and equality. Steve is a strong advocate for inclusive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging and mattering, where diversity is valued and supported.

Steve continues to promote the importance of ethical leadership, thinking and decision-making in education, and constantly asks the question, "What positive difference will that make to all our learners?"

Steve's approach is highly collaborative and is designed to empower service leaders, headteachers, governors and senior leaders to build leadership capacity, deliver lasting

improvement, and secure better outcomes for children and young people. Steve uses coaching methods that encourage reflection, helping staff identify areas for improvement, maximising strengths, and the self-discovery of authentic leadership styles.

Steve holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship, and in addition to his current role, Steve is also a Director at the National Association of Hospital Education and a member of the Health Conditions in Schools Alliance.

STEVE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Establishing an effective & inclusive school culture
- Leadership and management including governor development
- Self-Evaluation & Strategic School Improvement Planning
- Teaching and Learning
- Special Educational Needs





JAMES MARSH

James has gained extensive leadership experience working as a senior leader and Headteacher in a range of primary schools across the North West. James has now left headship and works as a full-time Education Consultant and adviser to a range of schools in differing contexts.

James has significant experience in school improvement, including supporting schools causing concern. He has led schools through transitional periods of change from 'Requires Improvement' judgements to 'Good' and 'Outstanding'. He has particular expertise in the inspection process, framework, and methodology. James has extensive experience supporting schools in developing the school curriculum and the quality of teaching. He also provides leadership coaching for Headteachers across the North West. As well as providing in-school support, James works as an associate adviser with ECM and delivers sessions for Best Practice Network on the NPQH programme.

JAMES' AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- School Improvement
- Curriculum Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Developing Senior Leaders and Headteachers

Now in my second year of working with James as my SIP and although I had worked with an ECM SIP for two years before, I was naturally wary about working with a new person. I need not have worried, the rigour of the ECM systems meant that transition was seamless.

When James arrived it was very clear that not only did he know “his stuff” when it came to Ofsted and the official checks and challenges, but he also knew “our stuff.” He had done his research: knew who we were and what we were all about. He listened and listened well. He saw where we were up to on our school improvement journey and where I was as a novice head in leading us. He “got us” and how we operate but most importantly, he “got me.”

James’ personable yet professional qualities provided me with a strong sense that this was a person with whom I could be honest without fear of an “agenda.” That I would be able to capitalise not only on his knowledge of all things school improvement and “headteacherish”, but also on his strength as a supportive and challenging expert.

As well as our termly visits, I contacted James to help prepare for our imminent Ofsted inspection. This was quickly arranged so that my Deputy and I met across Teams during the Easter break. We were put through our paces; grilled without intimidation. Questioned and prompted so that when the inevitable phone call came through in early May, we were fully prepared, match fit, battle ready and confident.

I look forward to my SIP visits - that’s not something I would ever have said nor had I experienced prior to our ECM involvement! The visits give me an opportunity to show how far we have come; to demonstrate how we have implemented the recommendations and reflect on what would be “even better if.” They have a positive impact on our school; our drive for improvement; our quality of teaching and learning, and the outcomes for our children. If I was to sum up working with James... he does what it says on the tin, he “gets the job done!”

Becky Crossley | Headteacher of Johnson Fold Community Primary School



COLLETTE MATHER

Collette is a highly accomplished and respected school improvement advisor with over 20 years of experience, including a decade as Headteacher of Ashdene Primary School—where she has led sustained, sector-leading improvement. Under her leadership, the school has not only retained its **Outstanding status** across multiple inspections, but embedded a culture where excellence *is a daily norm for every child*.

She is known for her strategic clarity, deep curriculum expertise, and calm, solutions-focused approach to driving improvement. Her leadership has been recognised for its impact in curriculum design, staff development, and inclusive practice—ensuring all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantage, flourish.

Collette works with schools at all stages of development—from those needing rapid improvement to those seeking to deepen and secure strong practice. She offers a high-trust, high-challenge partnership that enables schools to:

- Build and sustain effective leadership at every level
- Embed coherent, ambitious curricular with clear progression
- Strengthen the quality of teaching through practical, evidence-informed approaches
- Drive inclusion by refining systems and empowering teachers
- Improve outcomes without creating unnecessary workload

She has helped schools move from **'Inadequate/Requires Improvement'** to **'Good'** and from **'Good'** to **'Outstanding'** and is frequently called upon to support inspection preparation and curriculum reviews.

Collette's support is shaped by real experience of what works—and why. Her ability to inspire confidence and drive purposeful change makes her a valuable asset to any school committed to delivering excellence for its community.

COLLETTE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Inspection preparation and readiness
- School development planning and evaluation
- Curriculum design and development
- Teaching and learning improvement
- Subject leadership
- Senior leadership development
- Evidence-based school improvement
- Early reading and phonics
- Culture, Ethos, and Staff Wellbeing
- Assessment and tracking



As the Head Teacher, I am grateful for the invaluable support and guidance Collette Mather, (ECM Education Consultant) has offered. She has contributed significantly to our improving status in our recent OFSTED evaluation.

Collette demonstrated an unwavering commitment to our school's success, not only through on-site assessments but also through consistent telephone support. The availability and responsiveness displayed by Collette has been instrumental during times when quick decisions and guidance were paramount.

One of the most commendable aspects of Collette's support was the provision of sound and practical advice. Her deep understanding of educational leadership, combined with a keen insight into OFSTED requirements, helped me navigate the challenges of enhancing our school's performance. Collette was not only a consultant but a mentor, offering guidance on strategic planning, curriculum development, and effective leadership practices.

My leaders in school felt the EOSE was invaluable, as this process helped us understand the school's next steps in a non-judgmental way and offered us the outside validation we were hoping for. The teaching and non-teaching staff also agreed that this process was extremely helpful, and that Collette was so knowledgeable and that gave them confidence when OFSTED arrived.

I wholeheartedly recommend Collette to any school who is seeking a dedicated and knowledgeable advisor. Her expertise, coupled with a genuine passion for educational excellence, has left a lasting impact on our school's trajectory towards success. I am grateful for the positive influence Collette has had on Beaumont Primary, and I look forward to the continued collaboration in our pursuit of educational excellence.

Stacey Postle | Headteacher at Beaumont Primary School



MYLENE MCGUIRE

Working for 35 years in challenging urban contexts, Mylene is a National Leader of Education (NLE) and Executive Headteacher of a small Federation of two schools in Manchester. Mylene has worked as an NLE, Headteacher, Primary strategy manager, lead consultant on the national pilot and rollout of the Improving schools programme; a mathematics and literacy consultant, a school improvement adviser, SIP and as the senior officer for quality assurance in 3-19 Education for Manchester City Council.

Mylene has been a Headteacher for 13 years, starting at St Mary's RC primary school in Levenshulme until 2017 when she was seconded in an executive role to support St Cuthbert's RC Primary school, which was in an Ofsted category at that time. Subsequently, as Executive Headteacher leading the process of transfer to a formal federation between the two schools in January 2021.

In May of 2022, St Mary's secured an Ofsted overall effectiveness Grade of 'Outstanding'. Inspectors noted that, 'Leaders provide a highly effective curriculum from early years to Year 6. In all subjects, they have thought carefully about the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it. This helps pupils to achieve exceptionally well in all subjects.'

Previous inspections in (2018 & 2019), recognised that Mylene provides clear and unequivocal leadership, which has meant that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Disadvantage is not a barrier to learning in St Mary's. Often, disadvantaged pupils do better than their peers. St Cuthbert's (2019) inspectors stated that this 'is a very different school to he one inspected in 2016.

The executive Headteacher has worked successfully with the school's leadership team to transform the quality of education at St Cuthbert's. As a result, this is now a good school and pupils are making strong progress in their learning.'

St Mary's also secured a judgement of outstanding in their 2023 Section 48 inspection. The inspectors noted that, "There is a strong commitment by all to meet the needs of all learners and the school routinely and robustly challenges itself to do this effectively. There are clear and rigorous monitoring systems in place by leaders at all levels which enables excellent outcomes. If anything, the school doesn't recognise the full value and impact of the excellent work they do."

Mylene has introduced rigorous systems and processes for monitoring and evaluating the schools' impact on pupil outcomes. She has supported a number of schools in developing and refining this work in their own context. Mylene has led sessions for headteachers on effective performance management, efficient monitoring and evaluation and for curriculum development.

Other schools regularly visit the Federation in order to experience the approach to achieving a high-quality curriculum and the emphasis on inclusion, wellbeing and outdoor learning. St Mary's is a national 'Flagship' school for Inclusion under the IQM. Particular areas of strength: School self-evaluation processes and triangulating teaching, learning and assessment. Leadership development at both middle and senior leadership level and working with school governors to develop their role. This includes recruitment advice and Headteacher appraisal.

MYLENE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- School self-evaluation processes and triangulating teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leadership development at both middle and senior leadership level and working with school governors to develop their role.
- Recruitment advice and Headteacher appraisal.





OLIVER MCPHAIL

Oliver has been working in education since 2011 and is currently the Headteacher at Broughton CE Primary School in Preston.

He has been the headteacher at Broughton since January 2023 and has previously worked at a school in Bolton as the deputy. Oliver has been part of and supported schools through a number of Ofsted inspections, and he has an extensive knowledge of the current school inspection handbook.

Oliver's current school is in the top 6% of schools nationally for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, and generally in the top 20% of schools for the majority of measured areas. This was also the case for his previous school under his tenure. He has an extensive knowledge and understanding of assessment and has introduced and implemented rigorous assessment procedures to effectively support and improve outcomes. He has been an ECM associate for over 10 years.

OLIVER'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Analysing and evaluating external and internal data and assessment procedures
- Assessments in the foundation subjects
- Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)
- Analyse School Performance (ASP) tool
- Teaching and learning



SHAUN MILES

Shaun Miles has been a Senior Leader within the primary sector since 1997. During the past 20 years, he has been Headteacher of three different schools across a range of settings and Local Authorities. He is currently Headteacher at St. Luke's CE Primary School, Cannock, Staffordshire which is a larger than average primary school.

Much of his experience has been within schools with a Christian character and this continues to be a real interest and drive in his work. His passion for school improvement has led to attainment and progress above national averages in previous and current schools.

Shaun's work within his own Local Authority has led to Commissioned Reviews of school effectiveness as well as Headteacher induction and support. He is passionate about innovative processes and systems to improve quality of teaching and learning. Shaun holds a music degree and is an advocate for the importance of music, dance, art and drama in schools.

SHAUN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Christian Distinctively
- Performance Management
- Target Setting
- Monitoring & Evaluating
- Data Analysis
- Curriculum Development
- Safeguarding



KAREN MORRIS

Karen is a former headteacher now working as an education consultant and School Improvement Partner. She was a headteacher for over 20 years in areas of significant disadvantage; her most recent school (until December 2024) had a high proportion of Pupil Premium students, a high proportion of pupils with EAL (specifically new to English and many different languages), and a high number of children with additional learning needs. She took the school into a Multi-Academy Trust, so has experience of working as an academy headteacher.

Karen works as a School Improvement and Leadership Partner with ECM, as well as supporting Headteacher Performance Management and leading training. She has supported schools in many different contexts and across a number of different local authorities. She also works with a local authority as an associate school adviser. She holds both the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL). She has a thorough understanding of the deep dive methodology and the expectations of the current Ofsted framework.

KAREN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- The current Ofsted framework including preparing for inspection and deep dive methodology
- Leadership and Management, including subject leadership
- Monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and learning
- Safeguarding
- SEND, adaptive teaching and inclusion for all.
- Pupil Premium



MARK MULLIN

Mark is one of the Directors of ECM Education. He has extensive and current working experience as a Primary School Improvement Partner and Adviser. Mark was formerly headteacher of two very successful primary schools in Cheshire over a ten-year period, and prior to becoming an advisor, had 18 years of Senior Leadership Team experience. Mark has also served as an inspector for Ofsted.

As ECM Director and Education Adviser, Mark has supported a range of multi academy trusts, teaching school alliances, local authorities, and schools/academies of various sizes nationwide in devising leadership and management structures to secure significant improvements in outcomes for pupils. He has worked closely and strategically with CEOs, Local Authority Leaders, National and Local Leaders of Education and Executive Head teachers to define, co-design and deliver collaborative, effective, and highly efficient strategies for school improvement- including 1-1 support, training and large conferences. Mark currently provides direct support for approximately 14 schools in a range of contexts as a Leadership Partner.

Mark works alongside his fellow directors, John Evans and Phil Choi, to develop an innovative and continually evolving educational school improvement offer to reflect schools' ongoing needs. Over time, ECM have recruited highly talented & experienced professionals who are the experts in their field. ECM provide highly effective, impactful support for educational settings, based on years of practical, first-hand and successful experience. Our aim at ECM Education is to Inspire leaders to improve outcomes through a practical 'Get a Job Done' approach.

MARK'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Leadership and management development through training and coaching
- Innovation through curriculum development
- Curriculum expectations linked to the Ofsted Research Reviews
- Quality of Education
- Assessment, Target setting and Tracking
- Strategic school improvement through self-evaluation & impact planning
- Monitoring and Evaluation for Impact

The multitude of bespoke coaching and training offered by ECM, provides opportunities to further develop leaders of the future and ensure the outstanding work of the school is relentless. In addition, the validation role of ECM's Leadership Partner work has offered St Mary's CE Primary School the ongoing support and challenge required in ensuring the best outcomes for our pupils, resulting in our outstanding OFSTED judgement. I highly recommend ECM and have no reservation in urging all schools to take advantage of what this reputable educational training and consultancy company has to offer.

Diane Jeffries | Headteacher at St Mary's Primary School, Deane



I have worked with ECM on a professional basis for over a decade, initially as a founding director of REAch2 and more recently as Director of Education for Reach South Academy Trust.

ECM have become an outstanding provider of professional development with a national reach and reputation. ECM have co-designed bespoke professional development programmes for head teachers, producing excellent resources and materials. They have designed and delivered programmes to support a wide range of school development themes for both senior and middle leaders and have contributed to the success of many schools across the nation. Their bespoke approach ensures support is targeted to achieve maximum impact on outcomes for pupils. ECM's aim is to make certain that school leaders have the support and assistance to complete major tasks effectively and to a high standard, whilst providing excellent value for money. I can highly recommend ECM.

**Mark Elms | Director of Education
for Reach South Academy Trust**



KEVAN NAUGHTON

Kevan is a serving Headteacher with 20 years' headship experience (and 31 years of supporting schools) across different primary schools.

Kevan's school maintains consistently high performance and has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted. He also brings experience supporting educational standards and quality assurance at a national level. His school maintained an Outstanding overall in Oct 2023 and regularly appears in the top 500 performing schools nationally over the last 10 years.

Kevan brings a wealth of experience from his professional doctorate studies (including international perspectives) to support schools. The process of effectively implementing change, alongside pedagogical coaching and support, is a particular area of interest.

He has also worked as a National Leader of Education and School Improvement Partner within the local authority. Kevan has worked with schools to support schools to raise standards, develop greater consistency, effective assessment for learning, and establish consistent teaching protocols.

KEVAN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Coaching and Mentoring development
- Ofsted preparation and the inspection framework
- Supporting schools in looking for Good to Outstanding Ofsted judgements
- Developing rigorous assessment and pupil progress meetings
- Developing sustainable practices to monitor effectively and consistently
- Curriculum design and quality assurance
- Teaching and learning "Theories of Action" and developing consistency across the school system



TIM NELSON

Tim Nelson is a former primary headteacher and now works as a consultant and author. During his teaching career he taught every year group from Reception to Y13 with most of this classroom experience being in KS1 and KS2.

When he was a headteacher, his school was recognised for its innovative approaches to the curriculum with his ideas shared at a European conference and regularly featuring on Teachers TV and other media.

As a school leader, he worked as an LLE, a SIP and as an Ofsted inspector, a role that included mentoring trainee inspectors for several years. He has up to date knowledge of the 2019 Education Inspection Framework, including the most recent changes, and leads numerous training courses across the country helping school leaders and subject leaders understand the process and methodology of inspection. He specialises in working with primary subject leaders and senior leaders on curriculum development.

Over the last seven years, Tim has worked with over 450 schools across England and spoken at over 150 conferences, including the Inspiring Leadership Conference at the NIA in Birmingham where he spoke about the effective development of middle leadership. He was part of the expert panel discussing the curriculum at the annual Teach First conference in 2019 alongside the deputy director of Ofsted. He has also worked with schools overseas including schools in Kenya and Tanzania.

Tim is also part of Nottinghamshire's local authority school improvement team, enabling him to access the latest training for advisors on areas such as headteacher appraisal and updates and briefings from HMI. Tim is the author of a wide range of books on school leadership and governance, teaching and learning and the curriculum with sales of over 12,000 copies.

ECM live by their mantra of getting a job done. They are individually purposefully driven to ensure all children receive a high quality education; working alongside you to identify specific points where systems, practices and procedures can be enhanced. They are knowledgeable about current educational policy and are committed to remaining relevant and professional in their fields of expertise. I have had an ECM consultant as my SIP for the last 8 years and have always felt confident that our conversations were focussed, detailed and specifically directed to examine the systematic practice in the school. Deep dives were being conducted long before the current trend. Consequently our school moved from good to outstanding through the partnership with ECM.

**Lynn Williams | Headteacher, St. Peter's CE Primary,
Farnworth, Bolton**



KATHY NICHOL

Kathy has led her school through two very good Ofsted inspections, led the school through the process of conversion to academy status, has increased the age range of the school and has managed several large-scale premises development projects.

After 13 successful years as head at Puss Bank School & Nursery, Kathy became executive head in the Aspire Educational Trust. She is valued for her expertise in supporting schools to improve and is currently working across two schools. Prior to being a headteacher, Kathy held various leadership roles in schools in Cheshire, Singapore and London. She has been a teacher for 31 years in both mainstream schools and a special school for pupils with complex needs. Through her work as a Local Leader in Education, she has developed a deep understanding of educational contexts and curriculum design and implementation.

KATHY'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Inspection Process, Framework and Methodology
- Teaching and Learning
- Subject Leadership
- Curriculum design and implementation
- Supporting pupils with SEND
- Subject deep dives
- Inspections and preparation



GILLIAN TALBOT

Gillian has been a headteacher since 2007 with experience as an Executive Headteacher of two primary schools. She is also an LLE, a Pupil Premium Reviewer, headteacher mentor and a lead of a local consortium of primary schools. She has worked as a Quality Education Partner for Bury Local Authority since 2019 and is a facilitator on the NPQLT with the Best Practice Network.

Gillian has many years of experience in raising standards across the curriculum through improving teaching and learning using an evidence based approach. She has a forward thinking approach and a strong belief in supporting staff to develop expertise and leadership to enable them to become highly effective practitioners and subject/area leaders. Recent Ofsted inspection reports have referred to how she has 'improved school significantly whilst managing a difficult financial situation and improving staff morale, she has made teachers ambitious about what pupils should achieve.' Ofsted describe how she has 'successfully built a team of high quality teachers, teaching assistants and support staff who share the school mission statement.'

Gillian has an excellent understanding of the school improvement cycle and diagnostic processes effectively at all levels to ensure great progress. She has completed a number of Pupil Premium Reviews and school diagnostic reviews to support schools to identify successes and precise areas for development. Over the years, she has also worked on a number of curricula models and enjoys developing the curriculum to meet the needs of the children and the school community.



LIAM TRIPPIER

Liam Trippier is an experienced leader in education. He currently advises Headteachers and teachers, leads school reviews for local authorities, and develops supportive professional materials as a School Improvement Professional. He has excellent knowledge of inspection matters, including the latest framework.

He has been one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, a lead Ofsted inspector, and a Headteacher of a successful primary school. His work in evaluating and guiding schools has helped to improve the quality of their work and the outcomes for their pupils.

LIAM'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Liam offers a wealth of experience in the Ofsted inspection framework
- Supporting leaders in their school self-evaluation
- Developing leadership, Headteacher Performance Management, and Leadership Partner/SIP visits

I have worked with our leadership partner, Liam Trippier, in my previous role as deputy and acting head, then from the beginning of my headship at St Barnabas.

Liam's expert support and challenge has been instrumental throughout our school's improvement journey, ensuring a continual focus on actions which have maximum impact on outcomes for children. The termly leadership partner visits have supported our drive to improve achievement in core subjects, wider curriculum development and leadership. Consistency in teaching has improved as a result of our association. In addition robust levels of challenge, delivered in a supportive manner, have supported senior and middle leaders in feeling better prepared and confident for inspection; and governors in knowing the school better and being able to provide effective challenge.

Visits are sharply focussed, very thorough and highly productive, leading to actions which impact on children's outcomes.

Leadership partner support has significantly enhanced our effectiveness and driven improvements.

Jane Hodgkinson | Headteacher at St Barnabas CE Primary School





ALAN TAYLOR-BENNETT

Alan has wide-ranging and extensive experience of education. He was one of His Majesty's Inspectors for nearly nine years, inspecting primary, secondary schools and sixth form colleges, and undertook national survey work in a range of research areas, including as a member of the mathematics national core team. Alan had responsibility for the strategic development of the use of school performance data in inspections, which involved working closely with the DfE. He demonstrated particular expertise in quality assuring inspections.

Since then, Alan has been working in school improvement across several local authorities, the Channel Islands, and several academy chains and multi-academy trusts. He has assisted schools to improve from all starting points and has a particular interest in the ways in which already good schools can become exceptional.

Previously, Alan enjoyed many years of school leadership experience, including ten years as a secondary headteacher in Hampshire. During his time leading his school, it achieved a judgement of outstanding for leadership and management. He has undertaken leadership development work as an associate adviser with a local authority, and he was a school improvement partner.

Alan is a graduate of the University of Durham, with a degree in theoretical physics. After completing teacher training at Oxford University, he gained extensive experience of teaching physics and mathematics to A-level and Oxbridge entry standard and was a head of department in a large 11–18 secondary school on the south coast.

Alan has two master's degrees, both with distinction. One is in inspection and regulation with UCL Institute of Education, which involved research into the relevance of working

relationships between Ofsted and school leaders to the quality and impact of inspections.

Alan is married (to another teacher, of course!). He has two grown-up children.

ALAN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- inspections and MAT/school reviews
- the leadership and management of all aspects of secondary schools
- school and departmental development planning to drive improvement and assist accountability
- the promotion of positive and effective teamwork in schools
- gauging, leading and managing the quality of education at classroom level
- working with middle and senior leaders to undertake lesson observations to promote strong learning
- the promotion of high-quality learning in science and mathematics
- the use of assessment and tracking at classroom, department and whole-school level.





ALLAN TORR

Allan is from a small, former mining town in Derbyshire, and would in modern times have been Pupil Premium. He was the first in the family to go into higher education. He gained a B.Ed (Hons) and a Master of Arts in Education (Management).

He was the first in his extended family to go into higher education. He attended the College of St Paul and St Mary in Cheltenham, after which he qualified with a B.Ed degree with honours. He won a distinction for his teaching in his final year. He gained a Master of Arts degree in Education (Management) at The Open University and a Professional Certificate in Teaching Mathematics at Leicester University.

He has an extensive and wide-ranging teaching career. He taught in a secondary school in East Sussex teaching English as a foreign language; a middle school in West Sussex; a junior school in Grantham; and a primary school in Melton Mowbray. He moved to Manchester in 1996 as a deputy and then as a headteacher of a primary school in Middleton.

He is a qualified external assessor and external advisor. He was a team leader marking mathematics SATs and was a Lincolnshire lead for Year 6/7 transition.

For 11 years, Allan was one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. At Ofsted, he was the regional lead for initial teacher education, the regional lead trainer and the national trainer for equality and diversity.

For two years, he was the regional director for a large MAT, responsible for all of the academies in the north region, and Trust-wide responsibility for EYFS and Pupil Premium. From 2020, for two terms, he worked as a Manchester LA quality assurance professional and senior advisor. From 2021, he has worked as a QAS professional for Liverpool, Wirral and Manchester LA. He is a freelance education consultant and works with individual schools, MATs and Local Authorities including Bury and Manchester.



COLIN WATSON

Colin believes that culture and relationships are the key to ensuring that all members of the school community are engaged and play an active role in the school and education of children.

Colin leads a strong team of committed and driven staff. Ofsted (2022) reported that, 'Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Teaching staff do not accept second best. Pupils and children strive to achieve highly in lessons.'

His leadership style is a democratic and consultative one, which puts relationships, openness and trust at the heart. This has resulted in creating a positive, supportive and accountable culture. This 'togetherness' is evident at celebratory times as well as during more challenging moments – staff pull together, not apart. His favourite quote, by Martin Luther King, is something that he stands by: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Colin has undertaken personalised work with individual headteachers throughout Bolton, including monitoring and self-evaluation activities, such as data analysis, pupil voice, staff discussions and document scrutiny, as well as discussions about organisation and wellbeing.

The Personal Development aspect of his school is a strength, as evidenced in the most recent Ofsted report: 'Pupils are proud to belong to this school. They develop confidence in their own capabilities. They enjoy offering each other support and guidance. Pupils develop strong leadership skills in the many roles that they carry out on the playground and around the school. They demonstrate respect and maturity in the way that they listen to and consider different points of view'.

COLIN'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Creating innovative solutions to improve efficiencies across school
- Distributed leadership, staff development, recruitment and retention
- Data Analysis
- Working with Governors
- Pupil behaviour and personal development





JEANETTE WESTHEAD

Jeanette has been the Headteacher of Lowton West Primary School (a large two-form entry school in Wigan) for the past seventeen years and has led the school through three successful Ofsted inspections. Prior to that, she held two Deputy Headteacher posts, both in large primary schools. She also has a significant amount of teaching experience across KS1 and KS2, including experience as a Primary Strategy Leading Teacher in Maths and English. She holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship.

Jeanette has particular expertise in the inspection process, framework and methodology.

As a Lead Headteacher, she supports other schools with a range of school improvement. She has a sound understanding of educational frameworks, and her proven track record in school improvement positions her as a valuable asset to the schools she supports. She has supported schools with curriculum development, preparation for inspection, school self-evaluation, governance, safeguarding and provision for pupils with SEND.

Jeanette has developed rigorous and effective systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance, leading to accurate and well-informed school self-evaluation. She works with staff and governors to ensure that school improvement planning is sharply focused, with clear priorities and measurable success criteria. This has resulted in sustained high standards across the curriculum.

She is experienced in developing the expertise of subject leaders/senior leaders so that they are confident in monitoring their subjects and identifying strengths and areas for development. She is also experienced in undertaking curriculum reviews/deep dives including alongside senior leaders, subject leaders, external consultants and governors.

Jeanette believes that a broad curriculum should reflect the school's unique context, and she has worked alongside leaders to produce an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Her work ensures that a fully inclusive curriculum is in place for all pupils, with a well-considered range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular opportunities. She has worked with staff on adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. During the most recent Ofsted inspection (November 2022), it was recognised that "Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. They make sure that these pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Teachers provide pupils with SEND with valuable opportunities to apply their learning in different ways. This helps pupils to know and remember more. Pupils with SEND achieve well. They participate fully in school life."

Jeanette has a proven track record in leading and facilitating high-quality CPD for a range of audiences, including headteachers, deputy heads, staff and governors, both in her own school and for groups of schools. She is an experienced music subject leader, performing arts leader and NQT mentor. During her many years of headship, she has dealt with a range of HR issues, maintained a balanced budget, developed distributed leadership, reviewed the staffing structure to meet the school's needs, and been responsible for Health and Safety, GDPR and safeguarding. She readily embraces new evidence-based pedagogy and is very experienced in leading change, developing new initiatives and ensuring a whole-school consistent approach, whilst also considering the work/life balance of staff.

Jeanette also has extensive experience of working alongside Governors, including working with key governors to prepare Governor Strategic Days and leading training on the Ofsted inspection process for a group of Local Authority Governors.

She is passionate about improving the life chances for all pupils.

JEANETTE'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Inspections and preparation
- Subject deep dives
- School self-evaluation
- School improvement planning
- Developing subject leaders/ senior leaders
- Working with governors
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum development and monitoring
- Teaching of Reading, Maths and Music
- Pastoral/ Safeguarding (including behaviour and attendance)
- Provision for pupils with SEND



WENDY WHELDON

Wendy has been teaching for over 30 years and has experience in a wide range of settings with widely differing catchment areas: infant and nursery, primary and first schools, Pupil Referral Unit (EBD), Home Education and Higher Education. She had four very successful headships with several 'Outstanding' judgements.

Wendy became one of the first Local Leaders of Education in 2010 and then a National Leader of Education in 2015. Since 2017, Wendy has worked as an independent consultant for a number of LAs and Academy Trusts in Yorkshire and the East Midlands. She has particular experience and expertise in the areas of strategic leadership, improving the quality of teaching and learning, reading, curriculum, SEND, vulnerable groups and Early Years.

WENDY'S AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Supporting schools and raising standards through school improvement partner type support.
- Monitoring and supporting schools to help improvement particularly in EYFS.
- Completing supportive monitoring and reviews of school effectiveness alongside school leaders.

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