

ASPIRE

TRUST NEWSLETTER FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING



**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**
Part of True Learning Partnership

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Professor Geoff Baker



In my time as CEO of True Learning Partnership, I have been consistently impressed by the calibre of our staff and by the deep commitment colleagues show to driving standards in their schools. This commitment is evident at every level of the organisation – from administrators and teachers through to in class support, leaders and caretakers. Wherever colleagues sit, there is a shared determination to improve outcomes for children and young people through thoughtful, purposeful practice. As the Trust continues to develop, one of our defining hallmarks will be the creation of clear, bespoke routes for colleagues to grow and progress in their careers, underpinned by high-quality, accredited professional learning. For instance, we currently have 22 colleagues completing the NPQ SENCO, with many beginning to accumulate credits towards a Masters, alongside three colleagues undertaking Masters-level study through an apprenticeship route. In some areas of the Trust, this commitment to professional learning is universal: for example, within our IT support team, every colleague is engaged in an accredited apprenticeship programme that is carefully aligned to their role and starting point.

Regardless of role – whether leader, teacher or wider support staff – we are keen not only to support colleagues to engage with research, but to enable them to generate research, develop deep expertise and contribute meaningfully to the wider profession. Over the months and years ahead, we anticipate this will be a significant growth area for the Trust. A key purpose of this newsletter is therefore to keep colleagues informed about opportunities to develop practice, to share professional thinking on key issues, and to introduce broader perspectives and ideas that strengthen teaching and learning across our partnership.

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Director of Education**

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WELCOME FROM THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Craig Lomas

I am delighted to introduce the first edition of the Trust's Professional Development Centre (PDC) newsletter and to take this opportunity to thank colleagues across the Trust for the warm welcome I have received since taking up post as Deputy Director of Education and School Improvement, with responsibility for SEND and Professional Development.

Since joining the Trust in January, it has been a privilege to meet colleagues from across our schools and services, and to begin gaining a deeper understanding of the strengths, priorities, and challenges that shape our trust. What has been immediately evident is the shared commitment to inclusive practice, high-quality teaching, and continuous professional learning in the best interests of our children and young people.

The purpose of the PDC is to bring greater coherence, accessibility, and impact to professional development across the Trust. This newsletter will act as a regular point of connection, sharing trust-wide priorities, highlighting upcoming professional learning opportunities, signposting resources, and celebrating effective practice taking place in our schools. Importantly, it will also reflect our belief that professional development is not something done to staff, but something built with staff, grounded in evidence, professional curiosity, and shared expertise.

I look forward to working closely with colleagues at all levels as we continue to strengthen inclusive practice, develop our workforce, and align professional learning with our shared strategic goals. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and professionalism, and I hope you find this newsletter both useful and encouraging.



RESEARCH & PRACTICE



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: ADAPTIVE TEACHING

Chartered College of Teaching

This article from the Chartered College of Teaching explores the shift from traditional differentiation towards adaptive teaching, emphasising responsive, in-the-moment adjustments based on pupils' understanding. Rather than relying on heavily pre-planned tasks for different groups, adaptive teaching focuses on high-quality teaching for all, with teachers flexibly adjusting explanations, scaffolding, questioning, and pacing as lessons unfold. The article highlights that this approach is particularly effective for supporting pupils with SEND when embedded as part of everyday classroom practice.



The shift to adaptive teaching: A research-informed guide

MARK LESWELL, RESEARCH LEAD, SWALE ACADEMIES TRUST, UK
Introduction The number of students identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is increasing. In England, for example, 1.7 million pupils ...

My College |



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adaptive teaching is responsive, not pre-set – it relies on noticing, checking understanding, and adjusting teaching in real time.

Strong QFT underpins inclusion – adaptive teaching benefits all learners and reduces reliance on withdrawal or additional interventions.

Teacher expertise matters – effective adaptive teaching depends on subject knowledge, pedagogical judgement, and professional reflection.

RECOMMENDED READ: AI-DRIVEN ADAPTIVE LEARNING

As we continue to explore innovative approaches to teaching and learning, we recommend "AI-Driven Adaptive Learning in Education" as essential reading for all staff. This comprehensive resource examines how artificial intelligence is transforming personalised learning experiences and supporting diverse learner needs across educational settings.

The text provides practical insights into implementing adaptive technologies while maintaining the crucial role of teacher expertise and professional judgement in the classroom.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Personalisation works best when it informs teaching, not replaces it.

Implication: Use adaptive tools (including AI) to gain insight into pupil understanding and misconceptions, then apply professional judgement to adjust explanations, scaffolding, and feedback in lessons.

Adaptive approaches can strengthen inclusion and SEND support.

Implication: Technology can help identify learning needs earlier and provide varied routes through content, but it should sit alongside strong Quality First Teaching and inclusive classroom strategies.

Teacher expertise and ethics remain central

Implication: Effective use of adaptive learning requires critical engagement with data, awareness of bias and privacy issues, and ongoing professional development to ensure technology is used responsibly and purposefully



SPOTLIGHT ON PRACTICE

We are keen to celebrate and learn from the excellent practice taking place across our schools and would warmly encourage staff to share examples of successful teaching strategies, adaptive approaches, or pedagogical successes that have made a positive difference for learners. These case studies, whether small, practical adaptations or wider approaches, help us to share thinking, strengthen collective practice, and build a culture of professional learning across the Trust. If you have an example you would be willing to share, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to email me directly or speak with your Headteacher, who can support in sharing practice on your behalf.



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“The NPQ SENCO programme has significantly deepened my understanding of both the statutory and practical aspects of SEND leadership. We have explored the SEND Code of Practice in depth, particularly developing our understanding of the ‘must’ and ‘should’ statements and what these mean in practice for schools. Discussions around the importance of using the language of reasonable adjustments in all professional conversations, alongside the implications of the Equality Act 2010, have helped strengthen my understanding of inclusive practice and statutory responsibilities. A key takeaway has been reinforcing that a formal diagnosis is not required before support systems, interventions, and reasonable adjustments are put in place for pupils.

It has also been incredibly beneficial to collaborate with colleagues from a range of schools, phases, and career stages. Engaging with both primary and secondary practitioners—some aspiring to become SENCOs and others seeking to deepen their SEND knowledge—has enriched discussions and broadened my perspective. Sharing experiences and approaches with professionals who are equally committed to driving inclusion has strengthened my own thinking about how we can best support all students within our settings.”

Helen James
Deputy Headteacher

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“I am really enjoying my journey on the Improvement Leader apprenticeship so far. The online learning sessions have been engaging and thought-provoking, giving me the chance to explore a wide range of leadership and management approaches. I’ve particularly valued the extended reading and recommended resources, which have helped deepen my understanding and offered practical tools I can apply in my role. One of the most rewarding aspects has been learning alongside such a diverse group of people. Hearing different perspectives and experiences has broadened my thinking and encouraged me to reflect on my own practice. I’ve already begun implementing some of the skills and techniques covered in the programme. Balancing the off-the-job training with a busy workload can be challenging, but I’m learning that prioritising my own professional development is essential. Sometimes you have to be a little selfish with your CPD — making space for learning ultimately benefits both me and the organisation”

Marcus Heath
Director of ICT and Network Operations

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Growing Our Own Experts: Building Capacity Through the True Learning Partnership School Improvement Model

Debbie McGloin



At True Learning Partnership, school improvement is not something that is done to schools – it is something we lead together. Our School Improvement Model is built on a shared belief that sustained improvement for pupils comes through strong teaching, leadership and professional learning, developed collectively across the Trust.

We see school improvement as a collaborative, strategic enterprise. Rather than focusing on 'fixing' individual schools in isolation, our model is underpinned by deep partnership, shared responsibility and coherence. This allows us to move faster, work smarter and secure improvement that is both sustainable and rooted in our Trust values.

Our ambition is clear: for every teacher in every classroom to be as good as they can be in what they teach and how they teach. To achieve this, our School Improvement Model focuses relentlessly on excellence in curriculum, pedagogy, inclusion and leadership. Improvement is driven through a clear and consistent cycle – diagnose, plan, implement and review impact – ensuring that actions are purposeful, evidence-informed and focused on outcomes for pupils.

A defining feature of our model is our commitment to growing our own experts. We believe that the strength of the Trust lies in the expertise of its people. By developing specialists across a wide range of school improvement priorities – including literacy, inclusion, data, curriculum, professional learning and emerging areas such as AI – we build capacity not just in individual schools, but across the whole partnership.

Through Trust Improvement Leader roles, subject networks and leadership development programmes, colleagues are supported to deepen their expertise, engage in research and development, and lead trust-wide projects. These roles are rooted in school practice and designed to support colleagues across the Trust, sharing best practice and strengthening consistency while reducing workload through collaboration.

Professional learning sits at the heart of our improvement strategy. As part of the Laboratory Schools Network, we prioritise evidence-informed practice, instructional rounds and appreciative inquiry. Our trust-wide CPD offer, leadership pathways and funded postgraduate study ensure that professional growth is continuous, purposeful and aligned to trust priorities.

Ultimately, our School Improvement Model is about building collective capacity so that every school can flourish. By growing our own experts, working in deep partnership and remaining focused on what makes the biggest difference for pupils, we are strengthening our Trust for the long term – inspiring the best in everyone and improving outcomes for all.

OUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Our professional development activity across the Trust is currently focused on five closely aligned priorities: SEND, inclusion, Quality First Teaching (QFT), adaptive teaching, and the development of aspiring leaders. Together, these priorities reflect our commitment to meeting the needs of all learners through strong classroom practice, inclusive school cultures, and well-supported staff at every stage of their career, including teachers, leaders, support staff, and operational colleagues. SEND and inclusion remain everyone's responsibility, supported by high-quality, evidence informed practice that enables all staff to understand and respond effectively to pupil need within their roles. Adaptive teaching and QFT sit at the heart of this work for classroom-based staff, while complementary approaches focus on how wider staff contribute to access, engagement, independence, and wellbeing across the school day. This ensures that inclusive practice extends beyond the classroom and is embedded in all aspects of school life. Alongside this, we are committed to identifying and nurturing aspiring leaders across all staff groups, building capacity across the Trust to sustain improvement, share expertise, and lead inclusive practice with confidence and clarity.



TRUST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Our five key priority areas are:

- SEND – Developing expertise across all staff in supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in classrooms and across the wider school environment
- Inclusion – Ensuring every pupil feels they belong and can thrive, through the collective contribution of teaching, support, and operational staff
- Quality First Practice – Embedding evidence-informed approaches that support high-quality teaching, effective support, and strong provision across all roles
- Adaptive Practice – Responding flexibly to meet diverse needs, both within the classroom and across the wider school day, including pastoral, behavioural, and operational support
- Aspiring Leaders Development – Nurturing the next generation of leaders across all staff groups through targeted development opportunities

NASEN MEMBERSHIP: FREE SEND CPD RESOURCES

All staff are encouraged to take advantage of the free NASEN membership, which provides access to a wide range of high-quality, flexible online professional development focused on SEND, inclusion, and autism. NASEN resources are designed to be practical, accessible, and directly relevant to classroom and whole-school practice, making them well suited to busy school roles. Membership includes webinars, short courses, research summaries, and guidance that can be accessed at a time and pace that suits you, supporting both individual professional learning and wider school improvement priorities. Engaging with NASEN CPD is a valuable way to deepen understanding, strengthen inclusive practice, and remain informed about national SEND developments and evidence-informed approaches.



THE TRUST'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFER

The Trust's professional development offer is designed as a coherent, staged programme that builds capacity across all roles while aligning closely with our priorities around inclusion, adaptive teaching, and evidence-informed practice. Our internal offer brings together a series of structured development pathways, including leadership programmes, adaptive teaching and behaviour series, AI training, research seminars, key trust-wide events, and our PGCE provision delivered in partnership with Liverpool Hope University, supporting the development of future teachers within our schools. Staff and prospective applicants can scan the QR code to access further information on the DfE Apply for teacher training portal. We will begin with the rollout of the AI fundamentals and safe use series, establishing a strong foundation for all staff, with further programmes being introduced progressively over the coming months and into the next academic year. Alongside this, a wider external offer is being developed in collaboration with a number of organisations and partners and will be available shortly, providing accredited pathways and specialist training opportunities for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Access to external courses will be coordinated to ensure strategic alignment, and all enquiries should be directed in the first instance through Headteachers and myself to support consistency, prioritisation, and impact across the Trust.



Inspiring the best in everyone

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION:

FOUNDATION FOR PRACTICE

SESSION 1 – AI IN EDUCATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

DATE: THURSDAY 7TH MAY (4:00-4:30) - Online

[LINK](#)

SESSION 2 – USING AI SAFELY AND PROFESSIONALLY IN SCHOOLS

DATE: WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY (4:00-4:30) - Online

[LINK](#)

SESSION 3 – COPILOT VS (CHATGPT VS DEEPSEEK VS TEACHMATE)

DATE: WEDNESDAY 3RD JUNE (4:00-4:30) - Online

[LINK](#)

SESSION 4 – PROMPTING AI EFFECTIVELY: FROM BASIC QUESTIONS TO POWERFUL SUPPORT

DATE: THURSDAY 25TH JUNE (4:00-4:30) - Online

[LINK](#)

The AI professional development series introduces staff to the role of artificial intelligence in education, building confidence in both understanding and application. It covers what AI is and why it matters, how to use it safely and professionally, explores key tools such as Copilot, ChatGPT, DeepSeek and TeachMate, and concludes with practical guidance on effective prompting to support workload and professional practice.

