

ISA JOURNAL

ISSUE 35 | SEND | AUTUMN 2025



Careers and work experience

Expertise in inclusion
and excellence in action

Learning in stages, not ages



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SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

A photograph of three students in school uniforms. On the left is a young woman with dark curly hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark blue plaid skirt. In the center is a young man wearing a light blue shirt, a purple and yellow striped tie, and a dark blue V-neck sweater. On the right is another young man wearing a light blue shirt, a purple and yellow striped tie, and a dark blue V-neck sweater. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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Welcome

FROM THE CEO

Rudolf Eliott Lockhart



The greatest strength of our Association is the diversity of the schools that our Members run. It is the independence that we cherish that means the schools whose heads are in our membership can be wildly different from each other. Independence means being able to offer different specialisms, different approaches to education, and catering to very different sets of pupils. As an Association, we come

together because we value the opportunity to do things differently, both from state schools and also from each other. We value being able to run very different sorts of schools.

One element of the diversity of schools within ISA is the provision for SEN pupils. This is an area of real growth within ISA and across the independent sector more broadly. I am proud of the incredibly strong SEN provision across our Association and the way that independence underpins the nature of what our schools can do. We value the ability to tailor the curriculum to the pupils in our care. We value being able to specialise in different aspects of SEN. We value being able to select the pupils whose needs can best be met in our particular settings.

This edition of the Journal comes at a point where there is increasing focus on SEN provision in both independent and state schools. As I write, we are still waiting for the promised White Paper on SEN. It is an area of Government policy where there is a need for reform. The system can be too much of a postcode lottery with different Local Authorities having different levels of budget to cover Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Too often, parents struggle to get an EHCP for their child, and the cost in time and money of having to go to Tribunal can cause huge problems. We in the independent sector must be part of the solution when it comes to reforming the system. I hope that we can work with the Government to ensure that no child with SEN is let down by the system and fails to have their needs met.

This issue shines a light on some of the fantastic examples of SEN provision within ISA schools. I'm delighted that this means we can celebrate some of what our schools do so fabulously. I'm also really pleased that this will give an opportunity to unpack what goes on in some of our specialist schools. There are times when SEN provision can be poorly understood by some outside our sector. I hope that these pages will provide something of a corrective.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Rachel Borland - Principal at LVS Hassocks

Claire Robinson - NPQH, FCCT

Lisa Smith - Principal at Three Bridges School

Mark Loveday - Headmaster of Frewen College

The pages of this issue explore different aspects of SEN provision within ISA schools. Beth Elkins, Headteacher at Gretton School, looks at what we mean by inclusion when it comes to neurodiverse children and considers how schools might respond to a child's behaviour. Michael Jeffrey, Head of School at the Centre Academy, sets out his school's approach to careers and work experience and shows how central it is to everything at the school, and how vital it is to be supportive and practical at his SEN school to prepare young people effectively for the world of work.

Rachel Borland, Principal at LVS Hassocks, outlines how her school has helped develop the BTEC in Land-based studies, and how valuable this has been for pupils at her specialist school for pupils with an autism diagnosis. We also have a tour de force from Claire Robinson on the nature of inclusion and excellence. Claire sets out how inclusion must always be a defining feature and not an add-on. Lisa Smith, Principal at Three Bridges School, explains the importance of meeting learners where they are and offering a needs-led approach rather than an age-led one. Finally, Mark Loveday, Headmaster at Frewen College, outlines how the updated diagnostic definition for dyslexia works and what its implications are.

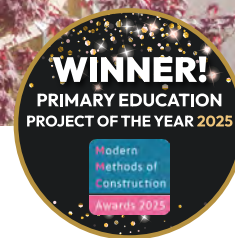
I am delighted that there is also an introduction from our new Chair, Jonathan Hetherington, Headmaster of More House School. In keeping with the theme of this edition, Jonathan runs a Special School. He sets out how you can make the most of your membership of ISA.

There is, as always, much more in this edition. I hope you will find much that is both interesting and helpful. And if not, well, you know where to find me, and I'll be happy to hear from you.



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BETH ELKINS
HEADTEACHER AT GRETTON SCHOOL

From sanctions to support: transforming how schools respond to behaviour

What do you think of when you hear the word 'behaviour'? Does it conjure up the face of a child who made your teaching career a challenge once upon a time? Or does it engender that awful feeling of trying to 'crowd control' with a group of unruly, disengaged teenagers? Is it a word encapsulated by a dusty school policy unvisited for months or even years? Or do you, like me, think of some of the most vulnerable and unique young people whose behaviour - challenging, heartbreaking, occasionally destructive or isolating—is crying out for compassion and understanding?

If you are an educator who keeps your finger on the pulse of cultural change, you are likely to have observed an increase in references to 'gentle parenting' approaches in the media. Approaches that give children choices and learning, that allow them room to make mistakes without reprimand and teach them to regulate their emotions through safe exploration. Approaches that treat errors of judgment as teaching opportunities, just as we would see spelling errors as opportunities for learning. So why do so many school behaviour policies still rely on 'zero tolerance' attitudes and sanction-based systems focused on principles of compliance and conformity? And where do these policies leave the children who - neurologically, socially, emotionally, behaviourally - need something very different to enable them to thrive?

I wonder if you have ever considered that the 'tit for tat' nature of detentions ("they have wasted my time, so I am going to waste theirs") may only teach learners retaliation, boredom or defiance? That the power imbalance of action/consequence cycles, which do not require learners to actually face the mistakes they have made and learn from them, but rather weigh up the action against the consequence, might actually create learners who view rules as transactions to be negotiated or resisted, rather than values to be understood and internalised, perpetuating the labelling of 'naughty children', which eventually becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy?

In recent research, I came across some older passages about neurodiversity in education; notably, the attitudes of the time towards differences in behaviour could be characterised by

descriptors of these children, such as (and I hesitate to even cite these were it not to highlight the need for change in attitude and thinking): 'maladjusted'¹, 'disturbed'² and even 'defective'³. Learners such as these unique souls were either described as medically anomalous, deficient in some way, or requiring the attentions of specialist institutions whose interventions may provide treatment of some description; and what is really shocking is that some of these articles were written in the same decade I was born. And I didn't think I was that old!

Curiously, I only agree with one of the above recommendations, in that I happen to still believe that these learners require the attentions of specialist institutions; not for 'treatment', interventions or medical procedures more likely to traumatise and harm than 'heal'; but rather specialist educational provisions who truly 'get it'. Provisions that 'get' that the differences in behaviour and presentation are not purposeful choices to damage property, hurt others or cause disruption, but are - in fact - genuine expressions of confusion, isolation, misunderstanding, hurt, fear and anxiety. Schools which get what these learners actually might need - instead of sanctions, disapproval and rejection - are compassion, professional curiosity, empathy and connection. Staff who 'get' that building trust through acceptance of difference is the only pathway for learners to dare to make mistakes and, in doing so, learn things that, just perhaps, their neurodivergence doesn't allow them to know instinctively from the moment they are born.

Reading older documents relating to autism and behaviour was shocking for me in many ways. I knew from my own experience of school that autism was little recognised at that time and barely acknowledged at all in girls. But it was also possible to trace the beginnings of the educational journey that we are still on now; the desire to understand more; the need for wider recognition, provision, services and support; the differences in education needed for such a wide spectrum of presentation.

Research suggests that we have moved forward - both educationally and socially - when it comes to recognising and accommodating our neurodiverse learners, which is nothing but



encouraging. And the prevalence of discussion in the media about the late diagnosis of the 'missing generation' can only add weight to the argument for more work to be done to assess what the real picture of special education looks like. However, I am keen to share with you the following phrases from the verbatim records⁴ of a sitting at the House of Commons:

- "There is hope for autistic children, though one of our greatest problems is our lack of knowledge"
- "I believe that there could be no worse place to send an autistic child [than a hospital]: to put a child in such a hospital is to make [his] improvement virtually impossible"
- "Skilled and patient teaching... can do much to help the autistic child"
- "Some of these children have a very high I.Q... [characterised by] remarkable skill in such things as music and mathematics"

I wonder how many of you would expect to have heard these words spoken today in Parliament, given the ongoing concerns being expressed about the lack of specific knowledge in our educational sector, consternation about long-term (often inappropriate) medical admissions, the need for appropriate and tailored teaching of our neurodiverse population and poor recognition of the astonishing abilities of this cohort?

In fact, these words were spoken in Parliament 55 years ago - in 1970! To be clear, I am not espousing the entirety of this account - many of the views are still massively outdated and downright horrifying in places, even though I have faith that the speaker arguably meant well! I suppose what I am saying is that the concerns expressed for this cohort back then still ring true to some extent today. So what is required to instigate fundamental change? And who, or what, should be doing the changing? If we are still expressing the same concerns about a lack of knowledge and the ability to be truly inclusive, then shouldn't we be turning our focus to the critical differences needed today - differences that can allow each of us to become open and ready for change in the educational sector? Shouldn't we be collectively addressing the statistics from the Department for Education, which tell us that between 25 and 29% of children with Education, Health and Care Plans or SEN support are suspended from school, compared with only 7.5% of their non-SEN peers?⁵ Shouldn't we be responding, with immediacy, to the figures that tell us that 28.7% of autistic pupils were recorded in 2021-22 as having persistent absenteeism (more than 10% of the school year), compared with the 14.8% persistent absenteeism rate of the full cohort?⁶

There is much nebulous discussion around 'inclusion' currently, particularly whilst we await the much-anticipated white paper on SEND, due in Autumn 2025. But what if 'inclusion' didn't actually mean that all children identified with unique learning needs should be expected to have their needs met within mainstream educational settings? What if 'inclusion' meant the determined and careful provision of a broad spectrum of different educational approaches, both within and outside mainstream? What if independent settings - often smaller, more adaptable, and often specialist - were better able to support neurodivergent learners in ways that they need, rather than expecting them to fit into a mould? What if these settings took a long, hard look at their (possibly) outdated behaviour policies and decided to just chuck out the 'rule book' and start again from a place of connection, building relationships around young people that enabled them a sense of belonging, rather than expecting a type of superficial uniformity? What if schools began with the curious observation of behaviours and learned how to recognise the messages learners are communicating in their own way? What if, instead of an army of data-driven competitors for top (league) table seats, we instead started to build schools that provided safe spaces for learners to be all the wonderful shades of their authentic selves and, in doing so, created a future society of artists, engineers, scientists, mathematicians, beauticians, lawyers, carpenters, cleaners and doctors who, instead of being measured against who they 'should or could have been', were taught to be proud of who they are?

For me, this wonderful world is a genuine possibility, and I personally believe that it begins - in schools - with a very different response to behaviour. If we choose to see, to listen, and to respond with understanding, reassurance and kindness, and we open the door to communication, it genuinely is possible to ensure that our neurodivergent young people are not only supported but valued; not only included, but celebrated; and not only recognised, but given the opportunity to flourish. And, believe it or not, it works for neurotypical children too!



Beth Elkins has worked with wonderful children and young people for over 20 years, working in SEND across Further Education, Secondary and Primary settings and later within the Local Authority, advising Cambridgeshire schools on the development of their SEN approaches and provision. She is a qualified SENDCo and fluent in British Sign Language. Mrs Elkins is the parent of a son with a PDA diagnosis and has been headteacher at Gretton School for 5 years so far, a job that she is truly passionate about. "I truly believe that these young people will change the world; their ability to learn, deeply and meticulously, in areas of their interests; their capacity for empathy; their unique ways of thinking; their indescribable humour (they are genuinely hilarious); the courage they show to overcome their own fears and uncertainties; their tenacious self-management in a sometimes constant state of fight or flight. Believe me when I say that these are some remarkable people."

1 Chazan, M. & Jackson, S. (1971). Behaviour Problems in the Infant School. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

2 Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children (1970). *Crisis in Child Mental Health: Challenge for the 1970s*.

3 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1971/feb/02/mentally-defective-children>

*The word 'heal' comes from an archaic narrative which, whilst perhaps noble in intent, still implied the necessity to change/improve/treat. I personally think autistic people are amongst the best in the world, just as they are.

4 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1970/nov/05/autistic-children>

5 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/5c1cae2-843d-414f-8bb7-08ddb31d8e6c>

6 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/117759/html>



Centre Academy London

MICHAEL JEFFREY
HEAD OF SCHOOL, CENTRE ACADEMY LONDON

On the right track: Careers and work experience at Centre Academy London

In hindsight, I wish I'd had the confidence to go with 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' as the name for our careers and work experience programme. To my mind, the metaphor of a mighty train powering down the tracks to some desirable destination, accompanied by that great song, captures our intentions perfectly. Instead, with an ISI inspection looming, I bottled it and went with 'Pathway To Employment', which I subsequently discovered every school in the land seems to have used. Yawn.

Ours is a new scheme on paper, though we have been doing things in a less strategic, almost ad-hoc way since 2022, when the then head, after something of a drubbing from Ofsted, sidled up to me in the yard and asked, "Would you sort out work experience and careers?" This, I knew, meant starting from scratch. It seems there are many millions of words written to advise on what the best career strategy should look like. So many folk are busy away on ideal programmes—great, if all schools are alike—but for a quirky, 50-SEN-kids school like ours, I needed to make it real to their needs. [Yes, of course I know the Gatsby benchmarks—a kind of aide-memoire to common sense.] For me, it's about talking, watching, encouraging, changing, and being patient. It's all about making the commitment, which I have verbally and in writing, that all our students will progress from Centre Academy London to a college place, a job, or an apprenticeship. No exceptions. So what exactly is Chattanooga Choo Choo—I mean, 'Pathway to Employment'? [Pardon me, boys.] It is a manageable, flexible six-point plan that is pertinent to our school. This is how it looks:

1. The golden thread – Career ideas woven into lessons

Recently, I sat in on a history class where the teacher ingeniously linked the 19th-century Golden Square cholera outbreak to the recent pandemic by looking at the roles and temperaments of the people involved—scientists, doctors and so forth. It occurred to me: why not try and make career/job links in all classes?

Teachers actually schedule time to discuss how whatever they are teaching can have a practical application in the outside world. For example:

- Art – design – everything tangible starts as a drawing
- Maths – measurements, budgets, sales, carpenters, TV producers, newspapers
- English – communication, making things clear, efficiency
- PE – health, good diet, keeping fit, stamina and concentration

It's a thought-generating exercise and good to do as a team effort towards the end of an inset day.

2. JOB DONE! – Work experience

We don't set aside a block of time when everyone goes off to a placement. It wouldn't work because our pupils need to be taken and collected from the host venue. There is much less disruption if we trickle the work experience throughout the year. When we started this in 2022, the first thing I did was to count up the number of children aged 15 and over. 17 pupils would need a placement. I grabbed some school letterhead and typed an attractive letter asking local business owners if they would consider giving our students a week of work experience. Thomas, a conveniently on-hand pupil, and I wandered into Clapham and distributed 20 letters. We smiled, charmed and chatted up managers, all of whom promised to 'get back'. Not one did.

It took a considerable amount of hard work to line up a list of companies. We are now able to provide students to Waitrose, McDonald's, local charities, 12 Rounds Boxing, the local library, a local children's nursery, and Clip 'n Climb. The written professional feedback is invaluable. We keep a copy of their provision maps. It's very hard for an employee to offer work experience provision, so each year we host an afternoon of drama, music and singing to thank the kind people who offer us these amazing opportunities. There are certificates and speeches. Last time, I donned the boxing gloves and gave a medley from hit musicals on the piano.

3. A day in the life of...

This heading, stolen from the Sunday Times Magazine, describes the series of talks given by men and women on the contribution they make to life—basically, what makes them tick.

The focus is not so much on academic qualification, or whether they went to university, but rather on character and drive, resilience and courage—a bit of life philosophy. What are the rewards, the challenges? Questions include: How do you spend leisure time? Are you content in your job? Will you be moving on? The talks take place in front of the whole school every Friday in an interview format, followed by a Q&A format. [Always the inevitable question: “How much do you earn?” The local mayor was honest.] We’ve had a very mixed selection of people: a vet, our local food bank rep, a policewoman, a shop manager, an actor, the CEO of LEGO (who turned up with 50 LEGO sets), to name a few. It’s aimed to give our pupils an idea of life and work, to demystify the idea of the workplace. Our new season kicks off in the autumn with a lady who sells private jets to the very rich. The following week, the bloke who runs Londis opposite the school will come in. The pupils thank them with a drawing linked to their profession. If you know how to ask the right questions, most people can come across as interesting, even accountants.

4. Travel hopefully— and Life Skills

A number of our pupils can’t travel independently and lack basic road safety awareness. They need to be worked with. Each week, a small group leaves the school with our OT specialist (who also takes the cooking club). They negotiate their way on buses, trains, in shops (checking varieties, comparing prices, interaction at the checkout), using crossings, they learn time awareness, and how to interact with other people. Frequent outings eventually build up confidence. One boy who took part in these sessions eventually left our school to work for the Elizabeth Line—his dream job. We’ve just doubled the number of extra-curricular clubs, all of which improve our pupils’ life skills: bead—dexterity, cooking — obvious, chess — problem-solving, debating — making an argument, basketball — team player, and so on.

5. Money talks

I listened to a radio phone-in lamenting the appallingly low level of financial knowledge in school leavers. “Money Talks” was my solution. We teamed up with Deloitte, who send six of their finest once a year to lead two weeks of differentiated workshops for the whole school. The money matters discussed include home budgets, leaving home, everyday banking, deals and tariffs, and online safety. All students get a certificate of completion to keep with their written work experience feedback. Money is also discussed in PSHE and citizenship lessons, but these yearly workshops firm up their learning and give them some money sense. Pupil feedback from the last session asked for more online shopping safety awareness, so that will be new this year.

6. It pays to talk

Guiding our pupils to make the right choices in how they progress when they leave school is key. When I became Head of School in January, I kept “careers” as an aspect of my role. I work with our older students and make sure each one has as much one-to-one time with me as possible. We obviously take into consideration academic ability, but more importantly, I ask the student to take a serious, good look at him/herself and ask: What will fulfil me? What can I see myself doing? Where are my character strengths and weaknesses? Am I driven? Should I consider an apprenticeship? Further education? We then look for jobs or courses together. I help with all the applications and will, if necessary, accompany a pupil to a college open day. I also make sure they can get independent advice.

We have links with the Clapham Spear Programme, with the local Job Centre, and we are regular attendees at the Wandsworth Job Fair. We also have a great relationship with the Shaw Trust (who helped the above-mentioned boy get his job with London Transport). Each year, we invite our friends at Apprentice Skills and Knowledge (ASK) to do two mornings of whole-school workshops on CV writing, interview technique and apprenticeship awareness. Each student is given a life membership in the apprenticeship database. The aim is to prepare the pupil practically and



emotionally for this transition. The motto of our school is “Keep it Real.” Given the fact that the vast majority of our students have an EHCP, and their needs are complicated—often by very high levels of anxiety—the very fact that they leave Centre Academy London with a place to go is an extraordinary achievement. In many cases—and I made this point to the leavers, parents and staff at this year’s graduation lunch—the learning trajectory of our students is more akin to the vertical take-off of a Harrier Jump Jet than the long, carefully calibrated trajectory of a neurotypical pupil. It might be the case that for the first two or three years, they do very little work or refuse to write.

The important thing is keeping them in school. Too much pressure, and we will lose them; too little, and they will not achieve. The same might be said for the delicate transition when they leave school. My advice to parents is to be patient—see the college place not as a means to an end, but as a stepping stone. Our pupils need extra time. Yes, it’s inspection-busting having a glittering careers policy on paper, but it needs to really serve the pupils. 100% of our leavers at the summer 2025 graduation have a job or a college place. They have all done at least two rounds of work experience, they have access to the apprenticeship database, and their social life skills have grown immeasurably [ask the parents]. We have all got our hands dirty figuring out their futures. It’s hard work, but if you’re true to your pupils, it will work out.

This Chattanooga Choo Choo business — I think we’re right on track. But should I finally take the plunge and rename it after all?



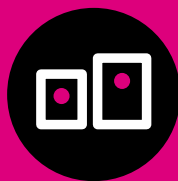
Michael Jeffrey is a BAFTA winning composer and producer, who started part-time at Centre Academy London in 2020, to ‘teach a bit of music’. He took on careers and admissions and then, in January 2025, became Head of School, a position he describes as a ‘glorious and unexpected privilege’.

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School News

CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS THE ASSOCIATION

Here is a selection of exciting news that has been shared with us from across the ISA membership. Please share your school's news with us at comms@isaschools.org.uk or tag us on X @isaschools to potentially appear in future editions of the Journal, on the ISA website, or shared on social media.

STEAMfest brings together 300 KS2 pupils from seven local schools



Leighton Park (LW)

In May, Leighton Park School hosted its annual STEAMfest event, welcoming 300 Year 5 students from seven local Primary and Prep schools, including St Piran's, The Oratory Prep School (OPS), Farley Hill Primary, Sonning CoFE Primary, Emmer Green Primary, Whiteknights Primary, and New Christchurch Primary. Bathed in sunshine on Leighton Park's Ten Acre Field, the event celebrated the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) through a series of hands-on challenges designed to inspire creativity and teamwork. Students, organised into teams of five, tackled three distinct activities mirroring real-world humanitarian challenges: constructing storm-proof shelters, designing rafts to transport essential aid across water, and devising systems to move clean water efficiently. With each task incorporating water, one perceptive Year 5 participant observed they were "using water to make STEAM."

The event is part of Leighton Park's Be Inspired Programme, which offers local schools free events and activities designed to extend and enrich the curriculum for Key Stage 2 students and beyond. Roz Edwards, who coordinates the programme, reflected on the day: "Organising STEAMfest again this year has been an absolute joy—from working closely with the schools and planning all the details, to seeing it all come to life on the day! But the best part for me was seeing the children's happy faces as they embraced the challenges with amazing teamwork, creativity, and enthusiasm. Well done to everyone who took part, and thank you to our fantastic students and teachers for leading the sessions!" how medicine is being transformed by artificial intelligence and technology. Hosting approximately 60 students from Years 11 to 13, the conference was also attended by students from local establishments including Ely College, St. Mary's School, Felstead School and the Cambridge Academy of Science and Technology (CAST).

North London Grammar School fosters global collaboration at IGO 2025

The International Greenwich Olympiad (IGO 2025), now in its fourth year, unfolded across two iconic UK cities, bringing together exceptional young minds from around the world in a dynamic week of innovation, collaboration, and cultural exchange. Held from 22 to 28 June, the Olympiad welcomed 522 students aged 10 to 18, accompanied by 186 supervisors from 53 countries, presenting 356 cutting-edge projects across 13 categories.

This year, IGO saw not only a significant increase in global participants but also a notable rise in the number of UK schools involved compared to last year, underscoring its growing prestige and appeal as a leading international educational event. The Olympiad also launched new categories such as Health Sciences and Drama, broadening the scope of the competition and offering students fresh opportunities to showcase their talents both in art and science. The integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) throughout the competition inspired participants to align their projects with pressing global issues, encouraging innovative solutions with real-world impact.



North London Grammar School (LN)

This year's event not only showcased youth-led solutions to pressing global challenges but also fostered lasting international connections that will extend well beyond the competition itself. At the heart of this success is North London Grammar School (NLGS), a proud recent member of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), whose commitment to academic excellence and global citizenship continues to inspire and empower young innovators.

As participants return to their home countries, they carry not only medals and certificates but also fresh perspectives, enduring friendships, and a profound motivation to drive positive change in their communities and beyond. These young innovators embody the spirit of global citizenship and the belief that with knowledge and determination, no challenge is too great.

'The best day of my life!' – pupils create lasting memories at ISA Friendship Festival



Leweston (SW)

Annemount School and The Mulberry House School joined forces to create a truly memorable day for Year One pupils, hosting the very first ISA Sports Event for this age group – a historic moment as the

youngest ever to feature on the ISA Sports Calendar. Dubbed the "Friendship Festival," the event was about far more than just sport. It was a celebration of friendship, community, and the pure joy of taking part. From the moment the 250 children arrived at Willesden Green Leisure Centre, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement and anticipation.

Throughout the day, the young athletes threw themselves into 13 different activities, from tug of war and rugby skills to sack racing and more. The festival was designed not only to test their sporting abilities but to encourage teamwork and new friendships, and it did so with heartwarming success.

Adding to the spirit of the day, Year Six pupils from St Charles Catholic Primary School stepped in as enthusiastic role models. Their energy and kindness helped guide the younger children through the activities, creating a supportive environment that lifted everyone's spirits.

After a lively morning, the children took a well-earned break before returning to the track for running races that had the crowd cheering. The day wrapped up with an awards ceremony where every child was celebrated for their effort and participation, receiving medals and trophies that recognised their achievements.

Bridgewater celebrates creativity and talent in music, art, and design



Bridgewater School (N)

In May, Bridgewater School was proud to host its annual Music, Art & Design Showcase Evening, a vibrant celebration of the creativity and passion of its talented students. The event at the independent school in Worsley brought together families, friends and staff to honour the achievements of the school's young artists, designers and performers. The evening began with a stunning exhibition of GCSE work from Year 11 Art students. Visitors were treated to an extraordinary collection of artwork – from striking fashion concepts and expressive mixed media canvases to inventive 3D constructions. Alongside this, Design Technology students presented a range of functional, problem-solving pieces, showcasing their understanding of materials, processes, and the use of emerging technologies. These works were not only technically impressive but also full of personal meaning and creative flair.

The second half of the evening featured a concert of musical performances from pupils across both the Prep and Senior schools. With a programme that spanned genres and styles, the performances reflected the depth and diversity of musical talent at Bridgewater – and captivated the audience from start to finish.

Holme Grange welcomes new Headteacher

Holme Grange is delighted to welcome Mrs Pippa Adams as its new Headteacher from 1st September. She joins from Farlington School in Horsham where she was whole school Deputy Head across Nursery-Sixth Form for four years. Previously, Pippa was Deputy Head Academic at St Edmund's School Hindhead, so she brings extensive leadership experience across independent co-educational schools from Nursery to Sixth Form. Mrs Adams is committed to championing academic excellence, pastoral care and wide-ranging opportunities that enable every pupil to thrive.



Holme Grange (LW)

SEN school to open new site

The Unicorn School has officially opened the Ock Building, its newly converted facility, following a generous £150,000 gift from the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Formerly the old Premier Inn on Marcham Road, the site has been transformed into purpose-built classrooms and learning spaces for pupils with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and speech, language and learning needs. The building opened this autumn, expanding the school's capacity and specialist provision.

Head Teacher Alison Woodworth-Sturla said: "When the Garfield Weston Foundation's grant came through in June, it gave us the final push and the means to finish the Ock Building on schedule. Now that it is open, we are already seeing how much of a difference the space makes for our pupils."

The Ock Building forms Stage 1 of the school's expansion, adding classrooms for up to 120 more pupils. Stage 2 will follow, with further facilities including life-skills provision for older students.



The Unicorn School (LN)

September 2025

Thank you to the Garfield Weston Foundation



Many ISA Members' Schools engage in partnerships with state schools to expand the opportunities and experiences available to pupils and teachers from all schools involved. Celebrating these projects is essential in showcasing the independent sector's value and inspiring more schools to play their part. ISA schools can share their partnerships on the ISC Schools Together website:

www.schoolstogether.org/about/adding-school-partnerships/.

NATIONAL EVENTS

SKIING

U9-U18 - Hemel Hempstead - 29 September 2025

FOOTBALL

U11/U13/U15 Girls - LVS Ascot - 30 September 2025
U12 Boys - St Johns, Enfield - 01 October 2025
U11/U13 Girls - Dixie Grammar School - 06 October 2025
U14/U16 - Boys - Nottingham - 23 January 2026
U11/U13/U15 Boys - LVS Ascot - 17 March 2026
U11 Boys - St George's Park - 20 March 2026
U13 Girls - Lingfield College - 05 May 2026

SAILING

U9-U18 - Draycote Water - 02 October 2025

ESPORTS

U9-U16 - Remote Rounds and Final - Nov 2025 & Feb 2026

HOCKEY

U11 Girls - Lee Valley - 04 November 2025
U13 Girls - Lee Valley - 06 November 2025
U15 Girls - Lee Valley - 18 November 2025
U11 Boys - Lee Valley - 29 January 2026
U13 Boys - Lee Valley - 03 February 2026
U15 Boys - Lee Valley - 05 February 2026

RUGBY

U10/U11 - Colchester - 07 November 2025
U16 Boys Open - Westonbirt School - 12 February 2026
U15 Boys - Market Bosworth - 13 February 2026
U14 Boys St James Boys' Ashford - March 2026
U18 Boys Scarisbrick Hall School - 04 March 2026
U13 Boys - St James Boys' Ashford - March 2026
U12 Boys - Teddington - 16 March 2026
U14/U15 Girls - Teddington - 20 March 2026

BADMINTON

U13/U15 - Nottingham - 20 November 2025
U15/U17 - Nottingham - 21 November 2025

SQUASH

U13/ U16 - Wycliffe College - 24 November 2025

SWIMMING

U9-U18 - London Olympic Pool - 28 November 2025

TABLE TENNIS

U11/U13 - Nottingham - 21 January 2026
U13/U15 - Nottingham - 22 January 2026

CROSS COUNTRY

National Finals - Venue TBC - 28 February 2026

NETBALL

U18 - Nottingham - 02 March 2026
U16 - Nottingham - 10 March 2026
U11 - King's High, Warwick - 11 March 2026
U14 - Nottingham - 12 March 2026
U13 - King's High, Warwick - 13 March 2026

Follow us on X @ISAsportUK
and Instagram @isaschoolssport for more updates.

 ISASPORTUK

 ISASCHOOLSSPORT

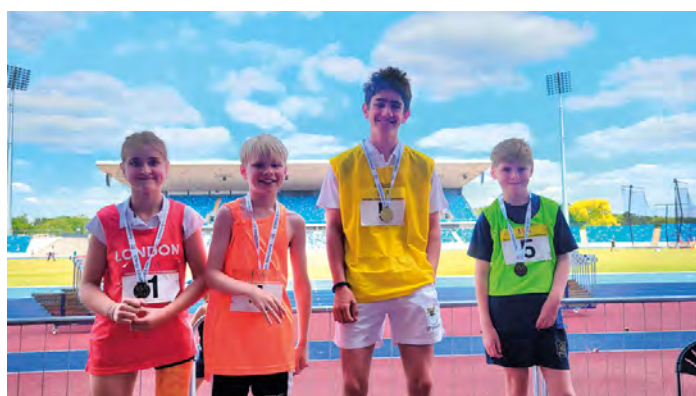
ISA National Cross Country Finals 2025

The National Cross Country Finals 2025 took place at a new venue in Mallory Park, Leicestershire, featuring a tough, undulating course. The event hosted 674 pupils from 163 member schools. Staff and students from a local school assisted with course setup and marshalling. Well done to all students for their efforts on the day.

Para Events

At the ISA Athletics Finals in June, we were delighted to welcome 7 students from ISA schools to compete in the ISA para events. This included the para shot, para howler, and the 100m, and 60m sprints. Well done to students from Duke of Kent School, Bedford Greenacre, Thorpe Hall, Wellow House School, and St James Senior Boys' School for competing in their respective events on the day.

As an Association, we are driven to push inclusive sport across our sports programme and across all of our member schools, including athletics. The para events at the national finals are an open invitation and do not require qualification through an ISA area event. We encourage schools to invite all disabled students with an interest and enjoyment of athletics, so they have the opportunity to represent their school and compete against others of similar impairment and ability. As we continue to grow, the events we focus on participation with all students receiving a medal on the podium.



NATIONAL EVENTS

CLAY PIGEON

U13-U18 - Hartpur, Gloucestershire - 13 March 2026

TRIATHLON

U9-U18 - Ipswich High School - May 2026

TENNIS

U13 - New Hall School, Chelmsford - May 2026

U15 - New Hall School, Chelmsford - May 2026

EQUESTRIAN

U9-U18 - Princethorpe College - May 2026

GYMNASTICS

U9/U11 - Adcote School, Shrewsbury - 10 May 2026

CRICKET

U15 Boys - St James Boys' Ashford - June 2026

U13 Boys - St James Boys' Ashford - June 2026

U15 Girls - Gosfield School - 11 June 2026

U13 Girls - Gosfield School - 16 June 2026

GOLF

U18 - Venue TBC - June 2026

TOUCH RUGBY

U13/U15 - Venue TBC - 09 June 2026

ATHLETICS

National Finals - Birmingham - 15 June 2026

INCLUSIVE FESTIVAL (SEND)

U11-U14 - Finborough School, Suffolk - May 2026

U12/U13 - Leighton Park, Reading - 16 June 2026

U11-U16 - Nottingham - 22 & 23 June 2026

AREA SPORTS COORDINATORS

EAST ANGLIA

Marc Holland | Woodlands School, Hutton Manor

LONDON NORTH

Sophie Martin | Kingshott School

LONDON SOUTH

TBC

LONDON WEST

Kevin Long | Boundary Oak School

MIDLANDS

Sarah Dicksee | Dixie Grammar School

Neil McCollin | Princethorpe College

NORTH

Nick McMahon | Hipperholme Grammar

SOUTH WEST

TBC

Follow us on X @ISAsportUK
and Instagram @isaschoolssport for more
updates.

X ISASPORTUK

IG ISASCHOOLSSPORT

Accessible and Active: the 3rd ISA Inclusive Festival of Sport

Leighton Park students were excited to deliver the School's third annual ISA inclusive Festival of Sport on Tuesday 17th June, in association with Power2Inspire. The six Sixth Formers from the CTech Sports course and the 25 Year 10s from our vocational Sports Leadership Qualification were eager to try out their coaching skills with younger pupils. The participants came from eight local schools, including Addington School for children with severe learning difficulties, and included a number of our Fryers from Years 7 and 8 joining in the fun! The accessible sports programme featured sitting volleyball, rugby, football, kwik cricket, boccia and goalball.

John Willis, founder of Power2Inspire and inspirational inclusive sport role model, was delighted that the event has grown from 40 pupils to almost 100 since the initial delivery in 2023. "This is a wonderful festival because it gets everybody, regardless of their ability, to play together, to make new friends and to have fun!"

Emily from the ISA was equally enthusiastic saying: "As an association we are really driven to push inclusive sport across our sports programme and across all of our member schools. It's fantastic to see all these children enjoying sport in a comfortable environment with their peers; long may it continue!"

Sam (Lower Sixth) who was teaching goalball as well as acting a security and the joint marketing and media officer as part of his CTech Sport course commented: "I think the involvement and engagement of the Festival is the most worthwhile thing. While it helps to keep the participants healthy, it also gives them an opportunity to try new things and make new friends, which I think during everybody's years in school is extremely important."

Lily (Lower Sixth) is also a CTech Sport student and responsible for leading the kwik cricket activity, as well as being part of the first aid team and working with Sam on media and marketing for the event. Lily reflected, "The Inclusive Sport Festival is a worthwhile activity because it allows students who wouldn't usually get the chance or support to participate in sports, have the opportunity to play games with new individuals to reach out and expand new friendships, which creates a sense of belonging. It also reinforces their confidence in themselves, this positive self-image extends beyond the festival, impacting other areas of life. Events like the Inclusive Sports Festival raise public awareness about the importance of inclusion in sports and the broader community. They provide a visible platform to advocate for accessibility, equal opportunities, and the celebration of diversity."

The event is part of the School's active partnerships and outreach programme which engages local pupils from less advantageous backgrounds and encourages access to opportunities such as reading support, maths support, food tech, sport, dance and art.

Lily shared: "What resonates mostly with me regarding the Inclusive Sports Festival is the Quaker value of service, which is evident in the School's encouragement to support the local community. Being involved in these activities has strengthened my sense of responsibility towards others and reinforced the importance of giving back."



Footnote:

This article is republished with the kind permission of Leighton Park School.

Message From the ISA National Chair

Jonathan Hetherington

To serve our association as its elected Chair for this 2025-26 year is both a great honour and a real privilege. Through our nearly 800 member schools, the ISA comprises the greatest breadth of school type and character, and boasts a richness of innovation and expertise unparalleled by any other heads' association.

A member of ISA from 2016, I have been the headmaster of More House School, Frensham, in ISA's London West region, since 2015. More House is the largest school in the United Kingdom specifically for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), now with more than 500 students on roll; mostly day-pupils and about 75 boarders. Despite experiencing the challenges of Specific Learning Difficulties, including Dyslexia, of Developmental Language Disorder and of related SEND, our pupils study a mainstream, academic curriculum delivered in a truly inclusive classroom environment, and a majority progress to university. A research partner with leading universities, More House supports schools and educational professionals across the independent and state-maintained sectors to improve their own provision and outcomes for neurodivergent learners.

School headship is a unique role, realising acute pressures and requiring vast reserves of resilience and fortitude. In my first year, there were many times when I felt unequal to the feats demanded of me. I sought to encourage myself, knowing that this was an unusual year with unique challenges: I was new to headship, it was a whole-school inspection year, and we had quite a few new staff. But year two felt similarly out of control; I hoped that might also be put down to its own unique challenges. It would get easier!

Like many of us, having now led our school communities through the pandemic, through changes to pensions, through VAT, through level three complaints, and even defending at tribunal, and through myriad other exceptional circumstances, I recognise now that this is the head's lot. We are always called upon to provide strong leadership and unrelenting optimism whilst facing the attrition of unexpected and new situations. And, despite being the figurehead in the midst of a large community of pupils, colleagues and families, it can be a lonely place.

Who really understands the demands and the pressure of competing priorities, often with so much human emotion attached?

From the very start, I have found the warmth and non-judgmental fellowship of our association inspirational and energising. The ISA's offer is exceptional in terms of professional development courses, support for staff in our schools far beyond the headteacher, bespoke and confidential expert advice, opportunities for pupils... But for me, the most powerful benefit of my membership continues to be the collegiality of coming together with fellow heads, all from very different schools and backgrounds but united in our innovation and aspiration for our pupils and our schools. We offer a support and empowering challenge of one another that cannot be replicated elsewhere, and it is ISA's warmth and fellowship which has fostered its rapid growth to become the largest of the ISC-affiliated heads' associations.

Through ISA, I have received the validation, support and encouragement not only to overcome the never-ending challenges we face as school leaders, but to realise that school headship is truly the most rewarding and privileged job ever.

Just like year one and year two of my headship, this 2025-26 year ahead promises again to bring new and exceptional challenges. At the time of writing, the impending government white paper on

education, anticipated sometime in October, looms ever larger in my mind. It will impact all of us and, especially in the world of special educational needs, presents so much uncertainty for families and for schools. Every ISA head will be facing at this time their own complement of problems to resolve, likely the cause of much anxiety.

I urge you to embrace the support opportunities available to you through your ISA membership:

- We are so fortunate in the expertise and dedication of ISA's staff, led by our inspirational CEO, Rudi Elliott Lockhart. Whether at ISA House or your Regional Ambassador, they are ever ready to take your call or email, to listen to whatever situation you are facing, and to share their experience and advice.
- Prioritise development of yourself in your role as your school's leader, attending your area heads' meetings and building strong links with fellow heads to offer one another support.
- Encourage your staff to enter pupils in ISA competitions for sports, arts and academia, offering them a regional or national platform on which to celebrate their achievements.
- Attend the ISA annual conference in Bristol in May 2026, and the Autumn Study Conference later this term, immersing yourself in high-quality professional development and peer-fellowship.
- Promote amongst your staff the Subject Level Networking Groups, promoting links between departmental leads and staff across schools and regions.
- Link into ISA's online forum to discover a community which pools the widest expanse of experience and knowledge, to offer solutions to individuals' queries or problems.
- Submit an entry for an ISA national award to bring public recognition of your school's special area of strength.
- Build the knowledge, skills and confidence of your senior and middle managers, and wider staff by accessing the ISA Professional Development programme of courses.
- Become more active in your association and in supporting fellow heads by taking on a role in your regional committee or putting yourself forward for election to ISA's national Executive Council.

I believe we become stronger, more effective leaders through collaboration, and I recognise this as being at the core of ISA's mission. Let this be a year where we each, as members of ISA, reach out to one another, promoting support and friendship, as we look bravely and with aspiration for our schools, to the future.

I wish you and your school communities well for the year ahead, and thank you for your fellowship.

Jonathan Hetherington has been Headmaster of More House School, Frensham, since 2015. A graduate in English Literature with a Master's in Educational Leadership, he has devoted his career to supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties and related needs. He also serves as a trustee of the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity and is active in wider educational and community roles.



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Legal Corner with Penningtons Manches Cooper



Fees in lieu of notice, filling the gap

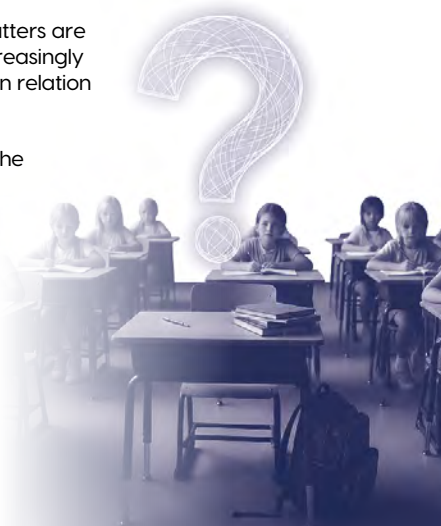
With the increasing financial pressures on parents arising from the introduction of VAT, it is commonly known that a number of parents are removing their children from independent education to maintained schools. Often, parents will only do this once a space is confirmed in a local maintained school/academy. Given the timelines that apply to accepting places from a maintained school/academy, it often means parents are unable to provide the contractually required notice to their child's existing independent school. The amount of notice can vary from half a term to simply a couple of days.

Parents seeking to avoid paying fees in lieu of notice isn't a new development, although matters are complicated due to the number of parents that are leaving. However, parents are now increasingly aware of their rights and the consumer protections that are afforded to them, particularly in relation to fees in lieu of notice.

This means that often when parents remove their children from schools without providing the required notice, and receive a demand for fees in lieu of notice, they will make enquiries as to whether or not the space that their child had at the school has been filled. Complications can arise where, for example, the space is filled in relation to either the class or year group of the child that has left, but there is a reduction in the total number of children at the school, or the school had been budgeting on an increase in numbers and is now simply meeting the same level of pupils.

This is important as more often than not, budget and spending commitments are based on the entire school and pupil body rather than just one class or year group.

With this in mind, schools should review their terms and conditions. It is now expected that schools will give credit in relation to fees in lieu of notice where there is no fee/revenue gap left by a child leaving; however, it should be clear that this has regard to the total number of pupils attending the school.



THE FUTURE IS MINE TO CREATE

More Than a Logo: Why Branding Matters for Schools

In today's competitive education landscape, whilst schools are primarily recognised as institutions of learning, they're also dynamic communities with a unique mission, values, audiences and culture. As a result, branding can no longer be just for businesses. Your brand is a powerful tool in defining your identity, in communicating your strengths, and in helping build lasting trust with students, parents, and the wider community. Oyster Design's Creative Director Ryan reflects on why branding is important for schools.

What Is a School Brand?

Your school's brand is far more than its logo or uniform. It's the overall perception people have of the school, shaped by everything from the tone of your communications and the design of your website, to how you engage with your key audiences and the local community. Your brand expresses who you are, what you stand for, and why families should choose you over another institution.

The key benefits of school branding

1. Clarity and consistency

A strong brand creates a clear, consistent message about your school's values and vision. This helps prospective families quickly understand what makes your school different and shows the power of your educational approach.

2. Increased enrolment

A well-branded school is more likely to capture attention, build trust, and remain at the forefront of your audience's minds when the time comes for them to choose. The application of your brand from every email, to printed materials and on-site signage can help strengthen your brand image and make sure that parents visiting you get a first impression of professionalism, clarity and a true sense of your vision and values at every touch point.

3. Improved internal culture

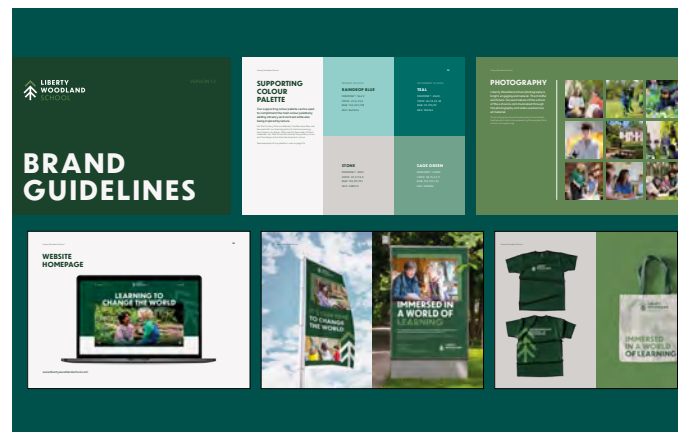
Branding isn't just outward-facing. A well-defined identity helps staff and students feel aligned with the school's goals and culture and creates an internal culture that promotes a team spirit and shared message about your school's principles and culture.

4. Stronger community engagement

A cohesive brand inspires pride and belonging, turning your community into ambassadors who advocate for your school.

5. Professionalism and trust

A strong visual identity ultimately exudes credibility through well thought out and consistent communications, reflecting a tone and confidence that truly reflects who you are and what you stand for.



Liberty Woodland School are a school with a difference. Oyster developed their new identity & brand guidelines to seamlessly reflect a consistent brand message. Every touch point engages clearly with their audiences, and reflects the exact aims of their educational structure and the positive outcomes that they have for young people in the future. Every design element, every image and every video are directed to show the school in its best light, and has improved the school's visibility dramatically, achieving a 348% increase in organic web visits and 240% increase in admissions.

Your branding is a strategic investment

Branding is about telling your story with purpose and clarity so that families, staff, and supporters can find you, connect with you, and become part of your journey. In a sector where trust, reputation, and community matter deeply, branding is more than important; it's essential.



Meet your ISA Regional Ambassadors

ISA Regional Ambassadors are experienced educators who provide tailored support to Member schools across the UK. Through annual pastoral visits, guidance on school development, and sharing best practice, they help schools thrive. Please prioritise their visit in your calendars. Ambassadors also attend regional meetings and events, fostering collaboration and community. Covering seven areas: East, London North, London South, London West, Midlands, North, and South West, they ensure every Member benefits from local expertise and support.



Emma Howard
North



Victoria Kennington
South West



Barbara McKeown
East Anglia



Lynn Maggs-Wellings
London North



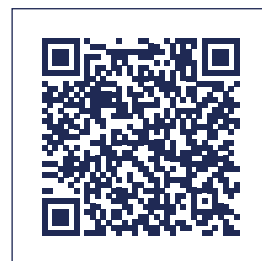
Sue Manser
London West



John Price
Midlands



Linda Sanders
London South



ISA staff contact page

Support for ISA Members with Atrium HR

One of the benefits of your ISA membership, is access to professional support for your mental health and wellbeing through Atrium HR.

This service is a personal benefit for ISA Members – headteachers – only, not for the wider teaching staff. It is funded directly by ISA, so there is no cost to you at the point of use.

You will need a personal login with Atrium to use this service.
Please look out for your welcome communication sent from web@atriumhr.com.

The objectives of a wellbeing programme:

- Improve health and wellbeing: Foster a culture of health, resilience, and balance that supports both personal and professional success.
- Enhance engagement and productivity: Provide tools and resources to help end-users to reduce stress, increase energy, and perform at their best.

Are you receiving our electronic newsletter?

All members should already be receiving our monthly newsletter, but if your colleagues would like to join in, they can sign up on the ISA website by creating an account. Not getting the newsletter yourself? Drop us a line at isa@isaschools.org.uk and we'll make sure you're added.



Professional Development

ISA offers exclusive professional development opportunities tailored for educators and leaders within independent schools. Members enjoy discounted rates on our comprehensive range of courses designed to enhance skills and broaden perspectives. By participating, you can advance your career and positively impact both students and the school community.

We are delighted to provide a diverse selection of online development options covering a wide array of topics. Each course combines expert knowledge, many with valuable networking opportunities.

Do take the time to incorporate courses, an important part of Continuing Professional Development, into your active schedule.

Cost

The rate for most online courses is £130 / £160 (Member / non-Member rate) per delegate.

How to book

For more information on our programme and to book, visit the website at www.isaschools.org.uk/events

We are delighted to provide a diverse selection of online development options covering a wide array of topics. Each course combines expert knowledge, many with valuable networking opportunities.

SEND:

SENCO Essentials for Independent Schools: A Quick-Start Guide

19 Jan 2026 | Zoom | 10-12.45

The SEND overview – advice for all Headteachers and Senior Managers:

02 Mar 2026 | Zoom | 1.30pm – 4pm

SEND: Finance, Local Authorities and EHCPs for Independent School SENDCos

23 April 2026 | Zoom | 10am – 12pm

Accessibility, Personalisation, and Differentiation: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for SEND

19 May 2026 | Zoom | 9.30-11.30

AT and AI to support SEND

05 Jun 2026 | Zoom | 9.30am-3pm

Leadership

How to run a school: for aspirant and new Heads

03 Dec 2025 | Zoom | 9.30am-3pm

Managing challenging conversations - a framework (2.5 hours)

03 Feb 2026 | Zoom | 10-12.30

Inspection

Inspection: Improving your documentation for ISI Inspections

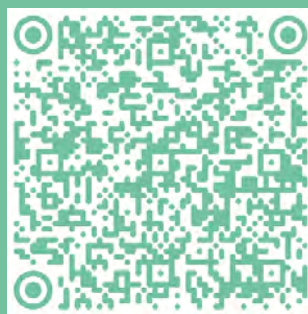
06 Feb 2026 | Zoom | 9.30am-3pm

Autumn Study Conference

The Autumn Study Conference complements our Annual Conference as a pedagogy-focused meeting of minds. It is an exchange of educational best practice, providing a range of thought-provoking keynotes, relevant breakout sessions and practical solutions to take back to your school. Also part of the conference is the ISA National Art Competition Final, an excellent platform for schools to showcase their students' artistic talents – and the ISA Awards ceremony, a celebration of ISA Members' success.

How to book:

For more information on our programme and to book, visit the website at <https://www.isaschools.org.uk/events>





ISA Accreditations

Our Professional Development Programme provides high-quality training opportunities for a wide range of school staff, promoting excellence in independent education across the board. ISA accreditations help support our Members and their staff in a range of different areas, providing professional development opportunities that keep schools up to date and add value to staff's credentials.

Providing high-quality continuous professional development (CPD) for staff is an essential tool for schools to maintain best practices, foster excellence in education and keep a competitive edge.

The ISA Certificate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead recognises the need for current, detailed and supportive professional development to ensure those who take a leading role in this area develop their skills and knowledge effectively. It is designed to enable all those who have an interest in equity, diversity and inclusion within their setting to maintain best practice.

The ISA Certificate for Senior Mental Health Lead ensures School Leaders remain current and have opportunities to develop a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The scheme aligns with the full DfE specifications for the role and is designed for senior staff with the role of Mental Health Lead within their setting.

The ISA Certificate in Advanced School Leadership recognises excellence in Senior Leadership and celebrates a continuing commitment to drive personal improvement. It is open to those leaders (both members and non-members) who wish to develop their skills and knowledge in school leadership.

The ISA Certificate in School Leadership is designed for aspiring school leaders who are committed to continuous improvement. It's open to both ISA members and non-members, providing a valuable pathway to develop your leadership skills and knowledge. Earning this certificate demonstrates your dedication to professional growth and showcases your advancing leadership capabilities.

For more information about ISA Accreditations



Annual Conference 13-15 May 2026

Mercure Bristol Grand Hotel
BS1 2EL





A Recipe for Progress: apetito and ISA Uncover the Realities of Independent School Catering

At a time when providing nutritious, cost-effective, and high-quality school meals has become increasingly complex for many schools, **apetito**, one of the UK's fastest growing school caterers, is stepping forward to address these challenges head-on.

To explore the key findings of its 'Shaping the Future of Independent School Catering Report', released earlier this year in collaboration with the Independent School Association (ISA), **apetito** is launching a brand-new webinar.

Hosted by Peter Woodruffe, Deputy Chief Executive of ISA, it brings together key voices from across the sector to explore and examine the complexities and possibilities of independent school catering that the report uncovered.

Joining Peter on the panel is Rudolf Elliot Lockhart, CEO of ISA who offers strategic insights into the evolving needs of independent schools, Rupert Weber, General Manager of **apetito**'s Education Division who shares strategic ideas about how independent schools can solve the catering challenges they are currently facing and James Stacey, Managing Partner of ISCC who brings a consultancy perspective on how schools can achieve operational and catering efficiencies.

This webinar delves into the evolving landscape of catering in independent schools, offering a clear and comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities shaping the sector today. Drawing on extensive qualitative and quantitative research involving around 60 Headteachers, Bursars, Business Managers, and Catering Managers from across the UK, the webinar examines each of the key report themes.

The Key Findings: What Schools Are Saying

The webinar explores the findings and shares practical strategies on how to deliver high-quality school meals without compromising on nutrition or pupil wellbeing. Discussions by the panel cover:

- **Cost Concerns:** Unpicking how schools can balance catering budgets while maintaining quality.
- **Food Quality and Nutrition:** How can schools offer high-quality, nutritious meals that give pupils the fuel they need to learn.
- **Pupil and Parent Engagement:** Why there's a growing need to involve families and pupils in food choices and education.
- **Tackling the Labour Crisis:** The impact of staff and skills shortages in school kitchens and how to mitigate these issues.
- **Food Safety and Allergies:** Why effectively managing dietary needs safely and inclusively is a non-negotiable for schools.
- **Education and Sustainability:** How important it is for schools to teach food education and adopt more sustainable catering practices.



The Three Biggest Catering Challenges Facing Independent Schools

When apetito began analysing the data collected for the report, three priorities emerged as the most pressing concerns for independent schools in relation to catering: cost, quality, and nutrition. During the webinar, each speaker shared insights on how these challenges are being addressed and what more can be done to support schools in delivering excellent food provision.

This webinar begins with taking a closer look at one of the first key issues independent schools identified - the concerns around cost. With budgets tightening across the sector, it's no surprise that cost is the top concern. In fact, 91% of schools identified it as one of their top three challenges. The panel's discussion focused on how schools can balance the need to manage costs with their goal of providing high-quality meals and shared changes schools can make to reduce the financial burden of their catering operations.

The report findings also show that the majority of schools rank quality as one of their top three priorities when it comes to providing school meals. However, what the data also showed us was that more than two in three schools state that actually achieving high-quality school meals is one of their top challenges. At this point in the discussion, the panel offered insights into how rising costs and the ongoing labour crisis are having a real impact, with schools finding it increasingly hard to offer high-quality meals, and, in too many cases, school menus are lacking variety and nutritional balance. They shared insights and steps schools can take to deliver better quality meals for pupils.

More and more schools are focused on offering a variety of balanced and healthy meal options to ensure that pupils are offered nutritious meals. Whilst this aspiration is to be applauded, the research does uncover that 25% of schools are concerned that their pupils' nutritional needs are not being met, and nearly 1 in 3 schools don't have a positive view of the variety of their school meal options, which shows there is room for improvement in a significant number of independent schools. The panel discussion focused on the challenges schools face in offering broad and nutritious menus and what changes schools can make to diversify their menus and offer a variety of balanced and healthy meal options.

Unlocking the Future: Learn How to Revolutionise School Meals

When apetito set out to begin this research project, it wanted to examine the true landscape of independent school catering. Partnering with the Independent School Association and ISCC for this webinar has allowed apetito to dive deep into both the challenges and successes schools face when it comes to their catering. This webinar is a valuable resource, enabling school leaders and catering teams to learn from industry professionals how to deliver an excellent school meal provision.

**Watch the webinar on demand,
or download the full report here**



Transform Your School Catering

Reach out to apetito's Education team and discover how apetito can transform your independent school's catering with a focus on quality, ease and significant cost savings by visiting <https://apetito.link/ISASchools> or contacting 0117 463 3563.



RACHEL BORLAND
PRINCIPAL, LVS HAS SOCKS

LVS Hassocks - Learning Without Limits

At LVS Hassocks, we believe in Learning Without Limits. Nestled in the heart of Sussex, our school is a specialist day provision for autistic young people aged 11–19, each with a formal diagnosis of autism. I am immensely proud to lead this unique and nurturing community, where our mission is to provide every student with the opportunity to grow in confidence, independence, and achievement.

Our 36-acre rural campus is another source of pride. Set amidst beautiful countryside, it provides not only tranquillity but also a rich outdoor learning environment. From our polytunnels, orchards, and raised garden beds to our wildlife habitats and animal husbandry projects, students have the opportunity to develop both responsibility and vocational skills. Our work in this area was recently recognised with the RHS Campaign for School Gardening Level 4 Award.

As a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school, our staff are specifically trained to support not only autism but also the array of co-occurring conditions many of our students experience. We recognise the challenges our young people may have faced in mainstream settings, including school refusal and exclusion, and we are committed to offering them a safe, structured, and supportive environment where they can thrive.

Our curriculum is built around three pillars: Learning, Growing, and Achieving. We take a 'stage not age' approach, ensuring that every student progresses at a pace suited to their individual needs, with opportunities to gain GCSEs and vocational qualifications at Key Stages 4 and 5. With small class sizes—an average of eight students, supported by both a teacher and Learning Support Assistant—we are able to provide highly personalised education, underpinned by therapeutic input to ensure our classrooms remain autism-friendly.

We offer the Pearson BTEC Level 1 in Land-Based Studies, giving students a chance to gain practical skills in areas such as horticulture, animal care, and countryside management. This hands-on qualification equips our young people with transferable skills in teamwork, time management, and problem-solving—skills that will serve them well whether they continue into further land-based study or pursue alternative pathways.

- The Award offers a basic introduction to the land-based studies sector and could be studied alongside other subjects.
- The Certificate offers a basic introduction to the land-based studies sector and could be studied alongside other subjects within a study program.
- The Diploma gives learners the opportunity to develop a broader range of skills in the land-based studies sector.

The content of these qualifications has been developed in consultation with further education colleges and other providers to ensure that the qualifications support progression to further learning and training. All learners taking these qualifications will study core units that focus on key transferable skills such as research and planning, time management and working with others. Learners will also take a number of sector units. The content of the sector units offers a broad introduction to the skills and knowledge within that sector, allowing the delivery to be practical and active to engage the learners. For land-based studies, the units cover activities such as caring for and feeding animals, preparing soil for planting, looking after plants to keep them healthy and using workshop tools.



When completing a Land-Based Studies BTEC Level 1, a child should be prepared for hands-on learning and developing practical skills in areas like animal care, horticulture, agriculture, or countryside management. They'll need to work outdoors in various weather conditions, follow health and safety procedures, and handle basic tools and equipment. The course emphasises teamwork, responsibility, and following instructions. Students will also complete coursework, including practical assessments, written tasks, and project work, which will be supported by tutors to ensure they succeed. Time management and a willingness to learn are key, as are communication and problem-solving skills.

These qualifications prepare learners for further learning at a higher level in land-based studies. The development of transferable skills means that learners can also choose a study programme from alternative sectors. For example, these qualifications in land-based studies could lead to Pearson BTEC Level 2 qualifications in this sector, or to Level 2 qualifications in other sectors.

Every day, I see the extraordinary progress our students make. They arrive with different experiences, challenges, and needs, but through our supportive, structured approach, they leave with greater confidence, resilience, and a set of skills that prepare them for life beyond school.

In 2024, our dedication was recognised nationally when we were honoured with the ISA SEND School of the Year Award—a testament to the passion and expertise of our staff team. That same year, Buckingham Palace announced that His Majesty King Charles III would become our Royal Patron, continuing the longstanding support first offered by Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. We are delighted to continue this proud tradition and look forward to welcoming His Majesty into our school community.

It is an honour to lead such a dedicated staff team, and a privilege to see our students flourish. At LVS Hassocks, we are not simply preparing young people for exams; we are preparing them for life.



Rachel Bolland

Rachel began her career as a secondary teacher in Hong Kong, having grown up and been schooled there. She quickly rose the leadership scale after working for the British Council in HK and Jordan. Rachel went on to manage a language school, a secretarial college and founded her own training company, alongside writing English textbooks for the Asian market. After completing an MA in language and communication research, Rachel worked at Bath University for a while before securing her first headship in the independent sector in Leicestershire. Her next appointment was as Principal of a large boarding school in Nigeria, before joining the Alpha Plus group as Principal in Birmingham and then London.

In London, Rachel was instrumental in the design and build of a new Boarding college situated over Westminster Bridge. She then worked at a bilingual school in Shanghai, which included the opening of a primary school and SEN unit, the first of its kind in Shanghai. Rachel is the Vice Chair of Governors of a large secondary school in Brighton, as well as a governor of an infant school in Worthing. She has two adult children who both work in the education industry and live on the south coast, where she can be seen cycling on a good day. Her special professional interests are raising educational standards and staff welfare.

Bridging expertise: Inclusion, excellence, and the future of independent education

In recent years, it has become clear that the landscape of mainstream education is changing profoundly. Increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are now an integral part of the classroom, and this trend is set to continue. This is not just a challenge but a remarkable opportunity—an opportunity to deepen our understanding, strengthen our schools, and build more inclusive communities where every young person can flourish. In 2024, ISC member independent schools reported 111,154 pupils identified with SEND, which is about one in five pupils. This figure represented an 8% increase over the previous year. The number of pupils with SEND in independent schools rose from 77,996 in 2016 to 132,510 in 2024 – a 69.9% increase, and over the same period, the number of pupils in independent schools with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) increased by 148%.

This shift reflects society itself: a richer tapestry of backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. To prepare young people not just for exams but for life as active citizens, we must acknowledge and respond to this diversity. It is vital that we see the increasing inclusion within our schools as a positive development—a sign of a society committed to equity and opportunity for all—and harness it to foster excellence.

A Sector-Wide Trend We Cannot Ignore

Across both the independent and maintained sectors, the number of children with identified SEND has risen significantly. In England alone, government data shows that more than 1.5 million pupils are identified as having SEND—a steady increase over the last decade. Independent schools, often seen as selective by nature, are not immune to this trend. More families are seeking schools that can combine high academic standards with strong pastoral and specialist support.

Neurodiversity, too, is better recognised. Dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum conditions and speech and language needs are now identified earlier and more accurately, thanks to advances in neuroscience and child development research. While this is a step forward, it places real demands on schools to adapt teaching methods, environments, and expectations. The classroom of 2025 looks and feels different from that of even ten years ago—and our approach as educators must evolve accordingly.

Collaboration as the Cornerstone of Inclusive Excellence

The more we recognise the variety of needs in our classrooms, the more we see how collaboration between mainstream and specialist schools can be transformative. It's no longer an optional extra; it's essential. Working together—sharing expertise, resources, and strategies—enables us to create environments where every child has the opportunity to succeed.

And this isn't just about those with additional needs; it enriches the entire learning community. When pupils learn alongside those with different perspectives and abilities, they grow in empathy, patience, and resilience. They begin to see the world through multiple lenses, which is exactly the preparation they need for a diverse, interconnected society.

I have witnessed the power of collaboration many times. Joint projects between schools, teacher exchanges, and cross-sector outreach programmes have led to innovation that would never

have happened in isolation. When mainstream teachers observe therapeutic strategies in action at specialist schools, they bring back approaches that transform their own classrooms. Equally, specialist schools benefit from seeing how mainstream settings maintain academic pace and breadth of curriculum.

Inspiration Close to Home

There is already inspiring work happening across the sector.

- More House School in Farnham, for example, is a specialist school renowned for sharing its expertise with mainstream colleagues. Specialising in developmental language weaknesses, processing issues, and associated conditions such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, More House has cultivated a holistic approach that combines early diagnosis, targeted therapies, and a carefully structured curriculum. Their professional development workshops—covering everything from sensory regulation to communication strategies—equip mainstream teachers with confidence and practical skills. The outcomes are remarkable: more inclusive classrooms where young people are not only supported but enabled to thrive.
- Beech Lodge School in Maidenhead demonstrates another powerful model. Their philosophy, rooted in the belief that “great minds think differently,” has shown how therapeutic approaches can be woven into everyday classroom life. When I consulted their team for guidance on autism support and emotional regulation strategies, their insights into sensory environments, emotional literacy, and tailored interventions proved invaluable. What struck me most was their generosity in sharing their expertise, recognising that by lifting others, the whole sector grows stronger.

These examples prove that collaboration is not simply about sharing resources. It is about building networks of expertise and trust—networks that allow teachers to continually learn, adapt, and innovate.

Lessons from Beyond the UK

My own journey has taken me beyond the UK, where I have seen inclusion reshape communities in ways that extend far beyond the classroom.

At Our Lady of Nazareth (OLN) School in Kenya, I witnessed something extraordinary. Traditionally, children with disabilities in that community were hidden away, unseen and unheard. But OLN has opened a dedicated unit for children with additional needs, and in doing so, has transformed local attitudes.

What is most powerful is the language they use. Pupils are described not as “special” or “deficient,” but as “able differently.” It is a subtle but profound shift: one that changes how children see themselves and how others perceive them.

This transformation was sparked, in part, by a visit I organised, bringing Kenyan teachers and four pupils from Nairobi's slums to Holme Grange. The exchange was humbling. For our pupils, it was an encounter with resilience, courage, and joy in the face of immense hardship. For the Kenyan children, it was an affirmation that their voices mattered and that they belonged in educational spaces of aspiration and excellence.

The impact reverberated on both sides. OLN has since integrated children with disabilities more fully into its school life, challenging generations of stigma. At the same time, our own community gained a deeper understanding of global inclusion—recognising that the barriers children face are not only about learning but about societal attitudes and expectations.

The Role of Teachers: Knowledge, Confidence, and Care

As the profile of our pupils changes, so too must the professional toolkit of our teachers. Advances in neuroscience have illuminated how children learn, how trauma affects the brain, and how neurodiverse pupils process information differently. Yet many of today's teachers did not receive this training during their initial teacher education.

That gap is not a failing—it is an opportunity. Schools must now prioritise ongoing professional development that equips staff with both the science of learning and the art of care. Teachers need strategies for supporting children with anxiety, managing complex behaviour with compassion, and differentiating lessons without lowering expectations.

Crucially, they also need support themselves. The emotional labour of teaching in today's classrooms is immense. Staff wellbeing, therefore, is not a luxury but a necessity if we are to sustain inclusive excellence. By building networks of pastoral care and professional dialogue, we enable teachers to remain resilient, creative, and compassionate.

What Neuroscience Teaches Us About the Classroom

Over the last two decades, neuroscience has revolutionised our understanding of how children learn. Brain imaging, developmental psychology, and cognitive science have uncovered insights that are profoundly relevant to today's classrooms:

- **Neuroplasticity:** The brain remains capable of forming new connections throughout life. "Late bloomers" are not exceptions—they are proof of neuroplasticity in action.
- **Executive Function:** Working memory, attention, and flexibility are critical for learning. Many children with SEND struggle here, but explicit strategies can help.
- **Stress and Learning:** High levels of stress or anxiety impair memory and problem-solving. Emotionally safe classrooms are scientifically essential, not optional.
- **The Social Brain:** Positive teacher-pupil relationships boost engagement and achievement, especially for children with additional needs.

These findings highlight why continuous professional learning is no longer optional—it is a scientific necessity.

Inclusion as a Collective Commitment

The value of working with specialist schools and professionals has never been clearer. These partnerships do more than meet the needs of pupils with SEND; they raise the standard of education for all. When mainstream and specialist educators communicate openly, share insights, and collaborate, the result is stronger teaching, stronger schools, and stronger communities.

And it's also important to recognise that sometimes, the best support for a child is in a setting tailored specifically to their needs. Making the difficult decision that a school might not be the right environment—that the right environment is outside the mainstream—is an act of true inclusion. Effective collaboration with specialist schools can support this, ensuring children transition seamlessly when necessary. Some pupils will thrive moving between settings, receiving the right support at the right time. Celebrating that nuanced approach, based on honest dialogue and shared goal-setting, ensures the best outcomes for individuals and schools alike.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Inclusive Excellence

Our young people are changing, and so must we. The question is no longer why we should adapt, but how quickly we can do it.

We have the tools: neuroscience, professional expertise, and proven models of collaboration. We have the evidence: better outcomes when schools work together, greater resilience in inclusive communities, and more hopeful futures for pupils once overlooked. What we need now is pace, ambition, and courage.

If independent education is to remain at the forefront of excellence, it must embrace inclusion not as an add-on but as a defining feature. That means investing in staff training, prioritising wellbeing, and building partnerships that cross not only sectors but also borders.

Because inclusion is not just about SEND. It is about creating schools that reflect the richness of society, schools that prepare young people to navigate a world where difference is the norm and where collaboration is the key to success. Together, we can create education systems that are both excellent and equitable—where "able differently" is not a euphemism but a truth that every child can live out.

Great minds do indeed think differently. Our task now is to ensure our schools are ready to let them shine.



Claire Robinson was the Headteacher of Holme Grange School until August 2025, where she served for 16.5 years. She successfully led the transformation of the school from a Prep School of 200 pupils to a thriving through-school of nearly 800, with provision from birth to age 16. Under her leadership, Holme Grange has won several ISA National Awards for Early Years, Senior School, and Sustainability.

With over 24 years' experience as a headteacher across both independent and maintained sectors, Claire is recognised for her visionary leadership, her commitment to staff wellbeing, and her ability to inspire and drive continuous improvement. She has extensive expertise in school growth, change management, safeguarding, and curriculum innovation. Claire is also a NACE Associate, working nationally with schools on accreditation and challenge for more able learners, as well as an MTa facilitator and Jigsaw-accredited trainer.

Her influence extends internationally through school partnerships in Nairobi and Japan, and as a delegate on the RS Academics Dubai Inspires programme. Claire is also a trustee for Neuroscience for Education, reflecting her passion for bringing research and practice together to improve outcomes for young people.

Before her career in education, Claire worked in financial services, specialising in corporate insurance, pensions, and sales—experience which has shaped her pragmatic and strategic approach to leadership.

She is an accredited Resilient Leaders Elements Development Programme™ (RLDP™) practitioner and consultant, an executive coach and has completed the Physical Intelligence Coaching programme, deepening her expertise in coaching and leadership development. Claire is passionate about building authentic, ambitious, courageous, and inclusive communities where staff and pupils are empowered to be their best selves.



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Enrolling sponsored international students: Essential steps for schools

As the new academic year begins, compliance is key for schools enrolling sponsored international students. Before the child starts, the school must download a copy of the student's sponsored eVisa via Share Code and keep it securely on file.

On the student's first day, the school should check their passport against the eVisa copy. If the passport has been renewed or updated since the initial enquiry, a fresh copy must be taken and stored.

Schools must also confirm the student's UK entry date. This can be evidenced through flight details provided by the family, or by checking the entry stamp in the passport.

By following these steps, schools not only meet UKVI sponsor duties but also protect their licence, ensure student safeguarding, and demonstrate a culture of diligence and care.

Next step for schools: Audit your enrolment process today to confirm these checks are in place before and on the first day of term.

At Holmes & Partners Ltd., we offer professional immigration and visa services tailored to your needs. Our expert team provides end-to-end support throughout the visa application process—from Student and Graduate Visas to UK Visitor and Skilled Worker Visas. We also assist with sponsor licence applications and ongoing compliance management. For schools and colleges, we offer a fully outsourced sponsor licence and visa support service that is designed to be cost-neutral, easing the administrative burden while ensuring full UKVI compliance.

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UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

DEBATING COMPETITION

Deadline: 23 October (event full)
Event: 29 November
TASIS England International
Open to KS3 - KS5

CHRISTMAS BANNER COMPETITION

Deadline: 26 November
Open to EYFS to KS2

DANCE COMPETITION

Deadline: 27 November
Final: 5 February
Bedford Greenacre Independent School
Open to KS2 to KS5

YOUNG MUSICIAN COMPETITION

Deadline: Thursday 4 December
Final: 11 March, Oxford University
Open to KS2 - KS5

DRAMA COMPETITION

Deadline: 11 December (Spaces are limited)
Day 1 and 2: 10 & 11 February
Luckley House School
Day 3: 29 April, King's High School Warwick
Open to Year 3 to Year 13

A CAPPELLA COMPETITION

Deadline: 16 December (Spaces are limited)
Event: 17 March, Leighton Park School
Open to all ages

SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUE COMPETITION

Deadline: 8 January
Final: 22 April, Stantonbury Theatre
Open to KS2 - KS5

STEM COMPETITION

Deadline: 22 January
Final: 19 March, Crosfields School
Open to KS2 - KS5

MUSICAL THEATRE COMPETITION

Deadline: 27 January
Final: 30 April, Gosfield School
Open to KS2 - KS5

COMIC STRIP COMPETITION

Deadline: 28 January
Open to KS1 - KS5

POETRY COMPETITION

Deadline: Thursday 26 February
Open to KS1 - KS5

We are delighted to share this year's Arts Programme for our Member Schools, filled with opportunities in art, music, drama, and creative writing. The calendar this year includes new competitions and challenges:

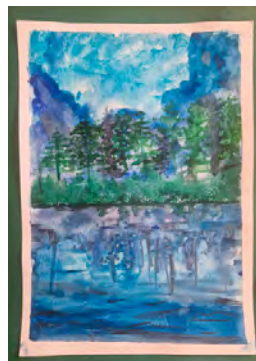
The Minibeast Competition, open to EYFS and Primary pupils, will encourage curiosity about nature and biodiversity while encouraging observation, imagination, and teamwork as children explore the fascinating world of insects, spiders, worms, snails, and more.

The popular Easter Competition will return, asking pupils this time to design an Easter Hat, giving them the chance to showcase their creativity through colourful and imaginative artwork.

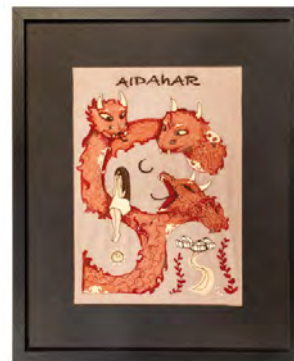
A brand-new addition this year is the Scrapbook Challenge, open to all ages. This initiative invites pupils to create scrapbook pages that express their emotions, memories, and creativity in an artistic and personal way. Using colour, drawings, pictures, and words, children can celebrate joy, hope, love, excitement, or even reflect on moments of sadness. This is a celebration of every child's imagination and self-expression.

We are thrilled to announce an exciting development for both the STEM Competition and the Shakespeare Monologue Competition, which will, for the first time, feature an online qualifying round followed by an in-person final.

Finally, we would like to congratulate everyone who took part in the regional stage of the National Art Competition. A special thank you goes to the Area Art Coordinators and all the schools who helped to organise and host the events. We look forward to the National Finals this November, taking place alongside the ISA Autumn Study Conference.



St Christopher's School
Epsom (LS)



Rochester Independent
College (LS)



Mayville High School (LW)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALL OUR EVENTS, INCLUDING THE ISA ARTS CALENDAR FOR 2025-2026 YEAR, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ISAARTS@ISASCHOOLS.ORG.UK

TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH NEWSLETTERS AND COMPETITION REMINDERS, SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LISTS: TICK THE BOX FOR ARTS EMAILS IN YOUR ACCOUNT'S CONTACT PREFERENCE ON THE ISA WEBSITE.



Follow us on X and Instagram @ISAartsUK for more updates.



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‘The Nine Lives of Me: An Autobiography by Queen Snowball’

by Jasper S (Year 5) Greenbank Preparatory School and Day Nursery
First place in the ISA Essay Competition 2024 in the Year 5-6 Category

I was born on a cold morning, in a tangle of tiny mewling furballs—my siblings. They rolled around cluelessly, while I blinked once, stretched dramatically, and knew in my soul: **I was royalty**. A queen trapped in a cardboard box.

One day, destiny arrived in the form of a bumbling boy human. He picked me up, stared into my stunning eyes, and whispered, “I’ll call you Snowball.”

Snowball? Basic. But fine. It’ll look good on merch.

1. Training My Human (Painfully Slow Process)

At first, he thought he’d “raise” me. **Adorable**. I immediately set to work training him.

I screamed at 3 AM for snacks. I sat on his face. I knocked things off shelves. This was not bad behaviour—it was **education**.

Eventually, he figured out the basics: food on demand, chin scratches on cue, and absolutely no picking me up unless I’m feeling emotionally generous (rare).

He lives to serve. I live to rule.

2. This House Is Mine

The minute I stepped into his house, I declared it mine. All of it.

His bed? Mine. He’s lucky if I let him sleep on the edge. **Couch?** Mine, especially when it’s freshly cleaned. **Laptop?** Obviously mine—best heated throne in the land.

He tried once to stop me from walking on the kitchen table. I slowly pushed his cup off the edge, watched it fall, and blinked.

Never happened again.

3. The Roaring Monster (a.k.a. Vacuum)

The vacuum. The beast. The enemy.

It sleeps in a dark closet, only to awaken and roar like a dragon with zero social awareness.

When it attacks the carpet, I vanish. Not from fear—from **disgust**. Queens don’t deal with noisy peasants.

My human laughs every time. Laugh, boy. One day, the vacuum will take you too—and I’ll be watching from the top of the fridge, silently judging.

4. The Sacred Sunbeam

Every day, I find the perfect sunbeam and bask in it like the goddess I am.

He calls it “lazy.” I call it **solar charging**.

Of course, he photographs me. Endlessly. Because I look breathtaking mid-snooze. I let him—he needs content for my future fan page.

But don’t even think about blocking my light. That’s grounds for exile.

5. The Red Dot of Deceit

Ah, the red dot. My eternal nemesis. Appears without warning. Taunts me. Disappears.

I stalk. I pounce. I nearly catch it... and it vanishes. **Again**.

And who’s behind it? **My traitor human**, giggling like a fool. One day I’ll catch it, swallow it whole, and leave the laser pointer in his slipper as a warning.

Play with me? Fine. **Mock me? Prepare to suffer.**

6. The Perfect Poo Performance

Every litter box trip is a dramatic production.

First, I scratch around like I’m digging for gold. Then, I take center stage, deliver my masterpiece, and sprint off like I’ve set the world on fire.

He calls it the “post-poo zoomies.” No. It’s a **victory lap**. I don’t just poo. I **perform**.

And yes, I ensure he smells my success. That’s called establishing dominance.

7. The Bath. The Betrayal.

One dark day, he did the unthinkable. **He put me in a bath.**

Water. Soap. HUMILIATION.

I screamed like I was being sacrificed. I clawed. I stared into his eyes with the fury of ten thousand betrayed queens. Then I sulked for hours, perched above him like a soggy statue of vengeance.

To this day, I’ve never fully forgiven him. I probably never will. He knows.

8. Grooming Like a Legend

Looking this good? It’s full-time work.

I groom daily with flawless precision. My coat? Glossy. My paws? Pristine. Tongue work? Elite.

If he interrupts me mid-groom with baby talk, I pause, glare, and resume. Grooming time is **not** cuddle time.

Occasionally, he tries to help with brushing. I allow it—for about 14 seconds. It keeps him feeling useful, bless him.

9. My Human, My Pet

Despite the betrayal (and the red dot crimes), he does have his moments.

He scratches my chin just right. He gives me treats when I shoot him The Look™. He opens the blinds for my sunbeam spa.

He thinks he owns me. **Please**.

I chose him. I allow him. He lives to serve, and I let him. That, my dear readers, is the greatest power of all.

Purrfectly yours, Queen Snowball



LISA SMITH
PRINCIPAL AT THREE BRIDGES SCHOOL

Learning in stages, not by ages

How a rural school in Cornwall is rethinking education by meeting learners where they are

Three Bridges Education is a small independent school located in rural Cornwall. I have had the privilege of serving as Principal since 2020, and it is a truly wonderful place to be.

Three Bridges Education supports and educates learners with a range of special educational needs and disabilities. While we are an Autism specialist school for those who have a diagnosis of Autism or other associated conditions, not all our learners have a diagnosis of Autism.

We cater for young people aged 11–19, covering Key Stages 3 and 4, as well as post-16 education. Every learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and comes from a diverse background, often shaped by challenging experiences. Many have experienced trauma, and most have been out of education for prolonged periods before joining us, often following negative experiences within previous educational settings or systems.

Given the complexity and diversity of our learners' needs, we use a needs-led rather than age-led approach to groupings. Learners are placed in clearly defined learning groups according to their developmental stage and individual requirements. The exception is our Transition Group—our post-16 learners—who are based in the Transition Town areas of the school.

Other learning groups are Explorer groups 1 and 2, based in the Explorer Forest areas of the school, and the Discovery group, based in the Discovery Village areas. Additional inclusive communal spaces include our natural garden and outside area, and our outdoor wellbeing hub. These are spaces where we can come

together for whole school activities, 1:1, and small group activities. Learners also have quiet breakout spaces, which are separate from the learning spaces. This wide range of spaces meets the overall sensory needs of the school community.

Descriptors for each learning group can be found in Appendix 1 in our curriculum policy, which is on our website:

<https://threebridgesschool.com/policies/>

Our curriculum policy details how we provide a broad and balanced adaptive curriculum which enables our learners to develop their knowledge and understanding and acquire skills which are meaningful, and learn how to apply these well to relevant situations and daily practice. Our curriculum ensures that all our learners learn at their own pace, whilst remaining highly aspirational, preparing learners for life beyond Three Bridges and well into adulthood. Educational visits and off-site activities are predominant in our curriculum, such as activities which encourage and support participation in the community, beach learning activities, and learning activities within the neighbouring forests. We have a designated Outdoor Learning and Food Tech teacher. Learners learn how to grow their own food in our polytunnel and then learn how to cook their produce, enjoying eating together (developing social and communication skills when doing so) and learning about nutritional benefits.

Our ethos underpins our teaching and learning practice.

Our purpose is to enable every learner to discover and explore their abilities and transition into future opportunities with the confidence and resilience needed for lifelong success.

Our mission is to provide an inspirational, creative and challenging education which meets the needs of all learners in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our vision is to empower learners to celebrate their individuality and build meaningful relationships through bespoke learning opportunities for a bright future.

Our values are to deliver high-quality special education provision with responsibility and integrity, equity and respect.

All our learners have Individual Education Plans and Individual Behaviour Support Plans (some learners also have Individual Health and Care Plans). Learners are encouraged to have ownership of these, and they are created and implemented in partnership with our learners. In addition to this, where relevant, learners also have Individual Transition Plans.

During the academic year 2024-2025, we started a new initiative, namely The Wellbeing Collective Project. The project aimed to initially create an overall Wellness and Enrichment Plan for the whole school and then use this tool to create Individual Wellness and Enrichment Plans for each learner. These plans are working alongside their current individual plans.

Wellbeing underpins our daily practice here at Three Bridges Education. The Wellness Collective project has helped us to further develop and elevate our practice. We have an established wellbeing lead within the school who works in small groups and 1:1 with our learners, educating and supporting them with their emotional health and wellbeing. In addition to this, we have an established parent/carer lead who has consistent and meaningful communications with parents and carers, which enables us to link home life experiences to meeting needs within school and to work in partnership with parents and carers. We also provide space for our parents/carers to meet monthly with relevant staff to provide face-to-face information and support, such as online safety.

Over this academic year, we have successfully created and developed our new Wellbeing Collective Project. Subsequently, creating our school's overall Wellness and Enrichment Plan, leading on to developing person-centred Wellness and Enrichment Plans for all our learners to ensure plans are motivating and meaningful, and needs are met and that there is equity across the school.



Initially, we considered our starting point. We have an established relationship with the Children's Sailing Trust, and we access this provision regularly with much success. We wanted to build on this, creating a breadth of opportunities to meet our learners' varied and complex needs. We began researching and networking with therapists and relevant services, including local and national services, eventually determining a range of services and professionals who specialised in the areas we needed. It was vital that these services met our high standards and were credible professionals with the same ethos as our school. We then included the identified services and professionals in our school Wellness and Enrichment Plan to create a wide range of opportunities. Once this was established, we reviewed each learner's needs collaboratively, matching them with services which would meet their needs. We then built this into their weekly timetable.

We are currently in discussions with additional services to develop this further in the next academic year. For example, we would like animal therapy to include a greater range of animals and opportunities.

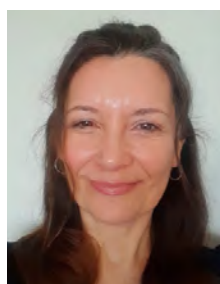
During this academic year, we appointed a new Sport & Fitness lead, and we have been linking their practice to the Wellbeing Collective Project. In addition to this, we are making improvements to our outdoor space over the summer break to enable team/ball games and movement activities, which will run in short bursts throughout the day or as PE lessons. We will also make greater use of community services and venues, both indoors and outdoors, such as sports halls and local swimming pools. We are members of the Youth Sport Trust Youth Sport Trust - Youth Sport Trust and recognise that sports and fitness have a significant positive impact on overall wellbeing.

At Three Bridges Education, we believe that therapeutic and enrichment activities go beyond our curriculum and provide opportunities for learners to explore their interests and develop new skills, build confidence, social skills, self-esteem, and physical wellbeing, and promote inclusion. This includes visits and experiences that connect learning to the wider community, building strong connections.

Enhanced learning and a broader range of opportunities open learners up to new subjects and experiences, broadening their knowledge base. Providing a platform for learners to explore different learning styles and engage in activities that meet their individual needs.

These activities indirectly lead to improved academic performance, sparking interest and a passion for learning and life beyond Three Bridges Education, opening doors to a wider range of educational and career pathways, and discovering hidden talents.

We are immensely proud of what our learners have achieved this year. New experiences, meeting new people, going to unfamiliar places, and a change of routine – all of these come with challenges. It has been wonderful to see our learners, with our support, overcome their uncertainties and apprehensions, allowing them to embrace new opportunities and increase their aspirations. We are excited to see this project grow and develop further in its success in the future.



Located near Truro, Cornwall, Three Bridges School is an independent special educational needs (SEN) secondary school offering person-centred learning programmes designed to engage, challenge, and inspire. The school's rural setting provides a calm and supportive environment where learners can develop both academically and personally.



MARK LOVEDAY
HEADMASTER OF FREWEN COLLEGE

The Delphi Study on Dyslexia: Insights and Future Directions (2025)

The start of 2025 saw a significant stride forward in the field of dyslexia with the launch of the much-awaited outcomes from the Delphi Dyslexia Study and the associated updated diagnostic definition.

The Delphi Method is a structured technique used to gather expert opinions and achieve a consensus on a specific issue, often in situations where there is no clear or established solution. It is particularly valuable in complex fields where the available data may be insufficient or inconclusive, and the problem requires expert judgment to resolve.

The Delphi Method involves a series of rounds in which a panel of multidisciplinary experts responds to a series of questions or surveys. Each round refines the responses from the previous one, ultimately reaching a consensus or common understanding among participants. This iterative process allows for anonymous contributions, reducing the influence of group dynamics and promoting more objective and diverse opinions.

The question of ‘what is dyslexia?’ has been debated for nearly 150 years, the Delphi Study brings us closer to shared understanding.

The focus of the Delphi dyslexia study was to create a definition that not only reflected current scientific knowledge of the condition but also was clearly translatable into workable approaches for assessment and identification (Carroll et al., 2025). To capture a broad spectrum of perspectives, the study drew on input

from researchers, academics, specialist teacher assessors, and educational psychologists.

The question of ‘what is dyslexia?’ has been debated for nearly 150 years. Adolph Kussmaul, a German physician, first identified reading difficulties as ‘word blindness’ in 1877. The first recorded case of dyslexia in England occurred in 1896 in Sussex, the home county of Frewen College, when Dr Pringle described a boy named ‘Percy.’ Despite being a bright and able child with normal intelligence, Percy experienced significant difficulties with reading (Kirby and Snowling, 2022). Labelled as having ‘word blindness,’ Percy represents the first documented case in England of what we now call dyslexia.

Dyslexia affects approximately 10% of the UK population, making it one of the most common specific learning difficulties (SpLDs). While the exact cause of dyslexia is not yet known, research suggests a genetic component, as it often runs in families.

Over the decades, recognition of dyslexia has faced several hurdles. Early scepticism in the 1960s and 1970s gave way to formal acknowledgement in the 1993 Education Act, which referenced dyslexia explicitly. Later, the Rose Review of 2009, Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties, provided a working definition and emphasised the importance of effective teaching and early support. Throughout this period, various hypotheses and models of dyslexia have been proposed, ranging from discrepancy-based approaches—where literacy skills are seen as out of line with general IQ (Snowling et al., 2020)—to phonological deficit models.

Today, efforts continue to ensure that children with dyslexia are identified early and receive effective support to help them succeed. Leading these initiatives is the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), a charity that has spent over 50 years improving support for people with dyslexia. The BDA defines dyslexia as ‘a specific learning difficulty which primarily affects reading and writing skills.

Learning to read and spell is a complex process, beginning with accurate grapheme–phoneme (letter–sound) correspondence, progressing to the recognition of sight words, and extending to the ability to manipulate word elements through morphology. Alongside these linguistic skills, cognitive processes such as memory and processing efficiency play a critical role in developing fluency.

While difficulties with literacy are central to dyslexia, its impact often extends beyond reading and spelling. Underlying challenges with processing and memory can affect an individual's ability to retain and recall information, whether seen or heard, which in turn influences wider learning. Many individuals with dyslexia also experience difficulties with organisational skills, further adding to the challenges they face.

Early identification is vital: research shows better outcomes for children when dyslexia is recognised and supported from the start.

Prior to the Delphi Study, many professionals acknowledged the Rose Review of 2009, *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties*, completed by the late Sir Jim Rose, as being the most recent and most used diagnostic definition by specialist teacher assessors. In his review, Rose proposed a working definition of Dyslexia: a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling was detailed. He described the characteristic features of dyslexia as difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and verbal processing speed. Rose was also clear in moving away from previous discrepancy-based models: dyslexia occurs across the full range of intellectual abilities, should be understood as a continuum rather than a distinct category, and does not have clear cut-off points (Rose, 2009).

The Delphi dyslexia study, initially launched in draft form and presented at the BDA's International Dyslexia Conference in 2024, reinforces the importance of phonological processes highlighted in the Rose definition. However, it places greater emphasis on background information, co-occurring difficulties, reading fluency, and orthographic skills.

Co-occurrence between dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) is often high, with conditions such as ADHD and dyscalculia frequently appearing alongside dyslexia (Bergen et al., 2025). Difficulties with memory and processing are central to many SpLDs, with each typically exhibiting at least one weakness in either memory or processing (Patrick, 2020).

The Delphi study also emphasises the value of a hypothesis-testing approach to dyslexia assessment, taking into account risk factors and drawing on multiple sources of information. Additionally, it addresses common misconceptions about dyslexia, clarifies the role of intellectual abilities, and considers the impact of dyslexia across the lifespan.

Implications for schools:

Early identification is vital to effective intervention (Catts and Petscher, 2018), with research showing better outcomes for children where this has taken place (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007). Additionally, children with poor reading are at increased risk of a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties (Snowling et al., 2020).

Screening tools can often play an important part in gathering background information and providing supporting evidence for onward referrals; however, they are purely screeners and do not provide a definitive outcome. Where dyslexia is suspected, and an onward referral made, or recommendations given to parents, it is important that schools ensure that professionals are suitably qualified, either as an educational psychologist or specialist teacher assessor.

As the definition is embedded into policy and practice, the challenge for schools and practitioners will be ensuring that the insights from this research translate into meaningful, effective support for learners with dyslexia across their lifespan.

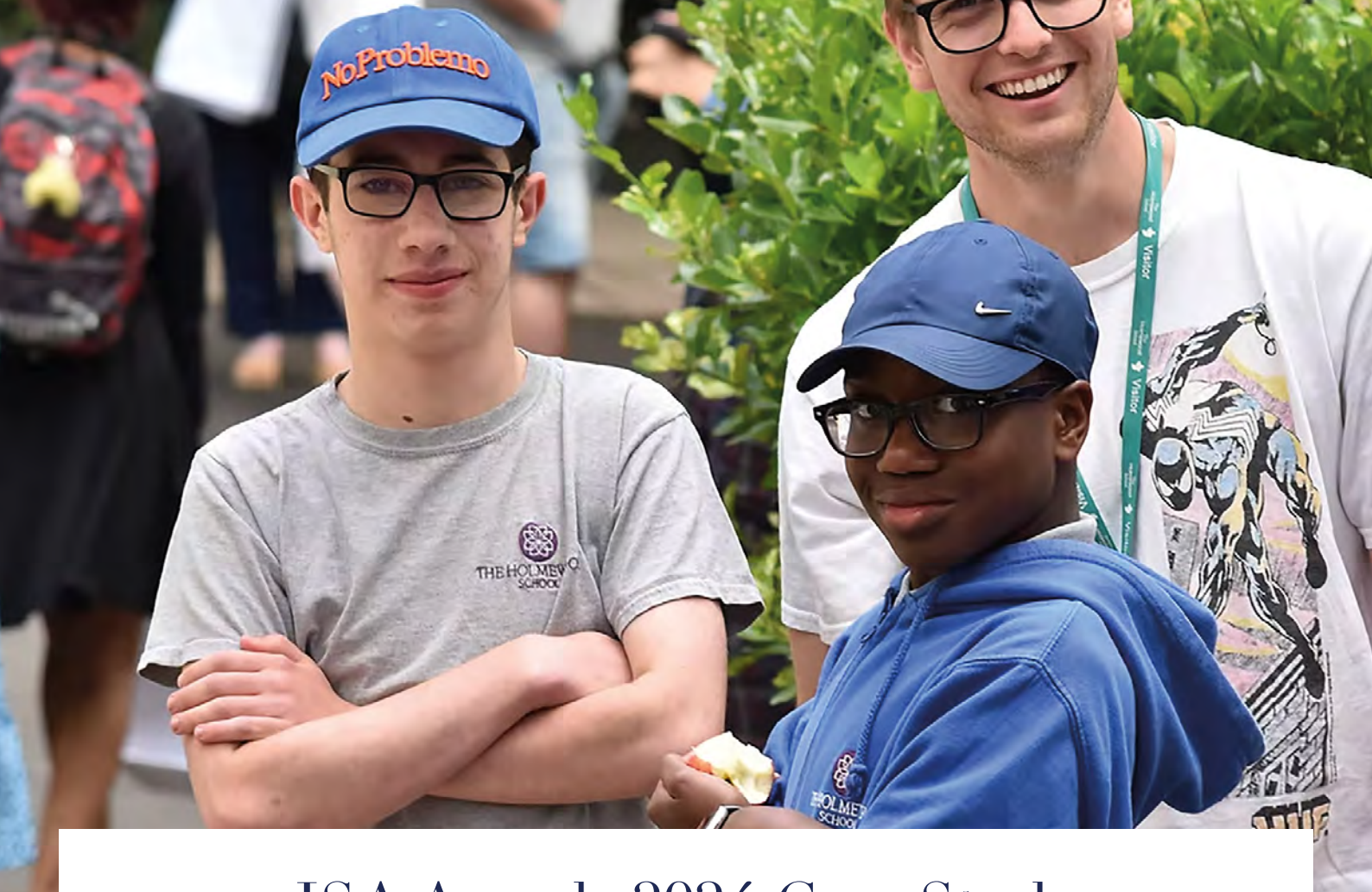


Mark Loveday is the Headmaster of Frewen College, an independent co-educational day and boarding school in East Sussex, specialising in supporting students aged 7–19 with dyslexia and co-occurring specific learning difficulties (SpLDs). With extensive experience across mainstream and specialist education in both the state and independent sectors, Mark has held a range of leadership roles including Deputy Head, Assistant Head, Head of Sixth Form, Head of Learning Support, and Head of Service. He has taught across primary, secondary, and sixth form settings, and has successfully established and led innovative educational initiatives such as inclusion advisory services and an award-winning alternative provision for students experiencing emotionally based school avoidance—recognised as Alternative Provision of the Year at the NASEN Awards 2023.

Mark is a qualified Specialist Teacher (SpLD) and a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) – SEND. He also serves as a Board Director and Trustee of a Multi Academy Trust, as well as a Board Director for the national Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Assessment Standards Committee (SASC). In addition to his leadership roles, Mark regularly delivers training, consults for an educational supplier, and speaks at national conferences and events.

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ISA Awards 2024 Case Study

SEND School of the Year



THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL

The Holmewood School London

History of the School

The Holmewood School London (THSL) is a pioneering independent special school located across three vibrant sites in North London. Established in 2010, THSL provides an educational lifeline for autistic young people aged 7–19 who have struggled to thrive in mainstream or other settings. Every student has a formal autism diagnosis, and many also experience co-occurring needs, such as ADHD, dyslexia, sensory integration differences, and mental health challenges. Despite these complexities, THSL students consistently achieve academic and personal outcomes that match—and often exceed—their mainstream peers.

Aims

At THSL, every student's journey is built upon the belief that identity, belonging, and aspiration are non-negotiable. The school's central aim is to remove the barriers that prevent autistic students from accessing the opportunities they deserve. This includes not only the academic curriculum, but also rich social, emotional, cultural, and vocational experiences. By understanding each learner's profile holistically, THSL creates environments where students can flourish as themselves—not in spite of their differences, but because of them.

A key focus is on developing core life skills and emotional resilience. THSL teaches self-advocacy and metacognition explicitly, ensuring that students leave with a strong sense of who they are, how they learn best, and how to navigate a neurotypical world. Students are encouraged to set their own goals and take ownership of their progress, supported by a team of educators and clinicians who champion their potential every step of the way.

Key Strategies and Innovation

1. Personalised, Therapeutic Pathways

Every student's timetable is shaped by their EHCP, strengths, and long-term aspirations. A collaborative planning process involving families, clinicians, and educators ensures that support is cohesive and tailored. Students access a rich timetable of therapeutic support, including weekly individual and group sessions in Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Dramatherapy, and Psychotherapy. These sessions are not bolt-ons but integrated into the fabric of school life, often linked directly to classroom themes and individual learning targets.

Reflective practice is embedded into the daily routine through check-ins, supervision, and therapeutic mentoring. This ecosystem of support means that students are not only safe but also emotionally literate and empowered. Regular reviews and agile adjustments ensure that support evolves as students grow.

2. Enriching and Accessible Curriculum

The academic programme at THSL is carefully designed to be flexible, relevant, and ambitious. Students follow a range of academic and vocational routes, including GCSEs, A Levels, Functional Skills, Arts Award, and BTEC qualifications. Teachers work collaboratively with therapists to ensure that sensory and communication needs are considered in all planning.

Curriculum enrichment is a hallmark of the THSL experience. Students engage in real-world learning experiences through enterprise projects (like running the on-site OT Café), outdoor learning (including Forest School), and creative arts (including digital animation). These experiences are not simply extracurricular—they are core to building confidence, independence, and transferable skills. The curriculum recognises that emotional engagement is the key to deep learning.

3. Community, Culture and Confidence

Community is central to life at THSL. Students are celebrated not only for their academic progress but also for their kindness, creativity, and self-expression. The school runs a vibrant calendar of cultural and social events, including Pride Month activities, neurodiversity awareness campaigns, open mics, and TEDxYouth talks. These events give students a platform to speak about their experiences and passions, building public speaking skills and advocacy in a safe, affirming environment.

Pupil voice is embedded across the school through the Student Council, peer mentoring schemes, and curriculum co-design. Students are encouraged to influence school policies and contribute to staff training and recruitment, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. A strong sense of belonging is evident in the way students support each other, take pride in their school, and reimagine what success looks like for themselves and others.

Outcomes

THSL students achieve transformative outcomes. Many join the school facing challenges such as school refusal, trauma, or low academic confidence. In 2024, all leavers progressed to positive post-16 or post-18 destinations, including competitive university courses, internships with organisations like Sky, and apprenticeships in childcare and IT.



Progress is tracked with tools such as CAT4, Literacy Gold Reading, Boxall, and PASS, capturing academic attainment, wellbeing, social development, and emotional resilience. Combined with student reflections, case studies, and family feedback, this approach ensures every gain is recognised and celebrated. THSL also develops confident, compassionate individuals. Students leave with a strong sense of self, improved engagement with learning, and the ability to advocate for their needs, shaping lives, relationships, and futures.

The school's personalised, therapeutic, and aspirational approach is evident in every student journey. Many arrive after periods of school refusal, anxiety, or disengagement, often with co-occurring needs such as dyslexia, sensory processing differences, or mental health challenges. Multidisciplinary support including literacy and numeracy interventions, bespoke timetables, occupational therapy, dramatherapy, and creative or vocational learning helps students progress in emotional regulation, social skills, and academic achievement, often exceeding expectations. Students also take on leadership roles, participate in public speaking, and contribute to whole-school initiatives, demonstrating the breadth of THSL's impact.

Next steps

Looking ahead, THSL is committed to deepening its impact and sharing its expertise more widely. One key priority is developing our whole school approach to executive functioning so that they can support their students to improve their skills in self-regulation, planning and organisation, working memory, attention and focus, problem-solving, and goal-setting. They are also working on developing their Podcast to include their Induction Programme, which will also be released as videos on YouTube. This 'introduction to working at Holmewood' will not only support staff development but also be available to the wider community audience.

Finally, THSL continues to work closely with families, feeder schools, and external professionals to promote inclusion and raise expectations for what autistic learners can achieve. Through research partnerships, professional development offers, and practitioner training, the school seeks to be a catalyst for system-wide change.



Bridget Young
Head Teacher



The Holmewood School
Scan to visit

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS

Holmwood House School	Edward Bond	East
Hafs Academy	Kazi Hussain	London North
Wentworth College*	Manuel Guimaraes	London North
Dulwich School Cranbrook	Sophie Bradshaw	London South
Elysian Shamley Green	Nadine O'Hara	London South
Kings Brighton	Sarah Williams	London South
Kings London	Daniel Carroll	London South
Rise Education	Dionne Jude	London South
Green Crescent School	Mutiullah Khan	Midlands
Lewis Charlton Learning Centres	Malcolm Kerridge	Midlands
The Beeches Independent School*	Abigail Brown	Midlands
Your Ideas School*	Clare Whalley	Midlands
Best Futures	Dawn Best	North
Cockburn Reach Academy	Ali Quinn	North
Grow Independent School	Sarah Hawthorne	North
Infinite Schools Wigan	Rob Jarvis	North
The Orchard Independent School	Steven Broderick	North
The Queens School Chester	Joanne Keville	North

*UK Affiliate Member

NEW OVERSEAS AFFILIATES

Ozel Izmir Oguzhan Ozkaya Ortaokulu	Oguzhan Ozkaya	Turkey
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TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Kirkstone House	Corrine Jones	East
Mander Portman Woodward Cambridge	Ann Meisner	East
Broadhurst School	Eilish Sleator	London North
Gateway School	Jonathan Coke	London North
Griffin House	Joanna Leach	London North
LVS Oxford	Melanie Waller	London North
Oxford International College	Sarah Watson	London North

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP (CONTINUED)

Southbank International School	Stuart Bain	London North
St. Christopher's School	Joel Simon	London North
Teikyo School	Andrew Davies	London North
Centre Academy London	Michael Jeffrey	London South
Earlscliffe	Mark Love	London South
Frewen College	Mark Loveday	London South
Radnor House Sevenoaks	David Paton	London South
Riverston School	Guy Baker	London South
St David's School	Sarah Syrradd	London South
The White House	Joe Knight	London South
Wellesley Haddon Dene Prep School	Duncan Andrews	London South
Weston Green School	David Brown	London South
Windlesham Prep School	Nick Matthews	London South
Hall School Wimbledon	David Bradbury	London West
Wetherby Kensington School	Victoria Playford	London West
Derby Grammar School	Alistair Bond	Midlands
Abrar Academy	Ilyas Miah	North
Argyle House School	John Sample	North
Bowdon Prep School for Girls	Sara Makepeace-Taylor	North
Brantwood Specialist School	Rae Stevenson	North
Cundall Manor School	Simon Weale	North
The Alternative School	Neil Reynolds	North
Blanchelande College	Alexa Yeoman	South West
Park School Bournemouth	Nadia Ward	South West
St George's Prep School	Sarah Hague	South West
Westbourne School	Paul Forsythe	South West

HONORARY MEMBERS

Alex Gear
Brendan Pavey
Stephen McKernan
Tracey Wilson

ISA | Awards

We are delighted to announce this year's Finalists and Highly Commended entries.

Each year, we welcome submissions for a variety of categories, which highlight the diverse range of strengths in our Members' schools. The Awards are a celebration of innovation, achievement and positive impact in developing the change-makers of tomorrow.

The ISA 2025 Awards Ceremony will take place at the Autumn Study Conference, 11 - 12 November. We invite you to join us in celebrating the best in your fellow ISA colleagues. If you are a Finalist, this is your chance to represent your school's achievements in perpetuity as the winners are announced. To read more about the ISA Awards and to book your place, scan the QR code below.

Congratulations to our Finalists and Highly Commended Schools!

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Early Years

Finalists: Liberty Woodland School | Scarisbrick Hall | St Christopher's School, Epsom

Highly Commended: King Alfred School

ISA Junior School of the Year Award

Finalists: Forest Park School | Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate | Salterford House School

Highly Commended: Heathcote School

ISA Senior School of the Year Award

Finalists: King's High School, Warwick | Kings Oxford | New Hall School

Highly Commended: Minerva Virtual Academy

ISA SEND School of the Year Award

Finalists: Beech Lodge School | Moon Hall School | Oaklands School, Hungerford

Highly Commended: Hazel Cottage

ISA Award for International Provision

Finalists: The Alternative School | English International School Baghdad | North London Grammar School

Highly Commended: Oxford International College Brighton

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport (Small School)

Finalists: Bowbrook House School | Brooke House College | Mylnhurst Catholic Preparatory School and Nursery

Highly Commended: The Mulberry House School

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport (Large School)

Finalists: Alleyn Court Prep | Cransley School | Stafford Grammar School

Highly Commended: St James' Senior Boys School

ISA Award for Excellence in Performing Arts

Finalists: Gosfield School | Lichfield Cathedral School | Stafford Grammar School

Highly Commended: LVS Ascot

ISA Award for Excellence in Fine Arts and Design

Finalists: Ballard School | Bournemouth Collegiate School | Leweston School

Highly Commended: Springmead School

ISA Award for Outstanding Engagement in the Community

Finalists: Moon Hall School | Stafford Grammar School | Wychwood School

Highly Commended: LVS Hassocks

ISA Award for Future Readiness

Finalists: Little Downsend | St David's Preparatory School | Weston Green School

Highly Commended: Liberty Woodland School

Sponsored by School Fee Plan



ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Finalists: Abbot's Hill School | King's School and Nursery, Plymouth | TASIS England

Highly Commended: LVS Hassocks

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Mental Health and Wellbeing

Finalists: Kings Oxford | LGS Stoneygate | St. John's Prep. and Senior School

Highly Commended: Liberty Woodland School

ISA Award for Excellence in Sustainability

Finalists: Colchester Prep & High School | Holme Grange School | Rochester Independent College

Highly Commended: North London Grammar School

ISA Award for Innovation in Independent Education

Finalists: More House School | The Pointer School | St Olave's School

Highly Commended: Claires Court





ANDREW HAMPTON

Working with Boys

Creating cultures of mutual respect in schools

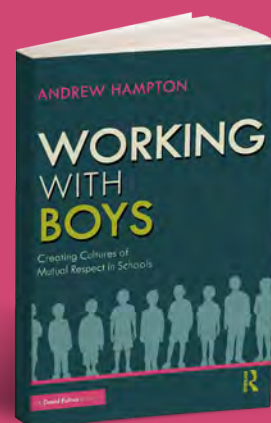
Working with Boys is a whole-school, iterative programme of study that uses guided reflection to empower boys to self-regulate their attitudes and behaviour and be the best they can be. The programme has a proven track record of supporting boys to be consistently principled, honourable, noble, trustworthy, upright and dignified.

ISA schools can claim a discount of 10% if they quote "ISA10" when emailing info@workingwithboys.com

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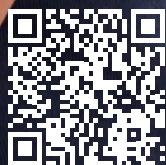
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