

# Annual Report 2018

Published January 2019

Our goal is to reduce educational inequality and improve the life chances of all children. Through collaboration, challenge and professional development, we are working to ensure every school community can benefit from the combined wisdom of the whole system.

## Contents

---

Foreword	2
----------	---

---

<b>WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE STAND FOR</b>	3
Celebrating success and building for the future	4
Our mission, our values	6
Achieving, sustaining and sharing excellence	8
Our Network of Excellence – 2018-19 partnership year	10

---

<b>WHAT WE DO</b>	23
<b>The Network of Excellence</b>	24
The Quality Assurance Review	26
Leadership Development Days	31
School Support Directory	31
<b>Programmes tackling educational disadvantage</b>	32
Challenge the Gap	32
EAL in the Mainstream Classroom	35
<b>Getting Ahead London</b>	36
<b>2018-19 pilot programmes</b>	37
Growing the Top - Stand-Out Schools	37
MAT Peer Review	37
<b>Events</b>	38

---

<b>IMPACT</b>	39
Our aims	40
Impact and performance against our aims	41
Hubs	44
Challenge Partners and ImpactEd	49

---

<b>Meet the team</b>	52
----------------------	----

---

<b>Schools participating in our programmes</b>	54
--	----

# Foreword

## Jon Coles Chair of Trustees



2018 has been a momentous year for Challenge Partners, with the retirement of Professor Sir George Berwick as CEO and the appointment of Dr Kate Chhatwal as his successor. George has been integral to the growth and success of Challenge Partners in its first years and the organisation is an important part of his legacy of change and innovation in education over a long and distinguished career. I won't be the only one to miss his wisdom and insight.

We have been fortunate to attract Kate as our new CEO. Her excellent track record in education policy, development and delivery, including at Department for Education, The Future Leaders Trust and Southwark Teaching School Alliance makes her an absolutely ideal person to continue the development of Challenge Partners and to take it into the next exciting phase of its development.

Before and since Kate joined us, we have thought hard about this next stage of development and spent some time reflecting on our purpose and on the values that guide us. Founded to continue the work of collaborative school improvement begun within London Challenge,

**Schools increasingly work together in new configurations and much has changed in education policy since we began Challenge Partners. Yet in new forms, the challenges of sharing knowledge and best practice remain central to the task of improving education.**

we have always based our work on the goal of 'upwards convergence' — the idea that spreading our combined knowledge will help all to improve and accelerate improvement most for those with the greatest need. Our work has always been based on sharing openly



and with trust in order to enable everyone to benefit from the shared wisdom of the education system.

In discussion with Senior Partners, Hub Managers, our Education Advisory Group, the Board and leadership team, we felt that it was a good moment to refresh the statement of our values and mission to bring out more clearly how our values can guide us in this next phase of work. Schools increasingly work together in new configurations and much has changed in education policy since we began Challenge Partners. Yet in new forms, the challenges of sharing knowledge and best practice remain central to the task of improving education. Our new statement of mission and values, which you can find on pages 6 and 7, sets out, we hope, how we will continue to work to our founding principles while meeting today's challenges.

At this time of financial and other pressures in education, it is perhaps more important than ever that colleagues determined to carry on improving continue to invest in collaboration and innovation. It is therefore a source of real encouragement as well as pride that the partnership has continued to grow over the last year. I have no doubt that by working together, sharing knowledge and using their collective voice, the schools making up Challenge Partners will continue to thrive, whatever the future holds. I hope that you enjoy this Annual Report and take satisfaction from all we have achieved together.

WHO WE ARE  
AND WHAT WE  
STAND FOR

# Celebrating success and building for the future

## Dr Kate Chhatwal CEO



In education there is often a significant lag between the hard work of staff and students and the formal reporting of results — by which time we've moved on to the next thing. This can mean that we miss the chance to learn from our successes and thank those responsible. I am therefore delighted that this report provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our schools and partnership.

Highlights include continued growth in the number of schools in our network, and sustained impact on the children and communities they serve, and on the wider system. Our collective impact is brought to life in the case studies you can read throughout the report, which highlight just some of the amazing practice and people behind the numbers.

In 2018, we continued to build on the successes of the first seven years of Challenge Partners, while considering how best to respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead. The period since 2011 has seen significant changes to many aspects of the educational landscape, from curriculum and qualifications reform

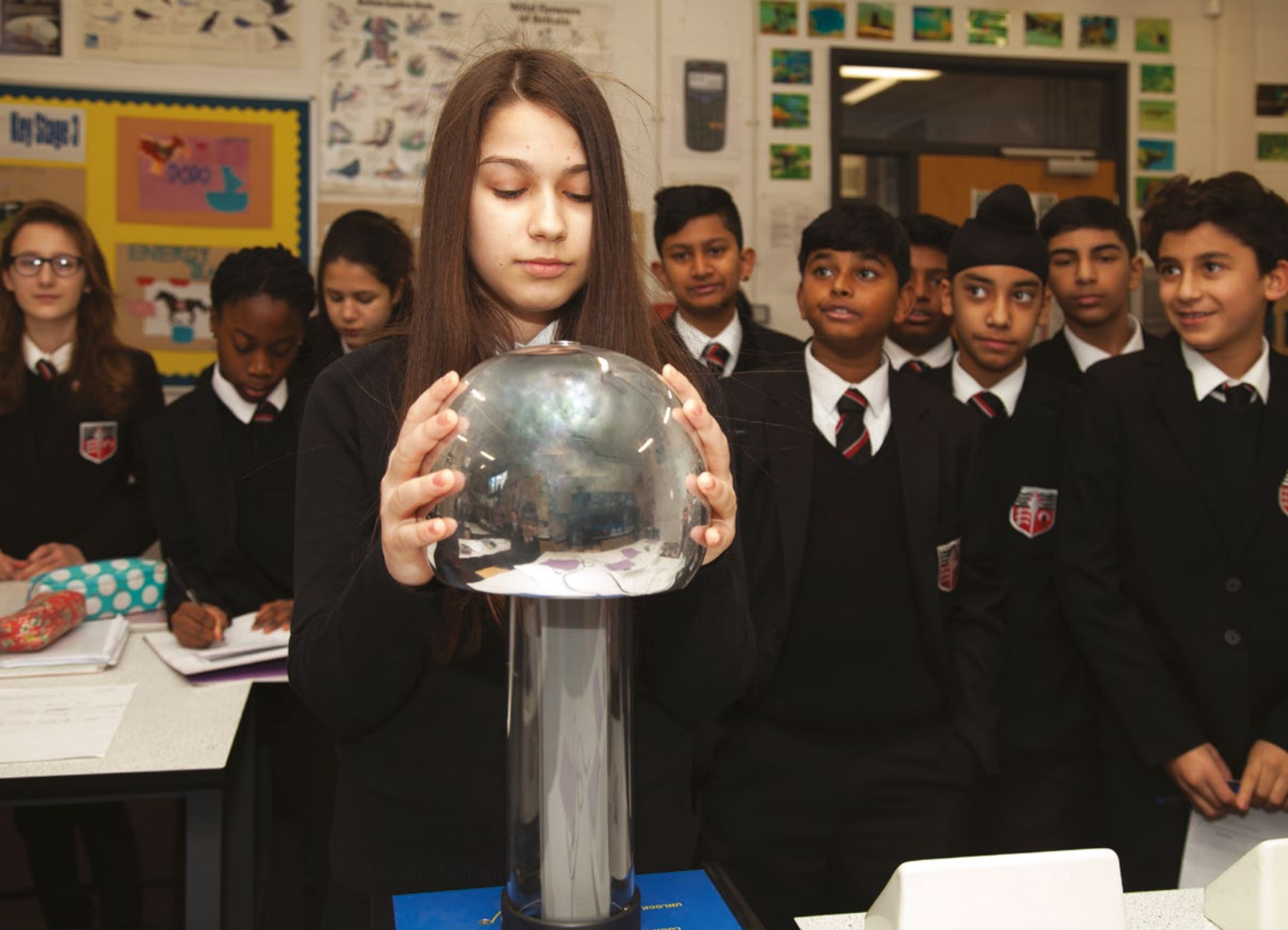
**The fact that Challenge Partners schools continue to outperform others nationally underlines the benefits of this outward-looking, partnership approach.**

across all phases and stages of schooling, to the huge growth of academies, teaching schools and area education partnerships. At the same time there have been seismic shifts in the global political and financial landscape, contributing to social and labour market changes, which seem only to be intensified and accelerated by the development of new technology and social media. Some of these changes bring new opportunities, others great challenge.

Sometimes the immense pressure of strained budgets, teacher shortages, and relentless accountability can lead schools to pull up the drawbridge. Yet in Challenge Partners, we have seen an enduring generosity of spirit, and thirst for peer collaboration and challenge. The fact that Challenge Partners schools continue to outperform others nationally underlines the benefits of this outward-looking, partnership approach.

While national and local government initiatives often focus primarily on educational deficits, it is a source of great pride for Challenge Partners that we are able to support schools at all stages of their improvement journey — including already high-performing schools looking to develop further. In her reflections, our Executive Director, Dame Sue John, shares the development of our Growing the Top – Stand-Out





Schools pilot programme, which is providing opportunities for some of the exceptional schools in Challenge Partners to learn with and from each other, other sectors, and beyond our shores.

Our drive for excellence in education is matched only by our drive for equity, and narrowing achievement gaps remains a priority across our partnership. In 2018-19 we are seeking to build on the important learning from our Challenge the Gap programme and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)-funded EAL in the Mainstream Classroom pilot, and to further embed a focus on tackling disadvantage in all that we do. Every school's Quality Assurance Review explicitly addresses the experience and outcomes of disadvantaged children, while many of our hubs and schools are exploring and sharing innovative ways of tackling educational inequality. We have intensified our efforts to facilitate the sharing of evidence and effective practice between our 84 special schools and alternative provisions, and between them and mainstream settings. Our curriculum project, due to report next summer, will consider how the needs of disadvantaged children can and should be taken into account in curriculum design.

Nationally, there are now more multi-academy trusts (MATs) than there were single academies in 2011 when Challenge Partners was formed<sup>1</sup>. Responding to the growing proportion of academies in our partnership, 2018 also saw an acceleration of work with the 164 MATs represented. This included a successful event promoting collaboration and challenge among MAT leaders, and the launch of our MAT peer review pilot, building on our successful school Quality Assurance Reviews. After further testing and refinement, these MAT reviews will be rolled out more widely in 2019.

To end almost where I started: it is good to take the time to acknowledge achievements, and this report is an important celebration of the schools who are Challenge Partners. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to look forward, to demonstrate our determination to continue to push boundaries and shape the system around us. What remains constant is the commitment to our mission of fostering excellence and equity, and to being truly practitioner-led.

<sup>1</sup> In 2011 there were just over 1,000 academies. By the end of 2018, this had risen to over 8,000 academies in around 1,400 multi-academy trusts.

# Our mission, our values

As mentioned in the foreword from our Chair of Trustees, we have been working with Senior Partners, Hub Managers, our Education Advisory Group and Board of Trustees to update our statements of our mission and values. Given the centrality of these to our collective endeavours, and the engagement of our schools in their formulation, we hope they articulate values and a purpose that all of our schools can continue to subscribe to.

## Mission

**Our goal is to reduce educational inequality and improve the life chances of all children. Through collaboration, challenge and professional development, we are working to ensure every school community can benefit from the combined wisdom of the whole system.**







## Values

We thought it would be helpful to share the previous description of our values alongside the new ones, so you can see how they have evolved.

Previous expression of value	Previous value descriptor	Refined expression of value	Refined value descriptor
<b>Pursuit of excellence</b>	Challenge each other to pursue the very best for every child, teacher and leader.	<b>Excellence</b>	We are always looking for ways to improve because we are determined to achieve the best for every child, teacher and leader.
<b>CP family</b>	Support each other with empathy by proactively disseminating expertise.	<b>Equity</b>	We treat each other fairly, with trust, care and respect. We seek the best for every child, and know that those who have the least need our combined expertise the most.
<b>Creative freedom</b>	Speak up and lead on issues and areas that affect the entire network and the school system as a whole.	<b>Courageous leadership</b>	We speak up and take responsibility for all children, making sure that we do not harm others in doing our best for our own schools.
<b>Trust and transparency</b>	Be open, honest and humble and trust each other to do the same.	<b>Challenge</b>	We expect the best of ourselves and each other, and value challenge which helps us improve.
<b>Teamwork</b>	Listen to, share with and learn from other colleagues.	<b>Collaboration</b>	We listen to, share with and learn from each other, developing our practice together so that every child benefits from our combined wisdom and creativity.
		<b>Innovation</b>	We use and generate research, we innovate with discipline and evaluate intelligently in pursuit of better outcomes for all children, especially the most disadvantaged.

# Achieving, sustaining and sharing excellence

## Dame Sue John Executive Director



The theme of our 2019 conference, Pushing the Boundaries, captures the inherent ambition and restlessness for continuous improvement that is in the DNA of Challenge Partners. How do we achieve excellence, sustain excellence and share excellence?

Our focus on courageous leadership brings to mind the wise words of Professor Tim Brighouse, who argued that as leaders we need to have endless intellectual curiosity and to role-model a predilection towards unwarranted optimism. To regard crisis as the norm and complexity as fun and to be utterly devoid of paranoia. Strong leaders relish the challenge of dealing with the unknown and can handle ambiguity effectively. Le Rochefoucauld, the 17th-century French author, did however recognise that, 'To try to be wise all on one's own is sheer folly'.

The power of Challenge Partners lies in our ability to bring professionals together and to create the right conditions for collaborative partnerships to thrive and ultimately improve the life chances of young people, especially the most disadvantaged.

As a knowledge mobilisation organisation it is vitally important that our schools exemplify best practice, both in terms of academic outcomes and in the quality of education experienced by young people. This year more schools in challenging circumstances have joined Challenge Partners and it is notable that, overall, Challenge Partners schools have achieved results above the national average. At Key Stage 2 the combined score for reading, writing and mathematics at expected level standard is 2% above the national average and it is of note that the Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score is 1.1pts above the national average. In terms of Progress 8, 20% of our secondary schools are in the top 12% and for primary schools the gap between our disadvantaged and non disadvantaged pupils is 5% lower than the national average. We are pleased to report that 22% of our schools rated as good in their previous inspection moved to outstanding, compared to 9% nationally.

We believe that the outward-facing nature of our schools and their commitment to hard-edged collaboration as a means of striving towards excellence has a crucial part to play in this success. Courageous leaders recognise the power of teacher agency within the school improvement landscape and for this to happen in a disciplined and meaningful way we have to look beyond the school gate. The lived daily experiences of the children in our classrooms are in the hands of our teachers and para-professionals and it is the job of leaders to inspire and empower teachers to act as agents of change.

The level of professional dialogue is heightened when teachers and leaders in our schools collaborate with a sense of purpose, working together to solve some of the intractable problems within our education system. The EEF attainment gap report of 2017 serves as a salutary reminder of how much more needs to be done to

**The lived daily experiences of the children in our classrooms are in the hands of our teachers and para-professionals and it is the job of leaders to inspire and empower teachers to act as agents of change.**

eliminate the gap that exists across all types of schools, regardless of their Ofsted rating. Trust, transparency and commitment to holding each other to account is the cornerstone of our annual Quality Assurance Review. The knowledge acquired by senior leaders as part of this process and the skills that are honed and developed impact directly on their own schools.

Our school leaders welcome the renewed focus on the curriculum, recognising that the national curriculum, alongside qualifications and assessment, doesn't

capture the spirit, quality and depth of an individual school's curriculum. We are engaged in a curriculum project to identify the key principles and important questions our leaders should be considering in terms of curriculum design.

Our thinking thus far has been informed and inspired by the work of Christine Counsell and her focus on the interplay between disciplinary and substantive knowledge and by Professor Mark Priestley who challenged us to consider whether we are 'Milkmen or Educators'. We will be engaging in a professional dialogue with our schools to capture their approaches towards ensuring that our young people have the knowledge, skills and attributes to thrive in a modern, complex, global society.

I am pleased to report that we have relaunched our secondary school Growing the Top – Stand-Out Schools programme, which follows on from an earlier pilot. One of our firmly held beliefs is that we should constantly challenge the current definition of Outstanding if we are to 'close the gap' over time and that those schools with the knowledge of how to 'stand out' should support those that currently do not. We refer to reducing this disparity in performance as the 'upward convergence' of our schools, pupils and teachers' performance. We assert that there is a risk within any educational system if it solely focuses on the lowest performing schools and the top performing schools are left to drift and potentially move aimlessly downwards.

It is important to stimulate the top to rise higher so that the whole system moves upwards and we do this by establishing learning partnerships, engaging in research, stimulating innovation and through the process of peer review. By 'stretching the top' a

momentum is created with the highest achieving schools driving the system forward.

Growing the Top was launched at the Royal Society and comprises of mini conferences for the participating schools to acquire external knowledge from academia, other areas of the public sector, the independent schools sector and the corporate world. Schools will work in trios and the facilitated visits to each of the schools will focus on what has been achieved at a systemic level to sustain excellence. Also, the development of new knowledge will be captured through collegial challenge of existing knowledge and collegial support in addressing current systemic challenges.

It is our intention to evaluate this project and Dr Peter Matthews, the author of the 2009 Ofsted report *Twelve outstanding schools: succeeding against the odds* will produce a report in co-operation with the participating school leaders, the findings of which will be shared with all of our schools.

We are mindful that according to Milton Friedman, 'One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programmes by their intentions rather than their results', and it will be interesting to capture the common themes that emerge from this piece of action research. Our thesis, based on the earlier pilot, is that the schools involved in the project have really considered what knowledge, skills and attributes young people need to navigate their future in a modern, complex world. Is it time to return to the notion of a student pledge whereby we ensure that young people have an enriched curriculum experience beyond the taught curriculum that provides opportunities for civic action and leadership?



# Our Network of Excellence

## 2018-19 partnership year

1. Ash Field Hub
2. Astrea Hub
3. Bengeworth Hub
4. Camden Hub
5. Challenger Hub
6. Cheam Hub
7. Chiltern Hub
8. Chrysalis Hub
9. Compton Hub
10. Cornwall Hub
11. East Coast Hub
12. East London Hub
13. East Midlands South Hub
14. Haberdashers' Aske's Hub
15. Herts and Bucks Hub
16. Impact Alliance Hub
17. Insight Hub
18. Inspire Partnership Hub
19. Kingsbridge Hub
20. Lincolnshire Hub
21. Link 2 Learn Hub

22. London Special and AP Hub
23. London West Hub
24. Northants Hub
25. North East Special Hub
26. North West Hub
27. Pickhurst Juniors Hub
28. Portsmouth Hub
29. Somerset Hub
30. South East London Hub
31. Tendring Hub
32. Three Shires Hub
33. Torbay Hub
34. Transform Hub
35. Wootton Bassett Hub





## ASH FIELD HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Jenny Bone

**11 schools**  
Leicester and  
Leicestershire

**Hub Manager**  
Rhian Richardson

The Children's Hospital School	Special
Greenfields Specialist School for Communication	Special
West Gate School	Special
Ellesmere College	Special
Millgate School	Special
Alderwasley Hall School	Special
Keyham Lodge School	Special
Fullhurst Community College	Secondary
Ash Field Academy	Special
Oaklands School (Leicester)	Special
Nether Hall School	Special

## ASTREA HUB



**25 schools**  
South Yorkshire  
and Cambridgeshire

**Hub Manager**  
Keith Hirst

**Senior Partner**  
Benedick  
Ashmore-Short

Hillside Academy	Primary
Byron Wood Primary Academy	Primary
Greengate Lane Academy	Primary
Netherwood Academy	Secondary
Hartley Brook Primary School	Primary
Denaby Main Primary Academy	Primary
Hexthorpe Primary Academy	Primary
Lower Meadow Primary School	Primary
Edenthorpe Hall Primary Academy	Primary
Highgate Primary Academy	Primary
Atlas Academy	Primary
Intake Primary Academy	Primary
Kingfisher Primary Academy	Primary
Hatfield Academy	Primary
Waverley Academy	Primary
Cottenham Village College	Secondary
Castle Academy	Primary
Astrea Academy Sheffield	All-through
Carrfield Primary Academy	Primary
The Hill Primary Academy	Primary
Gooseacre Primary Academy	Primary
Astrea Academy Woodfields	Secondary
Longsands Academy	Secondary
Ernulf Academy	Secondary
The Dearne Advanced Learning Centre	Secondary



## BENGEWORTH HUB



**Senior Partner**  
David Coaché

**6 schools**  
Worcestershire

**Hub Manager**  
Kirsty Shaw

St Richard's Church of England First School	Primary
Bretforton Village School	Primary
Leckhampton Church of England Primary School	Primary
Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School	Primary
Harvington Church of England First School	Primary
Bengeworth CE Academy	Primary



## CHALLENGER HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Stephen Chamberlain

**7 schools**  
Bedfordshire, Essex  
and Southend

**Hub Manager**  
Kate Holland

Kempston Challenger Academy	Secondary
Hadleigh Junior School	Primary
The Deanes	Secondary
Westborough Academy	Primary
Springfield Lower School	Primary
Daubeney Academy	Secondary
Lancot School	Primary

## CAMDEN HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Kate Frod OBE

**16 schools**  
London Borough  
of Camden

**Hub Manager**  
Rob Earrey

Beckford School	Primary
St Mary and St Pancras Church of England Primary School	Primary
St John's Upper Holloway Church of England Primary School	Primary
Hungerford Primary School	Primary
Primrose Hill School	Primary
Emmanuel Church of England Primary School	Primary
Edith Neville Primary School	Primary
Fleet Primary School	Primary
Carlton Primary School	Primary
Holy Trinity and St Silas	Primary
Brecknock Primary School	Primary
Kentish Town Church of England Primary School	Primary
Rhyl Primary School	Primary
Fitzjohn's Primary School	Primary
Eleanor Palmer Primary School	Primary
Argyle Primary School	Primary

## CHEAM HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Philip Hedger

**5 schools**  
London Borough  
of Sutton

**Hub Manager**  
Emma Dallimore

Cheam Common Infants' School	Primary
Brookfield Primary School	Primary
Cheam Common Junior Academy	Primary
Cheam Fields Primary Academy	Primary
Cheam Park Farm Primary Academy	Primary

## CHILTERN HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Adrian Rogers

**12 schools**  
Luton and  
Bedfordshire

**Hub Manager**  
Karen Bateman

Challney High School for Girls	Secondary
Marston Vale Middle School	Middle
Linslade Academy Trust	Middle
Lark Rise Academy	Primary
Cedars Upper School	Secondary
Chestnut Lane School	Primary
Samuel Whitbread Academy	Secondary
Putteridge High School	Secondary
Denbigh High School	Secondary
Challney High School for Boys	Secondary
Leighton Middle School	Middle
Dallow Primary School	Primary



## COMPTON HUB



**26 schools**  
Various North London  
boroughs and Kent

**Hub Manager**  
Emma Hazlegreaves

**Senior Partner**  
Ann Marie Mulkerins

Dollis Junior School	Primary
Heron Hall Academy	Secondary
Park Lane Primary School	Primary
Martello Primary	Primary
Folkestone Academy	All-through
Barham Primary School	Primary
Morehall Academy	Primary
Wembley Primary School	Primary
Brettenham Primary School	Primary
Elsley Primary School	Primary
Capel Manor Primary School	Primary
St Mary's Church of England Primary School	Primary
Lea Valley Primary School	Primary
The Archer Academy	Secondary
Chalkhill Primary School	Primary
Northside Primary School	Primary
Wren Academy	All-through
The Compton School	Secondary
St Theresa's Catholic Primary School	Primary
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	Primary
Woodside High School	Secondary
Northwood School	Secondary
Heartlands High School	Secondary
St Catherine's Catholic Primary School	Primary
Hatch End High School	Secondary
Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School	Primary

## CHRYSALIS HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Nicki Hyde-Boughey

**6 schools**  
London Borough  
of Brent

**Hub Manager**  
Alice Toft

Sudbury Primary School	Primary
Kingsbury Green Primary School	Primary
Alperton Community School	Secondary
Mount Stewart Junior School	Primary
Mount Stewart Infant School	Primary
Claremont High School	Secondary



## CORNWALL HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Sara Davey

**6 schools**  
Cornwall

**Hub Manager**  
Darren Payne

Trevithick Learning Academy	Primary
St Levan Primary School	Primary
St Buryan Academy Primary School	Primary
St Hillary School	Primary
Mounts Bay Academy	Secondary
Ludgvan School	Primary

## EAST COAST HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Sally Garrett

**9 schools**  
Suffolk

**Hub Manager**  
Chloe Richardson

Fred Nicholson School	Special
Pakefield School	Secondary
Hillside Special School	Special
Riverwalk School	Special
The Centre School	Special
Warren Special School	Special
The Ashley School Academy Trust	Special
Stone Lodge Academy	Special
The Harbour School (Ely)	Special

## EAST LONDON HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Dr Vanessa Ogden

**6 schools**  
London Boroughs  
of Tower Hamlets,  
Southwark and  
Lambeth

Greatfields School	Secondary
Saint Gabriel's College	Secondary
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch	Secondary
William Ellis School	Secondary
Leytonstone School	Secondary
Mulberry School for Girls	Secondary

## EAST MIDLANDS SOUTH HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Rita Hindocha

**16 schools**  
Leicestershire,  
City of Leicester  
and Derbyshire

**Hub Manager**  
Dave Roper

Kingsway Primary School	Primary
William Allitt School	Secondary
Avenue Primary School	Primary
Sir Jonathan North Community College	Secondary
Hamilton Academy	Secondary
The Winstanley School	Secondary
Rowlatts Hill Primary School	Primary
Beaumont Leys School	Secondary
Knighton Fields Primary Academy	Primary
Thurnby Lodge Primary Academy	Primary
Northfield House Primary Academy	Primary
Braunstone Frith Primary School	Primary
Rushey Mead Academy	Secondary
Willowbrook Primary Academy	Primary
Bosworth Academy	Secondary
Parks Primary School	Primary



## HABERDASHERS' ASKE'S HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Kafilat Agboola

**4 schools**  
London Boroughs of  
Lewisham and Bexley

**Hub Manager**  
David Welsh

Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College	All-through
Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy	All-through
Hatcham Temple Grove Free School	Primary
Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy	All-through

## HERTS AND BUCKS HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Dr Josephine  
Valentine OBE

**8 schools**  
Hertfordshire and  
Buckinghamshire

**Hub Manager**  
Mike Garvey

The Reach Free School	Secondary
Rickmansworth School	Secondary
St Albans Girls' School	Secondary
Chesham Grammar School	Secondary
Croxley Danes School	Secondary
Chancellor's School	Secondary
St Clement Danes School	Secondary
Aylesbury Grammar School	Secondary

## IMPACT ALLIANCE HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Stephen Whittle

**17 schools**  
London Boroughs  
of Bromley and  
Southwark and Kent

**Hub Manager**  
Paul Foster

The Charter School	Secondary
Marjorie McClure School	Special
Charles Dickens School	Primary
Julian's Primary School	Primary
The Charter School East Dulwich	Secondary
Midfield Primary School	Primary
John Donne Primary School	Primary
Leesons Primary School	Primary
Bromley Trust Alternative Provision Academy	AP
Bromley Beacon Academy	Special
Langley Park School for Boys	Secondary
Castlecombe Primary School	Primary
Chislehurst School For Girls	Secondary
Hayes School (Bromley)	Secondary
Pickhurst Infant Academy	Primary
Glebe School	Special
Streatham Wells Primary School	Primary

## INSIGHT HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Adam Lowing

**6 schools**  
Kent

**Hub Manager**  
Sarah Prest

Kings Farm Primary School	Primary
Whitehill Primary School	Primary
Ellington Infant School	Primary
Allhallows Primary Academy	Primary
High Halstow Primary School	Primary
Stoke Community School	Primary



## INSPIRE PARTNERSHIP HUB



**Senior Partner**  
John Camp



**Senior Partner**  
Rob Carpenter

**16 schools**  
London Borough  
of Greenwich  
and Medway

**Hub Manager**  
Harriet Joseph

Old Palace Primary School	Primary
Deansfield Primary School	Primary
Wingfield Primary School	Primary
Halstow Primary School	Primary
Horn Park Primary School	Primary
South Rise Primary School	Primary
Invicta Primary School	Primary
Alderwood Primary School	Primary
Maundene Primary School	Primary
Elaine Primary School	Primary
Windrush Primary School	Primary
Mulgrave Primary School	Primary
Rockliffe Manor Primary School	Primary
Woodhill Primary School	Primary
Sherington Primary School	Primary
Foxfield Primary School	Primary



## KINGSBRIDGE HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Kenny Duncan

**10 schools**  
Devon, Somerset  
and Torbay

**Hub Manager**  
David Wibberley

Compton Church of England Primary School	Primary
West Exe School	Secondary
Isca Academy	Secondary
Exwick Heights Primary School	Primary
Oldway Primary School	Primary
Marine Academy Plymouth	Secondary
Stanchester Community School Academy	Secondary
Kingsbridge Community College	Secondary
Crispin School Academy	Secondary
Teignmouth Community School	Secondary



## LINCOLNSHIRE HUB



**Senior Partner**  
James Greenwood

**2 schools**  
Lincolnshire

**Hub Manager**  
Chelsea Sandbrook

The Harrowby National Academies	Primary
Manor Leas Junior Academy	Primary

## LINK 2 LEARN HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Leah Crawley

**3 schools**  
London Borough  
of Bromley and Kent

**Hub Manager**  
Tracey Dinnage

St Paul's Cray Church of England Primary School	Primary
Oaklands Primary Academy	Primary
Burnt Ash Primary School	Primary



## LONDON SPECIAL AND AP HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Dr Penny Barratt

**39 schools**  
Various London  
boroughs and  
surrounding counties

**Hub Manager**  
Gary Morrissey

The Bridge Satellite Provision	Special
The Beacon Folkestone	Special
Ickburgh School	Special
Whitefield Schools	Special
St Piers School (Young Epilepsy)	Special
Willow Dene School	Special
Joseph Clarke School	Special
The Michael Tippett School	Special
Waverley School	Special
Cambridge School	Special
Chiltern Wood School	Special
Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre	Special
The Redway School	Special
Oakley School	Special
Ravensbourne School (Havering)	Special
Hornbeam Academy	Special
Five Acre Wood School	Special
St Mary Magdalene Academy: the Courtyard	Special
Treloar School	Special
Furze Down School	Special
Nexus Foundation Special School	Special
Dycorts School	Special
Gloucester House the Tavistock Children's Day Unit	Special
Drumbeat School & ASD Service	Special
Milestone Academy	Special
Pears Family School, The	AP
Riverside School	Special
The Village School	Special
The Bridge Teaching School	Special
The Bridge London ILS	Special
Castlebar School	Special
Little Heath School	Special
Highshore School	Special
Richard Cloudesley PH School	Special
Woodfield School	Special
The New Rush Hall School	Special
Manor School	Special
Samuel Rhodes MLD School	Special
Oak Lodge School	Special



## LONDON WEST HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Stephen Davis

**22 schools**  
Various London  
boroughs

**Hub Manager**  
Marie-Anne Leregle

Ryefield Primary School	Primary
North Primary School	Primary
Colham Manor Primary School	Primary
Cranford Primary School	Primary
Gifford Primary School	Primary
Ditton Park Academy	Secondary
Springwell Junior School	Primary
Isleworth and Syon School for Boys	Secondary
Perivale Primary School	Primary
Hounslow Town Primary School	Primary
Westbrook Primary School	Primary
Marylebone Boys' School	Secondary
Barnhill Community High School	Secondary
Baylis Court School	Secondary
Strand-on-the-Green Junior School	Primary
The UCL Academy	Secondary
Lampton School	Secondary
Brentside High School	Secondary
Parliament Hill School	Secondary
Lilian Baylis Technology School	Secondary
Springwest Academy	Secondary
Charville Academy	Primary

## NORTHANTS HUB



**9 schools**  
Northamptonshire

**Hub Manager**  
Andrew Wilson

**Senior Partner**  
Victoria Bishop

The Ferrers School	Secondary
Huxlow Science College	Secondary
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy	Secondary
Southfield School for Girls	Secondary
Hospital and Outreach Education	AP
Oakway Academy	Primary
Kingswood Secondary Academy	Secondary
Northampton School for Girls	Secondary
Wollaston School	Secondary

## NORTH EAST SPECIAL HUB



**6 schools**  
County Durham  
and Tyne and Wear

**Hub Manager**  
Yvonne Limb

**Senior Partner**  
Carolyn Morgan

Beaumont Hill Academy	Special
Ash Trees Academy	Special
Hope Wood Academy	Special
Portland Academy	Special
Barbara Priestman Academy	Special
Catcote Academy	Special





## NORTH WEST HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Gary Handforth

**9 schools**  
Greater Manchester,  
Merseyside and  
Blackpool

**Hub Manager**  
Ruth Coupe

Marton Primary Academy & Nursery	Primary
Abbey Hey Primary Academy	Primary
Christ Church Church of England Primary School	Primary
Peterhouse School	Special
Revoe Learning Academy	Primary
Moorfield Community Primary School	Primary
Cravenwood Primary Academy	Primary
Thames Primary Academy	Primary
Lewis Street Primary School	Primary

## PICKHURST JUNIORS HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Matt Rampton

**3 schools**  
London Borough  
of Bromley

**Hub Manager**  
Pippa Smith

Pickhurst Academy	Primary
Davidson Primary Academy	Primary
Darrick Wood Infant School	Primary

## PORTSMOUTH HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Alison Beane OBE

**25 schools**  
Portsmouth,  
Hampshire  
and Wiltshire

**Hub Manager**  
Sophie Venables

Craneswater Junior School	Primary
Wyndham Park Infants' School	Primary
St Mark's Church of England Junior School	Primary
St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School	Primary
St Swithun's Catholic Primary School	Primary
Wimborne Junior School	Primary
St George's Beneficial Church of England Primary School	Primary
Milton Park Primary School	Primary
Arundel Court Primary Academy and Nursery	Primary
College Park Infant School	Primary
Corpus Christi Primary School	Primary
Exeter House Special School	Special
Manor Infant School	Primary
Willows Centre for Children	Special
The Harbour School	AP
Highbury Primary School	Primary
Cliffdale Primary Academy	Special
Court Lane Junior School	Primary
St Paul's Catholic Primary School and Nursery	Primary
The Flying Bull Academy	Primary
Springfield School	Secondary
Admiral Lord Nelson School	Secondary
Mary Rose Academy	Special
Redwood Park Academy	Special
Chailey Heritage School	Special



## SOMERSET HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Peter Hoare

**12 schools**  
Somerset

**Hub Manager**  
Mike Wood

Robert Blake Science College	Secondary
Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School	Primary
Oldmixon Primary School	Primary
St Michael's Academy	Primary
Ruishton Church of England Primary School	Primary
Taunton Deane Partnership College	AP
Selworthy Special School	Special
West Monkton Primary School	Primary
Blackbrook Community Primary School	Primary
Heathfield Community School	Secondary
Brookside Community Primary School	Primary
Broadoak Mathematics and Computing College	Secondary



## SOUTH EAST LONDON HUB



**19 schools**  
London Boroughs of  
Lewisham and Bexley

**Hub Manager**  
Mary Collins

**Senior Partner**  
Michael Roach

Greenvale School	Special
St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School	Primary
Parkway Primary School	Primary
St James's Hatcham Church of England Primary School	Primary
Grange Primary School	Primary
Cooper's Lane Primary School	Primary
New Woodlands School	Special
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Nursery	Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Lewisham)	Primary
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	Primary
Watergate School	Special
Brent Knoll School	Special
St Saviour's RC Primary School	Primary
Holy Cross Catholic Primary	Primary
St Fidelis Catholic Primary	Primary
John Ball Primary School	Primary
Brindishe Manor School	Primary
Brindishe Green Primary School	Primary
Brindishe Lee Primary School	Primary



## TENDRING HUB



**4 schools**  
Essex

**Senior Partner**  
Anthony Welch

Westlands Community Primary School	Primary
St Osyth Church of England Primary School	Primary
Alton Park Junior School	Primary
Holland Park Primary	Primary



## THREE SHIRES HUB



**8 schools**  
Milton Keynes,  
Bedfordshire  
and Northants

**Senior Partner**  
Maxine Low

**Hub Manager**  
Angela Garner

Gilbert Inglefield Academy	Middle
Loughton Manor First School	Primary
Brooklands Middle School	Middle
Biggleswade Academy, part of LIFE Academies Trust	Middle
Long Meadow School	Primary
The Willows and EYC	Primary
Broughton Fields Primary School	Primary
Brooklands Farm Primary School	Primary
Newton Leys School	Primary



## TORBAY HUB



**8 schools**  
Torbay

**Senior Partner**  
Jayne Keller

**Hub Manager**  
Jeremy Kingston

Torre Church of England Academy	Primary
Ellacombe Academy	Primary
Shiphay Learning Academy	Primary
All Saints Church of England Primary School (Marsh)	Primary
Ilsham Church of England Academy	Primary
Warberry Church of England Academy	Primary
Roselands Primary School	Primary
Sherwell Valley Primary School	Primary





## TRANSFORM HUB



**Senior Partner**  
Rebecca Meredith

**22 schools**  
Nottingham,  
Nottinghamshire,  
Derby and Lincolnshire

**Hub Manager**  
Jill Wilkinson

Robert Shaw Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Whitegate Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Woodlands Academy (Nottingham)	Special
Parkdale Primary School	Primary
St George's Church of England Community Primary School	Primary
Breadsall Hill Top Primary School	Primary
Pear Tree Community Junior School	Primary
South Wilford Endowed Church of England Primary School	Primary
Henry Whipple Primary School	Primary
Highbank Primary School	Primary
Rise Park Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Rosslyn Park Primary and Nursery School	Primary
William Booth Primary School	Primary
Snape Wood Primary School	Primary
Bulwell St Mary's Church of England Primary	Primary
Burford Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Sneinton St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	Primary
Edale Rise Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Allenton Community Primary School	Primary
Rufford Primary and Nursery School	Primary
Brocklewood Primary Academy	Primary
Yarborough Academy	Primary

## WOOTTON BASSETT HUB



**Senior Partner**  
George Croxford

**28 schools**  
Wiltshire, Dorset,  
Bristol, Somerset,  
Gloucestershire  
and Oxfordshire

**Hub Manager**  
Steven Paddock

Westbury Leigh Church of England Primary School	Primary
Lainesmead Primary School	Primary
Gordano School	Secondary
Chew Valley School	Secondary
Backwell School	Secondary
Downland School	Special
Severnbanks Primary School	Primary
Bruton Primary School	Primary
Upton Noble Church of England VC Primary School	Primary
Brook Field Primary School	Primary
Goddard Park Community Primary School	Primary
Oaktree Nursery and Primary School	Primary
Lyneham Primary School	Primary
Noremars Community Junior School	Primary
Lawn Manor Academy	Secondary
Motcombe Church of England VA Primary School	Primary
Carterton Community College	Secondary
Charter Primary School	Primary
Shaftesbury School	Secondary
Ashton Keynes CE Primary School	Primary
Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School	Primary
St Mary's Church of England Primary School	Primary
Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre	Secondary
Royal Wootton Bassett Academy	Secondary
St Sampson's CE Primary School	Primary
Crowdys Hill School	Special
Longleaze Primary School	Primary
St Andrews Church of England Primary School	Primary
Oaktree Nursery and Primary School	Primary
Goddard Park Community Primary School	Primary



# WHAT WE DO

The background features several diagonal bands of color. From top to bottom, there is a light green band, a medium green band, a dark green band, and a grey band at the bottom. The bands are separated by thin white lines and have a slight gradient effect.

# The Network of Excellence

The Network of Excellence (NoE) is a national network of schools committed to sharing best practice and knowledge, to improve performance through effective challenge and support. It is made up of more than 430 schools across the country and pivots around an annual peer review. This is where school leaders review each other's schools, travelling beyond their own area to maximise opportunities for learning. Each school also works with others in a local hub to share expertise and address challenges.

## National support and expertise

The national network provides members with opportunities for collaboration and challenge. Membership covers the following:

- **Annual QA peer review** — a collaborative three-day peer review which provides a powerful opportunity for challenge, learning and reflection
- **Training and support** to send senior leaders to review other schools, which offers an excellent professional development opportunity to work with Ofsted-experienced Lead Reviewers, see schools in different contexts and reflect on their own practice
- **Leadership Development Days (discounted for NoE members)** — structured school visits lasting one day, enabling school leaders to immerse themselves in the context and practice of a school with particular expertise in a specific area, phase or subject
- **Online School Support Directory** — searchable resource to identify areas of excellent practice nationally (free to NoE members), available at <https://directory.challengepartners.org>
- **National brokering of support** across the Network of Excellence



- **Fortnightly newsletter** including policy updates, need-to-know information, funding and grant opportunities, and news items
- **National events and conferences** (free or discounted for NoE members) in locations across the country
- **National policy platform.**

## Local collaboration and change

All schools that are members of the Network of Excellence participate in a local hub with other schools in their region. Hubs collectively agree on their priorities for school improvement, and write an action plan that outlines the activities and programmes that will address these priorities.

Membership covers the following:

---

### Hub meetings

- Regular meetings to share practice and collaborate on common school improvement priorities

---

### Hub funding

- Funding from Challenge Partners (derived from membership fees) to allocate towards activities that further the hub's agreed priorities, as detailed in the Hub Action Plan
- The local area hub can apply to Challenge Partners for additional funding to run a hub-led event providing professional development for NoE members

---

### Frameworks for effective local collaboration

- Including Hub Action Plans, Leadership Residency Programme and data sharing.

**“The Network of Excellence has enabled us to reflect effectively on improvement strategies, celebrate successes and continue to drive forwards.”**

**Sally Garrett** Headteacher, The Ashley School Academy Trust, East Coast Hub



Sentence Starters

Also for riddles

I often

You'll be surprised to know...

I can

Sometimes I

Before

During

When...

Meanwhile

You can

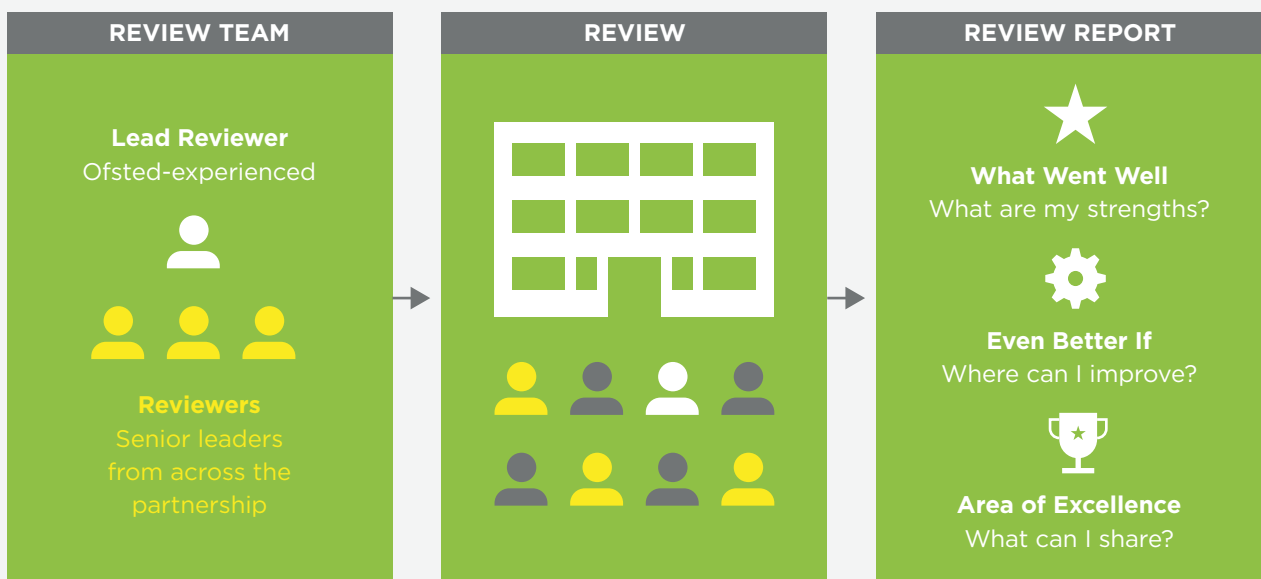
You may...

# The Quality Assurance Review

The Challenge Partners' Quality Assurance (QA) Review is an independently-led peer review focused on teaching and learning. The review identifies both what is going well and areas for development. Where excellent practice is identified, this can be accredited by the review team as an 'Area of Excellence' with the expectation that it is shared with other schools in the network.

The QA Review is a joint exercise between the review team and school. Though it is not a 'mocksted', all reviews are led by an independent Lead Reviewer with formal Ofsted training to ensure rigour. We also avoid cosiness by ensuring peer reviewers are drawn from beyond the school's locality. Review activities see visiting reviewers and members of the school's own senior leadership team work together to evaluate school effectiveness. This 'one team, two parts' approach enables honest and open professional dialogue about where the school is and what it needs to do to improve.

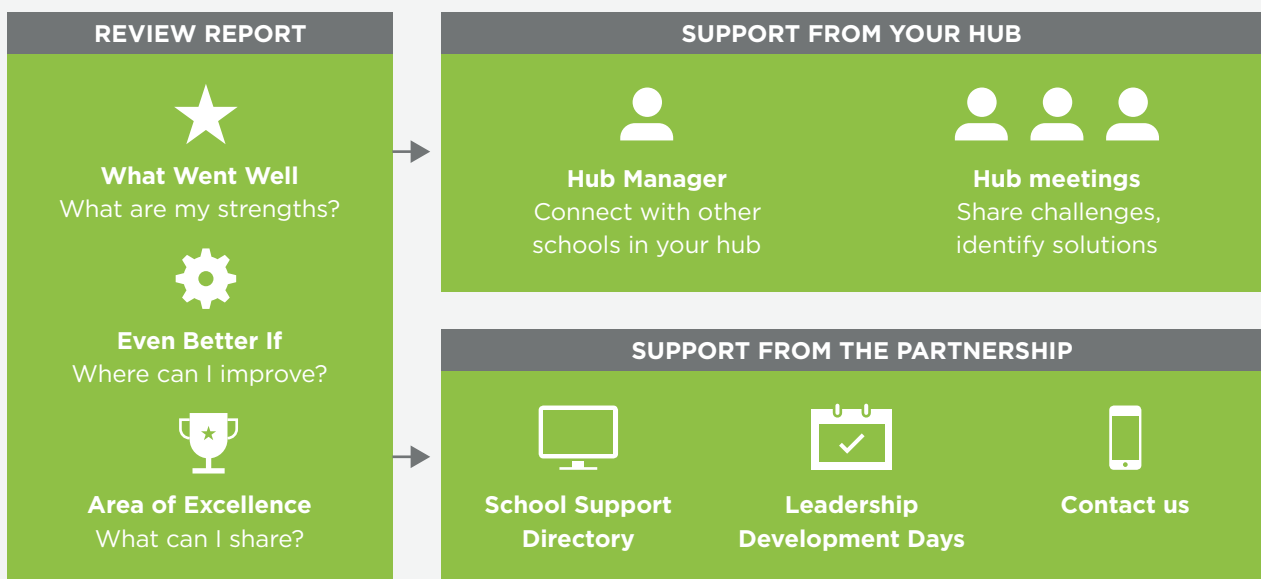
## How the QA Review works



Size of review team depends on size of host school

Review team and host school's SLT review school collaboratively – 'one team, two parts'

Review report is shared with Central Team and Hub Manager to enable follow-on support



The QA Review provides a high-quality professional development experience for senior leaders. Our schools tell us they value the professional development and new ideas their leaders gain by going out on reviews, as much as they do the review of their own school.

Each school in the Network of Excellence receives an annual review, and reciprocates by sending their headteacher and senior leaders to review other schools in the network. All reviewers are trained by Challenge Partners and have the opportunity to receive additional training to become advanced reviewers once they have successfully completed several reviews.

Over the last year we have refined and improved all QA Review guidance, materials and policies to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of our schools. This has included:

- reviewing and refining QA Reviewer training to ensure it gives senior leaders the best start in their journey of being a Challenge Partners reviewer.
- updating our guidance on the Area of Excellence application and accreditation process to make the process more straightforward, without compromising on rigour.
- updating the QA Review report format so that the 'context and character' of the school is captured at the beginning of the report, and that evidence about the provision for and progress and attainment of disadvantaged students is recorded.
- updating the QA Review cancellation policy for schools, Lead Reviewers and reviewers to extend the circumstances in which reviews may be rescheduled if affected by an exceptional event (like snow).

In order to ensure that we have an accurate picture of the needs and strengths of our schools, the information in review reports is categorised using a taxonomy. This allows us to track and meet the needs of our schools.

**“From a personal point of view, it was without a shadow of a doubt the best CPD experience I have experienced. It allowed me to develop my knowledge and understanding of areas outside my normal remit.”**

**Huw Morgan** Marine Academy Portsmouth



## IN THE PARTNERSHIP YEAR 2017-18

# 365

reviews took place

# 88%

of schools that are members of the Network of Excellence had a QA Review

Some reviews were cancelled where schools had recently had Ofsted or changes in leadership.

# 943 reviewers

attended a review

# 4.7/5

Average feedback score for overall QA Review experience from headteachers and reviewers

# 89%

of review teams were complete

# 4.6/5

Average feedback score from host headteachers for the QA Review as a CPD experience for them and their staff

## IN THE AUTUMN TERM 2018

# 4.7/5

Average feedback score for overall QA Review experience from headteachers and reviewers

# 86%

of review teams were complete

# 4.6/5

Average feedback score from host headteachers for the QA Review as a learning experience for them and their staff



It also means that Areas of Excellence can be recorded by category in our School Support Directory, making it easier for great practice to be accessed and shared. We continue to refine this process so that we and our schools are able to maximise the benefits derived from the powerful data we hold about our schools.

Over the next year, we will be concentrating our efforts on:

- how progress and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils can be further explored in every QA Review;
- ensuring all schools receive systematic, high quality follow up after their QA Review; and
- exploring how we can offer more bespoke reviews for schools that have been part of Challenge Partners for a number of years.

We strive to ensure that the review continues to be of exceptional quality.

**“The relationship between the school and the review team was excellent — true collaboration with challenge.”**

**Deamonn Hewitt** The Flying Bull Primary

## IN THE PARTNERSHIP YEAR 2018-19 (projected to happen)

# 97%

of schools have confirmed their QA Review date

# 1,042

reviewers are booked onto reviews

# 67%

of schools are meeting their reviewer commitment

We rely on our schools to send the same number of reviewers to reviews at other schools in the network that they will receive during their own school's review. This is essential in ensuring that each school is able to have a QA Review with a full team.

Samuel Whitbread Academy in Bedfordshire and has been with Challenge Partners since 2016 and recently had a Quality Assurance Review at the school. They reflect on the experience below.

**What have you gained as a school from having a QA Review?**

As a school, we have gained an external validation of our own self-evaluation processes as well as valuable feedback and constructive criticism for the future direction of our academy. We have also gained fresh ideas on how to address the key areas of improvement in our school development plan. The Lead Reviewer was extremely supportive but challenging at the same time. We definitely see the value of having a QA Review and would want to keep having them!

**What have your Senior Leadership Team (SLT) gained from having a QA Review?**

Our SLT has greatly appreciated the opportunity to be challenged robustly by experienced and respected peers from other schools. One of our new members of SLT was initially quite nervous, but after the review she saw the value in having one and said 'no course could be as beneficial to my professional development as that just was'. In general, our SLT felt the review definitely improved their own practice as they were re-energised with fresh ideas and new strategies on how to deal with the ongoing priorities in the school, and so they took a lot away from having a QA Review.

**What is the best thing about the review?**

The opportunity to go out and see other schools, as we currently only work with schools in Bedfordshire, so it is nice to feel connected to other schools across the country. We also gain a fresh pair of eyes on our school, as the review team are able to spot things that we don't, which is extremely valuable.



Cambridge School, have been with Challenge Partners since 2017. Here the assistant headteacher, **Nathan Lyons**, has reflected on his experience of being a reviewer.

**How did being out on a review help your understanding of practice within your own school?**

Special schools can be quite specific and a similar school may not always be near. Observing another SEN setting is always so helpful in reflecting on other ways of working and the ways that challenges are met in different, creative ways. Seeing how a school presents itself on its website and through data and information is really helpful to compare with my own school. As a class teacher, I always found observing peers and their classrooms and engaging in professional dialogue to be very useful for my own development. As a leader, it is so beneficial to be able to do this with another school and another leadership team.

**What did you gain out of being a reviewer on a QA Review?**

My role in school is Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for leading on staff training and development, and initial teacher training. Much of my week is spent in supportive observation of colleagues and in coaching and mentoring dialogue

aimed at improving practice. Challenge Partners is such a useful tool and structure for my own development and practice. The concept of the observations and challenge being 'developmental, not judgemental' really resonated with my own pedagogy. This has helped teachers to welcome and even look forward to observations that are focused on supporting them to identify areas that they need to develop.

**What would be your one piece of advice for a reviewer going out on their first review?**

The time flies by so for me it was really important to acclimatise and immerse myself quickly in the experience. Having a clear and quiet mind, open to observing and processing a wide range of information is something that often needs preparing for — the journey was helpful here.

My main advice would be to enjoy the opportunity to work with different learners and staff in a different setting — and to enjoy the privilege of supporting a school that wants to be challenged.





## Leadership Development Days

Leadership Development Days are structured school visits lasting one day, enabling attendees to immerse themselves in the context and practice of a school with expertise in a particular area. Schools in Challenge Partners, with accredited Areas of Excellence, have hosted Leadership Development Days covering subject areas and topics such as Maths, English, disadvantaged pupils, the more able, EYFS, mastery and SEND. Three to six pairs from different schools attend each day, providing the opportunity for schools to collaborate with colleagues across the partnership. Attendees are invited to observe lessons, learn about the school's journey, address challenges and reflect with colleagues. We continue to build on our work in developing the taxonomy to use it to support our identification of topics and hosts and better meet the needs of all our partners.

In 2017-18, colleagues from **60%** of hubs either hosted or attended a Leadership Development Day.

## School Support Directory

The School Support Directory is our online tool to allow members to view and connect with other schools across the Network of Excellence. Schools are able to use the platform to view other schools and hubs within the partnership, discover more information about good practice within a school and connect with a school to learn more. We have recently refreshed the design of this tool and have updated the information on the Areas of Excellence across the national network. Throughout this year we will work with Hub Managers to arrange demonstrations for their networks in order to support effective utilisation of this tool.

**"I had a brilliant day, particularly when I spoke with students. On the day I was able to reflect a lot on our own practice and discuss this with colleagues from other schools. It was powerful and gave me some good next steps to make."**

Leadership Development Day participant

### CASE STUDY

### Foxfield Primary School, Inspire Partnership

The Leadership Development Day at Foxfield Primary School followed a two-year action research project where exciting innovations were developed to enable reasoning and critical thinking skills in mathematics. This project originally stemmed from a Quality Assurance Review suggestion to further embed challenge for all learners. Twelve months later a follow-up QA Review recognised deeper learning in mathematics as the school's Area of Excellence.

On the day, leaders and teachers at Foxfield Primary School shared research, resources and practice with twenty senior leaders from across the country. Participants had the opportunity to observe learning in a number of classrooms, scrutinise books, speak to children and consider how to adapt the practice they saw in their own contexts.

Staff within the Inspire Partnership have a passion and expertise for nurturing confident children who shape and take ownership of their own learning, so to celebrate this by sharing strategies that have been successful for us was a joy. Since the project's inception, the number of children reaching the greater depth level in KS2 mathematics SATs has risen from 15% to 41%; it has also accelerated the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Importantly, questions and contributions from the participants created another opportunity to reflect on the project and consider how to continue our journey of improvement in the school. The insights from visiting leaders have led to the staff at Foxfield Primary School developing deeper learning prompts for writing and other curriculum areas and to leaders across the Inspire Partnership undertaking further research into deeper learning. This has been disseminated through our Professional Development Meeting schedule, alongside another project to create a more global curriculum which we believe will prepare children for the 21st century.

We were very thankful to receive such positive feedback on the day: 'A very insightful and inspirational day. I have learned a lot and am feeling very motivated to elicit change in my own context.' However, the collaboration following the day is key. So, participants, expect to receive your postcards with your pledges to improve practice soon and we look forward to welcoming back other colleagues from your schools: we fully intend to 'maggie' ideas from you, to improve education for all children in our schools.

# Programmes tackling educational disadvantage

## Challenge the Gap

Challenge the Gap is a whole-school improvement programme which builds capacity at all levels to break the link between poverty and poor outcomes. Leaders, teachers and para-professionals form a school team who, with training and support, design and implement tailored strategies to improve the achievement of their pupil premium children.

The programme delivers lasting and transformational impact for disadvantaged pupils, and school teams benefit from outstanding evidence-informed development including workshops, school-to-school collaboration and personalised visits. Teams work together to trial strategies around specific issues then use Challenge the Gap tools to track and monitor their success. Workshops focus on developing participants to build their pupils' competencies and skills in areas including: academic literacy and numeracy, critical thinking, resilience, self-awareness and meta-cognition. The practitioner-led programme ensures that the expertise of the education sector is used to improve pupil outcomes.

In recent years the Strategic School Improvement Fund has supported more schools to benefit from this programme and enable greater resources to externally evaluate the programme impact, with valuable lessons shared across the system.

**“For me the key element is the collaboration. It is brilliant hearing about what other schools are doing and talking with them to see how small tweaks could be made to our existing structures.”**

**Teacher** Southwark TSA cluster

**“Challenge the Gap has given us the opportunity to refine and personalise strategies to support disadvantaged pupils — it is clear that as a result of doing this, the children have now made good or better progress.”**

**Leader** Greenwich Cluster

### 2017-18 PROGRAMMES

# 97%

of staff taking part in Challenge the Gap would recommend it to their colleagues in other schools

# 84%

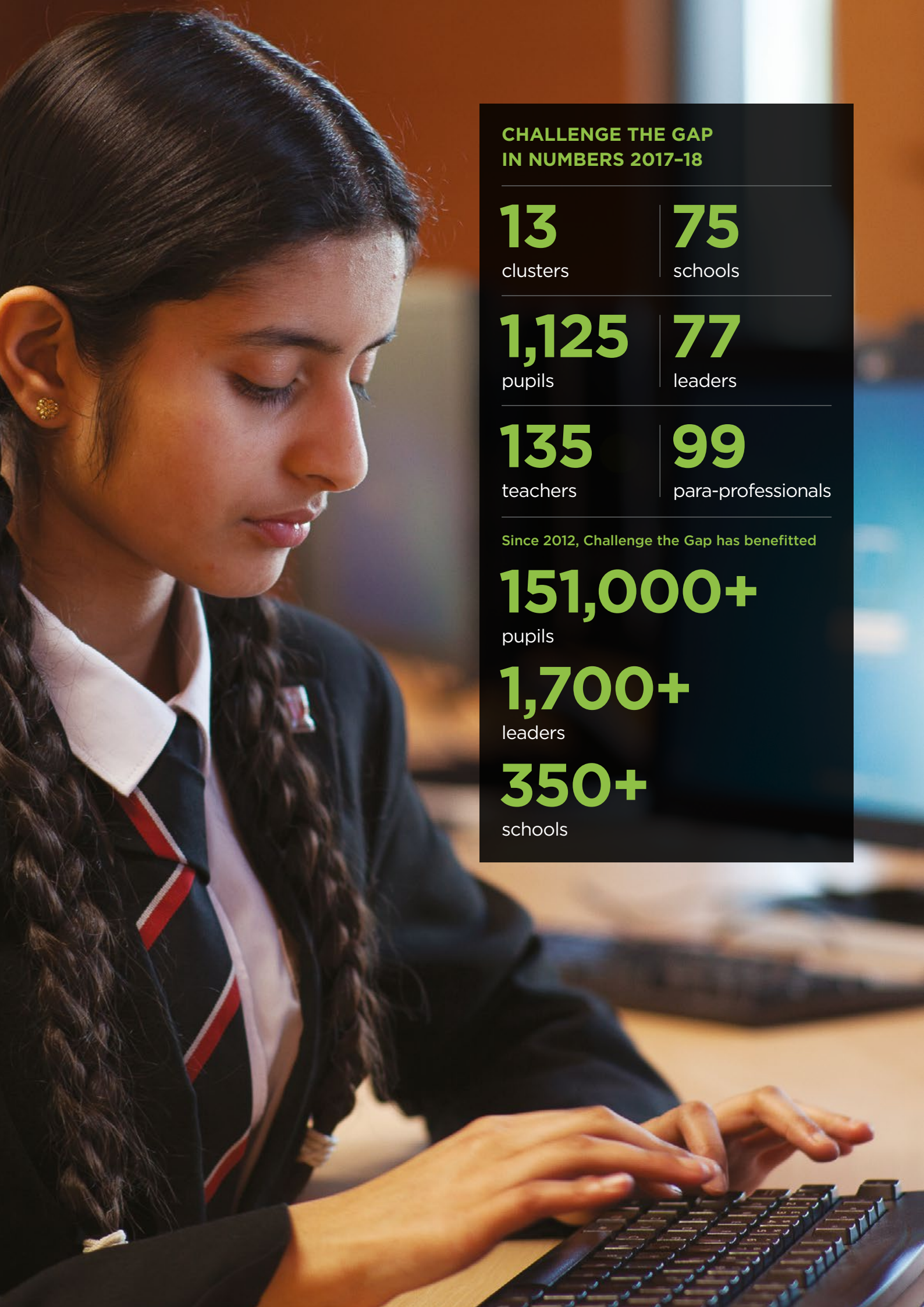
agree that there has been improved progress and attainment for their pupils

# 95%

agree attitudes and aspirations to learning for their pupils has improved

# 77%

agree that behaviour and attendance for their pupils has improved



**CHALLENGE THE GAP  
IN NUMBERS 2017-18**

**13**  
clusters

**75**  
schools

**1,125**  
pupils

**77**  
leaders

**135**  
teachers

**99**  
para-professionals

Since 2012, Challenge the Gap has benefitted

**151,000+**  
pupils

**1,700+**  
leaders

**350+**  
schools

## By providing additional challenge and support, The Victory Primary School has unlocked the reading abilities of their ‘invisible’ pupils.

### The challenge

The Victory sits in an underprivileged area with a high level of disadvantage. Pupils were joining reception with low reading skills and parental and community engagement had historically proved particularly difficult for the school.

### The response

The school identified a target cohort of 15 disadvantaged pupils in Year 3 who were struggling with reading, and set out to offer a differentiated package of support for them. They started by dividing the 15 pupils into three different groups, reflecting their reading levels, and set ambitious progress targets for each group. They found each group needed tailored initiatives to respond to their diverse needs.

For the first set of pupils, grouped as ‘emerging’, the school team identified the pupils’ fluency as stilted, making comprehension difficult. The team responded by tasking the para-professional to spend focussed time with pupils to provide one-to-one core reading skills support so they could read fast enough to understand stories.

The second set of pupils needed to develop their questioning skills around a text. Pupils were set tasks in retrieval questions, inference questions and ways to identify characters’ feelings and

authors’ choices. The team ensured the pupils had opportunity to develop this further practice by arranging extra afternoon provision.

For the final set of pupils, the school team focussed on developing their understanding and responses to more demanding questions requiring a deeper understanding of text. The team’s work was centred on developing discussion activities, including pupils discussing their own life experiences, to better understand feelings within the text.

### The outcome

100% of children in the target cohort achieved or exceeded the expected standard, with some pupils making outstanding progress. Teachers said the children were better able to access the curriculum, with a greater depth of understanding, and they had seen the pupils become happier and more confident. Across the school, staff have become more aware of pupil premium pupils and recognise the need for greater tailored support.

### Key learning

The school reported the programme made them recognise the importance of putting pupil premium pupils at the forefront of all they do. They reported great impact within the target cohort, who did not have multiple barriers to learning or identified Special Educational Needs. These ‘invisible’ pupils needed greater challenge and support to reach their potential. Staff leading on pupil premium have now been given wider whole-school influence as well as more time and resources to consistently reflect and plan for their pupils.

**“Being part of Challenge the Gap means that our pupil premium students are now at the forefront of teachers’ minds, and more than ever they know why there is a gap, why it shouldn’t exist and simple effective strategies to ensure teaching and learning opportunities are the best they can be to try and make sure that gap doesn’t exist at all.”**

**Leader** The Compton Cluster

## EAL in the Mainstream Classroom

This is a pilot project funded by the Education Endowment Foundation, The Bell Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy, and delivered by Challenge Partners, Hounslow Language Service and Lampton School.

**“Inspiring teaching of aspects of grammar. The course was delivered in a practical way which modelled the teaching of language to us teachers so that we felt confident in doing it ourselves in our classrooms / to staff in our schools.”**

History teacher

The project aims to support EAL pupils in the mainstream classroom. It is designed to build expertise and capacity among classroom teachers so they can provide the best teaching and learning for EAL pupils, so reducing the need for specialist support.

At the core of the approach is a focus on academic language, and the training supports classroom teachers' use and understanding of grammar, core vocabulary, and spoken language, which are key to helping EAL pupils within a whole class context, and which are also likely to have benefits for children more broadly, especially those from a disadvantaged background.

As part of the project, researchers from the University of York are conducting a randomised control trial over the course of the programme to assess the impact and effectiveness of the training on pupils. During 2016-17 we trained 12 Delivery Centres to deliver the programme. During 2017-18, 38 of the 71 schools that were recruited to take part in the programme were randomly allocated to receive the training (intervention schools) and 33 were allocated to continue with 'teaching as usual' (control schools). The evaluation report is expected to be published in 2020.



# Getting Ahead London

Getting Ahead London is a one-year coaching programme for senior leaders which aims to develop the next generation of London headteachers. The programme is funded by the Greater London Authority and was developed with PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers). Participants are grouped in threes and matched with a coach who they shadow for a day and receive support from twice each term. During the second year of the programme, 2017-18, we worked with 16 coaches and 48 participants, and by the end of the year 25% of participants secured a headship and an additional 10% were promoted to another role.

The third year of the programme began last September and runs until June 2019. We have introduced a small fee for participants this year which has allowed us to extend the reach and sustainability of the programme, working with 20 coaches and 60 participants.



**“The work with my coach was an absolute eye-opener. The meetings with him left me coming out each time as an enriched person, certainly as one who has learnt to look at myself even more closely and positively question myself if I could do something differently. Our coach has also been a critical professional mirror to all three of us to make us think how our vision aligns with what we actually say and how it comes across. This — as done in a safe environment — has been such an interesting learning curve for me.”**

Getting Ahead London participant



In 2017-18 we worked with

**53**  
schools

**16**  
coaches

**48**  
participants

At the end of the first term of the 2017-18 programme the following percentages of participants felt that the programme had:

- motivated them to become a headteacher in London **87.5%**
- made them more aware of their own skills and knowledge **87.5%**
- raised their awareness of their leadership styles **93.75%**
- raised their awareness of opportunities that exist to enhance their development **87.5%**
- enhanced their knowledge and skills **100%**

# 2018–19 pilot programmes

## Growing the Top – Stand-Out Schools

Launched in October 2018, Growing the Top is a challenging programme for secondary schools in our Network of Excellence which have outstanding performance but are driven to keep improving and learning from each other.

Underpinned by our core philosophy, that it is important to stimulate the top to rise higher so that the whole system moves upwards (the upwards convergence model), this programme provides opportunities for schools to establish partnerships and share their journeys towards excellence. This is achieved through research, discussions and school visit days to identify and share systemic best practice.

There are also opportunities to hear from other sectors, including charities and business, to challenge prevailing thinking in the education sector.

**“Well structured day, with a focus upon systemic efficiency and effectiveness, particularly around leadership.”**

Participant reflections from launch event



Growing the Top launch event, The Royal Society, 18 October 2018



## MAT Peer Review

The MAT Peer Review pilot programme launched in November 2018 and runs until April 2019. The purpose of the pilot is to trial an expert-facilitated MAT-to-MAT Peer Review process, to enable the development, identification and sharing of good practice among MATs and MAT senior leaders.

The MAT Review is distinctive because it focuses on multi-school improvement and responds to the needs of the MAT in its current stage of development. It is not the same as a Quality Assurance (QA) Review (though it builds on many of the same principles and practices) or an Ofsted inspection because MATs are reviewed on their own terms, not against a set of pre-defined criteria. However, it is no less rigorous than a QA Review, with a sharp focus on school improvement and the impact the MAT has on outcomes.

Like the QA Review, the MAT Peer Review is underpinned by the values of collaboration, support and challenge. The overarching aim of these professionally-facilitated, externally-facilitated, peer reviews is to bring about improvement in outcomes for pupils within the MAT being reviewed and across the system. A MAT participating in a review will have the opportunity to reflect on its development and impact. The review team will offer challenge, learn how other MATs operate, and have a unique opportunity to engage in professional dialogue on school improvement in the MAT context.

# Events



## National Conference 2018

### Connect, Collaborate, Create

During the 2018 Challenge Partners' national conference, "connect, collaborate, create", we celebrated outgoing CEO and founder of Challenge Partners, Professor Sir George Berwick, and welcomed our new CEO, Dr Kate Chhatwal, who spoke about her vision for the organisation moving forwards.

The conference saw over 200 delegates attend 18 different workshops on topics as diverse as "Behavioural insights and education: Moving beyond nudges", "Creating a play-based intervention to narrow the gap" and "Improving outcomes through a creative curriculum". The day also hosted a panel discussion, "What is social capital anyway? And who decides what's valued?" chaired by current editor and digital publishing director of the TES, Ann Mroz.

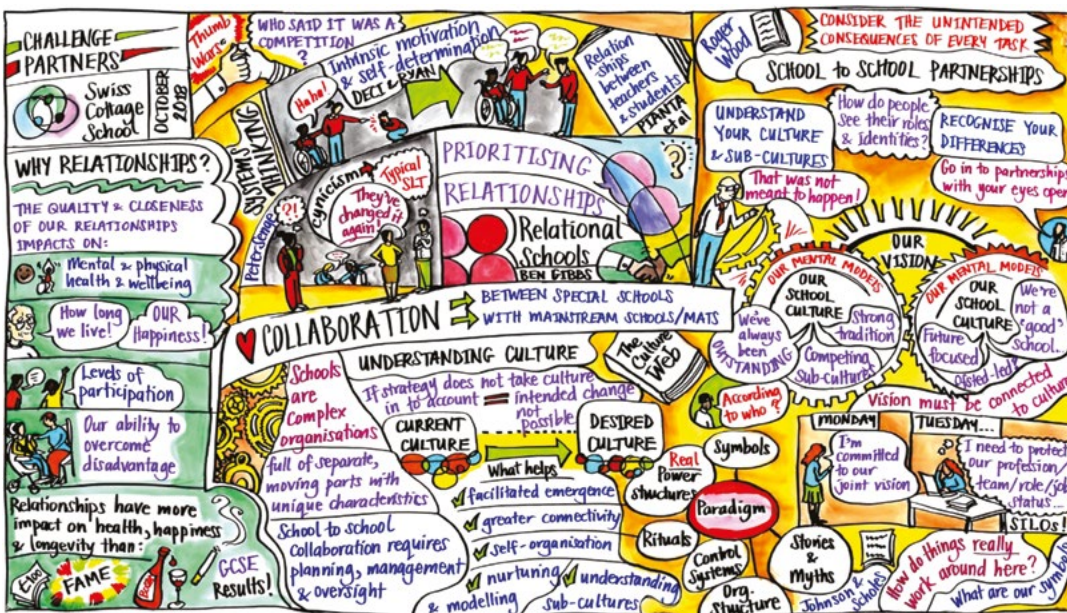


## SEND launch event

The life chances of young people with special educational needs and disabilities are dramatically less than those of their peers. Funding pressures make it even harder to provide an excellent and worthwhile education to SEND pupils, especially in mainstream settings. This year, school leaders from special, alternative and mainstream schools have come together to share practice and ideas to meet this challenge in all settings. The launch event in October 2018 saw those present pledge to continue to collaborate around the key challenges and opportunities identified.

## Strategies for MAT growth and development event

Our first event for MAT leaders was held in November 2018, with Dominic Herrington as our guest speaker. This was followed by carousels of practice, opportunities to network and a case study in MAT-to-MAT collaboration. Many were fascinated at how effectively MATs can work together, and the level of transparency and collegiate support evidenced by the case study (both MATs involved in the study are long-term members of Challenge Partners). The event evaluation average was 9/10, with 'interesting and varied' and 'networking opportunity' being most widely valued, and with requests for a longer event in future. In response, a further MAT leaders event has been scheduled for 3 April 2019.



SEND launch event, Swiss Cottage School, October 2018

Graphic facilitation by @MendoncaPen [www.pennendonca.com](http://www.pennendonca.com)



IMPACT

# Our aims

Our goal is to reduce educational inequality and improve the life chances of all children. Through collaboration, challenge and professional development, we are working to ensure every school community can benefit from the combined wisdom of the whole system.

To work towards our mission, we have collectively adopted these four core aims that guide what we do. We will be revisiting our aims to ensure they remain aligned with our re-articulated mission and values, so next year's report is likely to look different.

## AIM 1

Improve pupils' examination results at a rate above the national average and accelerate progress of the disadvantaged

---

## AIM 2

Enable all our schools to improve at a rate above the national average

---

## AIM 3

Create more national leaders and outstanding schools that fulfil the Teaching Schools criteria

---

## AIM 4

Develop a world-class, self-improving and sustainable system that contributes to national research and policy-making



# Impact and performance against our aims

Our role is to support the collaboration between schools within the partnership and to champion the great work they are doing. Therefore, these results will always belong to schools, rather than to us as an organisation. The figures included in this report show the collective summer 2018 exam results for schools in Challenge Partners in 2017–18. When compared with the national average, our schools are achieving better outcomes and progressing pupils faster, including outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

## AIM 1

Improve pupils' examination results at a rate above the national average and accelerate progress of the disadvantaged

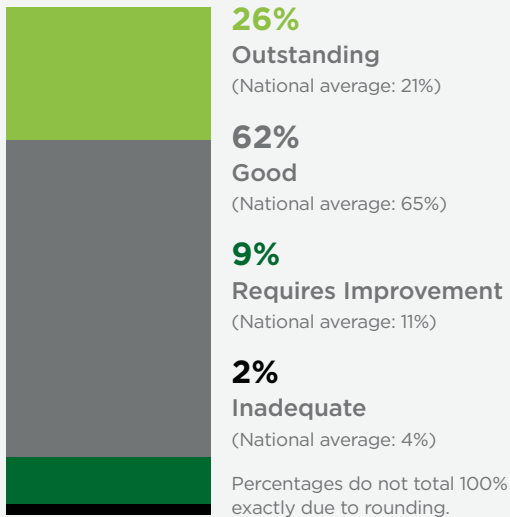
	KEY STAGE 2	KEY STAGE 4												
Our pupils attain results above the national average	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Partnership average</td> <td>66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><b>+2.0%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>National average</td> <td>64%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Expected standard reading, writing and maths</p>	Partnership average	66%	<b>+2.0%</b>		National average	64%	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Partnership average</td> <td>48.3pts</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><b>+1.1pts</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>National average</td> <td>47.2pts</td> </tr> </table> <p>Attainment 8</p>	Partnership average	48.3pts	<b>+1.1pts</b>		National average	47.2pts
Partnership average	66%													
<b>+2.0%</b>														
National average	64%													
Partnership average	48.3pts													
<b>+1.1pts</b>														
National average	47.2pts													
More of our pupils are progressing above the national average	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Reading</td> <td>+0.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td>+0.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths</td> <td>+0.5</td> </tr> </table> <p>Progress measures compared with national average</p>	Reading	+0.2	Writing	+0.4	Maths	+0.5	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Partnership average</td> <td>+0.14pts</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">20% considered 'well above average' compared to 12% of schools nationally</td> </tr> </table> <p>Progress 8 compared with national average</p>	Partnership average	+0.14pts	20% considered 'well above average' compared to 12% of schools nationally			
Reading	+0.2													
Writing	+0.4													
Maths	+0.5													
Partnership average	+0.14pts													
20% considered 'well above average' compared to 12% of schools nationally														
The gap between our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is smaller than the national average	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Partnership gap</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><b>-5%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>National gap</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Expected standards (reading/writing/maths) gap</p>	Partnership gap	15%	<b>-5%</b>		National gap	20%	<p>All figures relate to state-funded mainstream schools in England.</p> <p>Key Stage 4 figures use provisional data released in October 2018.</p> <p>Key Stage 2 figures use final revised data released in December 2018.</p> <p>Final Key Stage 4 data with breakdowns by pupil characteristics including disadvantage has not yet been published.</p>						
Partnership gap	15%													
<b>-5%</b>														
National gap	20%													

## AIM 2

### Enable all our schools to improve at a rate above the national average

We are proud of the diverse mix of schools within Challenge Partners, which includes some of the highest-performing in the country and others at an earlier stage on their journey to excellence. What unites them is their commitment to working together to improve, regardless of their starting point.

#### Challenge Partners schools



In 2017-18, Ofsted inspected 65 schools which had been part of Challenge Partners for a year or more. Here are some of the highlights:

**48%** improved their Ofsted grade compared to 34% nationally. The figure increases to **52%** for schools who have been in the Network of Excellence for at least three years.

**22%** rated Good in their previous inspection moved to Outstanding, compared to 9% nationally.

**74%** of schools rated Requires Improvement in their previous inspection moved to Good, compared to 63% nationally. The figure increases to **79%** for schools in the network for three or more years.

## AIM 3

### Create more national leaders and outstanding schools that fulfil the Teaching Schools criteria

We seek to increase the capacity of the system by supporting the accreditation of outstanding individuals, schools and practices. This enables more leaders to undertake school-to-school work and for everyone to access the available best practice.

In 2017-18, across the Network of Excellence, there were:

**38**

Teaching Schools

**943**

headteachers and senior leaders peer reviewed other schools in Challenge Partners

**31**

Network of Excellence hubs

**110**

accredited Areas of Excellence across Challenge Partners schools

**13**

Challenge the Gap clusters

**182**

leaders attended the pilots of the new Leadership Development Days

**11**

EAL delivery centres

**31**

Hub Managers running Network of Excellence hubs

**56**

National Leaders of Education (NLEs)

**34**

Senior Partners leading Challenge Partners



## AIM 4

### Develop a world-class, self-improving and sustainable system that contributes to national research and policy-making

**Our Central Team, Senior Partners and school leaders are involved in many groups, networks, boards and positions of influence across the sector.**

**These include:**

Academy Trusteeships, Member of the Education Committee at the Royal Society, Education Advisory Group member at the Sutton Trust, Chair of Trustees at the Brilliant Club, Trustees of the Brilliant Club, GLA research projects, Co-founding the Leading Women's Alliance and piloting a women-only NPQH, Member of the Ofqual Board, Member of the British Council Education Advisory Group, Member of the Centre for High Performance Education Board, Member of the National STEM Centre Advisory Group, All-Party Parliamentary Group Members, Member of the National Language Liaison Group, Headteacher Board Representatives, Members of the DFE Reference Group, Headteacher Board Representative on the interview panel for Free Schools, RSC Sub-Regional Forum Members, Chairs of Local Authority Partnership Boards, National Leaders in Education, CEO Forum Members, Chair

of the National Forum of Headteachers (Teach First), Regional Teach First Board members, Facilitators for the Prince's Teaching Institute, Consultant Headteacher for the Prince's Teaching Institute, Members of the Chartered Institute of Teaching, Members of the Chartered College of Teaching, NCETM Primary Teaching for Mastery Lead Schools, Advisory group member within the national JUSCO, Member of the Editorial Board London Grid for Learning, Director for Inspiring Leaders, Associate - Leeds Beckett University, The Leadership Research Council, Member of the Foundation for Leadership in Education, National Primary Committee of the Historical Association, External Education Expert for The Key for School Leaders, Education Advisor for Routledge Publishers, Apple Distinguished School Leader, Schools' Forum member, Headteacher Consultant for PiXL, School Governors, Leaders for National Teaching Schools and National Support Schools, Fellow of the RSA and Education Council member, Board member for WOW education, Ofsted national and regional groups, Social Mobility Panels.

# Hubs



Every school that is a member of the Network of Excellence belongs to a local area hub. Each hub has a Senior Partner and Hub Manager. The role of the Senior Partner is to establish the local area hub, to promote and champion effective local and national collaboration and improvement. The Hub Manager has responsibility to facilitate the collaboration between schools in the hub, working with them to set priorities, mobilise leaders within the schools to take advantage of opportunities both locally and nationally, and to help colleagues give and seek support from schools across the partnership.

that these priorities are addressed. To support the activities of the hub, a proportion of each school's membership fee is returned to the hub and forms a collective pot of funding to be used collaboratively to execute activities identified on the Hub Action Plan.

In 2017-18 we saw hub funding used on a range of activities including: middle leaders and teaching assistant programmes; activities designed to improve outcomes for SEND learners, closing gaps between disadvantaged and other learners and to stretch the most able students; curriculum mastery and oracy programmes; leadership programmes including improving strategic planning of leaders at all levels; developing strong monitoring and tracking systems; improving marking and feedback and more.



**“Hub network meetings have proved invaluable as we have developed relationships with other schools.”**

## Northwood School, Compton Hub

To encourage the collaboration and transparency of each hub, the Hub Manager ensures that every school is an active partner in co-creating a Hub Action Plan which sets out the common priorities across all schools in the hub. The Hub Action Plan also details the activities which each hub will undertake in addition to the Quality Assurance Review to ensure



## HUB SPOTLIGHT

## Chrysalis Hub

**C**hrysalis hub was established in March 2018 with Claremont High School Academy (CHSA) as the lead school. Since then we have continued to grow and develop. We now have six large schools within our hub and a number of other schools who have expressed an interest in joining in the next academic year. The size of our hub currently allows us to offer personalised support for our schools, using our hub funding strategically to offer training and CPD opportunities to grow and develop all schools within the hub.

We have a fully developed action plan detailing our hub priorities for the upcoming year and planned training and intervention to address these priorities. At our first hub meeting of the academic year, delegates had presentations from The Brilliant Club Conference, The Outstanding Teacher Programme, and OFSTED updates from the Pupil Premium Conference earlier in the year. These presentations were enabled through the hub funding and members of CHSA attending the conferences to then feedback information to the hub partner schools. Our agenda items at future planned meetings throughout the year will offer similar opportunities for training and development, as well as providing an excellent forum for sharing of best practice and continuing to grow and build upon outstanding practice within our schools.

Current and planned training and opportunities include: Outstanding Teacher Programme delivered by award-winning members of staff; Improving Teacher Programme; SEND training by Natalie Packer, a national expert in the field; use of assessment training from NFER; Pupil Premium Training; Developing Greater Depth Thinking; Behavioural Insights Team, delivered by external; Achievement for All; Quality Assessment training.

In addition to the above training we have also recently been successful in our bid to host two

Network of Excellence events in spring 2019.

The topics for these events are: Outstanding staff development at all levels, including through CPD and NQT training; and Achievement and Progress at KS4 in English and Maths.

We have a proven track record of outstanding delivery of both areas of the school and are delighted that we are able to offer training to schools within our own hub as well as opening up the opportunity to other schools within the Challenge Partners network.

From September 2018 we now have two members of staff who are fully qualified to deliver the Outstanding Teacher Programme through OLEVI. At Claremont we pride ourselves on our outstanding teaching and learning and have selected our Teaching and Learning lead, Ms Patel, along with our NQT programme coordinator, Ms Stavrou, to deliver the programme. Ms Patel was herself recognised for her excellence in the classroom when she was awarded the Silver Pearson Teacher Award earlier this year and we are very excited that she will be able to deliver the course to staff from a range of schools within our Challenge Partners hub.

As an Outstanding school, we were pleased to be able to join the Growing the Top – Stand-Out Schools programme offered by Challenge Partners, an invitation-only programme for schools that were awarded Outstanding in their most recent Quality Assurance Review / Ofsted inspection, has Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data above the national average. The intention of this programme is to provide exceptional schools that meet these criteria with support and challenge to continue to build upon their already excellent offering and we are looking forward to using the course to support us in continuing to grow, both as a school and as a hub within the Network of Excellence.



**“SEND is now top of the agenda! It’s enabled teachers to ask questions they did not feel confident about before. We started with the basics; establishing common terminology, encouraging a more open schedule with reduced teaching time whilst ensuring we built in a top-down SEND strategy. It’s been an overwhelmingly positive experience.”**

SENCO, Secondary School





## HUB SPOTLIGHT

## Portsmouth Hub

The Portsmouth Hub was established in 2014 and grew out of the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, led by Alison Beane OBE, NLE (Executive Director, Solent Academies Trust) and Sophie Venables (Director, Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance). The hub recognises that, by working together through Challenge Partners' Network of Excellence, we can share our collective learning and make the step change that is needed to improve standards, accelerate the progress of pupils and support system-wide improvements.

The hub is very much a partnership, owned and led by its members, who decide together how we want to shape its activities and direction. The Network of Excellence allows schools to retain their individuality whilst acknowledging that we are stronger together. By working together, the partnership allows schools to connect and share, to challenge and support. It has helped foster the moral climate for knowledge sharing between schools in disparate locations and also across different phases and leadership structures.

This openness in approach has laid the foundations for innovative programmes that aim to significantly improve the outcomes of pupils. In Portsmouth, we have just completed a year-long Strategic School Improvement Fund project that brought together 20 schools from the local area

to address the gaps in attainment and progress for SEND pupils. The project used regional and national SEND specialists to support schools in their development of SEND strategy, practice and implementation. This involved:

- Establishing a shared, whole school vision and responsibility for pupils with SEND
- SENCOs and leaders of SEND working strategically alongside class teachers to review and improve their teaching for learners with SEND
- Sharing practice in the deployment and development of teaching assistants to ensure that this resource is used efficiently and has maximum impact.

The practitioner-led, peer-review programme that the Network of Excellence operates, provided our schools with a positive and credible blueprint for school collaboration which enabled the SEND project to flourish. The national connections that come with being involved in Challenge Partners allowed us to draw on the knowledge and expertise of a wide variety of professionals from outside our locality to inform and drive the success of the project. We are looking forward to publishing the report from the project over the next couple of months.

## Collaborative hub research on maximising the impact of homework

### What was the challenge?

A vast amount of academic research on the relevance and impact of homework has been published. However, an overview of the research investigating the benefits of homework on pupil progress shows that any concrete agreement on its benefit is inconclusive. There is also evidence that suggests homework may have negative effects on learning. Therefore, as we all set homework and often stress its importance to pupils and parents, the senior leaders from the Herts and Bucks Challenge Partners hub questioned whether we were approaching homework in the right way, especially as it can be quite a divisive issue between pupils, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

### How did the hub respond?

The hub set up a joint research project into assorted homework issues during the 2017–18 academic year. We used existing expertise within the hub to help facilitate the research process, including access to the University of Cambridge's CamStar programme (Cambridge, School Teachers and Research). CamStar supports school based research by offering guidance on developing and shaping research projects, including tailored knowledge banks and advice on methodology. Moreover, the hub's teacher-researchers were visited by Dr Sue Brindley from the university, who gave advice to participants on research design and research methodology. This helped participating teacher-researchers apply good research methods and provided a rigorous evaluation process.

The aim of the project was to create a body of good practice. It was clear from initial discussions that the issues around homework were an area worthy of investigation, not least how the burden of workload can be managed whilst maintaining the best student outcomes. Importantly, the project emphasised by the need to understand homework in our own contexts, particularly working towards a greater understanding of how the type of

homework activities we are setting impacts on our own pupils' progress. The project also sought to canvass the views of our pupils, parents and teachers.

### What were the outcomes?

The researchers' findings were varied and quite detailed, but some common themes were clear. These included the importance of:

- Setting work that's relevant: set 'practice' or 'preparation' homework activities, not 'creative' or 'extended project work'. Homework should focus on either practice of previously taught knowledge or preparation for the next lesson through the learning of appropriate content.
- Checking the homework with the pupils in class after completion: this offers a chance to review the key concepts, correct misunderstandings and better embed the work completed to memory. Importantly, any preparation work should involve some form of low stakes testing or evidencing.
- Making sure students can complete the homework; pitch it to a student's age and ability as confusion, stress and anxiety will hinder their learning. A higher chance of success will increase confidence ahead of more challenging work in class.
- Making sure it is not too long: otherwise it will affect the pupils' well-being as well as their ability to complete other homework. Overall, pupils should have 1.5 to 2.5 hours of homework a night. Ideally, subjects should be limited to either 20- or 30-minute activities.
- Getting parents involved: without this homework can become a source of conflict between pupils and parents.

---

For more findings and details of the research process, please visit the hub's research website <https://homeworkresearchproject.wordpress.com>

# Challenge Partners and ImpactEd

ImpactEd is a not-for-profit organisation working in collaboration with Challenge Partners to support schools in understanding and evaluating the impact of the programmes they run. The case studies below profile projects developed by two schools within the network, focused on using impact evaluation to enhance understanding of what is working best for their pupils.



## Understanding the impact of a resilience programme

A city special school based in Leicester, Keyham Lodge School has been running a resilience focused enrichment programme since March 2018. The programme is targeted at 50 to 60 higher attaining students across KS2/3 who are eligible for pupil premium, have low levels of resilience linked to mental health and learning difficulties, or are from areas in the city identified as deprived or subject to high levels of crime. The programme provides pupils with a weekly opportunity to practice and succeed in a structured series of challenges, ranging from trail biking to joining the school band.

Having put the focus on resilience firmly at the heart of its curriculum and broader offer, Keyham began working collaboratively with ImpactEd to ensure the programme was well evaluated, so that it could be as effective as possible in improving outcomes for pupils.

### How is this working?

As a programme that is focused on developing personal capabilities, the main outcome measures that were considered were:

- Self-efficacy (pupils' perception of their ability to achieve tasks)
- Grit (ability to persist, to keep trying on difficult goals)
- Motivation (intrinsic interest in activities, seeing the value of effort).



Keyham made use of academically validated questionnaire measures identified by ImpactEd's research team for each of these three outcome areas. Pupils responded to these questionnaires before and after the programme. Pupils were also mapped to activities based on their scores from the pre-test, and were asked to complete reflective journals. Staff were actively involved in the evaluation and reviewed learning objectives and outcomes with pupils.

### What impact are we finding?

Results from the first term show small positive increases across both self-efficacy and motivation, with an average increase of 3.8% between pre and post. (Grit scores were stable.) Given that validated measures tend not to show large or dramatic increases, the positive results at an early stage are highly promising.

Our next steps will involve running the evaluation with a larger number of pupils to look for statistically significant results and benchmarking Keyham's results against other schools with a similar profile. The aspiration is that as the programme is continued, these positive early signs result in further future improvement.

## Using evaluation to plan for further impact

A three-form entry Church of England school in Evesham, Bengeworth CE Primary Academy has a long-standing commitment to high-quality inclusive practice. They are holders of the Inclusion Quality Mark and inclusion is an identified Area of Excellence in their QA Reviews.

As part of this focus, Bengeworth deliver a number of well-established programmes focusing on a full range of academic, social and emotional outcomes for pupils. With a view to sustaining impact, they were keen to review their evaluation practice to ensure their approach is evidence-informed.

### How is this working?

Bengeworth initially identified a number of key initiatives of particular importance to the school. In the first half-term of collaboration, this focused on Talkabout, a programme developing self-awareness and social skills, and Top Dog, an eight-week intervention using a card-based personality game to encourage pupils' metacognition and self-reflection on their strengths and weaknesses in learning.

The school had already made use of a number of methods to assess impact, including an in-built assessment tool used as part of Talkabout, and the COMA scale for Top Dog. However, the use of bespoke assessment measures meant comparing impact between programmes was challenging.



They were also keen to explore impact in context, and consider broader outcomes such as well-being.

The first step was to identify the outcomes that were expected to improve immediately after the programmes. Bengeworth identified well-being and metacognition as focuses, and baselines were conducted at the beginning of the academic year using ImpactEd's digital platform. ImpactEd will also be considering results in relation to long-term academic achievement, including the use of appropriate control groups, and looking at other programmes such as Rapid Read using standardised reading ages.

### How is this developing?

While the collaboration is still at an early stage, initial signs are promising. We are looking to see improvements in a few key areas:

- Better ability to compare impact between programmes by using standardised measures
- Even greater consistency across programmes in embedding an evaluation approach
- Reduction of teacher workload in inputting and analysing data
- Ultimately, by enabling better identification of what is working in context, evaluation is intended to support high-quality decision making to improve outcomes for pupils.

# Meet the team

---

## PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRAMMES

---



**Laura Lewis-Williams**  
Director of Partnership  
and Programmes

“It is a privilege to have the opportunity to work with our network of schools who are unequivocal in their belief that effective collaboration between schools will lead to an excellent education system for all children.”

---

## PARTNERSHIP

---



**Jonathan Goggs**  
Partnership Manager

“I love the opportunity to work with passionate and dedicated practitioners across the country, all of whom, are working to significantly improve the life chances of young people.”



**Tamsin Mowat**  
Partnership Manager

“Working for Challenge Partners gives me a sense of purpose and the ability to support others to make a difference to the lives of many children across the country.”



**Nicola Thomas**  
Associate Partnership Manger

“As a former primary school teacher, I’m passionate about equality in education and young people’s futures.”



**Aziz Ziriati**  
Associate Partnership Manager

“I am fascinated with the innovation that happens in schools and inspired by the passion of our partners to improve outcomes for all pupils.”

---

## PROGRAMMES

---



**Hannah Cornell**  
Programmes Manager

“What’s so exciting about being at Challenge Partners is seeing the power of the network in action. Practitioners leading change, being innovative and shaping the system to best support their students. It’s exciting stuff!”



**Roisin Killick**  
Programme Lead

“I was attracted by the moral purpose of the organisation and specifically the programmes I work on, directly tackling disadvantage. I thoroughly enjoy the opportunities I get to visit schools across the country and see the amazing teaching that is happening in a variety of challenging contexts.”



**Lottie Hayes**  
Programme Lead,  
Getting Ahead London

“I am passionate about education and how schools can positively impact all young people. I really enjoy working in an organisation that supports schools with this.”



**Liz Smissen**  
Pilot Programme Manager

“I am both qualified in and passionate about Education and knowledge management, and Challenge Partners provides the unique opportunity to bring these skills to bear in a meaningful way.”



**Dr Kate Chhatwal**  
CEO

“I love working with such a diverse range of leaders across England, all committed to the same cause of improvement through challenge and collaboration. Getting out to visit their schools and MATs is a real privilege.”



**Dame Sue John**  
Executive Director

“As a founding member of Challenge Partners I remain passionate about my strongly held belief that hard-edged collaboration will drive up educational performance and that the power of networking is vital in our global world. Challenge Partners is able to bring together like-minded professionals committed to improving the life chances of all pupils.”

## QA REVIEW



**Grace Hiorns**  
Programme Lead, QA Review

“I have worked for Challenge Partners for two years, and really believe in the power of effective collaboration and sharing best practice and how this can help us move towards our mission of reducing educational inequality and improving pupils’ outcomes.”



**Loren Richardson-Stevens**  
Programme Coordinator (QAR)

“I find it incredibly motivating to know that the work we do at Challenge Partners has such a positive impact on pupil outcomes within our schools.”



**Aliya Hasnain**  
Programme Coordinator (QAR)

“I feel so privileged to work in an organisation that focuses on continuous improvement in schools.”



**Sara Gaines**  
Head of Communications and Engagement

“I strongly support our mission and am committed to sharing the message that collaboration is key to ensuring all children benefit from the collective wisdom in our schools.”



**Nick Olive**  
Head of Innovation

“My passion is helping young people to realise their potential and my role exists to extend our reach and our long-term relationship with schools to improve the life chances of all students.”



**Amy Suddards**  
Data, Impact and Evaluation Manager

“Having just joined the team, I am looking forward to capturing and sharing the impact of the fantastic work our schools and practitioners engage in, and the results it has for young people.”

## FINANCE AND OPERATIONS



**Dr Yvonne Ndifor**  
Head of Finance and Operations

“My interest in transformative social change is embodied in our mission, values and objectives.”



**Belal Ahmed**  
Finance and Operations Assistant

“My colleagues are friendly and dynamic which makes for a fantastic working environment.”



**Ria Farrell**  
Executive and Office Assistant

“Both my parents are teachers, so I have some anecdotal insight into the challenges faced by schools and the sector. I’m really happy to support my colleagues in the brilliant work they do.”

# Schools participating in our programmes

## Challenge the Gap

Cluster	Participating schools
Compton	Northwood School Plumstead Manor School Bishop Challoner Catholic Federation of Schools The Archer Academy
Essex	Hadleigh Junior School Hamford Primary Academy Alton Park Junior School The Deanes
Greenwich	Rockliffe Manor Primary School Goresbrook School Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College Upton Primary School Foxfield Primary School Woodhill Primary School Chislehurst School for Girls
Hastings	St Leonards Academy Burgess Hill Academy Hastings Academy Folkestone Academy Rye College
Herts and Bucks	St Michaels Catholic High School The Reach Free School Kempston Academy Chancellor's School Sir John Lawes School Watford Grammar School for Boys
Portsmouth 1	Arundel Court Primary Academy Beacon View Primary Academy Northern Parade Junior School St Paul's RC Primary School The Victory Primary School Langstone Junior Academy
Portsmouth 2	Ark Ayrton Primary Academy Ark Dickens Primary Academy Cottage Grove Primary School Isambard Brunel Junior School Mayfield School



Cluster	Participating schools
Portsmouth 3	Springfield School Admiral Lord Nelson School Miltoncross Academy Portsmouth Academy Priory School Redwood Park Academy Trafalgar School
Plymouth	Notre Dame Plymstock School Plympton Academy Dunstone Primary School All Saints Academy
Southwark 1	Camelot Primary School Charles Dickens Primary School Dulwich Hamlet Junior School Friars Primary School St John's & St Clement's Primary School The Belham Primary School Oliver Goldsmith Primary School
Southwark 2	Alfred Salter Primary School Bacon's College Brunswick Park Primary School Robert Browning Primary School St Peter's Primary School Heber Primary School
Somerset Primary	Heron's Moor Academy Locking Primary School Birchfield Community Primary School Manor Court Community Primary School Elmhurst Junior School St Michael's Academy West Monkton Church of England Primary School Rockwell Green Primary School
Somerset Secondary	The Taunton Academy Chilton Trinity School The Blue School, Wells Nailsea School Heathfield Community School



# EAL in the Mainstream Classroom

## Control schools

Southgate School  
 The de Ferrers Academy  
 Oasis Academy Oldham  
 Wood Green Academy  
 Swanshurst School  
 The Stockwood Park Academy  
 Handsworth Grange Community Sports College  
 Parkwood Academy  
 Hamstead Hall Academy  
 Oakwood High School  
 Woking High School  
 Cotham School  
 Thornhill School  
 Lyng Hall School  
 Cantell School  
 Oasis Academy Lister Park  
 Queen Katharine Academy  
 St Edmund's Catholic School  
 Slough and Eton Church of England Business and Enterprise College  
 Orchard School Bristol  
 Putteridge High School  
 Stretford High School  
 Anglo European School  
 Birches Head Academy  
 Ipswich Academy  
 Reach Academy Feltham  
 Fir Vale School  
 North Birmingham Academy  
 Hammersmith Academy  
 The Compton School  
 West Walsall E-ACT Academy  
 Hall Green School  
 Aldersley High School



## Intervention schools

Delivery centre	Schools
Challney High School for Boys, Luton	Malcolm Arnold Academy Biddenham International School and Sports College Nicholas Breakspeare Catholic School
George Spencer Academy (in partnership with Bluecoat Academy and Djanogly Academy), Nottingham	Derby Moor Community School
King Egbert School (in partnership with Newfield School), Sheffield	Cedar Mount Academy Firth Park Academy Newland School for Girls The Oldham Academy North
Lampton	Park High School Northolt High School Whitefield School Barnhill Community High School Greig City Academy
Ninestiles, An Academy, Birmingham	Erdington Academy Tile Cross Academy Moseley School and Sixth Form George Dixon Academy Washwood Heath Academy
Rushey Mead Academy, Leicester	New College Leicester Soar Valley College
Silverdale School, Sheffield	All Saints Catholic High School Ladybridge High School King's Leadership Academy Liverpool St Cuthbert's Catholic High School King Edward VII
St Edmund's Catholic School, Portsmouth	St George Catholic College Fernhill School Avonbourne International Business and Enterprise MAT
St Matthias School, Wolverhampton, and The Earls High, Dudley	The King's Church of England School Bristnall Hall Academy Colton Hills Community School Joseph Leckie Academy
Swanlea School, East London	Duke's Aldridge Academy Dartford Grammar School for Girls Plasht School Harrow High School
Swindon Teaching School, Swindon	Fairfield High School

## Getting Ahead London

Bower Park Academy  
 Midfield Campus – Bromley Trust Academy  
 Chislehurst School for Girls  
 Coopers Lane Primary School  
 Eastbury Community School  
 Edith Neville Primary School  
 Edmund Waller Primary School  
 Fairlawn Primary school  
 Fleet Primary School  
 Foxfield Primary School  
 Frederick Bremer School  
 Gifford Primary School  
 Glebe School  
 Globe Academy  
 Granton Primary School  
 Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy  
 Hampstead School  
 Harris Academy South Norwood  
 Haslemere Primary School  
 Heartlands High School  
 Highlands Primary School  
 Horn Park Primary School  
 Invicta Primary School  
 Kingsbury Green Primary School  
 Kingsford Community School  
 Lucas Vale Primary School  
 Manorfield Primary School  
 Midfield Primary School  
 Mulgrave Primary School  
 Netley Primary School & Centre for Autism  
 Newman Catholic College  
 Nightingale Academy  
 Oaklands Primary Academy  
 Orchard Park High School  
 Park High School  
 Raynes Park High School  
 Richard Cloudesley School  
 Richmond Park Academy  
 Rockliffe Manor  
 Rutlish School  
 Salisbury Primary School  
 St John the Baptist, Hoxton  
 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
 Sudbury Primary School  
 The Bridge London Trust  
 The Charter School  
 The Stonebridge School  
 The UCL Academy  
 The Uruline Academy Ilford  
 Trinity Academy  
 Villiers High School  
 Waldegrave School  
 Wimbledon College



## Growing the Top – Stand-Out Schools

St Clement Danes School  
 Claremont High School  
 Baylis Court School  
 Northwood School  
 Hayes School  
 Chesham Grammar School  
 Brentside High School  
 Mulberry School for Girls  
 Rushey Mead Academy  
 St Albans Girls' School  
 Royal Wootton Bassett Academy  
 Kingsbridge Community College  
 Langley Park School for Boys  
 Bosworth Academy  
 Mulberry Academy Shoreditch  
 The Compton School  
 The Charter School  
 Sir Christopher Hatton Academy  
 Wren Academy  
 Lilian Baylis Technology School  
 Aylesbury Grammar School







John Keats Primary School  
391 Rotherhithe New Road  
London SE16 3FN

[www.challengepartners.org](http://www.challengepartners.org)