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Welcome from Roger Pope CBE

Associate & Strategic Leader of Teaching & Research Schools | Education South West

It is clear that the system is not working: outcomes are poor, children and parents experience the system badly and the funding is unsustainable.

If change is to be made, a key question is how can schools spend the money more effectively and still give parents confidence that the needs of their children will be met?

How can we build capacity, confidence, and skills in schools so that meeting the needs of most children through universal provision becomes more of the norm?

At the moment we have a model which diagnoses the needs of individuals to a level of detail that we cannot afford to meet, and moreover on a deficit model so that funding depends on proving what children cannot do, rather than what they can.

There are implications for teacher training and development, accountability systems, and local partnership working.

It is easy to knock Brian and Ted.

They ran the inclusion unit at a school where I once worked. It was a hut on the edge of the site where they taught literacy and the basic skills of life, like how to sweep the paths. Brian and Ted thought they were doing their best by the boys (mostly boys). Brian's aspiration was that they would be able to read the Sun during a tea break without embarrassment. His was a model of inclusion in the workplace. But my goodness me, what a lot was also being excluded.

Inclusion is once more under the spotlight. Our Secretary of State has it as a major priority for the Government. An Expert Group, under the chair of Tom Rees who is a Trust CEO, has been appointed to make recommendations.

Few think the current system is working. Outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs are generally poor. Parental experience of the system is often poor. We are raising expectations of a level of individual provision that we simply cannot as a system afford.

At the same time, teachers are worried about how they can meet the needs of all children in a class if we pivot towards greater universal provision.

As ever, it is a question of leadership. We need to build the confidence of staff and equip them to meet the needs of most children through universal provision. That means leadership that is visionary and brave. Management that can see how existing resources can be more effectively re-allocated. Resilience in convincing parents, who are also voters, that there is a better way. Investment in training that starts with ITT.

A lot depends on that leadership coming from Government. We can start the change now.

Do you view your every action in school through the lens of inclusion?

Tes Trusts in Education Networking & CPD Event

“One of those gnarly topics that can cause huge amounts of passion and annoyance” was how Education South West (ESW) CEO, Matthew Shanks described the issue of behaviour in school, when he was invited to be part of an expert panel at a Tes Trusts in Education networking and CPD event last month.



Matthew shared his South West perspective on the “gnarly topic” of classroom behaviour at this open-ticketed event on the morning on Tuesday 4 March 2025 before a live audience of nearly 90 at Birmingham City Council House, home of Birmingham City Council.

Chaired by Tes Editor, Jon Severs, fellow expert panellists from across the country included Gail Brown, CEO / Executive Headteacher at Ebor Academy Trust, Keziah Featherstone, Executive Headteacher of The Mercian Trust and also co-founder and trustee of WomenEd and co-chair of HTRT, closer to home, Rob Haring, CEO of Westcountry Schools Trust and Lyndsay Harris Director of Pastoral and Inclusion at Ark Schools.

The panel were tasked with exploring how schools can create a more consistent approach to behaviour, tackling policy implementation, and the most common behaviour challenges in school; as well as teacher confidence, and the balance between sanctions.

What is working, what is changing, and why behaviour remains one of the most debated topics in education.

Each Trust was asked one thing they have done that has had a significant impact on behaviour and to explain why. As well as thinking aloud, it was a useful exercise to swap notes and to reflect on practice in their own School (s) /Multi Academy Trust - as you will perhaps be doing as you read this report.

Speaking for ESW, Matthew started with the positive premise. The Trust has high expectations of all children and are proud of the behaviour in their schools with a firm focus on outcomes and accountability, and schools are supported to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Factually, suspensions and permanent exclusions remain below the national average and ESW do not use a rigid, one-size fits all model to tackle the challenges in recent years, and have moved away from more strident and binary behaviour systems. Teachers value the children as individuals and schools are informed of each child's USP at both primary and secondary. That said, Matthew recognises that standardised systems in place across School (s)/Trusts can be effective in encouraging respect, enjoyment and importantly, fun for children.

The Trust works on the premise that children are children. The adults in school might have greater experience and wisdom, but that must come with the responsibility to act as a role model for good behaviour [...] whom it is anticipated, will behave (yes!).

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Motivated by the Spring Leadership Forum

“Successful motivation is tied to life, survival and thriving.”

The build-up to the Spring Leadership Forum last month was already motivating before we even got started with the speakers.

A sizeable sign-up of keen delegates from across our Teaching School Hubs, including a number current and past LSSW/SWIFT NPQs Programme Members. Anticipation was stirred. Or you might say, very motivated.

Keynote speaker, Peps Mccrea, enthused us with his presentation on The Science of Motivation that drew on his experience as a teacher, teacher trainer, Director of Education at Steplab and educational researcher. With his characteristic positive persona, Peps provided an engaging overview of the evidence-based strategies that can significantly enhance student motivation in classrooms and schools.

From conversations with leaders and teachers around the country, Peps is increasingly seeing motivation to be a fundamental part and challenge of the school system. It is fair to say that some aspects of motivation are intuitive, but some are not always obvious. The purpose of his presentation was to dig deeper to provide us with a clearer understanding of how motivation works and to equip us with strategies that reflect the attention and effort students put into their class sessions.

Peps invited us to consider:

- What is your biggest motivation challenge?
- Have you a particular student or a whole class who you wish were more motivated?
- If you are a senior leader, have you a member of staff whom you wish were more motivated.
- Or is it a motivational issue that you face yourself?

It is important to understand that motivation is a system for allocating attention. We all know the busy world we live in and finding headspace can be tricky in a constantly buzzing world. Yet we can only think about a very small number of things at once and our brain needs a way of thinking about or considering all of these different aspects demanding our attention. Prioritising and allocating our precious attention is essential in our motivation system that triages these opportunities.

Context-specific motivation varies significantly depending on the context and task at hand, which means that you can influence motivation by altering the learning environment.

Motivation is not a fixed character trait, but a dynamic response to the environment and this perspective shifts the focus from labelling students as “motivated” or “unmotivated” to recognising the situational factors that influence their motivation levels. Unconscious processes are at work given much of the motivation system operates unconsciously.



Reports by Jude Baylis, SWIFT Executive Assistant
[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

SWIFT 2025 Summer Conference | on your doorstep!

Designed with you in mind to provide a transformative day of learning, collaboration, and inspiration – and all on your doorstep. The 2025 Summer Conference is on **Thursday 19 June 2025** in-person at the Future Skills Centre in Exeter.



Thinking about inspiring and relevant issues of the day, we have a motivating line-up of speakers.

Artificial Intelligence | Trust Leadership | Impact on Pupil Outcomes | Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | Pupil, Parent and Staff Engagement | DfE South West Regions Group.



Dan Fitzpatrick | The AI Educator and Author | Leadership in the Future - Educational Strategy in the AI Era



Lauren Rowles MBE | Paralympic rowing champion and inspirational speaker | Mental Resilience and Overcoming Adversity



Professor Rob Coe | Senior Associate, Education Endowment Foundation | What makes the biggest impact on pupil outcomes?



Bennie Kara | Co-Founder of Diverse Educators and author | Embedding Diversity in the Curriculum



Cassie Buchanan OBE | CEO of The Charter Schools Educational Trust | Trust Leadership



Jessica Trahar | Deputy Director, South West Regions Group | Update from the Department for Education SW Group



Professor John Jerrim | Education and Social Statistics, UCL | Improving Outcomes for High Achieving Children from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds



Krisha Gandhi and Caroline Leigh | Head of Primary & Deputy Head of Campus, Assistant Head at The Maynard School | DEIB Best Practice in the South West



Nick Wakeling | Director of Colyton Foundation | Improving Outcomes for High Achieving Children from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds



Stephanie Hamilton | Director of The Engagement Platform (Part of ImpactEd) | Research around Pupil, Parent and Staff Engagement

Sponsors



- Spend the day networking in-person with like-minded colleagues.
- Refresh your thinking with professional development that counts.
- Take time out of your normal routine.
- Enjoy lunch provided by local catering gurus, Goosemoor Educatering.
- Be part of the conversation.

Ticket price | SWIFT Members £100 and Other Colleagues £150.

#SWIFTConf25

REGISTER YOUR PLACE [HERE](#) AND FIND MORE INFORMATION [HERE](#)

Find out more about SWIFT and our partners [here](#) | 3

Interview with Gary Chown, CEO of The Harbour Schools Partnership Multi Academy Trust



“I would like to see improvements in how the system connects. I think some MATs are doing well and working in effective partnerships and I am hopeful that we could deepen this partnership and build a more architecturally responsible legacy.”

This is an auspicious week.

In fact, a very auspicious first three days for 36 SWIFT Member schools and 1700 staff within our Colyton and Kingsbridge Teaching School Hubs region.

Earlier this week, on Tuesday 1 April 2025, Tarka and Ventrus - two of our esteemed Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) officially merged to become The Harbour Schools Partnership.

Their logo says it all, with the lighthouse as a beacon and a guiding light across the surrounding area.

The new CEO is Gary Chown, one of the most experienced Trust Leaders in the South West, and a Trust CEO for the last 14 years with Ventrus.

Building on his experience, Gary is committed to partnership working and system leadership and has worked across the South West as an Education Advisor for the Department for Education and also as an Ofsted inspector.

Gary works in a range of partnerships beyond the Trust, locally, regionally and nationally and has extensive school leadership experience and a strong, proven track record of leading school improvement.

The timing was clearly perfect to interview Gary about his reflections as a Trust Leader.

1. What have you found to be most personally rewarding in your position to date as CEO of a leading Multi Academy Trust (MAT) in our region?

When I became a Head, I soon realised how isolating and isolated the system is around leadership and how schools, at that time, were almost competing with each other, which did not make sense to me, as someone who had come from business. I have always been driven by forming partnerships and relationships that help people to do their job better.

So, when I am in a room with all our 40 Trust Heads together and you can feel the energy, and see the partnerships and genuine connections they are making, both personally and professionally, that helps them to do their job, this is very rewarding for me and makes me feel that we are doing something well.

2. How has working with SWIFT Colyton and Kingsbridge Teaching School Hubs benefitted Ventrus Multi Academy Trust to date?

I think we have got a really good partnership with SWIFT, because it gives us that opportunity to work with other MATs and leaders. When you lead any organisation, I think there is a danger, that although you are part of something big, you can still become isolated as a single organisation and it is that connection and role that SWIFT plays in bringing together organisations that is a real strength. I love the way that, in particular Martin Smith (Executive Director), constantly positions the importance of partnership.

3. What is your number one priority in this first week of the newly merged Tarka and Ventrus MATs as The Harbour Schools Partnership?

Except it does not feel like a first week, because we have been working in preparation for this day for the past 14 months!

You could say therefore, it is business as usual, because we have been working in a revised school improvement model and running as one Trust for seven months with our Trust Heads meeting together. All the Senior Team are appointed and everyone knows where they fit in.

But to the question of the number one priority in week 1. One of my roles in the first week will be meeting and talking to some of the key players partly to say “we’ve done it!” We are now over the line and we are formally one Trust together, but also to refocus our efforts on our next steps.

I will be making sure that I recognise and reflect with senior colleagues and thank them for their work and check in with them to make sure those systems launched in this first week are embedding well and teams are settled.

4. What do you consider to be the most significant challenges currently facing Schools and Trusts?

The absolute obvious answer is financial challenges.

We have not had any real increase in funding and yet costs are spiralling in all areas, on top of that, Devon has got it particularly tough in terms of comparisons to the national picture, which also includes difficulty with recruitment in some areas. A corollary challenge for Devon and finances is that we have falling birth rates in many areas, which obviously reduces funding levels. To maintain a healthy organisation requires a lot of agility and careful thinking and planning.

Another major challenge for us as school leaders is mental health challenges within our schools and the number of children who are genuinely struggling with the demands of modern life.



READ THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH GARY CHOWN [HERE](#)
FIND OUT ABOUT THE HARBOUR SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP [HERE](#)

Deployment of Teaching Assistants | New Edition of EEF's Guidance

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have published a new edition of their guidance on Teaching Assistants. Built on a comprehensive review of the evidence base, the report offers five practical recommendations to support school leaders to deploy effectively their teaching assistants.

Click on the image below to find out more:



New updated Guidance from the EEF, Deployment of

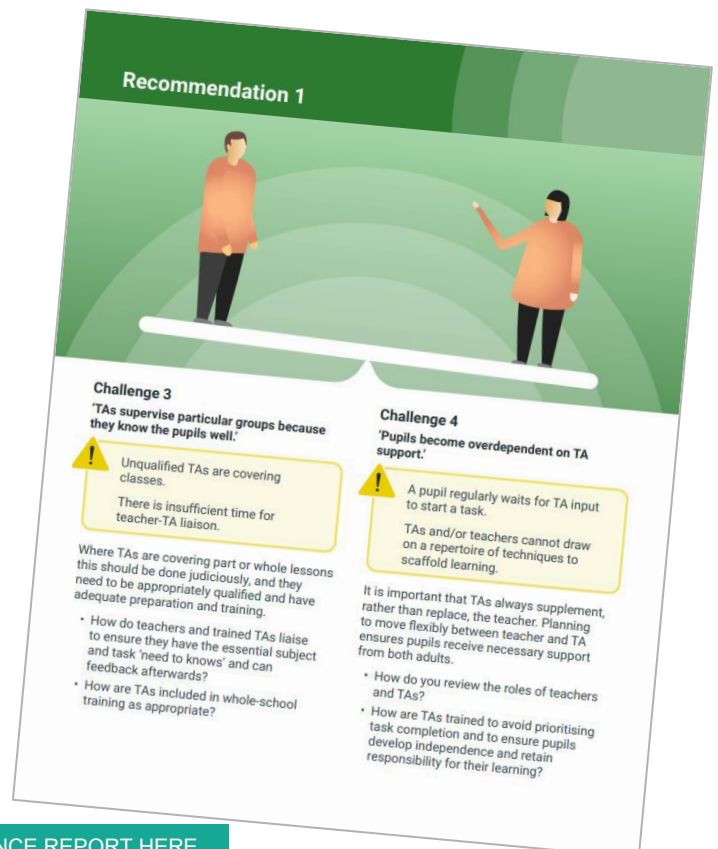
The Recommendations

1. Deploy Teaching Assistants (TAs) in ways that enable all pupils to access high-quality teaching.
2. Deploy TAs to scaffold learning and to develop pupils' independence.
3. Deploy TAs to deliver well chosen, evidence based, structured interventions where appropriate.
4. Prepare and train staff around effective TA deployment.
5. Engage all staff in the process of implementing effective TA deployment.



The guidance also contains tools and practical strategies to help illustrate how you can put the recommendations to use in your school.

We hope this guidance supports you to deploy Teaching Assistants carefully and strategically, so that all pupils, regardless of their background, are given the right support to thrive.



FIND THE DEPLOYMENT OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS EEF GUIDANCE REPORT [HERE](#)
 READ MORE ABOUT DEVON RESEARCH SCHOOL [HERE](#)

Guidance on the Use of Generative AI in MATs and Schools with SchoolPro TLC

Have you embarked yet on your Artificial Intelligence (AI) journey?



The use of AI in schools is rapidly growing, offering numerous benefits, such as enhanced efficiency, personalised learning, and improved decision-making. However, AI also presents challenges, including Data Protection risks, ethical considerations, the risk of bias, and concerns over transparency. Given the rapid advancements in AI and the growing reliance on these technologies in education, it is crucial for MATs and schools to establish clear policies that balance innovation with safeguarding concerns.

Our sponsor, SchoolPro TLC provides some helpful guidance here and a framework for the responsible use of AI in schools, ensuring compliance with UK GDPR, recommendations from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Department for Education (DfE), and guidance from Ofsted.

What is Generative AI?

Generative AI refers to AI systems that can create new content, such as text, images, video or audio. Unlike traditional AI, which follows explicit programming to complete specific tasks, generative AI uses machine learning to create original outputs from input data.

The UK Government and the ICO define AI as technology that mimics cognitive functions associated with human intelligence, such as learning and problem-solving. AI is increasingly used in MATs and schools for both educational and administrative purposes, raising questions about responsible implementation, data security and the ethical implications of its use.

Open vs Closed AI Systems

Understanding the distinction between **open** and **closed** AI systems is essential when assessing risk and implementing AI within educational settings:

- **Open AI Systems** | These include publicly available AI models (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini) that continuously learn from user inputs. They may store, share, or learn from the information entered, including personal or sensitive data. Schools should avoid entering identifiable information into these tools to protect personal and special category data.
- **Closed AI Systems** | These are proprietary AI solutions controlled by an organisation (e.g., school-specific AI tools integrated into a school's Learning Management System). Closed systems offer greater security and compliance as external parties cannot access the data input. If a school uses closed AI tools to process personal data, this must be included in the school's privacy notice.

Can Open AI Systems Be Configured as Closed?

Some AI tools, such as Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and other cloud-based AI models, are generally considered open AI systems by default. However, it is possible that they can be configured to function as closed systems depending on their settings and the environment in which they are deployed.

For example, within a Google Workspace for Education environment, Google Gemini can be configured to:

- Operate within a restricted school domain, preventing data from being shared externally.
- Be managed through Google Admin Console, where IT teams can disable data collection and adjust privacy settings.
- Restrict AI usage to pre-approved applications, ensuring compliance with school policies.

In such cases, an AI tool that is generally open in a public setting may be functionally closed within a well-managed, restricted environment. Schools should consult their IT lead or Data Protection Officer (DPO) to determine whether an AI tool is configured to meet data protection requirements before use.

MATs and schools should assess AI applications before use to determine their suitability based on these classifications and apply appropriate safeguards, such as data minimisation and access controls.

By Soton Soleye and Ben Craig, SchoolPro TLC



Quality Service



Cost Effective



Eco Friendly



Family First

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI IN MATS AND SCHOOLS [HERE](#)
FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SCHOOLPRO TLC SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS [HERE](#) AND CONTACT [HERE](#)

About Us

SWIFT is built on a partnership model of Colyton and Kingsbridge Teaching School Hubs; Teaching Alliances; local teacher training providers; Multi Academy Trusts; Kingsbridge Research School, Curriculum Hubs; Devon Schools Leadership Service; Teach First, The National Institute of Teaching and the Chartered College of Teaching.

By creating a strong, mature partnership, SWIFT acts as a multiplier within the education system, meaning we are much more than the sum of our parts. By working together in the spirit of mutual support and towards common goals we can make this a reality. The more than principle is enshrined in our logo, which is a stylised more than sign. >

We have a clear vision: to be a trusted partner for schools. We are guided by a set of values that ensure we support teachers and leaders to improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people, especially disadvantaged groups. To achieve this vision in accordance with our values, we have developed clear aims that guide our activities, and a coherent theory of change to show how the issues facing schools, our activity and our aims all line up.

Keeping in Contact

You have received this newsletter because you are currently one of our Colyton and Kingsbridge Teaching School Hubs' Schools and Partners and/or you have asked to be added to our mailing list.

If we have not got your preferred email address correct, or should you wish to unsubscribe, then please email SWIFT Executive Assistant, Jude Baylis | Jude.Baylis@sw-ift.org.uk

Connect with us on our socials for more updates and links to offers and news from our partners

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ONVU Learning on Tech Enabled Collaboration



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: Engage in collaborative learning opportunities with other educators using ONVU Learning. Share best practices, discuss challenges, and support each other in your professional growth.



SELF-REFLECTION: Before sharing the video, watch it yourself and note areas where you think you did well and areas where you see room for improvement. This self-reflection is a crucial part of the learning process.



PEER/CO-REFLECTION: Share the video with a trusted colleague or mentor who can provide constructive feedback. They can reflect on your lesson and offer insights from a different perspective.



INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING SESSIONS: Schedule regular coaching sessions with an instructional coach. During these sessions, review the recorded lesson together, discuss the feedback, and set specific goals for improvement.



Action Plan: Develop an action plan based on the feedback and coaching sessions. This plan should include specific strategies and techniques to implement in future lessons.



FOLLOW-UP: Record subsequent lessons to track your progress. This can be ongoing cycle of self reflection, feedback, and coaching helps ensure continuous improvement.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ONVU LEARNING [HERE](#) | CONTACT [HERE](#)
YOU CAN SEE THE PRESENTATION BY VICE PRESIDENT, MATT TIPLIN AT THE SWIFT SPRING LEADERSHIP FORUM [HERE](#)



Exeter Supply Partnership Updates

Are you looking for inspiration, practical tips, or the latest ESP news?

We invite you to look at the ESP blog, which has lots of helpful top tips and advice on supply teaching, and provides an insight into what working with ESP is like, plus updates on all things ESP.

You will find topics such as:

- [How supply teaching can unlock the door to permanent roles.](#)
- [ESP plans to bring their ethos to North Devon.](#)
- [Application and interview tips.](#)

You can also stay up-to-date by connecting with ESP on social media. Link to [@ExeterSupply](#) on Facebook, LinkedIn and X.



Supply Teaching: Unlocking doors to permanent roles

For many educators, supply teaching offers the best of both worlds—the flexibility to choose placements while gaining valuable experience in different schools. But beyond the immediate benefits, supply teaching can also be a powerful pathway to securing a permanent role.

At ESP, we see first-hand how supply teaching provides opportunities for educators to showcase their skills, build relationships with schools, and step into long-term employment. Many schools look to their trusted supply teachers when hiring, making it an excellent way to transition into a permanent position while maintaining flexibility along the way.

The bridge to permanent teaching roles

One of the biggest advantages of supply teaching is the exposure it provides to different schools, year groups, and teaching environments...

Exeter Supply Partnership works with Teachers and Teaching Assistants who are passionate about education and who wish to make a difference, however long or short their assignment with the school.

Benefit from the ESP not-for-profit ethos and be part of a service that is more than supply cover.

You can find out more below if you are thinking about supply teaching to suit your situation; or if you are a school and/or Multi Academy Trust who wish to sign-up to register for the ESP supply and recruitment service.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL NOW!](#)

FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EXETER SUPPLY PARTNERSHIP [HERE](#) | CONTACT [HERE](#) | PHONE 01392 927171 OPTION 1

Educatering Complete School Catering

Educatering offers a complete catering solution for schools using the best in locally sourced, restaurant quality products to provide exciting, child-led, nutritionally balanced meals.

Highest quality | Fresh produce | Locally sourced | Compliant with current legislation

Menus and Meals

As well as the best produce, Educatering also provide two or three-week rolling menus as they believe the best way to maximise the uptake in school meals, other than by providing better produce, is by creating exciting and nutritional meals for children to enjoy.

Menus can be tailored to remove any meals that children might not favour in your school and they are always keen to hear pupil and staff feedback. Menus are updated termly or twice a year based on your preferences to move with the seasons and allowing the inclusion of seasonal local produce.

Allergens

By buying all your food from Educatering, they can track and monitor allergens on the products used in your school, which are clearly visible in both the recipe books and the allergen charts.

For children who have severe allergies related to food, specific recipes and menus are available on request, which can be tailored to the needs of your school and pupils/staff.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EDUCATERING [HERE](#) AND CONTACT [HERE](#)

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SOUTH WEST

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