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www.sw-ift.org.uk

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Welcome from Martin Smith

Executive Director of SWIFT

Dear Colleagues

'Uplifting' was the feeling I had when reviewing this issue of the UPDATE. What a rich and connected profession has been developed in education.

Take the interview with Lindsay Cooper Smith, Director of Inclusion for St Christopher's Academy Trust: expertise from one Trust is generously shared across the system through the medium of the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) and the Early Career Teacher Programme (ECTP).

Meanwhile our trainees on the SWIFT Teacher Training course are benefitting from a curriculum designed by dedicated leaders in Trusts across our Teaching School Hub region, brought to life by mentoring in our committed partner schools, who once again, are part of various Trusts.

From Initial Teacher Training to NPQs, we are more connected to high-quality research than ever before. Our partnership with the National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) continues to grow and the superb new Evidence Portal, along with new resources from the every-reliable Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), exemplify the evidence-rich profession teaching has become. We have come a long way as a profession in the last 10 years.

What has not changed in that time is the joy and relief at reaching the Easter holidays after an intense term!

Have a great one.

2026 Summer Conference

Thursday 18 June 2026 | 0830 – 1535 | Exeter Racecourse

Gain fresh perspectives, sharpen your skills, and connect with professionals who share your drive.

Register now for our Summer Conference on **Thursday 18 June 2026**. Experience expert-led sessions and resources.

This year's speakers | Sally Apps, Daisy Christodoulou MBE, Steve Margetts, Shaheen Myers, Sufian Sadiq, Kamila Sidiqi, Lewis Wedlock & Nick Wakeling.

Topics | AI and Assessment | Equity, Wellbeing and Leadership | Care and Culture | Disadvantaged High Attainers | Masculinities in Schools | and more.

Enjoy some lovely food from Goosemoor Educatering.

SWIFT Members £100 | Standard Ticket £150

Discounts available for LSSW / SWIFT NPQ Alumni + ECT Induction Leads / Mentors

#SWIFTConf26

"Excellent presentation and super relevant to improving the quality of education in our schools."

(feedback from the 2025 Summer Conference sessions).

[BOOK YOUR PLACE AT THE SUMMER CONFERENCE HERE](#)

News Items

A View on Effective Mentoring

“At Widey Court Primary School, supporting Early Career Teachers (ECTs) is more than a statutory requirement - it is a deeply embedded part of our school’s culture.”

With the most positive “shout-outs” for more than one Mentor, Widey Court Primary School’s Deputy Headteacher and Induction Tutor, Jo Llewellyn shares their journey and top tips to effective mentoring.

I have been an Early Career Teacher (ECT) Induction Tutor at Widey Court since starting here as Deputy Headteacher in September 2022. My mentoring journey has been both rewarding and developmental for me. Whilst I have had many years’ experience of mentoring students and Newly Qualified Teachers, to lead the process myself, has necessitated knowing and understanding the expectations of my role and content and progression through the Early Career Teacher Programme.

When I started in my role, ECTs at Widey Court were about to start their second year and were fully embedded into the programme, which was helpful as their journey was already underway.

Now that I am in my fourth year, I reflect on how important it is to value the amount of time and effort Mentors and ECTs have to invest in the success of the programme and how building trusting relationships is vital between the three parts of the process: Tutor, Mentor and ECT. Tailoring our approach to individual needs and having open, honest and reflective conversations are essential to our mentoring journey. Careful thought is given to our ECTs, ensuring that they feel supported - not only in developing their classroom practice, but also in becoming part of the wider life of the school. This holistic approach helps ECTs to build confidence quickly and to develop a strong sense of belonging.

I believe that being an Induction Tutor is as a collaborative process where both Mentor and mentee learn and grow together. We are very fortunate to have the most experienced, nurturing, supportive mentors at Widey Court and are equally proud of the ECTs that we have recruited over the last four years. All of whom are engaged, eager to reflect, improve and enhance their teaching toolkit as they begin their teaching careers.

TOP TIPS for Effective Mentoring

1. Build trust and empathy from the start.
2. Listen actively before giving guidance.
3. Provide clear, structured, actionable feedback.
4. Tailor your approach to individual needs.
5. Balance support with professional challenge.

What truly works at Widey Court is the culture of openness and collaboration. Staff at all levels are committed to sharing practice and to supporting one another, creating a team ethos that ECTs quickly become part of. Successes are celebrated, challenges are shared, and everyone works together with a common goal: providing the best possible education for pupils.

A key strength of the provision lies in the work of the Mentors, who play a pivotal role in guiding and supporting new teachers.

Report by Jo Llewellyn, Deputy Headteacher and Induction Tutor, Widey Court Primary School



Introducing the NIoT Evidence Portal: connecting evidence to teachers’ professional learning

A new, national resource to equip teacher educators with research evidence and practical insights to inform professional learning is the hot topic on educator’s lips across the country.

Built by a dedicated team at the National Institute of Teaching (NIoT), the recently published Evidence Portal brings together rigorous, high-quality research and expert perspectives from Schools and Trusts to empower teacher educators to be able to make evidence-informed decisions when designing and delivering professional learning and support.

The NIoT Evidence Portal

Teachers educators are surrounded by more research than ever before but finding the time to make sense of it, and knowing what really works to support others, can be difficult. The NIoT Evidence Portal was created to help. The Portal is designed to inform, not prescribe, helping teacher educators access, interpret and use research thoughtfully within their own context.



So why does it exist?

One of the NIoT’s core missions is to improve the quality of teacher and leader development at a system level by generating and interpreting research, applying the insights to the design and delivery of high-quality teacher development programmes to be shared across the sector.

We have seen this in practice with our published work with the NIoT on the delivery of the Early Career Teacher Programme (ECTP) in coastal and rural communities and more recently a research study into school level professional development. A number of SWIFT schools are also currently involved in an exciting AI and mentoring research project.

£1.4 billion and nearly 2 million working days are spent on professional development each year.

As teacher educators, we are surrounded by vast amounts of research but finding the time to make sense of it and knowing what really works in our own Schools and Trusts can be difficult.

The NIoT Evidence Portal aims to solve this problem by bringing coherence to a crowded landscape and strengthens professional development by supporting teacher educators in accessing, interpreting and using research thoughtfully in their own context.



It currently comprises two major features: [the NIoT Evidence Toolkit](#) and the [‘Your Questions’](#) page.

The NIoT Evidence Toolkit

The toolkit brings together bite-sized, trustworthy summaries of professional learning approaches drawn from systematic reviews of international research on initial teacher education and professional development.

By Jen Knowles, SWIFT Director of Teaching School Hubs



[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)
[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE EVIDENCE PORTAL HERE](#)
[CONTACT THE NIOT TEAM HERE](#)

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Interview with Lindsay Cooper Smith, Director of Inclusion for St Christopher's Academy Trust



"I would wish all children to be educated locally with their peers and to get the support they need at the earliest possible opportunity to make sure there is a genuine holistic approach to inclusion with the family, school and professionals involved."

Lindsay has been teaching in primary education for 20 years in various settings working with children from Nursery to Year 6. Her passion for inclusion has led Lindsay to achieving the SENqual and becoming a SENCO. Previously, Lindsay worked with other agencies across Plymouth to develop person-centred practice and in 2018 she developed a nurture provision for primary school children at risk of exclusion, which was highly successful in supporting children and was partially funded by the Local Authority.

Lindsay now works as the Director of Inclusion at St Christopher's Academy Trust and is a Specialist Member of the SEND Tribunal and a Trustee at Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust. She enjoys working with schools across the South West and is proud of the inclusive practice which is in the heart of every one of the St Christopher's Schools.

Lindsay loves her role as a Facilitator for SWIFT for both the Early Career Teacher Programme SEN Group and for the NPQSENCO. Last year she co-authored, "The A-Z of SEN" - something she never thought she would achieve and is incredibly proud of this accomplishment.

We were pleased to ask Lindsay more about her thoughts on Special Educational Needs and inclusion practice.

1. What do you consider to be most personally rewarding for you as a Facilitator for the SWIFT ECTP and NPQs programmes?

Firstly, it was lovely to be asked because even though I have been doing this job for 20 years now, when I am asked to do something, my first response is always, there must be someone better than me who can do it! But it is a rewarding and proud feeling to be asked (thank you Team SWIFT).

I have always been concerned about the Initial Teacher Training programme for teachers and the level of SEN content. When SWIFT explained they wanted their new Early Career Teacher (ECT) to have a SEN cohort and that they would like me to facilitate it I was thrilled. It is great to bring all those new teachers with passion and drive together to share ideas, best practice, and help and support each other, rather than SEN teachers feeling side-lined. This collaborative spirit is very important.

With the NPQ for SENCOs, it is encouraging to work with new SENCOs who have got a real determination to make a strategic difference to children with Special Needs in their settings.

I love being a SENCO and I often think we can get a bad rap for being miserable or overworked. Yet I do not find this to be the case with the SENCOs in my team and certainly not with the SENCOs who are on the NPQ for SENCOs. I have appreciated listening to them, hearing the peer support they give each other. The coaching element of the NPQ for SENCOs has been valuable to all the SENCOs and very rewarding to me. Each term when we meet up and I ask about their previous actions, they tell me their successes.... this child is now no longer at risk of permanent exclusion, or a child has got a placement at a Special School. Priceless!

2. What has been your greatest professional learning curve in inclusion in SEND and how did you overcome it?

I had to think about this one for quite a while!

I think the thing that I still find quite challenging is to understand that people have a different view of inclusion. Challenges when you might hear someone say:

"Well, you know, they're choosing this behaviour, or this child shouldn't be in this setting, or it's the parents' fault."

This kind of dismissive behaviour towards children with Special Educational Needs was a big learning curve for me because at first I would get angry or walk away and stewed on such words. But now in the moment, I have had to learn to offer alternatives:

"Okay, so you think it could be to do with parenting at home, but why are the parents struggling with this child? Do you think the parent wanted to impact the child's wellbeing?"

"Or where do you think this behaviour is coming from?"

"Or you think this child should be PExed, but what is going to be the trajectory for that child if that is what we do?"

Posing challenging questions, picking it up in the moment and being brave is important because this is what the children deserve. This was a big challenge for me because I was shocked that people do not all think the same about inclusion or hold the same value of our children with SEN within our schools.

3. What do you consider to be the biggest current challenges for supporting children and young people with SEND in Schools and Trusts?

I think the biggest challenge for us has been the SEND sufficiency in the South West.

In Plymouth, Devon and Torbay, there are limited spaces in Special Schools available, which means the complexity of children we now have in our mainstream settings is much higher than we have seen previously.

That is not where we were 20 years ago, and probably not even five years ago, but it is developing and I am very proud of my schools and always impressed when the leadership teams think differently and come to me with ideas.



READ THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH LINDSAY COOPER SMITH [HERE](#)

Check. Adapt. Move Learning Forward | New EEF Resource

Devon Research School signposts to The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) new adaptive teaching resource.

In classrooms, learning rarely unfolds exactly as planned. Explanations land differently, questioning reveals misconceptions and confidence varies across the room. What matters most is not whether pupils struggle, but how we respond when they do.

The EEF's Check.Adapt.resource presents a simple but actionable model:

- **Check understanding of all learners.**
- **Adapt teaching to move learning forward.**

This is the engine of adaptive teaching. And when done well, it transforms classroom practice from delivery to diagnosis.

Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning
Check. Adapt

Select from a menu of approaches to move learning forward, responding to pupils' understanding.

Check
understanding of **all** learners

- Most misunderstand, so **pause and fix**
- Some are unsure, so **adapt support**
- Most understand, so **extend and support**

Adapt
to move learning forward

- Re-teach (not repeat)**
 - Explain differently
 - Use new examples or analogies
 - Model the task or your thinking step by step
- Address misconceptions**
 - Ask diagnostic questions
 - Compare or vote on answers
 - Ask pupils to explain their thinking
- Give immediate feedback**
 - Feedback to individuals or groups, verbal or written
 - Use prompts or cues
 - Give time to improve
- Add or remove scaffolding**
 - Give verbal, visual or written help
 - Share a checklist or template
 - Show an example or model
- Support understanding**
 - Link to prior knowledge
 - Use text or images to help memory
 - Connect to real life examples
- Adjust task or challenge**
 - Clarify or chunk challenge
 - Set one short, clear goal
 - Guide or model steps to follow
- Extend understanding**
 - Ask for reasoning or explanation
 - Use peer teaching
 - Build links across topics
- Use flexible groupings**
 - Group pupils by skill or understanding
 - Pair pupils for peer support
 - Use targeted teaching assistant support
- Adapting future lessons**
 - Anticipate pupils' needs
 - Pre-teach key concepts
 - Plan for gaps or misconceptions

Scan to access our guidance on giving effective feedback

Check Understanding of All Learners

Checking is not about asking, "Does everyone understand?" It is about gathering reliable information about what pupils know, think and can do, often in real time. The key shift is from sampling volunteers to sampling the room.

When we check effectively, three patterns typically emerge:

1. Most pupils misunderstand → Pause and fix

If the majority are confused, continuing is inefficient and inequitable. This is the moment to:

- Re-teach (not repeat)
- Address misconceptions
- Give immediate feedback

Repeating the same explanation more slowly rarely works. Cognitive science suggests that misconceptions often require restructuring, not just rehearsal. Changing representation, example type, or explanatory pathway is usually more effective.

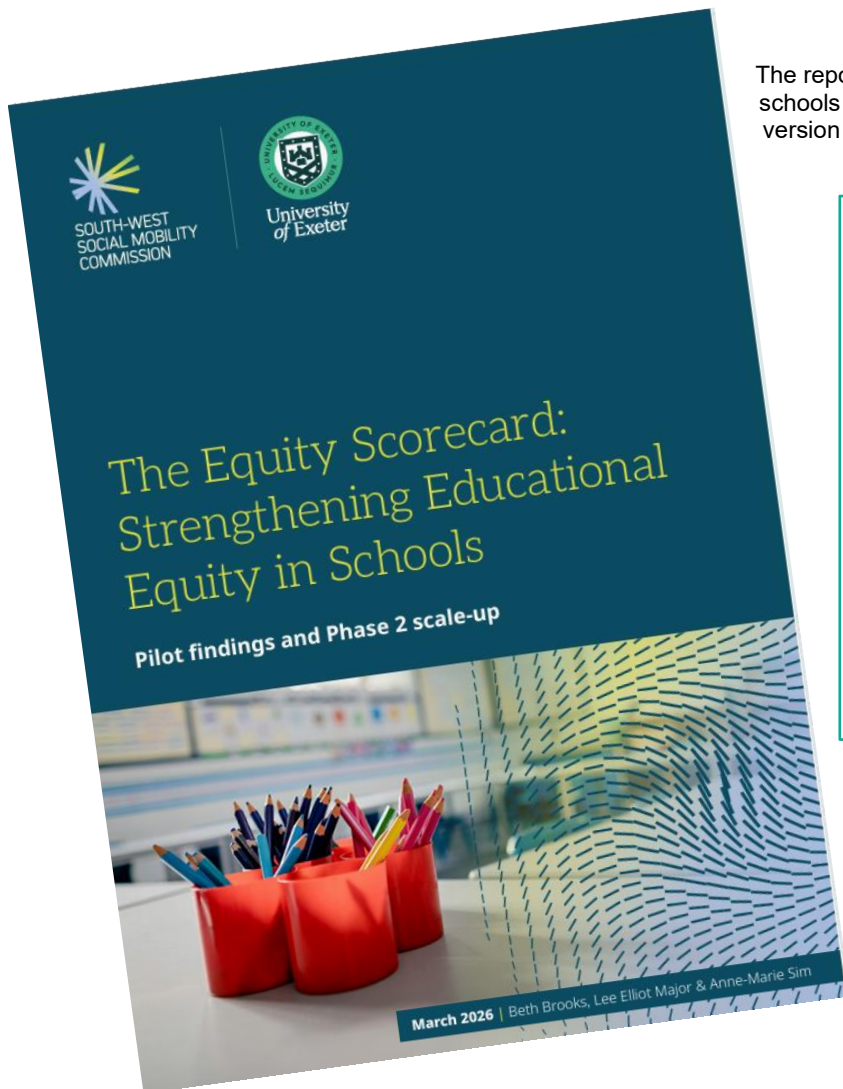
By Jon Eaton, Director of by Devon Research School



READ THE FULL ARTICLE [HERE](#)
FIND THE EEF CHECK.ADAPT.RESOURCE [HERE](#)
READ MORE ABOUT DEVON RESEARCH SCHOOL [HERE](#) & EEF [HERE](#)

The Equity Scorecard | Strengthening Educational Equity in Schools Report by the SWSMC

The South-West Social Mobility Commission (SWSMC) have published [The Equity Scorecard: Strengthening Educational Equity in Schools](#), bringing together findings from their pilot work across schools in the South West Peninsula.



The report sets out what they have learned from working with schools to test the Equity Scorecard, alongside an updated version of the tool and plans for national roll-out.

It includes:

- Key findings from the pilot, including how schools are using the Scorecard in practice.
- An updated Equity Scorecard (Version 2.0), shaped by feedback from participants.
- A set of Equity Case Studies, showing how different approaches are being applied on the ground.
- Reflections on what supports more effective, evidence-informed work on educational equity.
- A strong theme running through the report is the value of creating structured opportunities for reflection - bringing together data, professional judgement, and community insight to better understand and respond to disadvantage.



University
of Exeter



Linked to the Equity work, you are invited to attend The South-West Social Mobility Commission FREE event: 'In Conversation with Sir Martyn Oliver, HMCI' on **Wednesday 22 April 2026 from 1730 – 2000 at the University of Exeter.**

Finally, the Commission are offering a professional learning qualification in 'Leading Educational Equity: From Principles to Practice.'

READ THE FULL EQUITY SCORECARD REPORT [HERE](#)
BOOK YOUR PLACE AT THE IN CONVERSATION WITH SIR MARTYN OLIVER, HMCI EVENT [HERE](#)
FIND OUT ABOUT THE SOUTH-WEST SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMISSION PROFESSIONAL LEARNING QUALIFICATION, 'LEADING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY: FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE' [HERE](#)
FIND OUT ABOUT THE SOUTH-WEST SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMISSION [HERE](#)

Leadership Should Not Feel This Lonely | Support from SchoolPro TLC

Our Sponsor SchoolPro TLC reflects further on how their Safeguarding Team can support school leaders.

There is a particular kind of loneliness that only school leaders understand.

It is not about being physically alone - your days are full of people. It is the quieter side of leadership: holding decisions no one else sees, carrying responsibility for hundreds of children, managing sensitive situations, and staying composed when your insides feel anything but.



Leadership today is complex, values-led, and emotionally demanding. It is no surprise that many senior leaders report high levels of strain and isolation.

But this is not something leaders simply have to “push through.”

Reflective supervision is increasingly recognised as a powerful way to support those carrying this level of responsibility.

It offers a confidential space to think aloud, process challenges, and step back from the constant pressure of the role.

Leaders often tell us that supervision does not remove the challenges - but it does make them feel less alone. And that, in itself, can be transformative.

By Daniel Parker, SAR Specialist, DPO & Safeguarding Lead, SchoolPro TLC



READ THE FULL ARTICLE [HERE](#)
CONTACT THE SCHOOLPRO TLC TEAM ON 01452 947633 OR EMAIL [HERE](#)
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTHER SCHOOLPRO TLC SERVICES [HERE](#)
FOLLOW ON [LINKEDIN](#)

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 [LinkedIn](#) for more updates and links to offers and news from our partners.

Our Sponsors



YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SPONSORS [HERE](#) AND READ THEIR BLOGS ON CURRENT TOPICS ON OUR NEWS PAGE [HERE](#)

Celebrating Out-of-this-World Food with Educatering

Jamaica Day

We love to shout about all the wonderful cuisines of the world including the recent Jamaica Day, for which our area reps went above and beyond combining educational fun facts with tasty treats for the children in school to experience the flavours of the world.

The children got to try a variety of classic drinks from coconut water, papaya juice to guava; taste sweet and savoury treats from chocolate, caramel empanadas to fresh mango, coconut and custard apples. Not forgetting a classic recipe of jerk chicken served with rice and peas.



Conference Season

We are always attending conferences far and wide, showcasing our school food revolution and how we can benefit the school communities. Not only in providing the fresh produce and locally sourced meat from the South West, but our attention to detail, in helping to build recipes and menus to suit individual schools and encouraging children to have a health and filling school meal to boost their attention and learning in the classroom.



Cream Tea

With Easter fast approaching, our reps have been hosting parent and student cream teas to welcome the spring cheer! A gorgeous display was compiled consisting of chocolate dipped strawberries, scones with cream and jam (the Devon way of course!).



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

Opportunities with Exeter Supply Partnership

Primary ECT Supply Recruitment in Devon and Torbay | An Introduction to ESP

Wednesday 22 April 2026 from 1600 – 1700 | Online

Working on supply as an Early Career Teacher (ECT) can be a great way to expand your experience and confidence in a variety of settings and year groups. You build strong relationships with schools, and it is a great next step after completing your training.

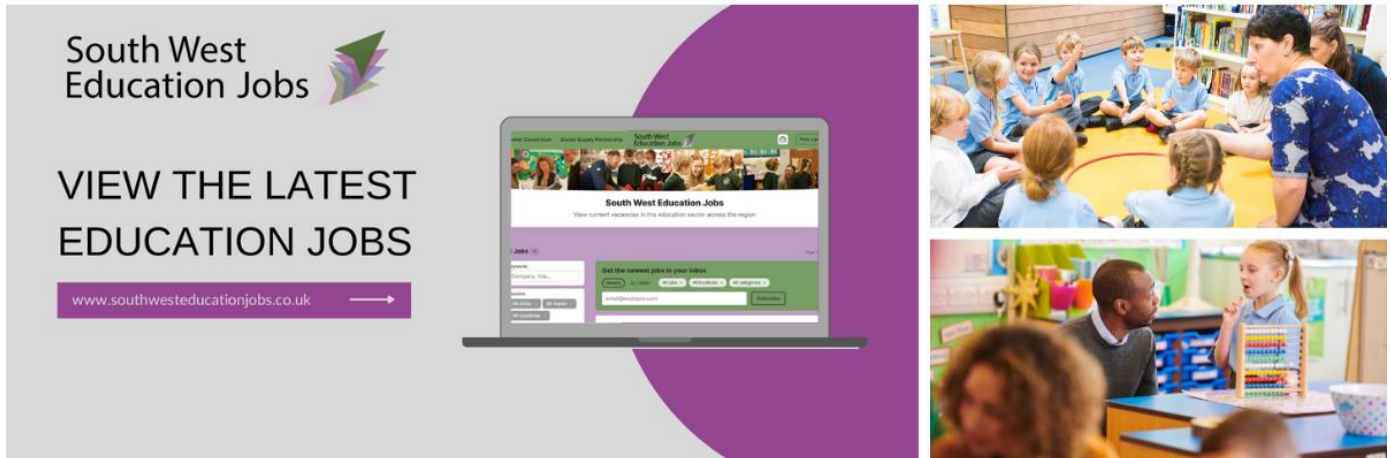
You are invited to come along to an online information session and discover our unique approach to supply teaching.

Exeter Supply Partnership is a not-for-profit service designed by schools, for schools, putting teachers and local communities first.

Book your place [here](#)

South West Education Jobs

In case you are not yet acquainted, South West Education Jobs is a free jobs board designed exclusively for schools and educational organisations in the South West of England to advertise job vacancies at no cost.



Why Use South West Education Jobs?

★ **Completely Free** | Advertise all your vacancies at no cost - no hidden fees or charges.

★ **Broad Reach** | Vacancies are shared on our South West Education Jobs [X page](#) (with over 450 followers)

★ **Social Media Promotion:**

- We actively share vacancies on local community group pages on Facebook.
- Regular job vacancy roundups are posted on Instagram, Facebook, X and LinkedIn pages, all for free.

★ **Targeted Audience** | Vacancies are sent directly to supply teachers, trainee teachers and subscribed job hunters.

★ **Proven Success** | In just over two years, 150+ schools have posted 3,000+ jobs, helping them to find skilled education professionals.

Getting Started is Easy

See attached with this issue a user guide with step-by-step instructions on how to:

- Sign up and create your account.
- Post and update job vacancies.
- Manage applications efficiently.

If you have any questions or need support, please do not hesitate to get in touch. The Team are always here to help you!

📞 Call us: 01392 927171 Option 1

✉ Email [here](#)

💻 Register your school online [here](#)

👤 Join our Supply Team [here](#)

FIND MORE ABOUT EXETER SUPPLY PARTNERSHIP [HERE](#) AND INFORMATION ABOUT SOUTH WEST EDUCATION JOBS [HERE](#) AND CONTACT [HERE](#) | PHONE 01392 927171 OPTION 1 FOLLOW ON [LINKEDIN](#)





Teign School Community Environment Engagement Event

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM NIGHT

Thursday 30th April 2026

6pm - 9.30pm

Teign School, Kingsteignton TQ12 3JG

We are excited to be hosting our first environmental film night and fundraiser here at Teign School, supported by the Rotary Club. We hope to see you there!

Our young people benefit hugely from interactions with people they may not meet in their every day lives. Gaining the knowledge and experience from members of their community helps them to develop life-long skills.

Do you have concerns about the environment and want to help us with ways to develop change within our schools and to support schools with their Climate Action Plans? We would love to hear your ideas.

6pm - 7pm We would like to invite you to Teign School to meet some students and see what actions we are putting in place for them, see what plants are on offer, enjoy some refreshments and maybe try your luck at the raffle.

7pm - 8.30pm Watch Future Council, a film by Damon Gameau (2040, THAT SUGAR FILM) takes eight kids on the ultimate school excursion: a road trip across Europe to challenge powerful leaders and find solutions to our greatest ecological challenges.



See the film trailer here
youtube.com/watch?v=sLPQxANfoxo

8.30pm - 9/9.30pm Question our panel of climate change, sustainability and regeneration experts lead by Education South West Multi Academy Trust's Sustainability Lead and South West Coordinator for Ministry of Eco Education - Tom Pether



← **FREE tickets available via this QR code**

tickettailor.com/events/friendsofteignschool/2101008
Supported by the Rotary Club and Friends of Teign School



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