



The
Mulberry
BushOutreach

Showing the way in teaching, practice & research

Course Overview

2023-25



Nurturing New Special
School Headteachers

Nurturing New Special School Headteachers Overview

The Rationale

Results from a very recent poll by a headteachers' union revealed that within 5 years more than 1 in 3 secondary school headteachers and more than 1 in 4 primary schools headteachers leave. The role of headteacher has changed considerably over recent years and can be very different to that of a deputy or senior leader. National headteacher qualifications are largely focussed on mainstream issues.

There is very little support for new special school headteachers, and their well-being. This course provides this. It recognises that the most vulnerable time for a new headteacher is in the first two years. Our programme runs over a few years and through a programme of training, coaching and mentoring aims to support both the headteacher and those who support them (CEO/Trustees/Governors).

This face-to-face course, with additional virtual support, aims to develop a community of heads new to special schools. It will enable the sharing of common issues, in a safe forum so that long term partnerships can be formed, and solutions found.

Course Outcomes:

1	To provide a supportive, reflective experience focused on new headteachers' well-being.
2	To create a network of special school headteachers at a similar point in their careers.
3	To provide specialist training input to address key issues of running a special school e.g. curriculum structure, role of leaders, relationship with stakeholders, culture of safeguarding, etc. All training will include updates on the latest educational policy requirements as well as the knowledge and skills required to be a successful headteacher.
4	To raise awareness of relevant educational research.

Course Tutors



Deirdre Fitzpatrick

Deirdre has been a school improvement partner for over 10 years and is currently a SIP for over 50 schools. She works with a vast range of schools including all through generic special schools, hospital schools, SEMH, PRUs and APs, residential and mainstream schools as well as schools in the maintained and independent sector. Deirdre has also worked to monitor schools for a number of organisations including Challenge Partners and Local Authorities. She has been a DfE expert advisor and has supported both free schools and schools in challenging circumstances. She has been a Director of Education, a National Leader in Education, headteacher and overseer of three outstanding special schools (one of which won TES School of the Year).



Andy Lole

Andy started his career as a mainstream primary school teacher. He has many years of leadership experience in special schools. As a headteacher his school was judged outstanding by Ofsted. He was a National Leader of Education. In this role he led many school to school improvement projects. He has worked as a School Improvement Partner since 2007, after being accredited by the National College of School Leadership. He currently supports 15 schools as their SIP. He has carried out monitoring and support work on behalf of several local authorities.

Delivery Methods

This residential course provides holistic support for new headteacher and those responsible for their success (CEO/Trustees/Governors) during the early stages of headship. There will be 6 face-to-face sessions for new headteachers, one each term.

Each session will include:

17.00 – 19.00	Arrival Followed by an evening meal and socialising/networking
8.00	Breakfast
9.00	Community meeting – well-being check-in
9.45	Training session 1
10.45	Coffee
11.15	Seminar technique focused on an issue identified by a school leader
12.00	Lunch
13.00	Training session 2
14.15	Educational research
15.00	Community meeting – well-being check-out
15.30	Finish

Each headteacher will also receive 6 individual 1 hour, virtual, support/coaching/mentoring sessions slotted between the training sessions.

Course dates:

Each session includes arrival between 5pm and 7pm the Tuesday evening before with an overnight stay included on the following dates:

Session	Date
1	Tuesday 17th October – Wednesday 18th October 2023
2	Tuesday 6th February –Wednesday 7th February 2024
3	Tuesday 18th June – Wednesday 19th June 2024
4	Tuesday 15th October – Wednesday 16th October 2024
5	Tuesday 4th February – Wednesday 5th February 2025
6	Tuesday 17th June – Wednesday 18th June 2025

Community Meetings

These spaces will focus on well-being. Course tutors will support the group to share the emotional impact of being a school leader, helping to build a supportive professional network.

Seminar Technique

This is a well established approach used in reflective practice. The 45 minute session is divided into several phases:

Phase 1 Presentation: 10 minutes

A participant presents something spontaneously without written preparation. There is no expectation of completeness but should include some live interactional material (not just a theoretical issue or a general problem).

Phase 2 Discussion: 20 minutes

The presenter now observes the *group* working on the material, asking each other questions, recalling details, puzzling out the problem. The group may free associate and should explore their own unconscious responses. The presenter's task is now to allow the group freedom to work on the material and to observe their conversations.

The course tutor encourages the group in certain specific ways. The group members are expected to formulate ideas about what they think was really going on. They are encouraged to consider what sense they made of processes presented, including the presenter's own feelings and responses. Also, to consider if something is missing from the 'picture' presented.

Phase 3 Reflection & Analysis: 10 minutes

The presenter re-joins the discussion. They are invited to comment on what they have heard, what new thoughts this gave rise to, and ways in which their perspective on the material may have developed or changed.

Phase 4 Review of process: 5 minutes

The group as a whole reflects on the work that has taken place, in particular to see whether the group process reflects aspects of the problem from which more can be learned.

Training Sessions

The course will cover a wide range of topics matched to participants' identified needs. This may include:

- Having a clear understanding and overview of the role of the headteacher and the timeline for the year of key events (to include financial, HR and Performance management deadlines as well as school quality assurance)
- Developing a highly effective curriculum and pedagogy to meet the SEND needs of the students
- Developing effective communication, policy and practice, across the school
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities required within leadership at all levels (including those to meet the different special educational needs of the learners) and how to ensure ongoing leadership effectiveness
- Understanding the role of the wider school structures (including the role of governance, trustees and MAT structures) and the headteacher role within this
- Understanding the role and responsibility of headteachers in working effectively with parents/carers
- Understanding of the role of the LA, DfE and other external stakeholders (including the SEN professionals) and how the headteacher can successfully work within these structures to ensure the best for their school
- Understanding of the financial and HR systems that operate in schools and the headteachers' role in their management and scrutiny
- Understanding of highly effective performance management and accountability systems including internal quality assurance systems and external inspection processes
- Exploring common headteacher challenges/barriers
- Understanding and managing emotional aspects of the role
- Developing a style of work that empowers leaders to take ownership and delegate responsibilities
- Developing an understanding of the coaching technique and how this can be used effectively
- Having an awareness of current and ongoing key educational issues

Educational Research

The course will share up-to-date research findings to help develop a rounded view of what best practice looks like in our schools.

Over the course of the training, we will run 4 virtual 45 minute group sessions with CEOs/Trust Directors/governors focussed on providing up to date information and guidance to help in their supportive role of the new headteacher.

Each trainee will be allocated a course tutor. They will work with each headteacher throughout the two years. Whilst the course will be predominantly led by the course tutors, an educational research specialist will also join the course and guest speakers will be invited to ensure a rich knowledge base.

How much does it cost?

The total cost for 2 years is **£3,870** inclusive of accommodation and meals.

Course Venue

The course will be run at The Mulberry Bush Third Space, Toddington, Gloucestershire. On site bed, breakfast and meals will be provided. The overnight accommodation includes a shared bathroom between each pair of rooms.

Note: due to the nature of the accommodation there will be a maximum 15 trainees on this course.

Further Information

Please contact Angie Brown
abrown@mulberrybush.org.uk

To apply please complete the application form.



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Further Information

Please contact Angie Brown on **01865 594700**
or email **abrown@mulberrybush.org.uk**

For further information visit **mulberrybush.org.uk**

