

News Bulletin



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Issue 26: 17 April 2024



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LIGHTHOUSE
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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that everyone had a good break at Easter and that Heads in particular got the chance to switch off and reset. Now we are in the full swing of recruitment season you will need those reserves of energy. The Central SLT have been drafting our new Strategic Plan and it has been a moment to really reflect on our people strategy and how we can make working in education more attractive. We recognise there is a generational shift that some of us in our hearts have been resistant to. The old rallying cries of ‘public service’ and ‘make a difference’ won’t do the trick by themselves! We need to sincerely and imaginatively explore how we can be a more flexible employer able to make education a competitive and attractive career choice for people in a variety of professional roles. We are taking the draft plan to Trustees next week and then on to the whole Trust for comment. I’ll be interested in your feedback.

We have interim leadership arrangements in place at both Whiteoak and Northleaze while Victoria Reyes makes the move to the Executive Headship at the former. I am very pleased that Abby Murray and Joe Thompson will be acting up as Associate Heads to support Victoria in Terms 5 and 6. I hope that they really enjoy the opportunity.

As ever,

Gary Lewis

Chief Executive



Internal Leadership Vacancies

We wanted to draw attention to a number of internal vacancies currently being advertised within the Trust. Click on the following links to find out more, including how to express an interest (EOI), for these opportunities:

- [Headteacher at Northleaze CofE Primary School \(Fixed Term\)](#) - EOI deadline is 12noon on Monday 22 April 2024.
- [Deputy Headteacher at Winford CofE Primary School \(secondment/maternity cover\)](#) - EOI deadline is 9.00am on Tuesday 23 April 2024.
- [Deputy Headteacher & SENDCO at Flax Bourton CofE Primary School \(1 Year secondment\)](#) - EOI deadline is 9.00am on Monday 22 April 2024.

Please share these with any colleagues who you think may be interested including Deputy/ Assistant Heads and Phase Leaders.

A reminder that you can find all internal vacancies by logging into Employee Self Service (ESS) on iTrent (where you access your payslip etc). You can also visit [our Eteach page](#) to see all external roles across the Trust, and set alerts for future job opportunities.

If you have any questions about the above please contact the [Central HR Team](#).

Central Team Staffing Update

We are very excited this week to welcome Jo Summerton to the LSP Central Team. Jo is our new Office Administrator and will be supporting the Central Team with diary management, logistics and meeting arrangements (and many other things!). Jo is part-time working Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.15am-2.15pm.



I am also pleased that Amy Broyd, who is also a Clerk for two of our primary schools, will continue to support Janine Ashman with Lighthouse Learning until the end of this academic year. Amy has been working with us over the past few weeks and has been a great help with primary networks and with setting up the NPQs which start in the next few weeks.

We will do our very best to help you if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch! A reminder that you can [click here](#) for Central Team contact details and working hours.

Eleanor Capel-Davies
Head of Administration

Cass Review and Gender Questioning Guidance for schools

Colleagues will have seen that Dame Hilary Cass's [final report](#), which has been submitted to NHS England, has again urged caution. The interim report had referred to social transitioning as being 'not a neutral act'. The final report goes a step further and refers to it as an 'active intervention'. The weekend papers also gave coverage to a new legal opinion indicating that schools are at risk of being sued if they are following approaches such as the [Brighton and Hove Toolkit](#).

I have asked Natalie Wilcox, Director of Secondary Education, to liaise with schools to ensure that we have a log of where social transitions is being considered or actioned in our Trust so that we can ensure that we are fulfilling all our duties to young people and their parents. Natalie will contact our secondaries directly. If there are any cases of social transition in our primary schools, could Primary Heads please [inform Natalie](#) as swiftly as possible.

I am content that our Equalities and Diversity Policy is broadly in step with the spirit of the Cass Report and I will be reviewing it again once the DfE's response to its recent consultation on its draft 'Guidance for Schools and Colleges: Gender Questioning Children' is published.

Gary Lewis
Chief Executive

Reminder: Parent, Pupil and Staff Surveys

As mentioned in the last bulletin of Term 4, the window for Parent, Pupil and Staff Surveys this year is Monday 22 April - Friday 10 May 2024.

Headteachers will be sent one email, which will contain the full set of instructions and the links to all three surveys this week so you have everything you need to facilitate the surveys within the timeframe above. Please keep an eye out for this email - if you have any questions please get in touch.

Eleanor Capel-Davies
Head of Administration



Reminder: Preparing for School Booklet

Following National Primary Offer Day yesterday (Tuesday 16 April) a reminder that we have published [a Trust-wide 'Preparing for School'](#) booklet for parents who have children joining our Reception Classes from September 2024.

Please include this with any other welcome documents you send out over the next few days/ weeks - a PDF version was also emailed to Primary Heads and Early Years Leaders on Monday 15 April.

Review of Reserves Policy Procedures

As you will know a new Reserves Policy was introduced in September 2023 to support the financial sustainability of the Trust in these difficult financial circumstances.

The policy sets an expectation that schools achieve the budget that is agreed for the financial year, with any overspends identified and addressed. It also requires schools to refer spending decisions outside of the agreed budget to the Trustees' Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee has reviewed the procedures to deliver the Reserves Policy and has agreed some changes, with immediate effect.

The procedures have worked well to increase awareness of the financial position of individual schools and the Trust overall. They have been effective in restricting one off discretionary spend and have increased our reserves, giving us the benefit of some additional time to address the financial challenges that we face.

The procedures have not been effective where schools have been reporting overspends in non-discretionary spend e.g. supply and agency costs. In most instances overspends have already been incurred and schools have had little opportunity to reduce or offset the additional spend. The procedures have created an additional bureaucratic burden for schools and the committee have had little choice in how to respond.

The Finance Committee have agreed to continue the process for schools to apply to the Finance Committee for additional discretionary spend. This includes one off projects, such as purchasing new equipment, and the appointment of additional staff above and beyond the budget. The limits currently within the policy (of non staffing spend over £15,000 in a primary school or £50,000 in a secondary school) still apply, although the Committee is minded to convert these limits to a % of the budget when the Reserves Policy is next reviewed.

(...continued)

Review of Reserves Policy Procedures (...continued)

The Finance Committee have agreed that schools will no longer have to apply to the committee where overspends in non-discretionary spend have occurred, such as supply or contractual spend such as the cleaning contract or energy costs. Instead, the standard narrative report that schools use for reporting to their Local Governing Body (LGB) will be adapted so that schools can specifically report these areas of overspend to their LGB with an explanation of why they have occurred and what action is being taken. The LGB will be asked to record their feedback to these issues. Both the explanation and the LGB response will need to be shared with the Finance Team in advance of the quality assurance checks of the Budget Forecast submissions which occur three times per annum. These will be shared with the Trustees Finance Committee alongside schools' projected budget outturns. A copy of the updated narrative report template as well as a Word version, are provided and should be used from now onwards. Both the template and Word version are available [on Foldr](#).

Despite this change schools should continue to try to mitigate the financial impact of overspends by reducing spend in other areas wherever possible.

We hope that these changes will reduce the administration burden on schools whilst maintaining a strong and necessary focus on controlling spend.

The [Foldr link](#) to access the revised narrative report (Excel and Word versions) is:

Schools Business Managers > Trust Wide > Finance Documents and Forms > IMP Guides



LSP Socials Poster

Our Trust-wide LSP social media accounts are a great way for our parents and staff to find out about job vacancies, opportunities and news from across the Trust. We have created a poster to advertise our social media. Please share [the poster below](#) with parents and staff.



**FIND US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**

Follow Lighthouse Schools Partnership
and be first to hear about:

- ▶ Job vacancies
- ▶ News from across the Trust
- ▶ Trust-wide opportunities
- ▶ And more!

 @Lighthouse_MAT

 /lighthouseschoolspartnership

 @Lighthouse Schools Partnership

www.lsp.org.uk



Internal Audit

The Board of Trustees has appointed Westcotts as our Internal Auditors. The programme for the remainder of this financial year, driven by the Trust's Risk Register, has been agreed and is detailed below:

Theme	School/Central Team
Cyber Security	Central Team
Budgetary Control	Portishead Primary
	St Peter's Primary
Mental Health	Central Team
	With online interview with 2 schools
Recruitment	Central Team
	With online interview with 2 schools

Westcotts will contact the schools in the programme for a budgetary control audit to arrange a suitable date and to provide you with a brief for the audit. We will also confirm the schools nominated for an online interview as part of the Mental Health and Recruitment audits as soon as possible.

Trustees will be considering the internal audit plan for the 2024-25 financial year at the Audit and Risk meeting on Thursday 16 May.





Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

Please email [Lighthouse Learning](mailto:hr@lsp.org.uk) if you have any questions about the below events.

Date	Event	Audience
Term 4		
Thursday 18 April 6.00-7.00pm	School Improvement: LSP School Categorisation for Governors with Neil Lankester, Director of School Improvement Click here to register your place	Governors
Monday 22 April 3.45 - 5.00pm	Primary Assessment Network. Online	Assessment Leads
Tuesday 30 April 9.15am–3.15pm	Child Bereavement Support Training. Stanton Drew Village Hall	Pastoral Leaders, Support Assistants etc
Thursdays 9, 16 and 23 May	Job Evaluation Training Email hr@lsp.org.uk to sign up by	All
Monday 13 May 3.45 - 5.00pm	LSP Primary Maths Network. Online MS Teams link to be circulated in due course.	Primary Maths Leads

Reminder: Job Evaluation Training

We are currently looking for Support Staff who are interested in being part of a panel to evaluate job descriptions across the Trust. Training will take place across three Thursdays in May.

If you or any staff members are interested please contact the Central HR Team on HR@lsp.org.uk or 01275 841396 by Friday 26 April.

You can use [this poster](#) to advertise this opportunity in Staff Rooms.

Tania Newman
Director of HR

Reminder: Governor Training on School Categorisation

Neil Lankester, Director of Improvement will be leading an online session for governors on Thursday 18 April from 6.00pm-7.00pm. In this session Neil will talk governors through:

1. Why we have introduced a categorisation process for schools and how this fits into the overall school improvement strategy for the Trust.
2. The criteria within each of the categories - how these have been written, and some of the content.
3. How this process is being introduced into schools, including how governors may wish to involve themselves.

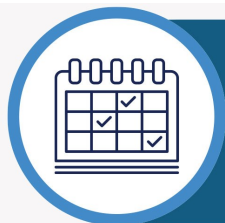
Please [click here to register your place](#).



KEY LINKS, DATES AND DEADLINES

These reminders do not replace the Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly.

Please note the following links will only work for those who already have access to the relevant site or folder. If you feel you need to be given permission to access something please [let us know](#).



Annual Planner

Click to view the Annual Planner
(Via Sharepoint)

Bulletin Index

Click to access an index of
previous bulletin articles



Previous Bulletins

Click to access previous editions of the
LSP Weekly News Bulletin

The Beacon

Click to read the latest edition of the
LSP Newsletter: The Beacon



Key Dates and Deadlines

DATE	KEY DATE OR DEADLINE	FAO
Friday 26 April	Deadline to sign up to join the Job Evaluation Panel. Email the Central HR team on HR@lsp.org.uk	All
Tuesday 30 April at 9.00am	Deadline for consultation on Teacher Appraisal/Policy Submit feedback and comments here .	Heads, Trustees & Governors
Friday 3 May	Deadline for applications for additional SCA funding	Heads & SBMs