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Introduction

Dear all,

I've managed a number of more up-beat introductions to the bulletin in recent weeks, so those of you who have followed my inputs over time will have been expecting a more austere message at some stage - here it is. Louise Malik came to talk to our Headteachers' Meeting last week about our communications strategy relating to finances. You will find the document that she was speaking to linked off the next page. We are accepting the reality of what is a very difficult financial year ahead. I'll not list all the factors that contribute to this and you will see that Louise has described them very clearly in the communications plan. A very brief summary would be to say that our costs are rising much faster than our income and this is all exacerbated by falling rolls. As I said, it will be tough.

I would like to add two things to the message. The first is to count a few blessings. Our Trustees have insisted on controls to spending that have allowed us to hold a larger strategic reserve than we would have had otherwise. Accepting that matters will be tougher in some schools than others, the reserves that we hold buy us more time to make wise reductions over a slightly longer timescale. This will support the priority of protecting the classroom and the experience of pupils.

The second thing to say is that we need to accept the reality of where we are and deal with it. Some of us will have experienced crises that never arrive because government produces the funding at the last minute. A glance at the news tells us that won't happen this time and the Schools' Minister has confirmed in writing to the Bath and NE Somerset Schools' Forum that there will not be a penny of pay grant to support the incoming staff pay rises. So although our scale as a well run large Trust gives us a bit more time, we will have to take action in every school to cut spending.

The communication of this to all our stakeholders, carefully and candidly, is key work for our Headteachers. We have supported you with the communication plan and Louise and I will be available to give additional support as requested. Let us know how and when we can help as this is a Trust-wide endeavour.

As ever,

Gary Lewis, Chief Executive

LSP Financial Strategy and Communication Plan

As I know you will be aware, the education sector is facing significant financial pressures and uncertainty. In this context it is really important to be clear about our Trust financial strategy and to share this appropriately.

We have prepared a number of documents to assist with this. The first is our [Financial Strategy Communication Plan](#). This document sets out actions and responsibilities. Broadly speaking, the Central Team will take responsibility for communicating with school leaders, Governors and external organisations. Schools have responsibility for communicating with their staff, parents/carers and, where appropriate, pupils.

Secondly, we have produced a document to articulate the key messages of our financial strategy. This is designed for internal use and is available as [a 'flip-book'](#) or as [a PDF](#).

Finally, please find attached some [slides](#) which provide some further information. This presentation was delivered to the School Leaders meeting on 5th March. It will be shared at the upcoming Chairs Forum meetings and we have set up a briefing session on this topic for school business managers at 14:00 on 24th March. The link to meeting is available [here](#) for anyone that wishes to attend.

If you have any questions about the Financial Strategy please do not hesitate to contact the Central Team.

Louise Malik, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Upcoming Primary Headteachers' Meeting

A reminder that the next LSP Primary Headteacher's Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 26 March from 9.15am** at Nailsea Baptist Church.

The MS Teams invitation for your diaries and agenda will be circulated next week. Please ensure you have this date already in your diaries.

Also taking place on this date (in the afternoon) is the Updated EEF Implementation Guidance session - see the specific article in the CPD section.



Easton CE Primary features on BBC Points West

On Thursday 6 March, Easton CE Primary School featured on Points West, as part of a wonderful heart-warming story covering the school applying for Sanctuary Status for refugees.

The news piece focused on the incredible work the school are doing to help refugee children feel welcome and supported as they adjust to life in the UK. An excellent example of how the school is living their values "Being different. Belonging together".

You can [watch the full news story here.](#)

LSP Summer Newsletter - The Beacon

The next LSP Newsletter for staff (The Beacon) will be published at the start of Term 5. Following on from our LSP Staff Conference in February, the theme of this issue will be Priority Pupils, and the ways we can build on our provision to help achieve equity for all our pupils.

As always, we would love to include any positive or interesting news stories from across the Trust, especially connected to any specific work or projects connected to supporting priority pupils. If you have any news stories or photos from your school that you would like us to include, could you please [email them to me](#) by Friday 25 April. This is a great opportunity to share with colleagues across the Trust and help to inspire one another.

Leah Evans, Communications Officer

World Book Day 2025 at LSP Schools

Last Thursday (6 March) saw school children and staff across LSP schools get involved in celebrating their favourite books. Below are just a handful of the wonderful costumes and celebrations from the day. We would love to include a wide selection of World Book Day 2025 celebrations in our staff and parent issues of The Beacon at the end of the year (July) - if you have any photos from your school that you'd like us to include, please [send them to Leah Evans.](#)



Richard Riordon at Golden Valley School inspired by 101 Dalmatians



Churchill Academy & Sixth Form



St Peters CE Primary School



Gordano Secondary School



Gordano Secondary School

GAG funding - IMP updates

We had earmarked Monday 10 March to start updating IMP with GAG statements as we receive them. However, to ensure consistent financial reporting, we have decided not to make changes to GAG funding on IMP until GAG Statements are available for all our schools. We will, of course, advise SBMs before making any changes.

16 -19 funding

We now have some additional, albeit limited, information about 16-19 funding for 2025-26: [16 to 19 funding: information for 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#).

The Teachers' Pension Scheme Employer Contribution Grant will continue to be paid separately to core allocations in financial year 2025-26 and we will assume funding will continue in future years for budget purposes.

There is yet to be any information on any NI contribution Grant for Post 16 providers (similarly for Pre-16).

The Post 16 School Budget Grant is going to be replaced by a Post 16 Budget Grant for the period April to August 2025 after which it will be subsumed into national funding rates for Post 16. The methodology for the new grant will not be published until May 2025, so we will assume that funding will be at similar levels until the end of 2024-25. We had assumed that the Post 16 School Budget Grant would be continuing in our budget assumptions.

The national funding rates are increasing from September 2025 (funding for the bands for the various study programmes are increasing by 10.65% to reflect the subsummation of the additional grant funding).

However, until we are in receipt of 16 to 19 funding statements, there remains a lot of uncertainty about Post 16 funding and therefore we propose to delay making any changes to Post 16 funding on IMP (including removal of the Schools' Budget Grant) until all the funding statements are available. Please note that IMP is currently projecting a 1.5% uplift for Post 16 funding across all 3 years from 2025-26. We aim to reduce that to 0.5% for 2026-27 and 2027-28 as previously advised but as part of the Post 16 funding updates when we have more detailed information for individual schools. We will, of course, keep you up to date with any developments.

Sue Warneford-Thomson, Schools Finance Support Manager

Internal Audit Programme 2024-25

The Internal Audit programme dates for the remainder of this financial year have now been set. The themes for the programme are determined by the Trustees Audit and Risk Committee, in line with the Trust’s Risk Register.

The schools identified to participate in the programme are determined through a risk matrix. This takes into consideration factors such as change of key staff (Head, SBM, Chair of Governors, move to centralised service etc), the number of recent audits and the school’s financial position.

Details of the areas to be tested, along with any information to gather, will be issued by Friday 21 March and the audits will take place via Microsoft teams.

Leading the audits will be Stephanie Panagi from our internal auditors Westcotts. Stephanie will contact you to arrange the teams meetings and please let Stephanie know directly if the date proposed for the audit is not suitable for you.

Stephanie’s email address is: stephanie.panagi@westcotts.uk

School/federation	Theme	Proposed audit date
Chew Valley School	Recruitment (with a focus on cover)	Wednesday 30 April 2025
Gordano School	Recruitment (with a focus on cover)	Wednesday 30 April 2025
Bishop Sutton and Stanton Drew Primary Schools	Budgetary Control	Thursday 1 May 2025
Burrington and Wroughton Primary Schools	Budgetary Control	Friday 2 May 2025
High Down Infant and Junior Schools	Risk Management	Thursday 8 May 2025
Northleaze Primary School	Risk Management	Friday 9 May 2025
Hannah More Infant and Grove Junior Schools	Emergency Planning	Tuesday 13 May 2025
Flax Bourton Primary Schools	Emergency Planning	Wednesday 14 May 2025
St Andrew’s Primary School	Emergency Planning	Monday 19 May 2025
St Mary’s and Wraxall Primary Schools	Emergency Planning	Tuesday 20 May 2025



Important Notice: Change of External Interim Audit Date

Due to factors out of our control our auditors (Albert Goodman) have requested that we bring the External Interim Audit (for year end) forward by one week to commence on **Monday 9 June 2025**, this means that requests for information from the schools are likely to be made earlier than anticipated.

The Central Finance Team will attempt to field as many queries as possible, however please ensure that Fixed Assets, Staff Contracts, Scanning and other monthly tasks are kept up to date to avoid unnecessary queries.

Please contact [Natalie Fear](#) for any queries relating to this audit.

Lloyds Bank Education Fraud and Cyber Awareness Webinar

Please see below a link to a training video provided by Lloyds Bank (the bank that the Trust uses) on the subject of Education Fraud and Cyber Awareness. This video should be a good support tool in this subject. Please feel free to share with any staff who may find this useful.

[Click here to view training video.](#)



NeoPeople Payroll Advance Fees Update

Please be aware, we have received notification from NeoPeople that they will be increasing their Payroll Advance fees from Tuesday 1 April 2025, as follows:

Standard advances from £35.00 to **£37.50**

Same day advance from £50.00 to **£55.00**

If you have any queries regarding this, please [contact the central HR team](#).

GOVERNANCE UPDATES

Submission of LGB updates to the Central Team

At their meeting in March, Trustees will be ratifying changes to LGBs.

Please can you ensure that you have [updated this form](#) with any leavers, new starters or reappointments to your LGB by **9.00am on Friday 14 March**.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to email [Chris Hills, Governance Professional](#)

Upcoming Chairs' Forums

The next LSP Chairs' Forums are being held online on:

- Wednesday 19 March 2025 7.00-8.00pm
and
- Wednesday 26 March 2025 10.00-11.00am

Chairs, or a representative, are requested to attend one of the above dates as the content will be repeated.

[Chris Hills Governance Professional](#) has already circulated the MS Teams links for these sessions. Please email him if you have any questions.



Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

Please email [Lighthouse Learning](#) if you have any questions about the below events.

Agendas, Teams links (if required) and other resources will be emailed one week in advance of each network. The full programme of Lighthouse Learning CPD on offer for 2024-25 can be found on the [LSP website](#).

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Wednesday 12 March 3.30-4.30pm	Trust-wide Priory Pupils Network Online via MS Teams	Priority Pupils Leads
Wednesday 12 March 3.45-5.15pm	White Rose Maths Mixed Age Webinar: Enable and Extend Link already circulated to attending schools	Specific LSP Schools
Monday 17 March 1.00-4.00pm	Primary History Network English Hub @ St Peter's	Primary History Leads
Monday 17 March 1.00-4.00pm	Trust-wide SEND Network Online via MS Teams	SENDCOs
Wednesday 19 March 3.30-4.15pm	Trust-wide Attendance Network Online via MS Teams	Attendance Leads
Wednesday 19 March 3.30-5.00pm	LSP Secondary Networks for Maths and MFL Both Online via Teams (link to be sent from Natalie Wilcox)	Secondary Maths and MFL Leads
Wednesday 19 March 7.00-8.00pm Or Wednesday 26 March 10.00-11.00am	Chairs' Forum Online via MS Teams. Link will be circulated by Governance Professional in due course.	Chairs



Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

Continued...

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Thursday 20 March 3.30-5.00pm	LSP Secondary Network for English Online via Teams (link to be sent from Natalie Wilcox)	Secondary English Leads
Monday 24 March 3.30-5.00pm	Primary Science Network Online via MS Teams	Primary Science Leads
Wednesday 26 March 12.30-3.30pm	Updated EEF Implementation Guidance In person @ Nailsea Baptist Church Click here to book your place.	Headteachers
Wednesday 26 March 3.30-4.30pm	Secondary Raising Standards Network Online via MS Teams	Secondary Standards Leads



Reminder: Updated EEF Implementation Guidance—Wednesday 26

March

Don't forget, the deadline for booking your place on the Updated EEF Implementation Guidance session is this **Friday (14 March) at 9.00am**. [Click here to book your place.](#)

Date: Wednesday 26 March

Time: 12.30 - 3.30pm.

This session is essential for all school leaders, and will take place after the Primary Headteachers' Meeting. We will provide lunch so headteachers can stay for the afternoon session. There are also additional places if you would like other staff to join the afternoon - it would be especially useful for any leaders who are / will be leading key school improvement projects this or next year.

Reminder: Team Teach Training

A reminder that Team Teach training is scheduled across the year covering both Level 1 and Level 2 programmes. There are spaces remaining for each of the courses below:

Date	Programme	Deadline to sign up
Wednesday 26 March 2025	Level 1 Team Teach Training	Tuesday 18 March
Monday 2 June & Thursday 12 June 2025	Level 2 Team Teach Training	Friday 16 May
Wednesday 17 September & Wednesday 1 October 2025	Level 2 Team Teach Training	Tuesday 9 September
Wednesday 15 October 2025	Level 1 Team Teach Training	Tuesday 14 October

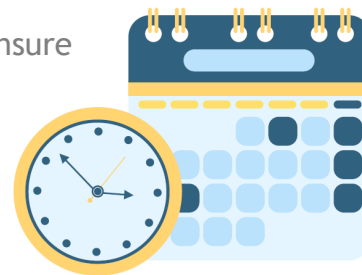
All training will be held at English Hub Room, St Peter's Primary, BS20 6BT.

[Please book here](#) .

You will need to complete the form for each delegate you want to sign up. Please do ensure that teachers who should complete this course book themselves in.

KEY DATES, DEADLINES & REMINDERS

These reminders do not replace the LSP Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly (link on next page).



Key Dates

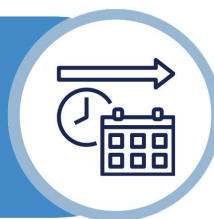
DATE	INFORMATION	FAO
Friday 21 March	Deadline to submit to Estates Additional Bid Fund requests to Callum Fear .	Heads, SBM/ OMs & Estates
End of Term 4	Ensure mid-point review 1 is completed for both teachers and school leaders are completed as per Performance Development Policy.	Heads & Leaders
Tuesday 22 April	Deadline to have set initial draft 2025-26 3-year budget.	SBMs & Heads



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 2024/25

Click to view the Annual Planner
(Via Sharepoint)



Bulletin Index

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Previous Bulletins

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LSP Weekly News Bulletin



The Beacon

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



SHARE WITH US

Don't forget, you can submit your school news stories to
be shared in our newsletters and on our social media.

Email your stories to: newsletter@lsp.org.uk