

MEI News

December 2024

Director Welcome



As we approach the Christmas break, now is a good time to take stock and reflect on our work - it has been another busy term for Maiden Erlegh Institute.

In September, we welcomed another large cohort of PGCE trainees, who are making good progress across our organisation and Alliance schools.

If you are interested in kick-starting a career in teaching from September 2025, please do get in touch - we would welcome your application.

We are currently busy finalising our programmes for our Trust Conference in February. We are putting together hub-based conferences this academic year, to embed our commitment to **belonging and mattering** and we look forward to sharing our session titles in due course.

We continue to see strong sign-up across our professional learning and development offer - whether that be for the in-person courses or our two new additions; the half-termly online professional learning carousels or the three Trust social networking and cohesion events we have organised this term. It is great to see like-minded colleagues across the organisation engaging in the Teaching and Learning Working Group, the Women in Leadership/#WomenEd network and the recent Leadership Supper.

We are excited to have recruited three new Lead Practitioners for Research and Innovation, and I look forward to working with Laura Hawkins (Primary Hub), Chloe Bateman (Secondary Hub) and Jack Alcock (Special/AP Hub) from January 2025 to further drive forward our CPD offer into next term and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas and best wishes for the new year.

Rob Buck
School Improvement Director - People Development

Behaviour Hub Update

We recently held our Autumn Behaviour Hub Open Day and welcomed senior leaders from different schools to observe behaviour culture in action at Maiden Erlegh School. The session topics included behaviour, routines, building culture and inclusion.

My session was on the processes and routines around inclusion, and we learned about robust school processes and the therapeutic approach to supporting students finding school difficult. When schools build a safe and inclusive culture, students will thrive and be the best version of themselves.

To achieve the best outcomes for students, staff should feel empowered and be able to teach to the best of their abilities and the Behaviour Hub programme allows this collaborative learning to take shape. We welcomed senior leaders new to the programme and alumni schools.



Ceri Burns

Deputy Headteacher - Behaviour, Culture & Safeguarding

PGCE Update

This Autumn, MEI recruited 17 PGCE trainee teachers, across a variety of primary and secondary schools.

Our courses provide teaching theory and practice, providing confident future teachers. The school based route means you are immersed in school life from day one.

If you are thinking of teaching and transforming young people's lives, get in touch.

Courses Update



Kelly Nash is the Trust School Improvement Director: SEND, and is currently running two courses to support staff to build their confidence and capability when working with our most vulnerable students.

“This term I have been fortunate to deliver the first day of the SEND Development workshop. It has been great to meet with enthusiastic colleagues from across the organisation who want to deepen their knowledge and understanding of how to support SEND pupils in the classroom and enhance their practice. The day focussed on what the ‘SEND trend’ looked like nationally and locally (spoiler alert – it is on the rise) and thinking about where teacher’s roles and responsibility fit within that.

Teaching and Learning Working Group



Chloe Bateman and Jack Alcock launched the Teaching and Learning Group this November. “We were delighted to launch our brand new Teaching and Learning Group. The group brings together like-minded colleagues from across the Trust to engage with cutting edge research into topical educational issues.

Our focus this academic year is on how AI tools can be used to support disadvantaged students. We met to explore the current literature on these areas – identifying key trends and themes in the recommendations.

Colleagues are now in the process of designing mini action research projects which will explore questions such as ‘Does using ChatGPT to provide feedback on extended writing lead to improved outcomes for students?’ – and at our next meeting we will peer review each other’s plans before launching our initiatives next term.”



Jack Alcock co-lead the opening session with Chloe.

“We discussed best practices for conducting classroom-based research projects and how to translate these ideas into measurable outcomes.

With multiple research projects set to launch, there are countless opportunities to collaborate, learn, and make a real impact on our students’ learning.



I have also delivered the first day of our ‘Aspiring SENCo’ course. The SENCo role is broad and busy; you are an advocate, a leader, a counsellor, an expert, a listening ear, a multi-tasker and a problem solver. However, it also an incredibly rewarding job that has significant impact for some of our most vulnerable children and young people”.

Julie Gibbins, Teaching Assistant at River Academy attended the SEND course.

“I feel fortunate to have been able to attend the SEND Development workshop. I was able to listen, understand and discuss in more detail the data trends and how this has an impact on our schools and within our own classroom environments.

Being able to discuss SEND with teachers from other schools, and gain advice from Kelly, provided a clearer picture on the approach to SEND learners and understand the responsibilities of a SENCo and those working with them”.

Kelly Nash

School Improvement Director – SEND

This group isn’t just about professional development—it’s about transformation. By leveraging innovative tools like AI and addressing systemic challenges, we have the potential to profoundly influence the learning experience for every student”.

We look forward to sharing the results of our projects in MEI’s new Insights Journal in the summer term. If you would like to take part in the Teaching and Learning Working Group, please get in touch.

Chloe Bateman and Jack Alcock

Lead Practitioners Research and Innovation

MAIDEN ERLEGH TRUST

Recruitment Event

Secondary and Special / Alternative Provision

www.maidenerleghtrust.org



Wednesday 29 January 2025
5:00pm until 6:30pm



Maiden Erlegh School in Reading,
81 Crescent Rd, Reading RG1 5SL

Meet our team. Find out about working in one of our schools. Discover current vacancies and the excellent benefits we offer.

Visit our website for Primary school opportunities, or ask a member of the recruitment team at the event.



www.maidenerleghinstitute.org



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Apprenticeship Spotlight



Colleagues from across the Trust have enrolled on a variety of Apprenticeship programmes, allowing them to gain qualifications on the job.

In this issue, we talk to Preeti Anchan.

How long have you been with the Maiden Erlegh Trust?

I have been with MET for more than 2+ years. I started working as Teaching Assistant and then progressed to Higher Level Teaching Assistant.

Name of Apprenticeship

Secondary Initial Teacher Training Apprenticeship in Science Biology

What inspired you to enrol on the Apprenticeship?

Working as a teaching assistant inspired my passion for teaching and my desire to make science engaging and accessible for all students, especially those in SEMH settings. My colleagues have been a significant source of inspiration, offering support and motivation.

What are you enjoying most?

I enjoy conducting practical activities in the classroom, building positive relationships with students, and watching their curiosity and confidence grow.

What challenges have you faced?

Balancing work, study, planning curriculum and setting up practical lessons has been challenging, but it has taught me valuable time management and resilience skills.

What advice would you give someone starting an Apprenticeship?

Stay organised, ask for help when needed, and embrace every opportunity to learn – you'll grow both personally and professionally.



Apprenticeships available in:

- Shared Services
- Admin & Support Services
- Teaching & Learning
- Leadership & Management

Preeti Anchan
Apprentice Teacher

Belonging and Mattering



Feeling like you belong and that you matter is important for everyone in a school – students and staff alike. For students, it's about more than just fitting in.

When they feel included and valued, they're more confident to try new things, share their ideas, and build positive relationships. This sense of connection helps them stay engaged in their learning and develop the skills they need to thrive both in school and beyond.

For staff, belonging and mattering make a huge difference too. Teachers and school staff who feel appreciated and supported are more likely to bring their best to work every day. They're more open to collaborating and trying new approaches.



Building this sense of community is vital in our work as MEI. Through our programmes and various staff development initiatives, we place a high value in fostering open communication where we welcome everyone's contribution and encourage teamwork.

When everyone feels like they belong and matter, the whole community benefits. People are happier, more engaged, and more willing to support one another.

Schools that focus on these values become places where everyone—students and staff—can do their best and feel proud to be part of something bigger and that is something we will continue to champion through our work across the Maiden Erlegh Institute.

Andy Johnson
Director of Education

For regular updates, upcoming courses, events and more, follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn.

@_MEInstitute

