



Supporting excellence in school leadership

Challenge Partners is a national partnership of schools committed to reducing educational inequality and improving the life chances of all children. Through collaboration, challenge and professional development, we are working to ensure every school community can benefit from the combined wisdom in the education system.

Schools benefit from unrivalled expertise: our Network of Excellence includes leaders who are renowned for their contribution to education, with experience spanning Ofsted, teaching and school leadership.

What leadership development opportunities can our network offer you?

Participation in our Network of Excellence offers exceptional professional development for school leaders. Collaboration between hundreds of schools across England enables leaders to develop themselves and their schools through:

- annual peer review and knowledge sharing
- training in key leadership skills and competencies
- sharing innovative practice
- helping schools to reduce gaps in educational achievement and improve outcomes for all

As a middle leader

You can take part in a Quality Assurance (QA) Review at your own school, which provides a chance to shadow key conversations around school improvement and gain experience in how to discuss potentially challenging questions.

We offer Leadership Development Days, an immersive one-day experience to learn from best practice and accredited Areas of Excellence in schools across the country.

Members also have access to an exclusive Network of Excellence area on our website with resources from across our schools and cutting-edge materials to support professional development.

As a senior leader

You can train and take part as a reviewer in QA reviews. You will visit other schools and work with Ofsted-trained lead reviewers to see schools in different contexts and reflect on your own practice.

Experienced reviewers receive additional training to develop mentoring and coaching skills. You also take part in your own school's review, engaging in enriching professional dialogue with external peers to accelerate self-reflection and improvement in your school. We offer Leadership Development Days, and a Leadership Residency Programme where you

can spend time in another school, shadowing the headteacher and learning from their practice.

You can take advantage of discounted tickets to our National Conference, where you will be inspired by expert speakers and have the chance to learn about successful practice drawn from a wide range of schools.

There are local hubs of schools, where you can work with new partners to secure improvements and personal development on shared priorities. Leaders of outstanding schools can also take on a hub leadership role, as Senior Partner or Hub Manager.

Multi-Academy Trust Leaders can benefit from a unique opportunity to see other MATs and their leaders in action, sharing best practice and other ideas.

We also offer

A Growing the Top programme for senior leaders in consistently outstanding schools to visit other sectors and gain insights into systemic excellence and challenge, to continue improving. And a programme for aspirant headteachers in London, Getting Ahead London, which offers coaching and support to learn more about headship and develop the confidence and skills to feel more ready for the role.

Case study

Adam Lowing became the headteacher of Whitehill Primary School last year, having previously been the headteacher at St Mary Cray Academy since 2014. The school had been through challenging circumstances for quite some time, and joining Challenge Partners helped the school to see where it was, and where it needed to take the next steps on its improvement journey.

Challenge Partners has made a huge difference to Adam, who first experienced the Quality Assurance Review as a middle leader, then as a senior leader and finally as a headteacher in his own school. He says, “each time, I came out as a better leader - more confident and more inspired”.

“As a middle leader in a school your world is the four walls of your school and maybe your local authority forum or multi academy trust. The standards that you think are acceptable, are what you are used to and what you see. Challenge Partners makes you start to think in terms of the national, and take a more objective perspective that brings real clarity.”

“Going out on a review is potentially even more powerful for your professional development than being reviewed yourself. It is the greatest privilege.” Adam has seen many colleagues come back from a QA Review, more ready to question their own practice. “They are more reflective, and able to lift themselves above the context of their own school to see things in far more broad brush strokes”.

Find out more

Call 020 7803 4970

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Visit our website at www.challengepartners.org/contact to contact us or www.challengepartners.org/cases to see more case studies

