STOUR VALE CONFERENCE

Friday 4th December 2026



WELCOME

We are excited to once again bring staff from across Stour Vale together for our fourth annual conference on Friday 4th December 2026.

Following last year's conference, we asked colleagues across the Trust what professional development would have the greatest impact on their practice. The response was clear. Staff highlighted behaviour management and de-escalation, SEND and inclusion, practical applications of AI, early years practice, mental health and wellbeing, support for disadvantaged pupils, and opportunities to deepen subject and curriculum expertise as key priorities for future training.

This year's conference has been designed directly in response to that feedback. We are delighted to offer a programme that combines nationally recognised speakers with expert practitioners from within and beyond our Trust. Sessions from Paul Dix, Marc Rowland and Christopher Such address the most frequently requested areas of behaviour, disadvantage and reading, while workshops on SEND, SEMH, adaptive teaching, de-escalation, mental health, Team Teach, early years practice and difficult conversations provide practical strategies that colleagues can take straight back into their classrooms and workplaces. Our programme also reflects the significant interest in artificial intelligence, with dedicated guidance on the safe and effective use of AI to support learning, improve productivity and reduce workload. Finally, subject-specific sessions in science, history, PE and mathematics ensure opportunities for colleagues to deepen their specialist knowledge.

We hope the day provides something of value for everyone, regardless of role or phase, and reflects our shared commitment to improving outcomes, supporting one another and continually strengthening the expertise that exists across our Trust.

The conferences will run simultaneously at four different Stour Vale schools:

- Redhill School, Junction Road, Stourbridge DY8 1JX
- The Earls High School, Furnace Lane, Halesowen B63 3SL
- Oldbury Academy, Pound Road, Oldbury B68 8NE
- Moat Farm Infant School, Brookfields Road, Oldbury, B68 9QR

Staff will not be required to move between venues. If for example, you select to attend Redhill School's conference you will remain there for the day.

STOUR VALE STAFF SURVEY

Following the conference, you will receive an email inviting you to complete a survey through Edurio. It takes around 15 minutes.

The purpose of the survey is to gather feedback about the conference and to better understand how our staff feel about working within Stour Vale- what's going well and where we can improve. Your feedback will help create a workplace where everyone feels supported to do their best work.

The survey will be anonymous and your honest views will directly shape future decisions and improvements. Every response is useful and we encourage everyone to respond.

BOOKING YOUR PLACE

Staff attending will choose which conference they would like to attend and book their place through Eventbrite. The link for booking is:

Stour Vale Academy Trust Conference - 4th December 2026 Tickets, Friday 4 December • 9 AM - 2 PM | Eventbrite

Full details of the speakers can be found towards the end of this document.

If you are attending the Oldbury Academy, Moat Farm Infants or Redhill conference there will be a variety of ticket options because of the choice of different workshops on offer. Simply choose the one that has the workshop that you wish to attend.

Please only book one ticket for one of the conferences.

Eventbrite will **open for bookings at 4pm on Monday 16th November** and will **close at 8am on Monday 23rd November**. Any staff who should be attending a conference but have not booked a place, will be allocated a conference by their headteacher.

Numbers will be limited at each venue. If you have a strong preference due to location or the speakers you want to see, book your place early to avoid disappointment.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Time	Conference 1 @ The Earls High School
9.00am-9.30am	Registration and Refreshments
9.30am-9.45am	Welcome
9.45am-10.45am	Marc Rowland: Supporting Disadvantaged Students
10.45am-11.15am	Break and Refreshments
11.15am-12.00pm	Rachel Salter (CEO of Stour Vale Academy Trust)
12.00pm-12.45pm	Lunch
12.45pm-1.45pm	Paul Dix – When the Adults Change Everything Changes
1.45pm-2.00pm	Conference close

Time	Conference 2 @ Oldbury Academy
9.00am-9.30am	Registration and Refreshments
9.30am-9.45am	Welcome
9.45am-10.45am	Paul Dix – When the Adults Change Everything Changes
10.45am-11.15am	Break and Refreshments
11.15am-12.15pm	Christopher Such – What Every Teacher needs to Know About Reading or; Jaspreet Buchray: Adaptive Teaching (Primary) or; Thomas Pole: Adaptive Teaching (Secondary)
12.15pm-1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm-1.45pm	Rachel Salter (CEO of Stour Vale Academy Trust)
1.45pm-2.00pm	Conference close

Time	Conference 3 @ Redhill School
9.00am-9.30am	Registration and Refreshments
9.30am-9.45am	Welcome
9.45am-10.30am	Rachel Salter (CEO of Stour Vale Academy Trust)
10.30am-11.00am	Break and Refreshments
11.00am-12.00pm	Kelly Hannaghan – Beyond Inclusion.The Emotional Impact of SEND or; Steve Brown – De-escalation strategies or; Lynn Smith – The Mental Health Journey in Young People or; Jodie Chan – Secondary Science or; Alex Bennett – Primary Maths or; Carmel Bones – Secondary History or; Practical Handball – Advanced PE teacher course (practical)
12.00pm-12.45pm	Lunch
12.45pm-1.45pm	Part 2 of the above training
1.45pm-2.00pm	Conference close

STOUR VALE ACADEMY TRUST

Time	Conference 4 @ Moat Farm Infant School
9.00am- 9.30am	Registration and Refreshments
9.30am- 9.45am	Welcome
9.45am- 10.45am	Part 1of : Deborah Udakis - Early Years or; Hamish Savania - Team Teach Level 1 or; Dr Christine Mott - Difficult Conversations
10.45am- 11.00am	Break and Refreshments
11.00am- 12.00pm	Part 2 of the above training.
12.00pm- 12.45pm	Lunch
12.45pm- 1.45pm	Part 3 of the above training
1.45pm- 2.00pm	Conference close

KEYNOTES AND WORKSHOPS

Rachel Salter: In Rachel's CEO address, she will update us on developments and progress across the trust. Included in this session will be guidance on the safe usage of AI in our schools to improve learning and reduce workload.

Marc Rowland: Supporting Disadvantaged Students

Marc has worked with numerous Local Authorities, Multi Academy Trusts, Research Schools, School Hubs, English hubs and groups of schools nationally on long term projects to support better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. He has carried out many area-based programmes, from Cumbria to Cornwall focussing on the experiences of disadvantaged pupils in schools and classrooms nationally.

Marc works with and advises the Department for Education on addressing educational disadvantage in schools. He has worked with well over 1000 individual schools to support them with their strategies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Marc is the education adviser to the Driftwood Association, a Swiss charitable foundation running education and development projects in Nepal.

He was formerly director of the Research School at Rosendale Primary School in Lambeth, and the Deputy Director of the National Education Trust (now NET Academies Trust).

Marc's most recent book 'A-Z of Addressing Disadvantage' was published in May 2025. 'Addressing Educational Disadvantage' was published in February 2021. The second edition of his award-winning book, 'An Updated Practical Guide to the

Pupil Premium', was published in December 2015 (John Catt Educational). His book 'Learning without Labels' was published by John Catt in March 2017.

Paul Dix: When the Adults Change

Paul worked in schools in Dorset, East London, Nuneaton and Birmingham. He was an English and Drama teacher, Head of Department, Head of Key Stage 3, Head of Faculty and co-opted onto the Leadership Team. In Nuneaton he was part of a team of teachers and support professionals who worked to bring the school out of a failed Inspection. Paul led on Behaviour. In Aston, Birmingham he launched a Fringe Theatre Venue for the City while leading five heads of department across three sites where results rocketed. He has celebrated the highs of seeing young people succeed against the odds and experienced the lows of working in schools surrounded by raw poverty and scant hope. And yes, he has cried in the car park.

As Director of When The Adults Change Ltd Paul works in the UK and across the world to show people that there is another way to support children's' behaviour. His work is acclaimed and embedded in thousands of schools from Kazakhstan to Tokyo, Sydney to Stoke and from the Welsh valleys to Dubai and Deptford. He has huge expertise in transforming school culture and changing the behaviour of adults for good.

Paul has advised the Department for Education on Teacher Standards, given evidence to the Education Select Committee and worked with the Ministry of Justice on Behaviour and Restraint in Youth Custody. Paul served as Chair of the Board of a Multi Academy trust for 9 Alternative Provision settings for five years. He has been featured in the Times, Telegraph and El Pais. Paul's media appearances include BBC1, Channel 4 News, CNN and Channel 6 in Peru (in Spanish)!

His book When The Adults Change, Everything Changes (2017, Crown House) has been a best seller for 9 years selling more than 200,000 copies. It won silver in the Indies Book Awards 2018 and is a core text for teacher training courses. The follow up After the Adults Change is equally as well received and reviewed. In 2024 Paul's latest book When The Parents Change Everything Changes was published by Cornerstone Press, Penguin Random House.

Paul is a sought after speaker and travels the world captivating audiences and inspiring them to change. He has worked in schools and on big stages in Brazil, Holland, Pakistan, Egypt, Spain, USA and Germany. His recent performance at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London was sold out. He is driven by a determination to make sure every child experiences a relational education managed by calm, highly skilled adults.

Christopher Such: What Every Teacher Needs to Know About Reading.

An astonishing wealth of relevant research exists on the subject of reading development. This is both a blessing and a curse. Navigating the evidence and using this to make better decisions in the classroom can be an overwhelming challenge for teachers and school leaders. This session is designed for anyone who wants to overcome this challenge and to better help all pupils become capable, confident readers. The session will address:

- Frameworks for understanding reading
- The nature of the English writing system and what this means for teaching word recognition
- The importance of reading fluency and how it can be developed
- The integrated bodies of knowledge behind language comprehension

- Principles behind teaching reading comprehension in a meaningful fashion

Dr Christine Mott: Difficult Conversations

This practical workshop will support school staff to feel more confident, calm and equipped when managing emotionally charged, challenging or confrontational conversations with parents and carers.

The focus will be on difficult conversations that arise in person or by telephone, particularly where a parent or carer is angry, distressed, defensive, demanding or arrives at school already highly escalated. The workshop will help participants understand what may be happening beneath the surface of these interactions and practise simple, usable communication tools to de-escalate tension, listen without becoming defensive, set boundaries clearly and close conversations safely.

This training will be particularly useful for teachers and support staff who have interactions with parents and the public.

Carmel Bones: Raising achievement in GCSE History.

Time is important in History classrooms (literally) but it is rarely on our side. We need approaches that are manageable and effective helping us make the most of every lesson.

In this session, Carmel Bones, experienced History educator, consultant and trainer, and Honorary Fellow of the Historical Association, will share practical strategies drawn from over 30 years in education and her extensive work supporting teachers and improving classroom practice.

We'll explore a range approaches to retention, memory, oracy and establishing effective starting points, alongside the role of engagement, feedback, challenge and learner autonomy in developing understanding. By the end of the session, teachers will have a range of practical takeaways to apply immediately in their classrooms, helping pupils develop deeper understanding, strengthen recall and take greater ownership of their learning.

Deborah Udakis: Early Years

Deborah was previously one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and is a highly qualified early years practitioner and leader. She previously worked in leadership roles in London local authority nurseries and children's centres and held a senior role in a local authority Registration and Inspection Unit.

Deborah has extensive experience of inspection, investigation and survey work across nursery, infant and primary schools, children's centres, and early years.

With almost 40 years' experience in the early years field, she is passionate about improving the life chances of children. She is committed to ensuring that the quality of early years provision and outcomes for children continue to improve at the end of the foundation stage.

Her sessions will cover:

- The use of the outdoor environment to promote and develop Communication and Language.
- Equality and diversity so that every child's background and identity are valued, recognised and celebrated and their experiences are broadened
- Children's Wellbeing

Kelly Hannaghan: Beyond Inclusion- The Emotional Reality of SEND

Kelly is a Mental Health, Wellbeing and Culture Consultant, award winning keynote speaker, published author and the Founder and Director of Mind Work Matters Ltd.

Supporting children and young people with SEND can be deeply rewarding, but it can also bring emotional complexity, challenging relationships and significant pressures for staff and families.

This practical, thought-provoking session explores the human impact of SEND, including belonging, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), attendance, staff wellbeing, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and challenging parental partnerships.

Participants will explore the emotional factors that influence school attendance, how to respond to distress without escalating it, and how to strengthen relationships between pupils, families and schools.

The session will also consider how leaders can support staff wellbeing and develop compassionate, sustainable approaches to inclusion, attendance and belonging.

By the end of the sessions, participants will:

- Understand the emotional reality of SEND and its impact on pupils, families, staff, belonging and the wider school community.
- Explore the connection between SEND, EBSA and attendance, recognising the emotional and environmental factors that can contribute to school avoidance and identifying supportive, needs-led responses.
- Recognise and manage the emotional impact of the work, including compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, personal triggers and the importance of staff wellbeing.
- Strengthen parental partnerships by navigating emotionally charged conversations, managing conflict and complaints, and rebuilding trust through collaborative approaches.
- Identify practical strategies for sustainable inclusion and support, including how leaders can protect staff wellbeing and embed a culture of belonging, psychological safety and emotionally informed attendance practice.

Steve Brown: De-Escalation Strategies in School

Steve is an outreach professional with 30 years' experience of working in schools supporting children with behaviour concerns across all age groups. These sessions will aim to provide knowledge and practical skills to support a range of behavioural and SEND needs in the classroom. He will cover strategies that support communication, de-escalation, environment, visual, and emotional/sensory regulation. There will be time for questions, and the session will offer a bespoke approach to behaviour support.

Steve's sessions will be useful for any staff regardless of their role and the strategies will be appropriate for both primary and secondary phases.

Lynn Smith: The Mental Health Journey in Young People

A practical, non-clinical overview to strengthen staff confidence to notice early change, respond supportively, and follow school pathways for early help and safeguarding.

Staff will be more confident to:

- Use a continuum/journey model
- Recognise stress responses and behaviour change
- Distinguish helpful vs unhelpful coping
- Hold a boundaried supportive conversation
- Route concerns to the right internal support quickly.

These sessions are appropriate for all school staff (teaching, pastoral, support, admin).

Jody Chan: Making every lesson count in Secondary Science

Jody is Deputy Director of Durrington Research School and is Director of Science. She has worked closely with Shaun Allison author of 'Making Every Science Lesson Count'. These sessions are targeted to Secondary Science teachers.

Jaspreet Buchray: Adaptive Teaching in the Primary Classroom

Jaspreet is Pupil Achievement Lead at Moat Farm Juniors and her session will focus on Adaptive teaching strategies in the Primary Classroom.

This session will explore what adaptive teaching is and why it is important in supporting all pupils to learn and make progress. It will consider how teachers can adapt their teaching to meet the different needs and abilities of pupils, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The session will look at practical strategies that can be used in the classroom, including scaffolding, modelling, questioning and assessment to check pupils' understanding. It will also explore the cycle of adaptive teaching, focusing on how teachers identify pupils' needs, plan and deliver lessons, make adjustments during learning and reflect on the impact of their teaching.

Finally, we will consider realistic and manageable approaches to adaptive teaching in everyday classroom practice. This will include exploring common challenges teachers may face and how small, practical changes can help create an inclusive learning environment where all pupils feel supported and can achieve their potential.

Tom Pole: Adaptive Teaching in the Secondary Classroom

In classrooms, learning rarely unfolds as we have planned. Despite our best efforts, a lack of prior knowledge or misconceptions may require us to take the learning in a different direction. How we respond in such situations will make a difference to the success of the lesson.

With limited time and resources, we need to know that the adaptation we are making will be worthwhile. However, some adaptations are unlikely to be effective. For example, repeating the same explanation more slowly is unlikely to make the change we need.

This session considers the evidence around adaptive teaching and explores how the EEF Check and Adapt tool can support a wider inclusive teaching approach. By the end of the session, we will have considered how to check pupils' understanding, identify when an adaptation is needed and choose a response that is likely to improve learning.

Tom is the Director of Tudor Grange Research School, working to bridge education research and classroom practice.

Alex Bennett: Primary Mathematics

Alex works at Northfield Road Primary School and has recently been appointed as a Teaching for Mastery Primary Specialist with the Central Maths Hub. His sessions will focus on the 5 Big Ideas of maths and what they look like in the Primary Classroom. His sessions will blend theory and application and is appropriate for anyone teaching and supporting in EYFS to Year 6 classrooms.

Hamish Savania: Team Teach Level 1

Hamish is Deputy Headteacher at Oldbury Academy and an accredited Team Teach Trainer. Team Teach Level 1 is an accredited behaviour support and positive handling qualification designed for staff working in low-risk educational, care and support settings, such as mainstream primary and secondary schools. It focuses on helping staff understand behaviour, prevent escalation, and respond safely when individuals become distressed.

Participants learn to:

- Understand behaviour as a form of communication.
- Recognise how emotions and unmet needs can drive behaviour.
- Use practical de-escalation and conflict-reduction strategies.
- Apply verbal and non-verbal techniques to calm situations.
- Improve teamwork and consistency when responding to behavioural incidents.
- Use personal safety techniques and, where appropriate, simple positive handling methods suitable for low-risk settings.
- Follow legal guidance and good practice for recording, reporting and reviewing incidents.
- Use processes of repair, reflection and relationship rebuilding after incidents.

England Handball – Advanced Teacher Course (Practical)

The 'Advanced Teacher Course' for handball will be delivered by qualified coaches from the sports national governing body, 'England Handball.' The course is aimed at teachers who have experience teaching the fundamental skills of handball at KS3 and want to learn more about the technical and tactical side of handball, with GCSE handball being a focus.

The course will allow teachers to develop their subject knowledge through practical based learning, providing example drills and practices that can be implemented in lessons. The focus on GCSE handball should have a direct impact on student outcomes for the practical component of the course, giving staff the confidence to develop students' individual skills and game awareness. In addition, with their improved subject knowledge, staff will develop greater confidence in accurately assessing students and preparing them for moderation.

The course will require practical participation from staff, so it is important to ensure appropriate clothing and footwear are worn.