

Head Teachers' Bulletin 23rd January - 2026

Upcoming Events

~~26th Jan – Heads' briefing 10.15 to 10.45 online – cancelled~~

27th Jan – Heads Forum, breakfast from 8 @Pastoral Centre

3rd Feb – Reading Network 2-4pm @Pastoral Centre

12th Feb – Writing Moderation FS2/KS1

13th Feb – Trust Choir Workshop @St Marie's Cathedral

26th Feb – Morning session for Heads and Senior Leaders with Jes @St Catherine's

26th Feb – Writing Moderation Y3/4

Actions from this bulletin

Actions from previous bulletin

- Book places on the writing moderation sessions
- Please complete the form to book places at the Choir rehearsal.

New Updates (since last bulletin)

Heads' Forum

Heads' Forum next week will follow the usual format. 8-9am is off agenda with breakfast.

9-12 we will be 'on agenda'. The first part of the Forum will involve sharing of Headteacher reports to look at shared learning. We will move from this into thinking about implications of the new Ofsted framework for the way in which we monitor and evaluate the quality of education and care in our schools.

We will then have our normal round of updates, which will include some time on preparation for the Trust INSET. To help with this, please bring the staff list that Anita sent to you for checking, either on a laptop or as a printed copy.

Trust INSET planning

Heads of schools in the Trust will have been sent brochures showing all that is happening at the INSET, along with invitations to each member of staff and a link to a form where staff can indicate their workshop preferences.

We need workshop preferences back from all staff by Wednesday 28th January to be able to finalise planning for those leading workshops. Please help us with reminders to all colleagues in your school.

We will run through the plans for the INSET at the Heads' Forum next week and the key things we need your help with to ensure that it runs well for every member of staff.

Head Teachers' Bulletin 23rd January - 2026

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators network

The minutes from the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators network meeting earlier in the week are attached. John is holding a catchup meeting on Monday 26th January so that those PLCs who were unable to attend are still able to inform and contribute to the development work this group is undertaking, and able to keep headteachers up-to-date with the work of this group. They should already have been sent a link for this meeting.

St Clare Singers Rehearsal Day

To confirm that the St Clare Singers Rehearsal Day is now 13th February at St Marie's Cathedral. Arrival from 10am for a 10.30 start, and will finish at 2.30.

The singers will be working on a contribution to the opening liturgy for our Trust INSET day. The choir will **not** be attending the Trust Inset, instead, the children will be **filmed during the workshop day**, so please check the photo permissions for each child you are bringing to the workshop.

The workshop day will run on the same format that worked so well in preparation for the Trust Mass, and serves a few purposes. It will build on the start we have made in giving opportunities for children across our schools to sing together.

We also have our eyes to a potential event in the summer term - more about that in the new year. Rebecca will share resources for those schools who can't attend the workshop.

Please complete the form to book places at the workshop.

Secondment Opportunity

St Patrick's are in need of a Learning Mentor! We are looking to second a Learning Mentor to St Patrick's for the remainder of the school year. If you have a member of staff who may be suitable for this role could you please email Fiona? Ideally we would want this post to be full time but if anyone has a member of staff who could join the St Patrick's team on a part time basis we would consider it!

From Fiona re: Thursday 26th February – our next Leadership Session with Jes Smith

I do know that he is my brother so I am probably biased but I think we have all really enjoyed our sessions with Jes and developed our leadership as a result of his input! Jes has designed all of the sessions for St Clare Leaders, he is back in the UK now and he has offered to continue our leadership journey in the morning on Thursday 26th February. Jes gives his time and resources to us free of charge, can we encourage as many Heads and Senior leaders to join this session as possible? We recognise how stretched things are in school currently but if we don't develop ourselves we won't be able to develop our teams. Please let us know who will attend from your school. Arrival from 8.30 for a 9am start please.

Head Teachers' Bulletin 23rd January - 2026

Senior Leaders Group

We recently scheduled and presented an overview of school funding and financial planning to the senior leaders group. Although originally planned as a single overview session, it was clear that colleagues were interested in developing a deeper understanding, we will look into the possibility of developing a more detailed programme going forward.

However, as we will shortly be commencing the financial planning cycle we wondered if this would be an ideal opportunity for the senior leaders to be involved in the development of their school budgets alongside headteachers, SBM and central finance colleagues. This may range from observing/shadowing through to actively participating in the development of financial plans/costing.

Therefore, we would be grateful if you could have a conversation with your senior leaders and confirm the extent of any engagement, you feel would be appropriate subject to your operational needs.

Please confirm any details of engagement with John Coats and Adnan Bashir.

Internal Audit Programme 2025/26

Our internal audit programme will commence on the 9th February with the following audit assignments:

- GDPR
- Fraud, Theft & Bribery

Schools selected by the internal auditors will be notified on Monday 26th January and provided with a detailed schedule of requirements, where appropriate.

If your school is selected and you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Adnan Bashir.

Items from previous bulletin

Trust INSET Day – 23rd February

We are just over six weeks away from our first whole Trust INSET day. As noted before the Christmas break, there are some things that we need from you and other colleagues to ensure that the day runs well for everyone.

What we need you to do:

- Anita will be sending a staff list to you. We need you to check for any changes/errors to the list and note any members of staff who are not coming to the INSET (see notes below)
- We will also be sending out links for curriculum staff (teachers, TAs, LSAs, Learning Mentors, etc) with a menu of workshops. Please circulate this to all members of staff and help us to ensure that we get everyone's preferences

Notes on confirming attendance at the Trust INSET:

Head Teachers' Bulletin 23rd January - 2026

We are thinking about part time members of staff and staff such as cleaners, lunchtime supervisors or exam invigilators who may not normally take part in every INSET day at your school.

We want to ensure that every member of staff knows they are welcome, but equally respect that a member of staff may not attend the Trust INSET if they would not normally have been taking part in a school INSET on that day. We need your help to have conversations with those members of staff and then to confirm the outcome on the staff lists, so that everyone is clear on who is coming.

Where part time members of staff wish to attend the Trust INSET, where this will take them above the proportion of INSET days that they should work across the year, they will of course be paid for the additional time.

If you have any queries about individual members of staff when you are checking through the list, please do note these on the staff list.

The aim is to ensure every member of staff is clear about what they are doing on the day and we have that in our planning.

Funded Accreditation Opportunity

I wanted to share a funded accreditation opportunity for early years leaders who already have experience of leading professional development.

The programme is aimed at leaders who are keen to build on their existing practice and support professional development both within their own setting and by working with another setting.

The commitment includes:

Three days of professional development (a mix of face-to-face and online sessions)

One additional day to complete and submit an Accreditation Evidence Document

There is £800 of funding available to help schools release colleagues to take part.

Places are limited, and the selection process will include a visit to the setting.

If you'd like more information, please see the flyer or if you want to arrange an informal discussion please get in touch with vjohnlewis@symathshub.org.uk

Writing Moderation

This is a reminder that our writing moderation dates are as follows:

Foundation/Y1/Y2 - Thursday 12th Feb

Y3/Y4 - Thursday 26th Feb

Y5/Y6 - Thursday 12th Mar

All of the moderation sessions will be hosted at the Pastoral Centre and will run from 2.30-4.00pm

Please confirm places for your staff at the moderation.

Part Time Maternity Leaver Cover

St Alban's need a part time teacher for Y3 from Easter. This is a maternity leave cover for 2 terms -April to December 2026 (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday half day - negotiable). If you know of someone wanting a secondment or temporary experience elsewhere, please put them in touch with Lindsey.

Head Teachers' Bulletin 23rd January - 2026

HLTA Opportunity

Lindsey Ebsworth has a HLTA who is doing the Assessment Only teaching training route. They are currently teaching in KS1, and need an (approx.) 20 day KS2 placement in an alternative setting. This could be organised anytime from spring half term onwards on a one-day per week arrangement until the end of the year. This is so that Lindsey can backfill their release.

The HLTA lives in Doncaster and doesn't drive, but their partner works near the centre of Sheffield.

The HLTA would need some mentoring support in gaining confidence in KS2 but could otherwise be expected to take responsibility for the class for significant portions of the one-day per week with no other cost to the host school.

If this is something that is of interest/might also help you, Lindsey would be interested in hearing from you.

Fundraiser gig for St Wilfrid's Centre

Not to be missed. Brilliant local band The Grand Plan are playing at Haggler's Corner (Queens Road, Sheffield) on Friday 23rd January. Doors open at 7.30, music from 8.30. See attached flyer for QR code to buy tickets. Don't delay – they will sell out fast.