

12th September 2025

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Kent Association of Leaders in Kent (KALE), I am delighted to welcome you to your new Headship in Kent. Whether this is your first Headship, you are new to Kent or moving to a new school within Kent, thank you for joining us in our work to provide fantastic educational opportunities for children and young people in the county.

KALE (previously known as KAH) is an association for all leaders of education in Kent, all phases, all schools and colleges. You are automatically a member.

KALE's core purpose is to **Connect, Represent** and **Support** education leaders. We work on behalf of Headteachers, Heads of School, MAT CEOs and FE College Principals.

The early period of Headship can be demanding and challenging. You will inevitably be focused internally on the priorities for your staff and pupils, but we urge you to recognise the benefit of connecting with other Headteachers, who will generously share their experience with you, provide mentoring and coaching support and welcome you into their schools to observe practice. Building your professional networks is not a selfish act; it will assist you in being an effective leader and serving your pupils and families.

This letter gives you information about some important activities that we hope you will find useful:

- Joint KCC and KALE Welcome Event for new Headteachers
- Your KALE representatives
- The KALE annual conference

Other colleagues and I look forward to meeting you at the New Headteachers Welcome event on 10th October 2025 at the Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel. Please do reach out if you have any questions or need support.

Yours sincerely

Ashley Crittenden

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New Headteacher Welcome Event

You are invited to attend a new Headteachers welcome event on 10th October 2025 at Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel, Ashford Road, Hollingbourne, Maidstone, ME17 1RE. The first part of the morning (8.15am–11.15am) will be hosted by KCC and the second part (from 11.15am – 1.00pm) by members of KALE.

Please note: You are most welcome to join the KALE event, even if you haven't attended the KCC event beforehand. Together these sessions are an opportunity to meet and network with other Headteachers and to explore how both KCC and KALE can support you.

The KALE session will be a great opportunity to:

- Hear more about the KALE community, how you can connect with colleagues and how they can support you.
- Meet other new HTs and share experiences of early Headship.
- Sign up for coaching support and network sessions available to you through KALE.
- Consider how to get the most from working with your mentor.
- Learn more about the broader professional development offer open to you.

The overall purpose is to ensure that every new Headteacher feels welcomed, valued and engaged as members of KALE. The event is open to anyone appointed since January 2025 and includes those new to headship as well as those appointed to a new school. We do hope you will join us at the welcome event.

Connect with your local KALE representative

KALE operates through 4 Area Boards, whose members are elected to represent colleagues in each district of the county. They will be in regular contact to ask for your views on key issues; to invite you to get involved in projects, networks and other initiatives. Your school is in the **** area and your area representatives are:

Details of your area representatives can be found [here](#).

Securing a mentor

Having the support of a mentor during your first year of Headship can be hugely valuable and we would urge you to talk to your Chair of Governors (or equivalent) to ensure that provision is made for you to receive support. KALE is committed to ensuring that this support is available to every new Headteacher.

If you are a leader in a maintained school, then it is typically your School Improvement Adviser who will suggest a mentor for you and broker the initial connection. If you are working within a multi-academy trust you may have a mentor allocated to you from within the group of schools.

If you do not yet have a mentor in place, please talk to your KALE representative who will be able to assist in brokering a link with a suitably experienced colleague.

KALE Annual Conference, 27th November, 2025

The annual conference is a great opportunity for education leaders to network and to examine key issues and themes together. We would like to offer you a 50% discount on the price of the full-day conference and we would be delighted if you would join us. KALE's annual conferences are consistently well-received, and colleagues enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to network with colleagues, listen to a range of high-quality speakers and attend workshops. The title for this year's conference is *Connected Leaders: Reclaim Your Joy*. You can read more about the event and book your place [here](#).

Professional Development

You may be thinking about your own professional development and that of your staff. At the new Headteachers' event, colleagues will share information about opportunities for you to access coaching, and details of Kent-based organisations that provide professional development.

If you are considering NPQs, please note that there will be only 1 cohort in the 2025/26 academic year, starting in November 2025. Applications are opening in September and there will be a finite number of funded places available. Teachers and leaders can choose from any of the nine [Lead Providers](#) accredited by the DfE to deliver NPQs.

In Kent, the local provision is offered by:

The Thames Gateway Teaching School Hub, working with [LLSE](#)

The Kent Teaching School Hub, working with [Ambition](#).

KCC New Headteacher Induction Programme

We would also encourage you to participate in the programme offered by KCC which covers topics including school development planning, safeguarding, finance, governance, behaviour management. There is no charge to attend and full details of the programme and booking arrangements will be sent directly to you from KCC.

If you have any questions about KALE, please get in touch, info@kale-connect.org.uk and speak initially to Sylvina Clemons, KALE Partnership Administrator.