

Monday, 11th – Tuesday, 12th September 2023

Biographies



Fiona Allen

Fiona worked at the Godolphin and Latymer School from 1992-2000 as teacher of Biology and Head of PSHE. Completed an MSc in Occupational Psychology in 2000, gained Chartered status with the BPS, and worked as a consultant for nine years with clients including Deutsche Bank, BT, AIB Capital Markets, in the areas of recruitment, assessment, selection and leadership development. This involved executive assessments for senior roles (MD level), leadership development workshops for middle and senior leaders, and coaching senior teams on emotional intelligence. Returned to education when her daughters started school to become Head of Biology at University College School from 2009-2016. Became Deputy Head Academic for St Benedict's School in 2016, where she is currently employed.



Cassey Benito

Cassey is a Programme Manager at High Performance Learning and has five years' teaching experience in Business Studies and Human Resources within Higher Education. She obtained her Masters Degree in Public Administration at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa in 2022. Cassey has a great passion to solve problems and implement improvements and transformation. She enjoys politics and inter-collaboration on contemporary issues such as globalisation between various countries.

Cassey has written an editorial for the Cape Times Newspaper in 2020 titled "Drinking from the deep trough of rampant municipal corruption".



Deborah Carrick

Deborah Carrick is the More Able Coordinator and Head of Art & Photography at Ewell Castle School where she has taught for over 8 years. From September 2023, she will be leading on High Performance Learning in the Senior School, as an Associate Assistant Principal.

After her Art degree, Deborah studied Psychology at university and went on to work in psychiatric units and to manage projects for adults with learning difficulties. She has been fascinated by meta-cognition and its potential for enhancing learning since she trained to be a teacher 13 years ago.



Katie Coote

Katie began teaching in 2012 in the state sector within an infant setting and learned a huge amount before moving into the private sector in 2015 and then at Ewell Castle from 2016 onwards. At Ewell Castle she has taught across both KS1 and KS2, initially leading Maths before taking on the role of Head of Teaching and Learning, and then Assistant Head.

Katie gains an enormous amount of satisfaction from researching new ideas to problem-solve issues within the school and through building a culture to ensure implementation is as successful as possible. Her favourite subject to teach is Philosophy for Children (P4C) never failing to be surprised and impressed by very young children's ability to articulate big ideas by digging down into sophisticated discussions.



Silas Edmonds

An alumnus of Calday Grammar, Silas completed his BA in English Literature and Latin at the University of Keele (the poetry of William Blake and Catullus being particular favourites), later achieving Chartered London Teacher Status, an NPQH through the Institute of Education and then his MA in Educational Leadership and Innovation through the University of Warwick.

Formerly Head of Senior School and Acting Principal of Surbiton High, Silas was appointed as Principal of Ewell Castle School in January 2019. His educational focus is inspiring young people to discover their strengths and to stimulate their intellectual curiosity so that they can think freely for themselves, "knowing what to do when they don't know what to do..." (Piaget).

Silas currently sits on the Futures Committee and Executive Board for *Society of Heads* as well as the Educational Advisory Boards for *8 Billion Ideas* and *Hemisphere*, with their respective approaches to creative enterprise and EDI a strong resonance.



Deborah Eyre

Deborah's career has focused on helping students reach high levels of cognitive performance. She created the High- Performance Learning organisation to engineer a system-change in educational thinking so that we start to accept that most people could be high performers and structure schools accordingly. A global educational leader, academic researcher, writer, and influencer, Deborah has held senior roles globally and in UK and advised governments and educational foundations in UK, Hong Kong, South Africa, KSA, USA, and Singapore. From 2010-2014 she was Global Education Director for Nord Anglia Education and prior to that Director of the UK government's National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTYA). A widely published author, her works cover books and articles and think-tank pieces. Professor Eyre is a Freeman of the City of London and holds a range of board positions.



Jane Gandee

Jane has been headmistress of St Swithun's in Winchester since 2010 and was previously director of studies at City of London School for Girls. She read French and Spanish at Girton, College, Cambridge before spending two years as an accountant prior to starting her teaching career. She is a keen sportswoman having represented Cambridge at athletics and cross-country, and captained the women's football team. She still runs competitively when time allows. St Swithun's embarked on its HPL journey in 2019 and was re-accredited as an HPL world-class school in May 2023. Jane is an HPL accreditor and most recently accredited St George's School Windsor Castle!



Yvonne Geraghty

Yvonne, Assistant Principal of Whole School Curriculum and Assessment at Castle Park School in Co. Dublin, brings over 12 years of primary teaching experience from Ireland, England, and Dubai. Passionate about creating a tailored curriculum that addresses every child's needs, Yvonne eagerly anticipates the World Class School Induction. There, she aims to delve into High Performance Learning's philosophy and framework, with a keen focus on the advantages it can offer Castle Park for an enriched educational journey.



William Goldsmith

William has a career spanning almost twenty years in UK Primary education and leadership. He is currently Head of St George's School Windsor Castle, having run St Leonards Junior School, St Andrews, where he embedded the IB Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes, as well as a sector-leading approach to outdoor learning. William is passionate about a skills and mindset based learning philosophy; has a background in emotional wellbeing and mental health; and strongly believes in the value of learning outside the classroom. He is a founding fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching; fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts; and has a Masters in Learning and Teaching from the University of Oxford. In addition to his role as Chair of the Education Committee of an HMC School, William is a trustee of SupportU, a Reading based Charity, and sits on the Executive Board as Vice-Chair of The Institute of Boarding, part of the BSA group.



Bethany Hart

Beth joined Ewell Castle School in September 2023 as Deputy Head (Academic). She has a First-Class Degree from UCL (in Mathematics with Economics) and is passionate about teaching Maths. Previously Head of Maths and a member of the Senior Leadership Team at Surbiton High School, she has been particularly focused on leading: whole school academic strategy; learning power initiatives; continuing professional development and pioneering a leadership acceleration programme.

Beth has previously taught at Hampton School and Norwich School, and prior to that, trained as an Actuary at KPMG before seeing the light and heeding the higher call to education. Beth is a governor at her local primary school, with a keen interest in supporting the education of young people in her community.



Henry Knight

Following a career in the wine trade, in 2003 Henry took a job as an English teacher at Woodcote House – a proprietorial, boys' boarding and day prep. School. In September 2009 he was appointed Headmaster, completing his MEd. in Educational Leadership in 2011. In 2016 he became Headmaster of Belhaven Hill School, a co-educational boarding and day prep school in East Lothian. He left in September 2020 to take up the post of Head of English at Sandroyd School in Dorset. In September 2022, he was appointed as Head of Senior Prep and Student Performance at St George's School Windsor Castle.



Helena Ledermann

Helena has been an educator for over 20 years. Currently, she is a teacher in Castle Park School, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, initiating a new role as Religious Literacy, Ethics and Philosophy teacher across the ages ranges (6-12). Previously, she taught in schools that follow the International Baccalaureate Programme in Rome, Monza and Milan where inquiry-based, transdisciplinary teaching and learning ignited a passion within her. She trained staff as Language and Literacy Lead to facilitate a balanced literacy programme throughout schools under the ISM (International School of Milan) umbrella in Milan from 2006-2008. As a firm advocate for lifelong learning, she is currently researching pupil agency as part of her dissertation for a Master in Education with Trinity College, Dublin.



Amy Lilley-Stewart

Amy is the new Assistant Director, Professional Learning and Development for High Performance Learning. Amy has worked in the education sector both nationally and internationally in a variety of educational contexts. Amy began her career as a teacher of Art and Design and was quickly appointed Head of Art at a large Secondary school. Most recently, Amy worked at the University of Gloucestershire leading the Secondary Initial Teacher Training routes and working closely with colleagues in schools on delivering high quality mentoring and trainee teacher outcomes. Amy is interested in research and is currently completing her PhD in Creative Arts Practice and Wellbeing.



Kerri Lyon

Kerri joined the HPL team as their Chief Operating Officer at the beginning of August. After completing her undergraduate and Masters degrees in Law, Kerri spent several years working across Aston University supporting research, producing publications, and coordinating assessments and results. Following her time at the university, Kerri spent six years creating, developing, and running the operations function across a university spinout AI-for-energy startup to scaleup based in Birmingham. Kerri is thrilled to be able to bring her operational expertise to the global HPL community.



Tristram Marchington

Tristram completed his PGCE at UCL's Institute of Education and since then, he has taught and led in both KS1 and 2. He worked in two schools in London, where he was Assistant Headteacher and Head of Teaching and Learning. In 2017, Tristram relocated to Malaysia and he became Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead at the British International School of Kuala Lumpur. Then, in 2020, Tristram was appointed Deputy Headteacher in Devon and returned to the UK. In 2022, Tristram was appointed Assistant Head – Pastoral at Alderley Edge School for Girls before being appointed Deputy Head of the Prep School in 2023.



Stephen McKernan

Stephen is currently Principal of Castle Park School in Dalkey, Co Dublin. He has been a Head of three schools spanning twenty years both in the Maintained and Independent sectors in Northern Ireland, England and Ireland. Building upon his primary degree in Education from the University of Ulster, Stephen holds both a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and the UK National Professional Qualification in Headship. He is an Inspector for ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) and has served as National Chair of the ISA Inspections Committee in the UK.



Catherine Millar

After graduating from Nottingham University in History, Catherine completed her PGCE and began her teaching career in the state sector in Cambridgeshire and the Bahamas. In 2002, Catherine relocated to Manchester and was Assistant Head of Sixth Form at Manchester High School for Girls. She gained promotion to Head of Sixth Form at Alderley Edge School for Girls in 2008 and became Deputy Head, Academic in 2014. She is passionate about girls' education and developing effective pedagogical approaches which maximise academic and personal achievement.



Luke Ramsden

Luke is Senior Deputy Headmaster and Director of Safeguarding for the St Benedict's family of schools. In his time at St Benedict's they have become a flagship school for safeguarding and pastoral care, with the happiness of every student placed firmly at the heart of what they do. Outside school he is an ISI inspector and also regularly speaks at conferences and writes for the TES, among other journals, on school leadership, pastoral care, and safeguarding. He is also proud to be Chair of Trustees for the Schools Consent Project charity and an advisor to the Global Equality Collective.



Melanie Saunders

Melanie has been part of High Performance Learning since it was established by Professor Deborah Eyre in 2016 and now operates as Chief Education Adviser for the organisation. She contributed extensively to the design of the World Class Schools Award and has supported many exceptional schools to successful accreditation.

Melanie has extensive and varied experience of school leadership as a secondary headteacher but also as a school Governor, IEB Chair and, for many years, as Head of Strategic School Improvement for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

She has written for several publications, most recently, "The Secondary Curriculum Leader's Handbook," (Published John Catt) and, as an ex-Head of English, served on the 2019 ASCL Commission, "The Forgotten Third."



Nicola Smillie

After graduating from the University of Liverpool in Hispanic Studies & French, Nicola completed her PGCE and began her teaching career in the state sector. In 1994 she moved to the independent sector as Head of Spanish at Westholme School Blackburn, where she held various positions including Head of Year and finally Deputy Head (Academic). After completing her NPQH in 2014 she was appointed as Headteacher of Saint Martin's, Solihull. In 2020 Nicola took up the position of Headmistress of Alderley Edge School for Girls. Nicola is an inspector for the Independent Schools' Inspectorate, NW Regional Chair for the Girls' School Association and member of the GSA Council and Membership and Accreditation Committee.



Joseph Smith

Joe became Headmaster of St Benedict's School, Ealing in September 2023. His previous role was as Head Master of The Oratory School, where he moved in 2016, having been Headmaster of the Oratory Preparatory School since 2010. Educated at Liverpool University, Mr Smith got a first in English and a PGCE at Brunel; he has a Masters in Education from Buckingham University. His first teaching post was at Colfe's School, followed by 12 years at Monkton Combe in Bath where he became Head of English and Housemaster. He is also a Governor of Downe House School and Berkhamsted School.



Mark Tindale

Mark trained as a Primary teacher with PE specialism at Liverpool John Moore's University, graduated 1996. Spent 5 years working in London, 2 years as a Year 3 teacher at St Margaret's School, Barking and three years teaching at Ibstock Place School, Roehampton (The original Froebel Presentation School). The last 20 years have been spent working at Castle Park School, Dublin, Ireland, predominantly as Deputy Head.

Married, with two teenage children. His hobbies include watersports, trail running, tennis and travel.



Mark Tomlins

Mark works across the HPL range in several areas: he works with schools, supporting their development from Induction through to accreditation; he has several areas of responsibility within the fellowship to manage the Global Lead Teachers and our formal and short courses; he also manages the HPSA programme. Mark has had a long career in education. His main experience is within the primary phase, although he has also held positions on governing bodies and the Peterborough Diocese Board of Education. Before joining the HPL core team, Mark led his last school through HPL accreditation achieving World Class School status.



Deniece Wheeler

Deniece takes a collaborative and consultative approach to business development and has developed a wide international network of education professionals. She supports High Performance Learning with the development and delivery of recruitment, training and events. Deniece has been based in Dubai working within the international education sector since 2008, consulting on behalf of education service providers across: education publishing; special educational needs provision; teacher recruitment; and teacher training. She served from 2019-2021 on the board of British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) to represent the needs of supporting partner organisations. Deniece has a BA (Hons) in Marketing, a CIM Professional Diploma in Marketing, and completed an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology & Coaching at the University of East London in 2022. Deniece is passionate about individual and organisational wellbeing and is a registered yoga & meditation teacher and accredited EMCC coach practitioner.