

Middle Leadership Conference: Driving School Improvement 2026

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Thursday 25th June 2026 Virtual Conference



Chair & Speakers Include:

Phil Jones
National Chair
National Association for
Pastoral Care in Education

Matt Bromley
*Education Author,
Journalist & Advisor*
bee

Sam Garner
*Wellbeing & Cognitive
Specialist*

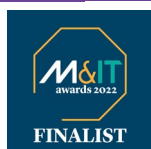
Mark Blackman
CEO
Leadership Together

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Middle leaders play a vital role in shaping the day-to-day experience of pupils and staff. Positioned between senior leadership and classroom practice, they are responsible for translating whole-school priorities into effective action within departments and phases. This one-day conference is designed to support Heads of Department, Phase Leaders and aspiring senior leaders in strengthening their leadership practice and developing greater confidence in their strategic role.

Across the day, speakers will explore the key aspects of effective middle leadership, including building positive and accountable team cultures, leading professional conversations, using data thoughtfully, and responding to national developments such as the Curriculum Review. Sessions will focus on practical approaches to reviewing and refining curriculum provision, supporting staff development and implementing improvement in a sustainable way.

The conference will provide space for reflection, discussion and the sharing of practical strategies. Delegates will leave with a clearer understanding of their leadership responsibilities, a set of realistic next steps, and renewed confidence in leading improvement within their teams and across the wider school.

By the end of the conference, you will be able to:

- Articulate the strategic role of the middle leader in driving school improvement and translating whole-school priorities into departmental action.
- Lead and sustain a high-performing team culture built on trust, clarity, accountability and shared professional standards.
- Interpret the implications of the Curriculum Review and evaluate your curriculum for coherence, ambition, sequencing and impact.
- Implement practical approaches to curriculum refinement that strengthen teaching quality without increasing unnecessary workload.
- Use data intelligently to identify priorities, plan intervention and monitor impact at subject or phase level.
- Conduct professional conversations with confidence, balancing challenge and support to improve practice.
- Manage competing priorities effectively and adopt strategies to sustain resilience and leadership effectiveness.
- Leave with clear, actionable next steps to strengthen culture, curriculum and outcomes within your area of responsibility.

10.00 Chair's introduction and welcome

Phil Jones *National Chair, National Association for Pastoral Care in Education*

10.10 Curriculum Leadership: Securing Quality and Coherence in a Changing Landscape

Matt Bromley
Education Author, Journalist & Advisor
bee

- Understanding national curriculum developments and expectations
- Evaluating sequencing, challenge and knowledge-building
- Leading sustainable curriculum refinement at subject level

10.50 Leading Difficult Conversations with Confidence

Sam Garner
Wellbeing & Cognitive Specialist

- Structuring professional dialogue around improvement
- Balancing support and accountability
- Managing resistance constructively

11.35 *Comfort break & virtual networking*

11.50 Driving School Improvement Through Middle Leadership

Steve Burnage, FCCT FRSA M.Ed.,
International Education Consultant, Inspector & Author
Mister Steve Training and Consultancy

- Translating whole-school priorities into departmental impact
- Influencing upwards, across and within teams
- Leading change with clarity and credibility

12.35 *Lunch break & virtual networking*

13.10 Building High-Performing Teams: Culture, Trust and Accountability

Jude Macdonald
Director of Inclusion, Keys Academies Trust
Director, Wolf Inclusion

- Establishing shared expectations and professional standards
- Creating psychological safety alongside high challenge
- Addressing underperformance with confidence

13.55 *Comfort break & virtual networking*

14.10 Using Data with Purpose: From Information to Action

Evie Booton - Ford
Senior Middle Leader & Director of English & Performing Arts
Wolverhampton Girls' High School

- Interpreting data meaningfully at department level
- Identifying gaps and planning effective intervention
- Avoiding data overload while maintaining rigour

14.55 Workload, Wellbeing and Sustainable Leadership

Mark Blackman
CEO
Leadership Together

- Managing competing priorities as a middle leader
- Delegating effectively and building team capacity
- Sustaining energy and resilience in a demanding role

15.35 Progression into Senior Leadership - Am I Ready for the Next Step?

Andy Carroll
Head of Sixth Form
Halliford School

- 5 Questions Every Teacher Should Ask Themselves Before Applying for Senior Leadership
- Why Good Teachers Get Stuck
- Maximising Your Chance of Success

16.15 *Chair's Closing Remarks*

There will be time for Questions & Answers after each speaker session

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Download

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Virtual Format

This virtual conference will include access to a user friendly virtual format which will provide you with the full conference experience from your workplace or home.

Date

Thursday 25th June 2026

Conference Fee

- ☐ £295 + VAT (£354.00) for schools, NHS, social care, private healthcare organisations and universities.
- ☐ £250 + VAT (£300.00) for voluntary sector / charities.
- ☐ £495 + VAT (£594.00) for commercial organisations.

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