



**December 2020**

**“inspiring future generations of teachers”**

## **Our first edition newsletter!**

“Welcome to the first edition of the Berkshire Teaching School Alliance newsletter! The Teaching School has had a successful year, despite the challenges of Covid-19. We have recruited a high calibre of school direct trainees and continue working in partnership with the University of Reading to provide professional teacher training courses. The lead school for Berkshire Teaching School Alliance, Maiden Erlegh School, was visited by Ofsted just before the lockdown and judged the school to be outstanding in all categories. The school was also part of Reading University’s involvement in the Ofsted Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Inspection Pilot and the feedback received was very positive. The Teaching School has recruited over 40 Specialist Leaders in Education. They, alongside our two National Leaders of Education, work on school-to-school improvement and professional development within and outside of Maiden Erlegh Trust. The Trust also has four Fellows of the Chartered College of Teaching. Finally, we are excited to announce that Heathermount School, a special school joined Berkshire TSA in September 2020, taking our Alliance partners to 15 schools.”

**Rob Buck, Director of Teaching School**



**For further information and regular updates, follow us on...**



## **New Starters Induction Day 17 September 2020**

**@BerkshireTSA**

We welcomed our new School Direct and Reading University Core trainees in September. The induction day included an introduction and tour of the school, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and of course Covid-19 measures. New trainee, Poppy, had this to say about the course. “As soon as I entered the gates I received an incredibly warm welcome from every teacher I came across and any nerves I had were calmed (quite a feat for a new trainee!). From the induction talks you could see that the culture of collaboration, excellence in teaching and support was deeply embedded throughout the school. This was evident no more so than in the English department that I feel very lucky to be working in. The teachers I’ve met are all incredibly knowledgeable, friendly and inspiring in the skill and creativity they bring to their classrooms. I have come away from the first few weeks of training energised and looking forward to spending more time at school and getting to know all the students!”

## **What is a Teaching School?**

Teaching schools give successful schools an important role in the training and professional development of new teachers and qualified staff as well as contributing to the raising of standards through school-to-school support and Continuing Professional and Leadership Development. Maiden Erlegh School is a National Teaching School designated by the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Find out more by clicking the icons or visiting the website.

[www.berkshireteachingschoolalliance.co.uk](http://www.berkshireteachingschoolalliance.co.uk)



**Berkshire TSA is part of Maiden Erlegh Trust. For more information please visit the Trust website: [www.maidenerleghtrust.org/](http://www.maidenerleghtrust.org/)**

## Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) Q&A

**Staff name :** Cat Bell

**Title :** Head of Science / Specialist Leader in Education

**School:** Maiden Erlegh School

**Quote from the staff member :**  
"Less is more"



**Every issue we quiz one of our BTSA colleagues!**

**What is your role?** Head of Science at Maiden Erlegh school. I lead a large science Faculty, with 24 teaching staff and 5 technical support staff. We have a large number of students who go on to study the sciences at A level. I oversee the science heads of department/ subject leads and develop the vision for the faculty. I organise curriculum development and support with the professional development of my team by delivering CPD.

**What do you find most rewarding about your role?** Ultimately

my time in the classroom with the students. I find the moments in a lesson when a student who was struggling suddenly has that light bulb moment particularly rewarding. Additionally in my SLE role, I have completed some long term projects doing outreach work with a range of different schools. It has been especially fulfilling when you see first hand the improvements at the school which are then also recognised by external verifiers such as Ofsted.

**Who inspired you to pursue the career you have today?** To be honest, teaching was never on my radar and I was heading down a very different career path, however when I did begin to contemplate teaching as a career, my grandmother was a big inspiration as she had been a teacher and lecturer at university.

**What challenges did you initially face when you became a teacher?** Initially my focus was very much about what I was doing in the classroom. As you gain in experience you realise that your focus changes and it is all about what the students are doing and how you can facilitate their learning and understanding of the concepts you are teaching.

**What advice would you give to a trainee teacher?** Be organised! Try to stay ahead in terms of lesson planning and prepping resources. I tend to ensure I have my materials ready a week in advance and it really does help when you have to deal with the unexpected.

**What inspires you?** My colleagues. It has been a difficult few months for us all recently in adjusting to life and teaching in the midst of a global pandemic. We are a strong team and have worked together to support each other and develop an enormous range of new skills.

**Recommend a book you recently read** I am Pilgrim by Terry Hayes. Nothing to do with education but I found it rather gripping.

**What is your secret talent that no one knows about?** I am ambidextrous, which really helps when using more than 1 colour to write on the whiteboard!

### UPCOMING COURSES / CPD OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ Curriculum Leadership Development Programme
- ⇒ Pastoral Leadership Development Programme
- ⇒ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
- ⇒ Autism Awareness

For more information contact

mesteachingschool@maidenerleghtrust.org

### TEACHING SCHOOL HUB – 2021

We are pleased to announce that we have applied to become a Teaching School Hub. Should we succeed, we will become one of 87 centres of excellence in the country, replacing the previous network of 750 teaching schools. The BTSA lead school is an outstanding school that will build strong partnerships with other schools to support teachers and leaders. We hope to play a significant role in delivering the Early Career Framework. Fingers crossed!

### Train To Teach Information Evening 26 November

Berkshire TSA held its first ever virtual Train to Teach event. There was huge interest, despite being held virtually. The evening included a presentation by the Director of Berkshire TSA and a Q & A session. Our attendees found the event very informative. Berkshire TSA colleagues usually enjoy interacting with prospective applicants and delegates and answering queries in person, however under the Covid restrictions, safety comes first. If you have questions about training to teach, or wish to find out about the school direct route and more, please email:

mesteachingschool@maidenerleghtrust.org



## School Improvement Work during Covid

Maiden Erlegh Trust and Berkshire Teaching School Alliance have colleagues with an excellent track record of providing effective and professional support to other schools. Our NLE (National Leader in Education) and CEO of Maiden Erlegh Trust, Mary Davies, regularly delivers school improvement work.

***"As a National Leader of Education, I have the privilege of working with colleagues in different schools and seeing the tremendous work going on in all sorts of settings. Usually, this would mean going into schools and/or arranging visits to one or more of the schools in the Trust. Since March, we have had to do things differently, but the ingenuity and creativity of the profession has come to the fore. Projects have included working with leaders on safeguarding, curriculum development and a range of aspects of leadership. It is also very exciting to be able to include Specialist Leaders of Education to add a different perspective and help in the broadest way possible. I am always grateful to be invited to work with other schools and amazed at their generosity of time and expertise. It is a real exchange."***



### NQT SPOTLIGHT

The 2019–2020 cohort of trainee teachers completed their training in unique circumstances this year. This cohort have demonstrated flexibility and resilience in the unique circumstances caused by the Covid outbreak. They have skills and experience that will be invaluable to schools as they have become newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Our NQT programme supports NQTS by providing tailored support and professional development to each individual. Current NQT Elysia is enjoying the programme,



***"I am absolutely loving my first term at Maiden Erlegh as an NQT. It's been a very unusual first term, but busy none the less (I'm not quite sure where the last few months have gone!)."***

***My fellow NQT colleagues and I have all been assigned a tutor group, which has been a great way to build a pastoral rapport with students. We have had half-termly observations and meetings with our mentors, and received constructive feedback each time, as well as receiving lots of guidance from departments. Despite it not being ideal, the opportunity to teach online lessons has also been a great learning experience."***

***We have also engaged in a variety of NQT conferences, some within the Maiden Erlegh Trust, and others extended to the Wokingham Borough. These conferences have covered behaviour management, supporting SEND, teaching & learning, and the use of data. Whilst it has been a shame that we have not been able to meet up with other NQT's in person, it has still been great to share experiences and pick up tips for the year ahead. Thank you to the members of staff within the school and Trust who have delivered these sessions, we're all looking forward to the conferences in the new year."***

***The support that we have all received from members of staff has been incredible, so thank you all for being so welcoming and supportive for the beginning of our teaching careers. "***

For more information about the Teaching School, follow us on social media or visit our website.

[www.berkshireteachingschoolalliance.co.uk/](http://www.berkshireteachingschoolalliance.co.uk/)

[mesteachingschool@maidenleghtrust.org](mailto:mesteachingschool@maidenleghtrust.org)



@BerkshireTSA

**Don't just feel  
local pride,  
teach it.**

We're looking for new teachers to help change the lives of students. As a trainee not only could you receive a bursary of up to £26k, but you'll have the reward of developing local people that you can be proud of.

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## Become a Youth Mental Health First Aider

### 2 Day Course

Thursday 4 February 2021 09:00 – 16:00

Friday 5 February 2021 09:00 – 16:00

Venue: Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Reades Lane  
Sonning Common, Reading RG4 9LN

The Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course is for everyone who works with, lives with or supports young people aged 8-18. They will teach you the skills and confidence to spot the signs of mental health issues in a young person, offer first aid and guide them towards the support they need. In doing so, you can speed up a young person's recovery and stop a mental health issue from getting worse.

The course will teach you to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis – and even potentially stop a crisis from happening.

But more than that, we aim to give you the information and skills to look after your own mental health so that you can set an example for young people. By giving you the tools to have these conversations, we hope to empower you to create a mentally healthy, supportive environment in your family, school, peer group or community.

Let's create a future where mental health is treated as a normal part of life, in the same way as physical health. A future where every young person has access to support if they need it.

This course qualifies you as a Youth Mental Health First Aider, giving you:

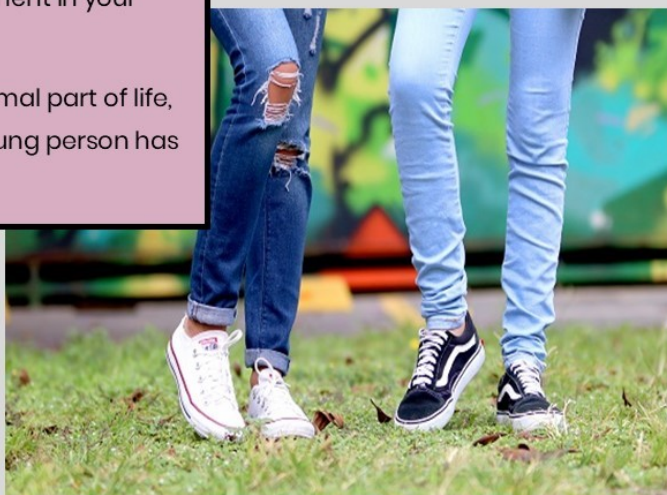
- **An in-depth understanding of young people's mental health and factors that affect wellbeing**
- **Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues**
- **Confidence to reassure and support a young person in distress**
- **Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening**
- **Knowledge to help a young person recover their health by guiding them to further support – whether that's through self-help sites, their place of learning, the NHS, or a mix – engaging with parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate**
- **Ability to support a young person with a long term mental health issue or disability to thrive**
- **Tools to look after your own mental wellbeing**

### Everyone who completes the course gets:

A certificate of attendance to say you are a Youth Mental Health First Aider

A Youth MHFA manual to refer to whenever you need it

A workbook including some helpful tools to support your own mental health



### Course fees £300 (including course materials)

To book please email

[mesteachingschool@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:mesteachingschool@maidenerleghtrust.org)

For more information about Mental Health First Aid please visit <https://mhfaengland.org>

**Course Instructor: Ali Walker**, MHFA  
England Accredited and Director of  
Inclusion and Safeguarding Maiden  
Erlegh Trust



@berkshiresa 0118 926 2467



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**VIRTUAL CPD  
SESSION**

# Autism Awareness Event

**27 January 2021**

**11.30—12.30**

Do you work in a school setting and wish to learn more about autism and how you can support students in your school? Join us for an introduction to autism awareness in a school setting. Our event will be delivered by senior specialists working within a special school.

## Topics covered:

- **Key behaviours exhibited by autistic children in the classroom setting (autism in the round)**
- **What teachers can do to support autistic children / intervention strategies**
- **Looking specifically at autism in females in a school setting with support strategies**
- **Flagging materials and further support for schools**

## Our Hosts



•**Priya Pillay** – Senior Speech and Language Therapist, Lead of the Therapy Team and member of SLT, Heathermount School



•**Nicole Durrans** – Primary teacher for 12 years, Assistant Head Teacher and Leader of Foundation and Primary Departments, Heathermount School

**Session fee £10**

To book email:  
[mesteachingschool@maidenrleghtrust.org](mailto:mesteachingschool@maidenrleghtrust.org)



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