



**Flying
High
Partnership**

Flying High Career Journeys

Case Studies

we are flying high
where everyone counts



WELCOME

We know that investing in personal development alongside the professional development of our staff ensures they can deliver the very best opportunities for our children.

These case studies shine a light on just a few of our team members' and their career journeys so far with Flying High.

More details about carers with Flying High and the benefits we provide for employees can be found on our [careers site](#).

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Case study

People Principle 3

Professional Development and Growth
Investing in and supporting our people to reach their full potential by providing appropriate pathways for professional learning, development and progression.



“The desire to improve standards for children and young people, particularly around social mobility; allowing children to think anything is possible, to believe in them and be a champion for them. The opportunity to make a difference to the lives of children that don’t have that experience elsewhere - that is what drives me to get up in the morning and make each day count.”

Jess Smith

Headteacher,
2023



Career Timeline



My leadership journey

"I joined Greenwood Primary Academy as an RQT in 2014. I held a range of basic subject leader roles at first, gaining Key Stage One phase leader in 2017.

I was successful in gaining the Deputy Headteacher post at Leamington Primary Academy. I spent two years there before being promoted to Headteacher at The Green Infant School in January 2023.

When I gained my headship, it took me a while for reality to sink in. I was excited but also very nervous. I was most excited about getting to know a new community, new children and to build my own staff team around me.

Aspirations for my Headship

My aspirations for my headship is firstly and foremost to improve provision and outcomes for children, to provide them with motivation to want to come to school and to provide a wider curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

I would like to be able to enable my staff to grow too. Growing young staff and leaders is a passion of mine, developed from my time as a learning coach and class mentor for SCITT students at Leamington.

have no doubt it will be a massive learning curve, but

everything I've done in the last 5 years has been a learning curve and I am keen to keep learning and making sure I'm always putting the children first.

Inspiration

One of the Trust's strengths is spotting and developing people which I want to emulate with my staff. I wouldn't be where I am today if it hadn't happened for me. As an example, in the early years, I was observed teaching Maths by a Trust leader who encouraged me to go for Maths subject lead. Now I'm an NCTM Maths specialist.

Several Trust leaders have been pivotal in my career progression and I can never thank them enough. Claire Stirland, Director of Education has been instrumental. She has encouraged me and given me the confidence to go for things I never would have otherwise gone for. It's meant so much having that person who I can talk to, who is open and honest with me and has my best interests at heart. She's been an unofficial mentor and an absolute icon!

I have also had the benefit of two very strong female role models in leadership (Headteachers of both my schools). They were both so influential in my leadership development. If I hadn't had seen them doing it, I wouldn't have thought I could.

Flying Forward to Headship

The Flying Forward to Headship program has made me think about the importance of professionalism and presence as headteacher for staff, children and parents to see that the 'ship is steady'. It's helped me to develop my understanding that a leader's behaviour is contagious and that how you present yourself is how other people see you.

The programme allowed me to work and share in a group of other like minded people, who were all on the same professional journey with similar aims. Some gained Headships along the way, so I learned a lot listening to their stories. I found the additional element of being given access to research very useful too.

Looking back

The advice I would give me younger self is to take every opportunity that presents itself, and to stick to your goals; don't procrastinate, just do it. I would also advise myself to make sure to take care of myself.

Realise, every day, each professional step you take, is a stepping stone towards your ultimate goal"



Case study

“Throughout my career, I've learned so much from colleagues around me. From my year group partner who hugely influenced my practice, to my Headteacher who encouraged me to take up leadership roles across the school and Trustwide, I have embraced the chance to push myself out of my comfort zone and try something new.”

Sam Jenkins

Key Stage 2 Phase
Leader, 2023



Flying High Partnership

Career Timeline

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Teacher Trainee
inspiring leaders
2015-16

NQT & Y6 teacher
Beeston Fields Primary School
2016/17

Subject Lead for Computer (school)
2018

Specialist Subject Lead, Trust wide
2019

Debate Club lead, Trust wide
2020

NPOSL
2019

Learning coach for Inspiring Leaders
2021

Key Stage 2 Leader
Hawthorne Primary School
Sept 2022

My Flying High journey started as a SCITT trainee in 2016 which, while hard work, was thoroughly enjoyable. My first placement, at Mapplewells Primary School made me fall in love with the profession straight away. Sam Leek (now head at Bilsthorpe) was my class mentor and learning coach there and was instrumental in my development.

My second placement at Greenwood Primary School, re-affirmed I'd made the right decision to choose primary teaching. In the SCITT programme every student is learning in a school based environment and surrounded by **supportive people** to help them become the best teacher they can be.

I've been influenced by many people throughout my career. Russyn Cast (then Professional Lead for the SCITT) was the first. She was **incredibly nurturing** and wanted everything single student to get through because she believed in them. She was so invested in us and always had time for me even after graduating. It made all the difference in those early years.

I gained my first job as an NQT through the Trust NQT Pool at Beeston Fields Primary School. This experience can be seen as daunting, but I really enjoyed the process. Applicants were put on the spot, but I enjoyed being adaptive and rose the challenge.

My first year group was year 6, as an NQT. That was scary! However, I realised that the leadership team had belief in me, so I took it as a compliment. Having had an amazing experience as a trainee, **this experience was challenging and way beyond my comfort zone**. I made mistakes and was thrown in at the deep end, but I loved it and looking back, it was the start of the making of me as a teacher. I learned so much from the people around me and had a lot of support.

In my third year I became Computer subject lead for my school. I also became Debate Club lead for the Trust. I loved getting involved in something trust wide, working with teachers and children from across different schools.

Being a Specialist Teacher for the whole Trust gave me a handle on how computing feeds into the wider Trust curriculum and the impact it can have. It allowed me the opportunity to lead other PLCs and SCITT courses too and in doing so, meet colleagues from other schools and have impact on their **development and learning** too.

Sam Jenkins

Key Stage 2 Phase Leader, 2023

That's the lovely thing about the Trust, every time I go to Head Office or to another school, I see someone I know through having had this experience. Even though the Trust is getting bigger, it still has that family feel which you can't replicate.

I was influenced greatly by my Y6 teacher partner at Beeston Fields, Laura Clark (who was also Teaching and Learning lead for the Trust at the time). She's the most organised person I know and has a vision for where she wanted to take the year group. She's like an **unofficial mentor** to me and we have kept in touch.

While at Beeston Fields, I was a learning coach to teacher trainees which was added another dimension to my experience and coaching skills. Because I'd been through the same programme, I could speak to them about it and try and help them out; I knew the stresses, the worries, the work load so I have been able to talk about my experiences. It has enabled me to **support the development** of numerous trainee teachers, who have gone on to have careers within the trust, which is very rewarding.

After 5 years at Beeston, I was looking for the next steps in terms of my progression. I wanted to stay within the Trust if I could because I don't know anything other than the Trust and I didn't want to move away. I was successful at gaining the Key Stage 2 Phase leader role at Hawthorne Primary School. I am also T&L and English Lead as well as computer lead for the school. I continue to be computer lead and the debate club lead for the Trust too

Looking back, I've learned that enthusiasm and positivity gets you a long way. Even when things are tough, remain positive and a beacon of happiness for the children because that's what they need and it creates a place where they want to be.

In terms of my own formal CPD, I started NPQSL in Sept 2021. It has been really interesting and useful so far. It has helped me **learn completely new things** like budgets, deployment of staff, logistics of how a school runs day to day and setting a vision for the future, knowledge and skills you need as a senior leader.

I also made sure I sat with Secondary colleagues, which allowed me to discuss and understand the transition to year 7 better. From a year 6 point of view, my role is help prepare students for the transition to secondary school so it was very helpful to have those to have conversations.

I realised that some of the issues faced by secondary schools are the same in primary schools, such as strategies for behaviour management etc. This understanding has **impacted** the way I ensure my Year 6s are prepared and supported for their next step.

I'm taking progression step by step. Moving from Beeston into a completely different school was a first massive step, taking totally me out of my comfort zone, where people don't know me, with **new leadership responsibilities**, managing adults as well as children. I've loved the experience and its made me realise that I aspire to deputy headship and beyond... eventually!

I've spent my career so far in two completely different schools within the Trust. I can safely say that the values and ethos are exactly the same. Both schools feel like family, and **values** are embedded in children. Coming from Beeston, an established Trust school, I like to think I've been able to support Hawthorne to embed in as they were new to the Trust when I joined.

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Case study

“Before I had even joined the Trust, I felt valued and invested in. I joined Flying Forward to Headship and the whole Trust Inset day before I started my post, both of which left me feeling invigorated, re-energised and excited to get started.”

Kristabel Beeley

Deputy Headteacher, Beeston Fields Primary School


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Career Timeline



When I qualified as a teacher, I wanted to be an Educational Psychologist. However, leaders at the school at the time encouraged me to continue in teaching. They recognized potential in me and saw that I had a constant desire to improve myself and the people around me to achieve the very best for the children. I am a big believer in continuous improvement, based on research, evidence and collaboration. Therefore I learned not to be afraid to challenge the status quo where I feel improvements can be made.

In my first school, I became TLR for Early Years and then Assistant Headteacher. I led the Early Years unit through an expansion and restructure and subsequent Ofsted visit, taking it from RI to Good with outstanding features.

I joined my second school as an Assistant head, progressing to Deputy within a year. Both roles taught me a lot and developed my leadership skills.

My roles in leadership developed my ambition to be Headteacher. I completed NPQH which included conducting a project around changing lesson structures and including principles around cognitive science.

The next step

When I started looking for suitable Headship roles I knew I wanted to be in a Trust in order to have access to support and collaboration as a first time Headteacher. I researched Flying High and really liked what I saw. I saw a Headteacher post at a Trust school. I visited & met Paul Goodman, Deputy CEO and Karl Clowery, Head of Hucknall Flying High. Their representation of the Trust confirmed to me that I wanted to apply. I wasn't successful but I considered this process as something to learn and grow from and I appreciated the honest feedback and advice I was given by Trust leaders which matched my feelings too.

Reflections

This process made me realise I wasn't quite ready for headship because getting it right matters for the children and it also matters for the staff. I just knew I wanted to continue my career with this Trust. I wanted to see another Headteacher in action and have opportunity to watch their practice while I developed my own. I wasn't made to feel as if the door had been shut, but rather that the Trust had recognized my potential and gave me confidence to continue looking for the right post.

In April 2022, I was successful in securing a Deputy Headship post at Beeston Fields. The Headteacher was a System Leader for the Trust, so my role involved acting up as Head for 2 days a week. A perfect way to develop my skills as a leader of the whole school and get a real feel for the realities of headship. Since joining, I've stepped in to temporarily lead the Early Years unit, giving me opportunity to further hone my craft and develop my leadership skills.

Kristabel Beeley

Deputy Headteacher, Beeston Fields Primary School

Starting with the Trust

Before I had even joined the Trust, I felt valued and invested in. I joined Flying Forward to Headship and the whole Trust Inset day before I started my post, both of which left me feeling invigorated, re-energised and excited to get started. Hearing Chris Wheatley, CEO speak openly and honestly about his leadership journey as well as sharing his vision for the Trust reaffirmed to me that this was where I belonged and it sparked new flames in me. The values of the Trust that no child gets left behind; that every child matters resounded with my own beliefs, and it was clear this lived in the Trust on a daily basis.

Flying Forward to Headship

Flying Forward to Headship gave me the confidence I needed to come in to a new school and establish myself as leader. The content based on theory and research such as the Radical Cander and Blueprint Approach was refreshing and fascinating and allowed me the space to reflect on the leader I aspire to be. It was what I needed to hear, there's permission to make mistakes, as long as you grow and learn from them.

I was inspired by the CEO and other Trust leaders being honest and open about their own journeys. They shared what's worked well what hasn't worked well for them, and gave recognition that we are all real people and the journey is bumpy. It gave me reassurance and confidence. Chris gave me great advice which has stayed with me and helped me particularly around managing and leading people.

For me, leadership is about emotional intelligence, where my team need to feel valued, feel important and see the impact of their work, so I have developed skills in order to do that effectively.

Advice to my younger self?

You don't need to be perfect. Its ok to be learning and have it as a journey, rather than feeling like you need to be perfect all the time from the start.

Career Aspirations

Headship is where I'd like to go next, but it's a big step. I'm inspired by people like my Headteacher, Angela (Beeston Headteacher) who is a system leader who supports other schools in the Trust too. Maybe somewhere in my futures I'd like to do something wider than just my school but that is a long way in the future.

What gets me up in the morning?

The children! The children deserve the best deal and education is the vehicle to allow them to aspire to be whatever they want to be. I've always wanted to work in disadvantaged areas. I feel the world is really unfair and for some children before they've even gone to school they are on the back foot. I will go over and above to make sure I give them the best, because I want them to have a good deal in the same way that I would want my own children to have this.

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“ I consider it a privilege to be in a position where I can support other site managers to ensure all our schools are respectful, clean, tidy learning environments for our children. I’ve been where they are, so I know how they are feeling. We work together collaboratively to achieve positive results.”

Simon Chambers

Site Standards & Compliance Support Manager



Career Timeline



I started as an Assistant Site Manager at a special needs school. My boss there was very supportive, set high standards and moulded me into who I am today. I learned so much from him. He encouraged me to be the best I could, giving me advice and support along the way. That reassurance from him helped me take the next step into site management. When I became Site Manager at a different school, I found it quite a daunting at first. There was lots of responsibility and lots to learn but I found my feet and helped to turn the school around. I was there for 3 years but realised there was a ceiling and felt there was no where to progress. Then the Site Manager post at the newly opened Hucknall Flying High Academy came up. From researching about the Trust and meeting the staff, I identified with the ethos and values, and it was clear they invested in their staff. I have been fortunate to have been inspired and supported by colleagues such as Jeanette who was leading on Estates across the Trust at the time. She saw my work ethic, expertise and knowledge that I brought and it was great to help the school to establish roots and grow its reputation as a caring and nurturing school that was always well maintained and cared for. I would like to say I’m very proud of where we started and where I left Hucknall and I wrote a letter to them to tell them that when I left. After a year in post, I was successful in becoming Lead Professional for Site Management, a Trust wide role. There was a need to balance the two roles, and I’m grateful to Karl Clowery, the Headteacher, who was fully supportive and recognised the value in me having this role. It enabled me to work with other site managers across the Trust to learn and share best practice which I could bring back to Hucknall too.

With the Trust growing, it was increasingly clear that site management has a key role to play in supporting the Headteacher and business manager in estate management. The Lead Professional role grew and soon proved unmanageable as a dual role. The post of Site Standards and Compliance Support Manager was therefore created and I was successful in achieving it.

Supporting others as I had been

This new role enables me to provide real support those with less experience. I’ve been on that journey so I know what it’s like to feel daunted at the role, particularly around requirements of compliance. Trust Site Managers now have got someone to ask questions and seek advice. I make it clear no one is ‘bothering me’ because they’ve taken the time to contact so they obviously need an answer and I am there for them.

I also manage non compliance cases and support schools with specialist knowledge where needed.

Another part of my role is supporting schools with induction for new site managers, so they feel immediately valued and a part of the team. They learn about the Trust values and expectations of the role, but also that they are not on their own. They have me as a first point of call, backed up by a network of Site Managers, the Estate Team, as well as the school they are in. In this way, I support our site managers to be the best they can be.

Simon Chambers

Site Standards and Compliance Support
Manager

Maintaining high standards

I consider it a privilege to be in a position where I can support other site managers to ensure all our schools are respectful, clean, tidy learning environments for our children. This is achieved through effective triangular working between themselves, the Headteacher and Business Manager, which is crucial to improving and maintaining site standards.

My ultimate vision is that all schools gain the Safety Smart award. (site management outstanding Ofsted equivalent). Only a couple have it at the moment, but I would like to support all our schools to reach that standard in the next few years because our children deserve the best environments to learn.

Collaboration is key

I recently lead and have presented to the Professional Learning Community for site managers – another skill I am developing! This is based on the model already employed by Trust teaching staff, which brings all the site managers from across the Trust together once a term to collaborate, network and learn from each other. It's enabled me to develop effective working relationships based on mutual respect and trust. I've been where they are, so I know the challenges that they are facing so we can work together to resolve them and we are already seeing the benefits of this in schools.

Nurture and support to develop

I'm fortunate to have been talent spotted and have such a supportive team. Nick has totally put his trust in me. Dave is extremely knowledgeable in his role but had no education experience when he started, so I'd like to think I've helped him understand the nuances of the role. The Estates team work very well as a team as we offer different knowledge, specialisms and expertise so we are able to help and support each other. The Trust will continue to grow and who knows what the futures holds. There's a very clear path for progression now for site managers in our schools but it's about being ready for when it comes up and being willing to step up and stretch out of your comfort zone too.

What gets me up in the morning?

My role is a new one and we are forging a new path for the team, but already I feel its making a difference. Everyone in the Trust is here to do a good job. I get up because I know that I can make a difference, if I wasn't there who would my colleagues call if they had an issue? I feel trusted to do my job and I'm proud to be a part of my team. Our schools are on a journey and I'm on it with them, and I'm really proud that we can work on it together. When I go home at night, I ask myself if I've done something positive today, and if I have, it's been a good day.

My role is a new one and we are forging a new paths with our schools, but already I feel it's making a difference.



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