

Guide to System Leaders for School Support: Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)



Welcome to our guide to accessing and securing support for your school through deployment of our Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs). Our alliance includes a range of mainstream Primary, Secondary and Special school partners, whose skilled leaders are available to support your staff.



What are Specialist Leaders of Education ?

Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) are 'outstanding' middle and senior leaders who have the skills to support individuals or teams in other schools. SLEs can provide evidence that they understand what outstanding leadership practice in their own area of expertise is and know how to support other leaders in their own school context.

Teaching Schools are responsible for designating SLEs, brokering SLE deployments and providing ongoing support. The SLE role is designed to help improve the quality of school leadership through school-to-school support and peer-to-peer learning, ultimately raising standards and improving the outcomes for children.



How will a specialist leader of education benefit their own school ?

The SLE programme:

- is an excellent form of continuing professional development (CPD) for middle and senior leaders, enabling them to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities in a variety of ways
- further develops SLEs' coaching, mentoring and facilitation skills, which can also be used to support colleagues in their own school through internal training and development
- gives individuals the opportunity to learn about different school contexts and systems, which will in turn help them to develop their practice in their own school
- supports schools' internal succession-planning strategies, by enabling individuals to demonstrate they are ready to step up to the next leadership level
- supports staff retention by motivating and re-energising leaders who are taking on this new role



Schools in receipt of SLE support

Feedback from current SLE work and similar leadership programmes tells us that leaders value and benefit from the support of their peers.

This type of peer support:

- is credible, because it is rooted in current leadership practice and draws on real, relevant experience
- takes place within the supported school, with the SLE working alongside staff and taking into account demands on their time
- is flexible and bespoke, adapting to the particular needs of the supported school
- brings a fresh perspective to specific challenges or issues, as well as specialist knowledge and expertise
- takes a coaching approach, meaning that development will be collaborative
- helps to assure long-term, sustainable improvement – the aim is to help supported leaders to develop their own leadership capacity
- can contribute to improving school performance overall by providing a specific focus for development and implementing tangible goals that staff can really engage with



What does the SLE do ?

As an SLE, you will be deployed into schools to develop the leadership capacity of individuals and teams using coaching and/or facilitation that draws on the knowledge and expertise in your specialist area. Your work will contribute to improving outcomes for students in other school settings.

Typically, SLEs will work with middle and senior leaders to:

- carry out diagnostic visits
- develop action plans, identifying key priorities and SMART targets
- provide one-to-one or group support
- offer coaching and mentoring support
- provide access to resources and training.

The ultimate aim of SLEs will always be to contribute significantly to improving the outcomes for children



PROCESS FOR BROKERING SLEs

Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) come under the designation of teaching schools. Application for SLE support in a school is brokered by Linwood Teaching School Alliance (LTSA).

Process:

Applications for brokering SLEs are made via LTSA by contacting:

Kate Tuck, Director, Linwood Teaching School Alliance katetuck@linwood.bournemouth.sch.uk

The Headteacher of the school requesting support and the Director of LTSA determine the scope, timescale and anticipated outcomes of the intervention.

The SLE contacts the Headteacher to complete a '*System Leader Action Plan*'.

The SLE then meets with the Director of LTSA to finalise arrangements.

At the end of the agreed support the SLE and the headteacher of the school complete the '*SLE evaluation form*'.

The completed evaluation form is forwarded to the Director of LTSA .

SLE rate is £350 per day. £300 will be paid to the SLE's home school to cover release and travel; £50 will be retained by LTSA to cover training, support and admin for SLEs. Costs to the host school will be calculated on a daily rate or pro rata for half days.

SLEs Deployment Agreement

SLEs will be monitored and held accountable for the quality and impact of the support they provide. They will be expected to provide evidence that their work has had a positive impact with measurable outcomes. As Linwood TSA is responsible for the quality assurance of all our SLEs' work, we need to formalise the arrangement with written agreements (see above).

Being an SLE is a really beneficial experience both for the SLE and their home school. They get to experience a wide range of different learning environments and challenges, developing their skills considerably, which in turns benefits their day-to-day role at their school. Indeed a number of SLEs have been given additional responsibilities from their school due to the increased skill and expertise that they have developed. Similarly it gives outstanding staff an opportunity to impact on the life chance of students from a wide range of schools which is an incredibly rewarding experience.



Frequently Asked Questions :

Who makes the decision about SLE deployment?	The Teaching School identifies an appropriate SLE and will request their release from their own school for an agreed period of time.
What are the priorities for SLE deployment ?	To develop a self-improving school system. SLEs intended to enable staff in other schools to develop their own practice through coaching
Can the Local Authority or other strategic partner block book an SLE (s) to meet its own priorities?	Yes - as long as the deployment is in keeping with the Teaching School priorities and capacity.
How many days should an SLE be deployed in one school?	The amount of time is negotiable, as long as the deployment contract is clear and the targets are appropriate/realistic to the timescale. Teaching Schools are looking to deploy their SLEs for up to 10 days a year.
What is a reasonable expectation of the flexibility of deployment of an SLE?	SLEs have timetabled commitments in their schools therefore receiving schools need to respect this.
Is the SLE involved in the initial meetings to discuss the SLE Deployment Agreement?	Not usually – the SLE will be introduced once the initial diagnostic meeting has taken place and the most appropriate SLE identified.

Please see our website, www.linwoodtsa.org.uk for further information about our SLEs, including pen portraits, how you might apply to become an SLE and links to further support.

