



# Choose Herts

Build your **teaching career** with us







# WELCOME TO HERTFORDSHIRE!

We are delighted to showcase aspects of working and living in Hertfordshire. You can explore a taster of what there is to offer through these pages and we hope that you will be intrigued to find out more for yourself. Hertfordshire has something for everyone from Harry Potter to Hatfield House, through to Hitchin Lavender and so much more.

You can read what life is like teaching and leading in our schools to give you a feel for the support, training and development available in Hertfordshire to new and experienced teachers, headteachers and support staff.

Hertfordshire is a beautiful county ideally located for easy access to major road, rail and airport connections. Frequent train services run throughout the county into London giving access to all the cultural and leisure activities it has to offer. Heading north to the hills or across to the coast for a weekend break could not be easier!

The county is a wonderful mix of thriving market towns, picturesque small villages and quiet waterways. It is also home to bigger, bustling towns with bags of employment and career opportunities, all set within beautiful countryside. Hertfordshire towns are regularly featured in the top ten places to live in the UK each year for desirability and family life; house and rental prices vary by location and there is something to suit everyone's pocket.

Hertfordshire is home to over 520 schools, with nearly 200,000 young people educated within its borders through an extensive range of educational settings. Check out the map on pages 4 and 5 to see the locations of towns and districts and the numbers of schools. The school types vary as much as the locations within which they are situated, giving a wide choice of places to work and study. There are some thought-provoking insights into our schools and the creative, high-quality staff teams viewed from the NQT and headteacher perspective.

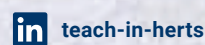
With so many schools to choose from – where do you start? There are some great tips in our recruitment feature on 'How will I find my perfect job?' on pages 8 and 9. We would also encourage you to become familiar with Teach in Herts. New job opportunities are regularly available for NQTs, phase and subject specialists through to leadership roles – all made easy to access on our website/jobs board – [teachinherts.com](http://teachinherts.com). Please register to get all the latest updates; more info on page 7.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), will be particularly drawn to our information on the comprehensive NQT induction and training opportunities showing the breadth and specialisation of the training offer and support available in Hertfordshire.

We are always happy to hear from you or answer questions at Teach in Herts, so do not hesitate to get in touch.

*The Teach in Herts team*

Follow us on our social media channels



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# HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS



## Stevenage

Primary: 27  
Secondary: 7  
Special: 4

Bedfordshire



Luton Airport

## St. Albans

Primary: 53  
Secondary: 12  
Special: 4  
All Through: 1

M1

Tring

## Dacorum

Primary: 57  
Secondary: 9  
Special: 3

Hemel  
Hempstead

Buckinghamshire

Watford

M25

## Watford

Primary: 32  
Secondary: 6  
Special: 1

## Three Rivers

Primary: 28  
Secondary: 7  
Special: 2



Heathrow Airport

Hertfordshire schools advertise their vacancies daily on [teachinherts.com](http://teachinherts.com) so register now to receive the latest job alerts in your preferred districts.

## North Herts

Primary: 55  
Secondary: 7  
Special: 2

# Cambridgeshire

## East Herts

Primary: 62  
Secondary: 13  
Special: 3  
All Through: 1



## Welwyn Hatfield

Primary: 39  
Secondary: 6  
Special: 3

## Broxbourne

Primary: 33  
Secondary: 7  
Special: 1

## Hertsmere

Primary: 32  
Secondary: 7  
Special: 2

## Essex

To London

First schools and nurseries attached to schools are included in the primary category; middle schools have been included in the secondary category





## MEET HEADTEACHER NEIL HASSELL

**Neil became the headteacher of The Hemel Hempstead School in September 2018 and has been surprised and delighted with what Hertfordshire and Herts for Learning have to offer in support, training and development.**

"I have worked in four authorities, in maintained schools and academies, in standalone settings and in one of the largest multi-academy trusts in the country. Herts for Learning (HfL) is by far the best support structure I have experienced.

Because HfL is school-owned and run by proven school and system leaders, its focus is right where it should be: on training, services, advice and support that allows headteachers to maximise impact and outcomes in their schools.

Hertfordshire is a great place to work. On the one hand thriving modern towns, great road and rail links to London and further afield, yet an area of natural beauty with fantastic sporting and outdoor facilities and spaces.



As a teacher in Hertfordshire, you get the full diversity of a truly comprehensive intake with young people who have a thirst for knowledge and an energy to succeed. I genuinely cannot see myself now working anywhere else".

## MEET HEADTEACHER ANDY SCOTT



**Andy is excited to be starting his new role as headteacher at Watling View Special School in St Albans and lets us know about his journey to this point.**

### **How did you start in teaching?**

I initially undertook a degree in BA PE with QTS. I also led sports sessions for a local authority delivering multi sports to young people aged between 6 -18 with a variety of special educational needs and disabilities. It was here that I started to develop my passion for working with young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

### **What does your career pathway look like?**

After university I gained a teaching position in a secondary special school. My first leadership role was a PE subject leader. I gained my next leadership promotion to become a senior teacher in charge of behaviour for learning in a 3 -19 all through special school. I then became assistant head responsible for personal development, wellbeing and behaviour.

### **What do you think the benefits are of progressing your career in Hertfordshire?**

Being part of a special school in a county the size of Hertfordshire has a number of benefits. One main benefit has been that in my role as deputy head I was part of a number of meetings with other deputies from schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties. This enabled best practice to be shared across the county and professional strategic discussions to be conducted on the key issues facing special schools.

### **What support and development have you experienced?**

I have recently been appointed as headteacher at Watling View. I am excited to start this next phase in my career and to undertake this in a Hertfordshire school. I am just about to start an induction programme for new headteachers and have been allocated an experienced headteacher to support me through my first year of headship.

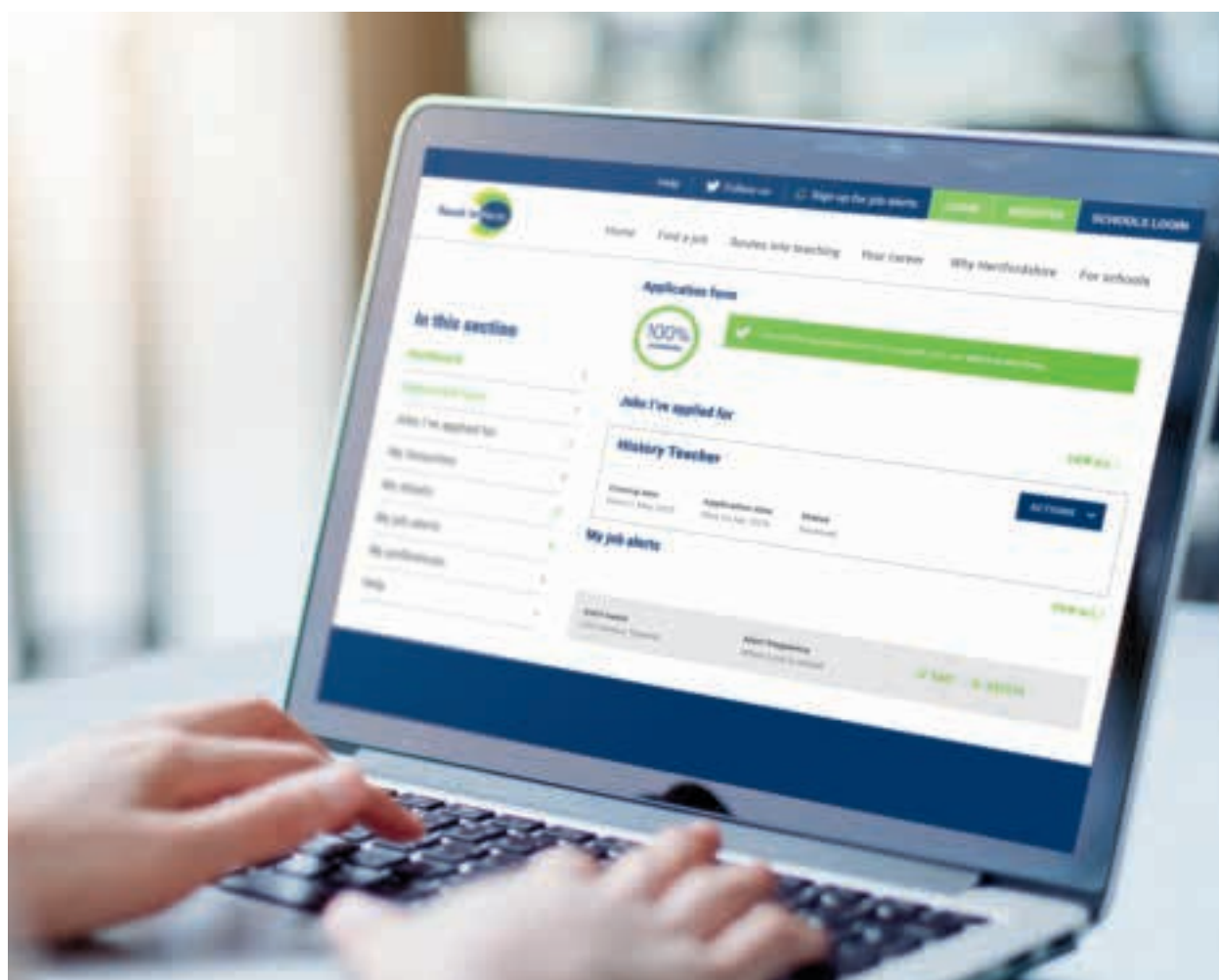
Throughout my career I have been very fortunate in that I have had senior leaders who both supported and challenged my thinking in applying change. They empowered me and gave me confidence to become a successful leader.

# TEACH IN HERTS

With 520 shareholding schools and other settings advertising their vacancies on **teachinherts.com** it really is the complete solution for teaching, leadership and professional and support jobs in Hertfordshire.

Here are some top tips for finding your perfect role with us:

- Register as a candidate by scanning the QR code below or visiting our website
- Create personalised job alerts to be notified when a relevant vacancy is added
- Complete your online application form in advance to save time applying when you find the perfect job
- Tailor your personal statement to the school or setting that you are applying to in order to make it stand out
- Make use of the other resources on the website to aid your application and progress your career
- Make sure to follow us on social media to be updated with news and events



Scan this QR code to register on Teach in Herts

# HOW WILL I FIND MY PERFECT JOB?

- ✓ Register on [teachinherts.com](https://teachinherts.com)
- ✓ Create personalised job alerts to see when vacancies are added
- ✓ Complete the online application form in advance to save time when you find the perfect role
- ✓ Keep an eye out for social media posts about upcoming events or invites to join groups

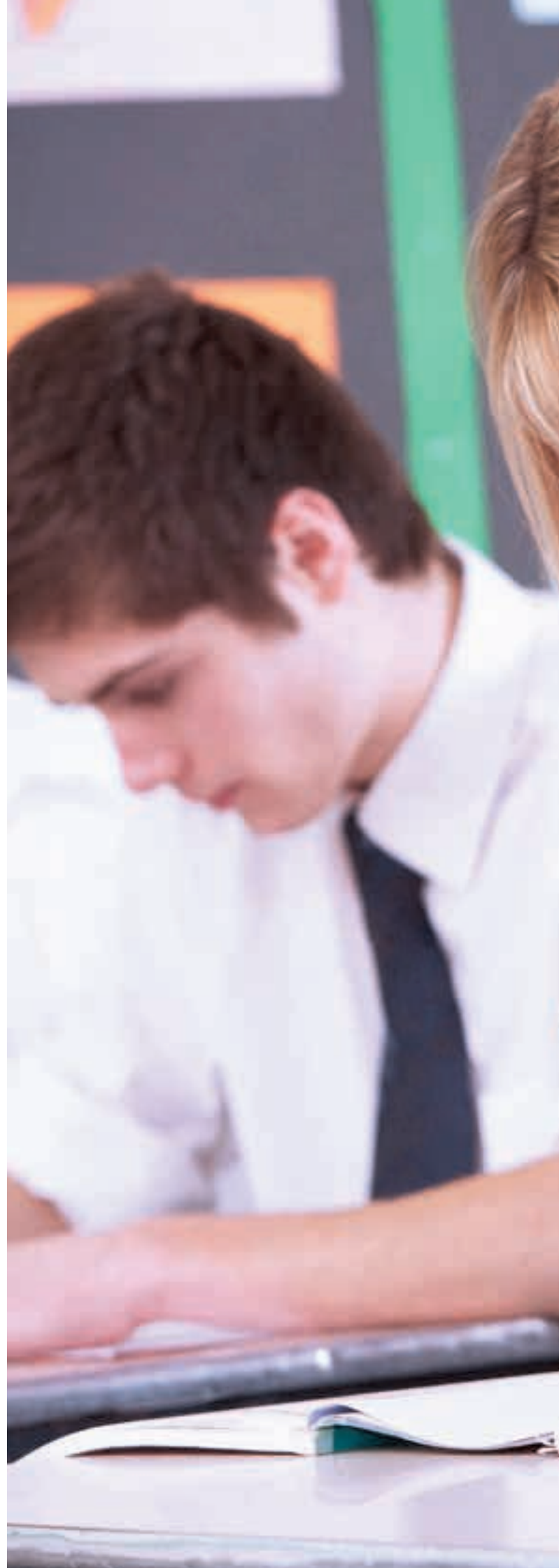
## Application and interview top tips:

- Ensure all sections of your application form are complete and there are no gaps in employment history
- When writing your personal statement do your research – look at the school's website and latest Ofsted report to tailor your application and make it stand out
- Double and triple check your application form and personal statement for spelling and grammar mistakes. If possible, ask a friend or family member to check it too!
- If you are invited to interview, do a practice run of your journey to make sure you know how to get there and how long it will take
- For the lesson observation, preparation is crucial! Be original and memorable with your content and delivery, and create copies of the lesson plan for the observers and any teaching assistants
- Although you may be nervous when you first arrive for an interview, remember to be polite and friendly to reception staff at the school – they could potentially be your future colleagues!
- It is said that 93% of our communication is non-verbal. Remember to be smiley and confident throughout the day with both children and staff. Also, remember to make eye contact with all members of the panel throughout your interview

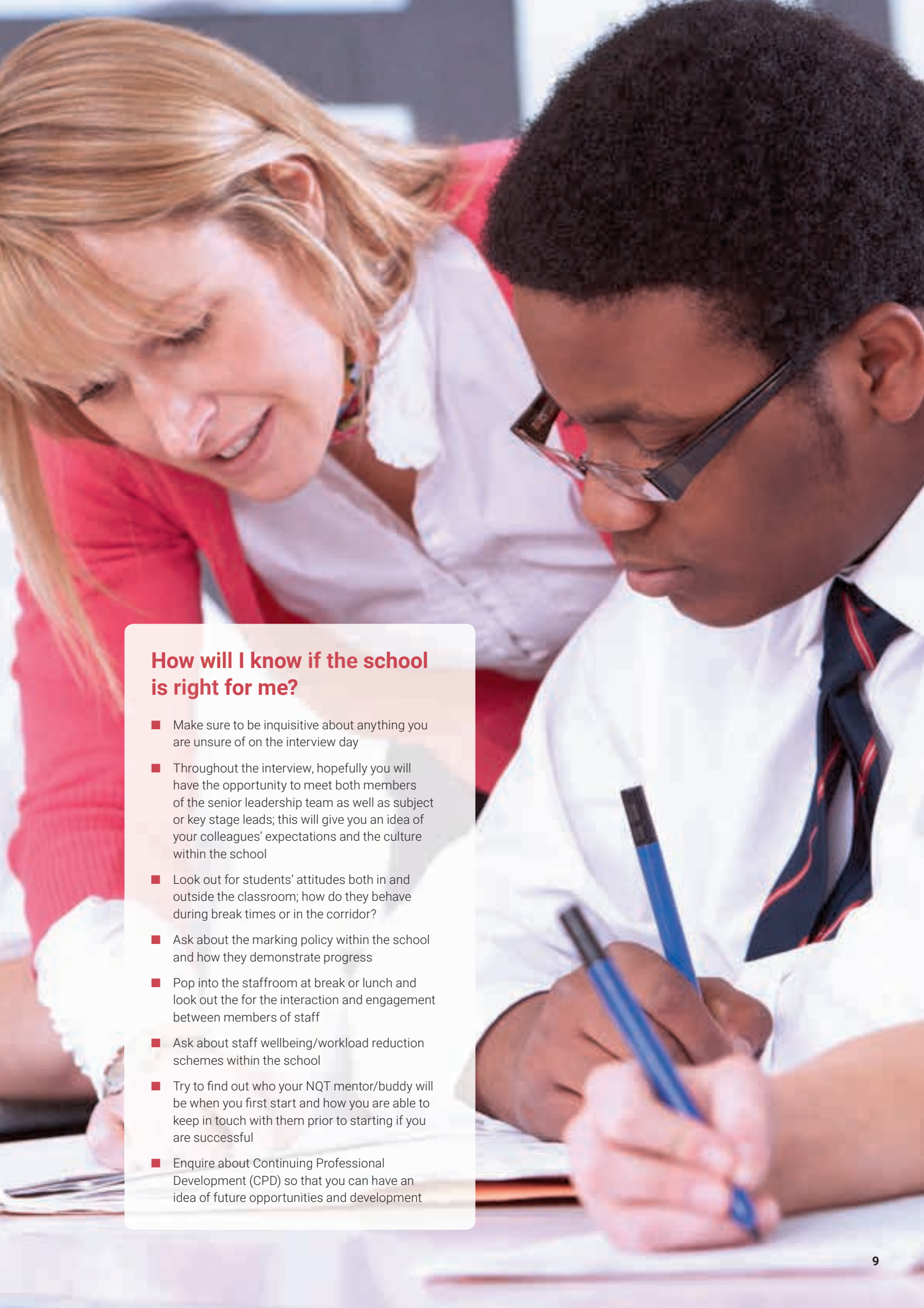
### **"Your application form should open doors for you.**

Your personal statement should match the job specification for each school; you need to describe your experience, knowledge and skills in teaching so far. Structure the information well, make it easy to read and be ready to talk about this at interview."

*Joanna Di Bella,  
District School Effectiveness Adviser*







## How will I know if the school is right for me?

- Make sure to be inquisitive about anything you are unsure of on the interview day
- Throughout the interview, hopefully you will have the opportunity to meet both members of the senior leadership team as well as subject or key stage leads; this will give you an idea of your colleagues' expectations and the culture within the school
- Look out for students' attitudes both in and outside the classroom; how do they behave during break times or in the corridor?
- Ask about the marking policy within the school and how they demonstrate progress
- Pop into the staffroom at break or lunch and look out for the interaction and engagement between members of staff
- Ask about staff wellbeing/workload reduction schemes within the school
- Try to find out who your NQT mentor/buddy will be when you first start and how you are able to keep in touch with them prior to starting if you are successful
- Enquire about Continuing Professional Development (CPD) so that you can have an idea of future opportunities and development



# LIFE IN HERTS

Steeped in a rich and colourful history, Hertfordshire is one of the Home Counties, bordering with the North of London. Surrounded by beautiful, rolling countryside but with a fantastic transport network, it's a county of contrasts!

With great schools attracting families to the area and an easy commute into London with all it has to offer, Hertfordshire is a great place for anyone to live.

## TRAIN LINKS TO LONDON:

Stevenage	> Kings Cross	24 mins
Hitchin	> St Pancras	33mins
Bishop's Stortford	> Liverpool Street	38 mins
Tring	> Euston	37mins

\*from uSwitch statistical analysis of 138 different UK cities and areas in 2015

Hertfordshire has  
**the best employment stats**  
in all of the UK\*

Rent Prices are on average  
**43% lower**  
in Hertfordshire than London\*\*

\*\*August 2019 comparison of Bishop's Stortford, Welwyn Garden City, St. Albans & Watford compared to London on numbeo.com

## ParksHerts

With over a hundred flagship parks in the county, there is so much more to see in Hertfordshire. The ParksHerts website provides single point of access for information about Hertfordshire's parks and open spaces.



@ParksHerts



@ParksHerts





# Hertfordshire 2020 Year of Culture



@HYOC2020



@HertsYOC2020

## Monthly Themes

<b>January</b>	Try Something New
<b>February</b>	Skills Development and Volunteering
<b>March</b>	Access The Arts
<b>April</b>	Go Somewhere Local
<b>May</b>	The Big Outdoors
<b>June</b>	Big Ideas
<b>July</b>	Cultural Olympiad
<b>August</b>	Families and Friends
<b>September</b>	Heritage and History/Meet The Maker
<b>October</b>	Be Inspired/Get Back Into
<b>November</b>	Creative Minds and Creative Industries
<b>December</b>	Celebrate and Illuminate



VISIT HERTS

We have plenty of ideas for great days out all year round, so take a look at some of our top ten lists and blogs for inspiration.



@VisitHertsUK



@VisitHerts







"I am not always looking for the finished article but I am keen to find someone who has passion and is willing to have a go!"



# MEET HEADTEACHER JENNY SHERRY

**Being a headteacher has many responsibilities but one of the most important is ensuring that staff are happy, supported and working towards their career aspirations. Jenny Sherry, Headteacher, spoke to Teach in Herts about how schools in Hertfordshire help those who are looking to start or continue a teaching career in the county.**

## **What has your teaching journey been like?**

When I was younger, I always told everyone that I wanted to be a teacher. I knew I wanted to go to The University of Hertfordshire so that I could stay at home, work and pay my way through university, which is what I did. This gave me lots of access to schools in Hertfordshire and I secured my first role through one of my placements.

The first five years of my career were at the school in Hertfordshire that I had one of my teaching practices in. It was hard but they gave me all the experiences I could have wanted. One of the schools I had supplied at during my career had asked me to come in as they had been put in special measures. It was not long before a new headteacher came in and asked me to take on some more responsibility and I did. She asked me if I would take on more and I slowly kept developing to the point where I would be looking at a deputy head role at some point in the future.

I did some leadership training and I started to think about the next stage in my career but for personal reasons, I moved away from Hertfordshire to the West Country to start a family.

## **After living in the West Country, why did you want to return to Hertfordshire?**

I missed working in Hertfordshire and wanted to continue to progress my career in the place where it started. I started back at a school that was getting some intensive support. HfL advisers have such a good experience and rapport within schools and I very quickly built up an increased network of people. I got my first deputy head role and then took on an acting head role. It all progressed very quickly but I enjoy a challenge.

## **What support have you had from being in Hertfordshire in terms of your own personal development as a headteacher?**

When I took on my first headship, I knew it was a challenging role and through the Hertfordshire Improvement Partnerships (HIPs) and consultants at Herts for Learning, we were able to turn the school around quickly. It was great to know there was always someone that could come in and support any aspect of the school. I am passionate about the fact that the

Hertfordshire School Improvement programme is really focused on making sure that headteachers can be supported to do some quite challenging things in some tight timescales. I was able to get support inside school and to access the community as there are good networking opportunities available.

## **What support is available to school staff in Hertfordshire?**

The first thing we tell any new starter at the school is what our support package is, and find out what areas they want to develop.

When a new teacher first joins us, we look at the HfL NQT induction and conference to support them. As staff progress, we identify their training and development needs whether that is for individuals, year groups, clusters or whole school. We have had HfL subject specialists and resources in areas such as assessment, maths and English.

We are passionate about investing in our staff whatever the stage of their career.

## **When you have a vacancy and you are interviewing, what are the key characteristics you are looking for in a new teacher?**

I want someone that is realistic about teaching, because it is a challenging and rewarding job in equal measure; it is very rewarding but I do not want to sell people a myth because there are times when it can be stressful. It is a full time job throughout the year; it is just not evenly distributed.

I want them to visit and get a feel for the school and the culture; each school is unique. I am not always looking for the finished article but I am keen to find someone who has passion and is willing to have a go!

## **In terms of NQTs, is there anything you are particularly looking for?**

I am expecting them to be reasonably confident in front of a class of children. I remember my first day as a teacher, as the children walked in I suddenly thought, "Oh my, where do I start?" as it can be overwhelming. I want someone that is realistic about the challenges they are going to face.

## **How do you support staff that are new to Hertfordshire?**

We support any staff that join our school – whatever stage of their career, age or career background. I had a teacher that came to work here a few years ago who came in, really impressed me in his interview and observation. We offered him a role and he said he would really like to take it but would have to move to the area and sort out somewhere to live. By the afternoon I had found somewhere for him to stay and he has now been with us for two years and is buying his own house.

We always want to provide support to any new member of staff, especially if they are relocating. All teachers at this school are happy to help and welcome new people into Hertfordshire, whether that is sharing the best routes if you wanted to cycle or the best places to go and visit. We had four NQTs a couple of years ago and they are all still with us currently.

# WHAT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT WILL I HAVE AS AN NQT?

## NQT Induction in Hertfordshire

**Induction is the bridge between training and a career in the teaching profession.**

In Hertfordshire, Herts for Learning is commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council to provide a robust NQT induction service for schools. The NQT induction service ensures that newly qualified teachers are fully supported at every stage of the induction process and are registered, monitored, developed and assessed in line with Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) regulations.

Each year we welcome around 500 NQTs into Hertfordshire schools and we have dedicated training and administration teams who are there to support both NQTs and their mentors throughout their induction period.

## Why complete your induction in Hertfordshire?

Herts for Learning's NQT Induction Service provides a robust structure with professional guidance, training and support for every stage of the induction process. We have a well-established infrastructure and experienced specialist advisers who are able to advise on all matters pertaining to NQT induction.

## What makes us different?

- We provide a comprehensive NQT induction handbook and toolkit for all NQTs and tutors detailing the most up-to-date guidance on the induction process
- The service also provides NQTs with access to extensive NQT phase and subject specific training and conferences
- Access to specialist advice, support and guidance where NQTs experience difficulties
- Telephone, email and face-to-face advice, support and guidance
- Dedicated NQT Twitter account and Facebook group for sharing tips, blogs and resources



@HFL\_NQTs



Join our NQT Network – search Hertfordshire NQTs on Facebook to join our Facebook networking group and settle into your new teaching community.

### "The NQT training offered by HfL is fantastic.

The sessions are led by experts in the field who tailored the training to our needs and I have been able to incorporate these tips and tricks into my own teaching. It's also a great opportunity to share experiences and practices in a safe place."

*George Rule, French & Spanish teacher,  
Assistant Head of Year 9*



## NQT Induction Conference Programme

### Early Years NQT

This popular, interactive and exciting programme run by the Early Years team supports NQTs in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through a tailor made programme.

It consists of four full days spread over the academic year that cover essential aspects to support the development of high quality practice and provision. A final session at the end of the programme consists of an interactive webinar that will give delegates the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with an Early Years adviser following reflection of the year.

### Primary NQT

Providing development and support for NQTs during their induction period, this wide-ranging programme tackles key aspects of induction and promotes good progress against the Teachers' Standards. Sessions are spread across two and a half days throughout the year and enable NQTs to receive high-quality training, share experiences with other NQTs and explore strategies for managing the pressures of their first year.

The 3 sessions – Managing, Developing and Refining – build confidence over the year and develop ideas and practice within each key stage. The cohorts run in four locations across Hertfordshire making them easily accessible for all teachers whatever their location, and increasingly welcoming NQTs from across our borders in neighbouring counties.

### Special School NQT

This practical and informative programme is led by colleagues working in special schools alongside HfL's SEND advisers. Delivered across 3 days spread over the academic year, this course can be tailored to meet the needs of the delegates and reflect the type of school they are working in.

In recent years, as well as providing an essential overview of the induction year, topics have included: supporting learners with apps, iPads and other technologies; exploring how to make effective use of visual cues and other classroom strategies; making best use of assessment systems.

Recent delegates have commented on how they valued the opportunity to discuss and share issues relevant to being an NQT in a special school.

### Secondary NQT – subject-specific training

The team offer the opportunity to attend a three-day subject specific conference programme. These unique, subject-level programmes offer intensive and specialist training and development from recognised experts in their subject.

The programme will enable delegates to develop subject expertise and practice in the classroom. Delegates will be provided with a range of resources and strategies to try out at school as well as having the opportunity to network and share strategies with other NQTs and trainees teaching the same subject.

TOP  
10  
TIPS

from NQTs  
for NQTs:

1. Be a sponge! Take all pieces of advice given and learn from experienced staff
2. Keep an open mind and be positive
3. Take risks in your teaching because it is your time to trial new things. We are still learning!
4. Be certain you are getting the right support and development, so you can enjoy the job and be the best teacher you can be
5. Be prepared for responsibilities you will not have had during your training year
6. Take notes about memorable experiences ready for report writing. Have a class list in the front of your diary
7. Be open and honest and do not be afraid to ask for help or admit you are unsure
8. Drive it yourself – make time to reflect, ask questions and take the lead in developing your own practice
9. Observe as many experienced teachers as you can – try out as many of their strategies as you can and adapt them for you
10. Breathe, do not panic and remember to enjoy the year, it goes so quickly!



"The training has been exceptional. The focus on a particular subject area has meant that each training day was relevant and immediately transferable into the classroom. The opportunity to share with other NQTs from the same subject area has been invaluable."

# SCHOOL-BASED ROUTES INTO TEACHING

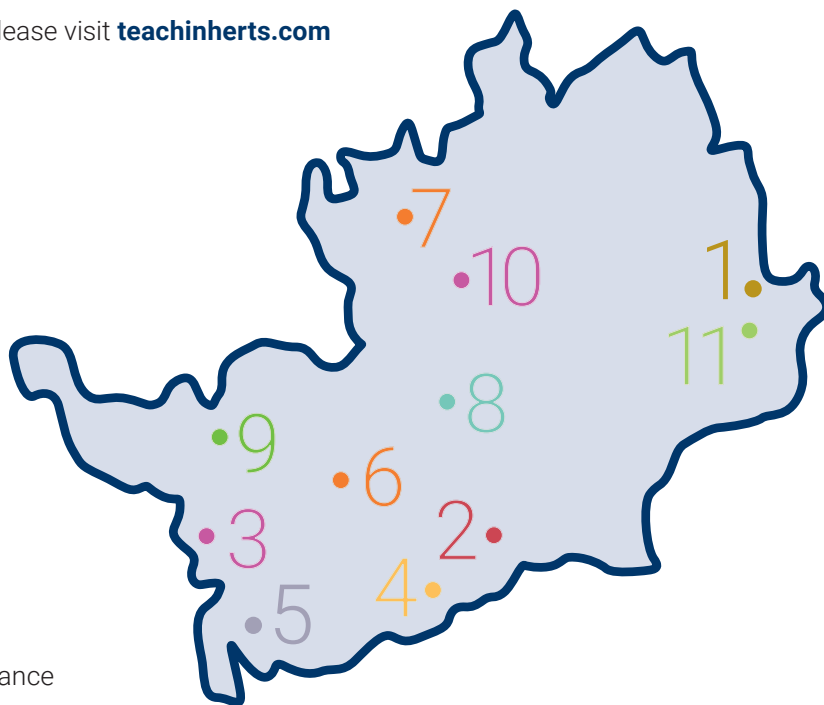
## School Direct and School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)

- 11 Teaching School Alliances working with partner groups
- School Direct Training Programme (salaried/unsalaried)

For information on routes in to teaching please visit [teachinherts.com](https://teachinherts.com)

## Hertfordshire Teaching School Alliances (TSAs)

1. BSET SCITT (Bishop's Stortford Education Trust)
2. The Wroxham Teaching School
3. West Hertfordshire Teaching Schools Partnership
4. Advanced Learning Alliance
5. The Herts & Bucks Teaching School Alliance
6. Alban Teaching School Alliance
7. North Herts Teaching Alliance
8. Acorns Teaching School Alliance
9. Dacorum Schools Alliance
10. Round Diamond Teaching School Alliance
11. Catalyst Teaching School Alliance





**Having developed an interest in education from a young age, Lucy Marsh's route into special needs teaching has been a journey but the support she has received every step of the way has meant her passion for education is as palpable as ever.**

Lucy is currently completing her school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) in Hertfordshire. After completing a child development GCSE course at school and studying Early Year's development at college, she started teaching swimming at Nascot Wood Junior School with special needs children. It was not long before the school offered her the opportunity to become a qualified teacher.

Teach in Herts spoke to Lucy about what it is like to go through school-centred initial teacher training and why Hertfordshire is the best place to start your teaching career.

### **How did you get into your current role as a trainee teacher?**

Last year I was working as a teaching assistant (TA) with a child 1:1 who had additional needs. Because of this experience, Nascot Wood Junior School thought it might be something I was interested in so they asked me if I wanted to complete my training to become a qualified special needs teacher. So, without hesitation, I accepted.

### **Why did you want to take the leap from teaching assistant to teacher?**

Teaching is something I have always been interested in, but I never had the confidence to complete my teaching qualifications. Having worked at Nascot Wood Junior School for a few years, I have received amazing support from the headteacher, leadership team and all the staff, who have encouraged me to take the next step and given me the confidence to think I could actually fulfil my dream.

### **Why did you decide to follow the school based route to get your qualification, rather than study full-time at a university?**

When I decided that I really wanted to become a teacher, I knew that I did not want to leave the school to study full-time at university. I really enjoy the practical learning aspect of being in an actual school classroom. I have been able to train on the job through a School Direct / SCITT route with the support of the school, university and Herts for Learning.

### **What support and training have you received?**

As well as attending St Mary's University one day a week, I have received initial training in September to support visually impaired children on four specific training days. During one of the training sessions provided by Herts for Learning, I was blindfolded so I got to spend time in their shoes. It really helped me focus on the important things for a visually impaired child; things that you would not think of as a fully sighted adult. Your initial reaction is that they just cannot see; the training teaches

you there is so much more involved and affects so much more than just sight loss. The resource pack provided with the training was so useful; I am able to constantly refer back to it. I have also been able to email the team and contact them for additional support and guidance after the initial training.

### **Why do you want to be a special educational needs teacher?**

In my previous role, I worked with a pupil with autistic spectrum disorder, from year 3 onwards; he was non-verbal and found it difficult to control his emotions. Through working closely with him, he started to speak and made huge improvements to the point where in year 6 he got an award for the most improved student in maths. He did really well. It is the most rewarding job you could ever have. The spark in their eye when pupils are interested in something or finally get something is amazing to witness.



### **What is teaching in Hertfordshire like?**

Teaching in Hertfordshire is great fun. There are so many opportunities to develop in school, through school-to-school support and via training courses at Herts for Learning. There are great trips to go on around Hertfordshire; recently the school has been to Harry Potter World, Cassiobury Park and Cheslyn House and Gardens. There are many great places to visit locally in Hertfordshire, you do not have to travel miles and miles for great experiences.

### **What would you say to anyone that potentially was looking to work in a Hertfordshire school?**

Whenever you start a new role, you are always offered courses and training. The opportunities that you are given are brilliant – you are always supported to improve and be the best you can be.

For more information about Getting in to Teaching via the school or university-based routes please visit: [www.getintoteaching.education.gov.uk](http://www.getintoteaching.education.gov.uk)

# UNIVERSITY-BASED ROUTES INTO TEACHING

## University of Hertfordshire **UH**

### About the School of Education

The University of Hertfordshire (UH) is committed to transforming lives through education. The School of Education has strong links to hundreds of organisations, including nursery, primary and secondary schools, giving students plenty of opportunities to gain practical experience and tackle professional challenges head on. As a result, UH graduates go on to successful careers and have a huge impact on the lives of thousands of learners.

The innovative courses reflect the social, political and technological changes taking place in the field of education, and students benefit from the expertise which spans curriculum development, educational assessment, early childhood education and STEM education.

With a long history of working in the education and training of teachers and other professionals in the education sector, it is an established and dynamic School committed to developing excellence and confidence in teaching, learning and professional practice for individuals in a variety of contexts.

We maintain high professional training standards through excellence in scholarship and research, alongside an emphasis on reflective practice. Innovative work in research and consultancy adds to our local, national and international credentials. UH offers both university-led as well as School Direct routes into primary and secondary teaching, working with partnership schools across Hertfordshire and its neighbouring areas.

UH is a leading regional provider of Initial Teacher Education. Further details can be found on their website:

**University of Hertfordshire, School of Education**  
[www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)



University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education: [www.educ.cam.ac.uk](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk)



[www.beds.ac.uk](http://www.beds.ac.uk)





**Having completed his NQT induction 2 years ago, Ben Amatruda reflects on his teaching career so far and how his decisions along the way have led him to where he is now.**

Ben is currently teaching History at a secondary school in Hertfordshire, having completed his Initial Teacher Training at Middlesex University. Teach in Herts spoke to Ben to see how his career has developed through training, the induction process and securing his first teaching role.

### **What made you want to become a teacher?**

I knew I wanted to become a teacher when I was in sixth-form as I was inspired by several of my own teachers and thoroughly enjoyed my time at school. I also found that I never felt challenged or motivated in any previous jobs that I had, and knew teaching would be a rewarding career.

### **Why did you choose to follow the university based route into teaching?**

I was encouraged by my university and other teachers to go through the university based teaching programme. Moreover, after just finishing my undergraduate degree, the theory side of teaching practice interested me. There were also grants for my subject that helped me financially, which I wouldn't have received if I signed up for a non-salaried Schools Direct programme.

### **What support and training have you received throughout your career so far?**

Throughout my training year I had fantastic support from both my university and my placement schools. For me, the most valuable support I received was from my school sessions as they enabled me to implement the theory I had learnt at university, reflect on my current practice within the school and make proactive changes. Secondly, throughout my NQT year I had incredible support such as regular feedback, meetings with my mentor, observations and weekly sessions led by our NQT coordinator. As a result, I felt I made significant progress throughout my NQT year.

### **How did your NQT year differ to your training year?**

You are officially a teacher which helps psychologically. Meaning that the classes were 100% my responsibility from the first day and to me that made a huge difference. However, I still received regular support that was crucial to my development.

Also, my training year was specialising in RE and then my NQT year was training as a History teacher. My school provided fantastic support to make this transition as smooth as possible. I attended subject studies training through Herts for Learning and I worked closely with my department and my NQT mentor to ensure progress was being made. It confirmed for me that



if you are considering a change to your training or subject it is always worth asking as there is often support available to facilitate this.

### **Beyond teaching in the classroom what other opportunities have you had to participate in the wider school community?**

I have participated in my school community in many ways; I have created a Philosophy club that I have run for the last two years. Additionally, I have helped run the girls football team with the PE department and have volunteered to go on many trips with the school, including the battlefields trip, the ski trip and Duke of Edinburgh.

### **What would you say to anyone considering working in a Hertfordshire school?**

I would recommend Hertfordshire schools highly. The support I received from both the school and the university was fantastic. It certainly made my training years enjoyable and rewarding.

### **What are your hopes for the future of your teaching career?**

My priority at the moment is to continue establishing myself at my current school, particularly in the two departments that I work in. I enjoy both the pastoral and the curriculum side of teaching and therefore currently have no preferred route for the future and would be open to both depending on what opportunities present themselves further down the line. I thoroughly enjoy my job everyday and so I am sure that I will be as passionate about my career in the future as I am now.



“Hertfordshire has always had a reputation of being on the front foot and that is what I love about it.”



# MEET HEADTEACHER CHRISTINA SINGH

**Headteachers play a vital part in how Hertfordshire builds a close community of schools and academies across the county. The bond that schools, the local authority and Herts for Learning have with headteachers is crucial in how teaching staff, support staff and leadership teams progress their careers.**

**Teach in Herts spoke to Christina Singh, who has been a Headteacher in Watford for six years. She discusses how important the support has been and why people should teach in Hertfordshire...**

## **What support do you get as a headteacher in Hertfordshire?**

Hertfordshire has a history of respecting the role of Headteachers, and understanding the challenges that we face. Hertfordshire has always had a reputation of being on the front foot and that is what I love about it. Both Hertfordshire local authority and HfL respond to what is happening in a very proactive way. As a Hertfordshire headteacher, I feel at the cutting edge of what is happening in education.

There is plenty of sensible and balanced advice from Herts for Learning that I have found tremendously useful – particularly in my early stages as a headteacher. Even now, I use the support and guidance from HfL all the time, both for myself, teachers and support staff.

## **As a headteacher, what support do you give your teachers?**

When I joined the school, I looked at what I wanted to achieve, which was outstanding learning in every classroom. We took away the teaching judgements, and, instead, we assessed learning. This encourages you as a headteacher to look at what the children are learning, rather than giving preference to a particular teaching style, and gave me the freedom to look at the impact a teacher is having.

## **When you interview for a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) what are the things you look for?**

I want to see a passion for teaching, a willingness to learn and a level of resilience. I want to see a spark in somebody so I can really work with that person. The culture here is incredible; the whole team believe and share the same vision. This helps to motivate and retain staff, and they tell me that they can't imagine working anywhere else.

## **Is that ethos shared by the senior leadership team that you have?**

Within Hertfordshire, there is a real appreciation for the role all staff have in making a school a great place to work. Headteachers and senior leadership teams across Hertfordshire understand the importance of ensuring that teachers are professionally valued. They are doing an important job, often in difficult circumstances. My job is to facilitate them to do their absolute best.

## **How do you facilitate your staff to do their best?**

When I am recruiting, the first thing I always do when I am interviewing a potential teacher or teaching assistant is talk to them and explain that I understand that this is quite a stressful situation for them, but I am not here to catch them out. I am here to catch them doing their best. Right from the start I make sure to meet new members of staff, give them time and get to know them. All my staff or pupils can speak to me at any moment – the door is always open.

## **What is available to help staff progress their careers?**

There are so many training and development opportunities in Hertfordshire through Herts for Learning or school to school exchanges. We are rich in knowledge and resources. Most importantly, it is about building relationships and making sure that you are involving that person in any discussions about their development.

We have had 4 teaching assistants train to become qualified teachers. It is great to see that transition and they have brought so much skill and experience to the classroom.

## **What experiences can you give children outside of the classroom?**

Being in Hertfordshire and so close to London but not being in the centre of the city, gives us the best of both worlds. We are in a location where we have plenty of green spaces around us. This is great for the health and wellbeing of the children.

Most recently the children had the opportunity to interview the Minister for Education and see the debating areas and MPs at the House of Commons. We look for as many amazing opportunities for them as possible.

## **Lastly, why would you recommend becoming a headteacher in Hertfordshire?**

I think that being a headteacher is the most exciting job that anyone could ever have. It is hugely varied and you will never, ever get bored. It is a challenging job; you have to be very good at plate spinning.

Being a headteacher in Hertfordshire gives you the best chance of success because you have the support mechanisms in place. I recently did my executive headteacher training and the quality of the continuing professional development was really high. It challenged my thinking, made me self-analyse and evaluate. I now have a much clearer understanding of my strengths and weaknesses. It is about the professional dialogue that you get in Hertfordshire, which is fantastic and unique.

# ABOUT HERTS FOR LEARNING

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities

Herts for Learning (HfL) offers an extensive training programme to support school and academy staff at all stages of their careers. Training is focused on enhancing and broadening professional knowledge, skills and expertise, whilst also improving pupils' learning experiences and achievements.

Expertise and best practice is drawn upon from within our family of schools and academies, to ensure that all training is relevant and has impact. All of our training courses are available for schools and academies both in and out of Hertfordshire.

[hertsforlearning.co.uk](https://hertsforlearning.co.uk) has detailed information about the latest programmes available to book on the online booking system, CPD Hub.

## Education support services

Herts for Learning has a history of providing education support services to schools to improve the outcomes for children in Hertfordshire and beyond.

The team consists of current, experienced practitioners who work closely with schools to pilot and refine their work to ensure the support packages available will deliver the outcomes required. Support is available for all school phases from Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special, subject area specific and assessment tools and training, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, pupil health and wellbeing, safeguarding and of course NQT induction, conferences and NQT specific programmes.

## Business support services

There are so many other aspects which help schools run in a professional, efficient and cost effective way. Whichever school you start your career with, if you are in Hertfordshire, 99% of schools will be buying some services from HfL to supplement staff they have inhouse.

Experienced school practitioners and professional experts are available to provide a wide range of support in the following areas:

- Business management services
- Data management services
- Financial services
- Governance
- HR and Recruitment services
- Technology for Schools



## Blogs

The education team love their work with teachers and children and their passion for respective subjects leads them to an increasingly innovative and research-led path.

They are a busy team of practitioners who are proud to work for Herts for Learning. Register for their blogs at [hertsforlearning.co.uk/hfl-blog](https://hertsforlearning.co.uk/hfl-blog) and you will receive an email as each new blog is published. This is a growing area of work for the company and one that is developing to cover more phase and subject areas. Don't miss out - they are a great read and very thought provoking!

Contact details for the Herts for Learning Team are: [info@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:info@hertsforlearning.co.uk); or call **01438 845111**



## Places to Play Every Day

Invaluable resources that will help practitioners to effectively organise their Early Years environment so that it invites learning across a range of contexts, both indoors and outdoors. Each section provides an overview of an area of provision and includes: the adult's role, resource ideas, skills to be taught and visual examples.



## ESSENTIALmaths

Herts for Learning subject experts have designed an easy to pick up and use set of sequences with step-by-step guidance covering the entire mathematics curriculum from year 1 to year 6. Designed to support teachers, the planning includes examples of how concrete and pictorial representations can benefit pupils' learning as well as other mastery techniques. The ESSENTIALmaths planning tool has a wealth of ideas to deepen and extend mathematical thinking for all learners.

## Supersonic Phonics

Supersonic Phonics is a resource packed full of lively, engaging and active phonic activities to help develop early literacy skills in young children. The Supersonic Phonic 'easy to use' activity cards promote a range of activities to enable practitioners to structure active phonic sessions. The cards are based on elements of the 'letters and sounds' phased developmental approach to teaching phonics. This is a digital download product. The activity cards can be printed and laminated for use by practitioners.



## Great Expectations - Volume 1

Great Expectations is a year-long education programme, delivered by Herts for Learning, looking at the features of great schools and strategies that have impact in closing attainment gaps and raising aspirations. This book has been published to share their stories.



Teach in Herts is an award winning school recruitment support service, funded by over 520 shareholding Hertfordshire schools and managed by Herts for Learning. Schools have their own microsite within Teach in Herts to advertise and manage their own teaching, leadership, professional and support vacancies throughout the year. The job site has around 40,000 visits every month during term time.

Job hunters can search, register and sign up for alerts by district / geographic location and also for the specific roles they are seeking. It really is a one stop shop for school jobs in Hertfordshire online at [teachinherts.com](https://teachinherts.com)

The website is also full of other useful information for job seekers and those interested in a career in teaching or living and working in Hertfordshire.

Contact details for the Teach in Herts Team are:  
[teachinherts@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:teachinherts@hertsforlearning.co.uk): or call **01438 845785**

Follow us on our social media channels



Herts for Learning is the largest school company in the UK, dedicated to improving education for young people in Hertfordshire and beyond.

Herts for Learning commenced trading in September 2013, as a spin-out from Hertfordshire County Council's school improvement service. We are a leading provider of school improvement services and we offer a wide range of school improvement and business support products and services to schools, academies and educational settings inside and outside of Hertfordshire.

As a collaboratively owned school company, Herts for Learning operates with a not-for-profit ethos. Beyond maintaining sufficient reserves and financing long-term projects, any surplus made is invested in the common good and/or the development of specific new services to address key challenges for our shareholding schools. Since its creation, Herts for Learning has reinvested £830k in common good activities. More information can be found on our website: [hertsforlearning.co.uk](https://hertsforlearning.co.uk).

Contact details for the Herts for Learning Team are:  
[info@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:info@hertsforlearning.co.uk): or call **01438 845111**

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