



Connecting
Hackney and
Tower Hamlets
Schools

JANUARY 2025

NEWS

A message from the Director of East London Teaching School Hub

In our first newsletter of 2025, we share with you some examples of how local schools are engaging with Initial Teacher Training as a successful recruitment and retention strategy. We also invite you to get in contact with our new ITT school engagement lead, Adele Page, to share your own examples of ITT best practice or to learn more about how you and your schools can engage with ITT.

We also provide updates on the impact of our ECF and NPQ programmes with a particular spotlight on the new NPQSENDCo qualification and how you can apply for our next fully-funded Spring 2025 cohort.

In this edition you can also hear from members of our team on how their work with ELTSH is providing unique professional learning opportunities and how you could join our team too! ELTSH is always seeking ways to connect practitioners across our region to learn with and from one another to benefit all our students. Please do get in contact with us if you would like to get involved.

Ruth Smith
Director of East London Teaching School Hub

Follow the new ELTSH page on [LinkedIn](#)



ITT Matters

In each of our bulletins and newsletters, we offer reflections, practical ideas, updates and, with your contributions, real stories from the world of Initial Teacher Training so that Hackney and Tower Hamlets schools can benefit fully from engaging with Initial Teacher Training. Whether you're a leader shaping the system, a school interested in dipping your toe into ITT, a new or seasoned mentor, or a trainee navigating your first classroom, this space is for you.

Over the next few pages we share the experiences of trainee teachers placed in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, in addition to a case study from a federation of local schools sharing how ITT is integral to their recruitment and retention strategy. We hope you find these useful.

Adele Page, our ITT Engagement Strategic Lead, is also keen to work with schools in our hub area to support engagement with ITT. Please do get in contact with her if you'd like to talk more about how to engage with ITT.

Contact Adele Page via email below.
apage@mulberryschoolstrust.org
Alternatively call: 07886087979



Local ITT Partner Snapshots:

Wapping High School is a valued partner school working with Mulberry College of Teaching, an ITT Accredited Provision specialising in Secondary English, offering placements to beginning teachers and contributing to programme design.



Reflections from a secondary English Teacher:

"It was great to meet my school mentor, whose extensive knowledge and experience were both inspiring and encouraging. Embarking on this journey has been extremely enriching, and I'm excited to see my progress throughout the course."

— Akifah, Trainee Teacher at Wapping High School

A Journey into Teaching: Reflections on the ITT Experience

Lorna, an Early Career Teacher at Springfield Community Primary School, Hackney, reflects on her transition from completing a PGCE with UCL and Primary Advantage to her current teaching role. Her journey highlights the challenges, growth and impact of high-quality ITT partnerships.



me raring to go. That day highlighted the importance of student relationships, a principle that remains central to my teaching philosophy.

How did your mentors and tutors support you?

My mentors and tutors equipped me with strategies to manage classrooms effectively, such as positive reinforcement and non-verbal communication techniques. I observed theory acted out in practice which allowed me to enhance both student engagement and my ability to establish and maintain a positive and effective learning environment.

How has the ITT course impacted your confidence and abilities as a teacher?

The ITT programme shaped my understanding of teaching as a reflective practice. It taught me to view myself as a lifelong learner, constantly evolving in response to new experiences and challenges. I realised the significance of patience in building relationships with students, colleagues and the wider school community.

Equally important was the lesson that seeking support from experienced colleagues is a strength, not a weakness. Their insights and encouragement helped me develop the skills I needed to navigate my early career confidently.

What are your reflections looking back and looking forward?

Looking back, I would tell myself to prioritise relationships from the beginning. Connections with students, colleagues and mentors are the foundation of successful teaching.

As I continue my journey, I am looking forward to settling in as a teacher of my own Year 2 class for whom I have lofty goals! I will continue to foster a love of reading for my students and support them as learners.

Why teaching?

Before entering teaching, I worked for a children's mental health charity in Hackney where I met remarkable families and developed a passion for working with children. This experience inspired me to want to pursue a more direct role in their lives and my interest in pastoral care, safeguarding and supporting children led me to primary education. Living in Hackney, I applied for a PGCE through the Primary Advantage Schools Direct programme in partnership with UCL, a decision led by my desire to make a difference locally.

What was your experience of the ITT course?

Without prior classroom experience, the ITT programme provided a comprehensive foundation in educational theory, pedagogy and practical teaching. Training across two schools within a federation, I gained firsthand insights into effective teaching practices. Professional studies sessions were attended by all trainees on a placement in a Primary Advantage school, building a community where leaders shared their expertise on key topics including Early Years and SEND giving us a breadth of experience.

Being a teacher is challenging and the role my mentors played was pivotal. I particularly appreciated the experienced mentor that fostered a supportive and reflective environment, encouraging me to experiment and learn from my mistakes. Their guidance helped me transition smoothly into daily teaching and built my confidence.

What was your first lesson like?

My first official lesson, a history lesson on Arsenal Football Club's evolution, coincided with an Ofsted inspection! Though daunting, the preparation I received through weeks of observing and working with small groups left

Have you been inspired by Lorna's experience?

If you are a school ITT lead or prospective trainee who would like to learn more about ITT at Primary Advantage Federation please contact Sandra Gaudan, Primary Advantage Learning, Development and Partnerships Manager. sgaudan@primaryadvantage.hackney.sch.uk or visit [Primary Advantage's website](#).

If you are a school ITT lead interested in working in partnership with UCL IOE, please [find more information here](#).

If you are a provider that is interested in working with us on a case study for publication. Contact us [here](#).

How our schools engage with Teacher Apprenticeships and ITT as a recruitment and retention strategy and how we've made it work. (Viridis Federation, Hackney)



What is your context?

The Viridis Federation comprises Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden primary schools. We have one joint Governing Body with each school having its own leadership team with the common aim of giving children the very best. We provide a rich, exciting curriculum and a no-excuses culture for low standards. Year on year, pupil outcomes are significantly above national figures despite a higher-than-average percentage of disadvantaged, SEND and EAL pupils. We offer high quality CPD to our staff, utilising experience within the Federation and from our external partners.

Why did you want to engage with ITT?

The Federation have successfully run the ITT apprenticeship programme for over eight years. In collaboration with London Metropolitan University, we created an innovative training pathway for the development of new teachers. The aim was to create a sustainable staffing model that supported the training and development of new teachers through a cost-effective training offer, particularly beneficial to competent teaching assistants whilst also providing experienced staff with the opportunity to become mentors.

What did you do?

The partnership with London Metropolitan University allowed for the development of a salaried training offer which would lead to a PGCE qualification. We endorsed a value centred approach, creating a programme with the aim of preparing trainees for the realities of teaching in the current education climate in an urban context. We built a profile in the competitive training market by developing a marketing plan that included school experience days, extended volunteer placements, a graduate teaching assistant programme, recruitment fayres and increased online and social media presence.

Are there any specific challenges or successes?

The apprenticeship programme at Viridis continues to be heavily oversubscribed and has 100% successful completion rate leading to a smooth transition to the Early Career Teaching programme. Many

teaching assistants and teachers who completed the apprenticeship programme now mentor new cohorts, with a large proportion making up the Federation's middle leadership team. Recruitment and retention remain challenging, and we continue to maximise publicity to recruit high quality trainees, embedding the graduate teaching assistant route to apprenticeship and promoting the benefits of beginning a teaching career in Hackney.

We pay into the apprenticeship levy and receive £9,000 to cover the cost of training and assessing the apprentice. This means a commitment of salary within the budget for each apprentice employed. With careful placement of apprentice teachers working initially with middle leaders and then leading their own classes from the end of the first term, the finances balance across the year. Careful mapping of financial commitment and reward is an essential analysis ahead of programme delivery.

What were/are the benefits?

The teaching apprenticeship route empowers proactive recruitment and training of graduates as trainee teachers. The 'grow your own' approach means that trainees grow accustomed to our pedagogy, standards and expectations from the start. The programme gives autonomy for interviewing prospective candidates and choosing the highest quality graduates to join the staffing body with a contractual agreement to stay in the school for as long as both parties agree.

As the apprenticeship is a fee-free, salaried route, the benefits for the trainee include the opportunity to 'earn while you learn' as an unqualified teacher with an inner London salary. The Federation model also promotes future career opportunities across a number of schools.

If you would like to learn more about Teacher Apprenticeships with London Metropolitan University click [here](#).

If you are a provider that is offering Teacher Apprenticeships and interested in sharing a future case study with us please contact us [here](#).

ELTSH's Early Career Framework: Impact

We were delighted to welcome over 350 new ECTs and mentors to Cohort 4 of the ECF programme last term. In their first sessions ECTs explored and challenged definitions of disadvantage in education, exploring our local context to identify some of the challenges, but also the resources and opportunities in East London. The secondary sessions were enriched by contributions from Dr Katharine Vincent who brought her expertise on school-leaders' efforts across the region to address the challenges of education post-Covid through their work in [Reconnect London](#).

The Impact on the ECTs was shared in their module evaluation feedback with 99% of the respondents stating that they were satisfied with the programme (69% response rate). Here is what ECTs had to say at the end of their first module.



Dr Katharine Vincent shared with ECTs what London schools have been doing to overcome the challenges faced in schools post-covid

"I have been able to use what I have learnt in the first term in a productive way to help set my expectations and create a positive learning environment for all my students."

**Secondary Early Career Teacher
London East Alternative Provision**

"I am proud of how I have established clearer routines and improved classroom behaviour. When challenges with transitions arose, especially for my SEND pupil, I adapted strategies to support her needs better. This experience has enhanced my skills in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment."

**Hackney, Early Career Teacher
Princess May Primary School**

"The face-to-face session was very helpful and the materials online are very thorough and detailed"

**Tower Hamlets Mentor
Stepney All Saints Church of England
Secondary School**

ECTs in their second year of induction have started their Practitioner Inquiries. These small-scale class-based investigations enable ECTs to explore key ideas from the ECF framework in their own context. This term, ECTs will be identifying key questions they have about their classroom teaching to investigate over a longer period of 18 weeks, culminating in sharing their learning within the school and beyond.

A unique feature of the UCL programme, the practitioner inquiries enable ECTs to draw on the strong research tradition of a university-based Lead Provider and evidence-underpinned framework and critically apply elements of the ECF to questions that are important to them. This supports their developing professional voice.

Year 2 ECTs tell us...

"I welcome the different approach the facilitators have taken in year 2. It motivates me to see this as a true journey, one in which we are building from what we did last year rather than repeating. I have found the inquiry approach very helpful, particularly as I have been able to apply the results directly into my day to day work."

**Secondary Early Career Teacher
City of London Academy, Shoreditch Park**



Ilan James facilitates Y2 ECT induction

"The practitioner inquiry helps me grow as a teacher by encouraging reflection and data-driven decisions. It empowers me to adjust my practice."

**Tower Hamlets Early Career Teacher
St Luke's Church of England Primary School**

Celebrating the NPQ Specialist Consolidation Conference 2024



I am privileged to lead strategically on the NPQs for East London Teaching School Hub as well as facilitating the NPQ Leading Literacy programme. In both roles, I was able to celebrate the impact the NPQs are having on schools in Tower Hamlets, Hackney and beyond at our November 2024 Specialist Consolidation

Conference. This is an event which brings together participants and facilitators from our specialist NPQ programmes. The day was a time to reflect upon the learning across the programmes, share thinking and understanding and celebrate the impact this has had on participants' teaching and leadership in their own schools.

Without a doubt, the standout part of this day was listening to participants share their implementation projects. These projects are an integral part of the NPQS. Throughout the programme, participants are supported to effect change successfully within the context of their own settings by understanding the process of implementation, engaging with evidence-based research and, with the support of facilitators and their colleagues, apply their learning to improvements in their schools. The other facilitators and I were truly inspired by the projects we saw. Professionally confident practitioners and leaders demonstrated how they applied skills and knowledge gained in the programmes and how they used evidence-based research to benefit the children and young people in their settings. Some of these projects raised questions which challenged



Learning from each other's Implementation projects

our thinking and offered inspiration and ideas. In particular, the facilitators were impressed with the level of reflection that happened at each stage of implementation – all of us took elements away to use in our own contexts!

Matilda Feeney-Mellor from Langley Park School for Girls and Lucy Jones from Roselands Primary School have undertaken the NPQ Leading Literacy. In the next page they share a summary of their implementation projects presented at the Consolidation Conference, and they reflect upon the impact the NPQ has had on both their implementations and their leadership.



Spring 2024 NPQ participants receive programme participation certificates

The Vocabulary Gap – more than just words for Year 9 and 10 girls



Matilda Feeney-Mellor, Langley Park School for Girls

Before starting my NPQLL, I was certain that my implementation project and subsequent leadership focus would be surrounding reading and, specifically, reading for pleasure. I believed that this was the area that would provide the most

successful results and would have the most positive impact on my students. However, after accessing the research from the NPQ, I realised that more foundational skills needed to be unlocked before the concept of reading for pleasure could even become available to many of my students. Thus, my implementation project slowly began to change.

After initial analysis of pupil voice surveys, I focused my implementation project on improving the vocabulary of a focus group of girls who lacked the confidence to engage in class discussions. To begin with, I created a knowledge organiser for their current unit. This tool included identified Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary that needed to be explicitly taught, sentence stems and background information on events relevant to the text and time period. The focus group of girls have now had the first version of this knowledge organiser, and I am now meeting leaders to discuss the impact and next steps.

I feel lucky to have undertaken my NPQLL - it has given me the belief that I can lead on projects such as this. The programme has equipped me with the skills, research and confidence to better support our students as readers, writers and people. Being given the opportunity and the support to be a better teacher to the young women that I teach has been fulfilling for both me and my pupils, and I plan to continue to support these students to believe that they have a right to understand and assume ownership of complicated words.

Learning to Talk and Learning Through Talk

Lucy Jones, Roselands Primary School



My implementation project aimed to improve the provision of oracy in the 1.5 entry primary school where I am the English Subject Leader. Inspired by a range of evidence-based approaches, I explored strategies to improve the oracy skills of children in my class, evaluating and reviewing their impact as part of my ongoing monitoring.

From then, I was able to share these strategies across my phase before adapting and implementing them within the rest of the school. My project has raised the profile of oracy; regular, structured practice, in which children discuss ideas, using exploratory talk, in small groups, has resulted in children's self-esteem being boosted. The use of sentence stems has meant that all children are able to contribute. Children are more actively engaging with the content of lessons and learning through talking, listening and developing their ideas. A gradual shift in school culture is underway, as teachers and children have begun to value oracy as a central part of good quality teaching and learning, with opportunities for it being provided across the wider curriculum.

The NPQLL has empowered me to implement knowledge and ideas gained; oracy was an area I had less experience of and thanks to the programme, I have been confident to focus on this and lead school improvement, engaging teachers and children alike. Every Peer Learning Group session, assessment task and piece of reading was invaluable and helped to deepen, challenge and clarify my thinking. It has given me great confidence and equipped me with the skills to evaluate, mentor, inspire and develop a clear long-term vision of literacy for the school. The research and case-studies are now a solid foundation which I can refer to as and when necessary, both to support teachers with their specific needs and to lead the whole team on our next step to develop and improve the literacy provision for our children at Roselands.

Spotlight on the NPQ SENCo programme

Our seventh cohort of NPQs have got off to a flying start, including the new NPQ SENCo. This programme is designed to equip both teachers and school leaders within the SEND landscape. It aims to develop participants' professional knowledge and critical understanding of key concepts to lead and coordinate special educational needs and disability provision across an educational setting.

We have over 60 participants engaging with this programme, our largest cohort! Our cohorts are led by our fabulous facilitators and SEND specialists, Kevin McDonnell (headteacher at Stormont House School), Sandra Collier (Deputy at Stormont House School) and Colin Gall (Assistant Headteacher and SEND coordinator at Clapton Girls' Academy). They said they were delighted to meet all their new participants face to face and felt the enthusiasm and passion for leading Inclusion.

The NPQ Special Educational Needs Coordinator (NPQSENCO) is designed for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, teachers interested in developing expertise in SEND or school leaders. This NPQ is now a mandatory qualification for SENCOs from September 2024. Learn more about the programme [here](#).

Apply for our next NPQSENCo

If you would like to join the next NPQ SENDCO cohort in Spring 2025 with ELTSH apply [here](#). Please note, there are full scholarships available for this programme issued on a first come first serve basis. We're anticipating high levels of demand, so get your application in quickly! Registrations open on 10th February 2025.

Hear from leaders and facilitators working with East London Teaching School Hub

Meet some of the strategic leaders and facilitators working with ELTSH. They are highly experienced senior leaders with expertise in teaching and leadership within inner-city schools. We hope their insights and guidance may inspire you to get in contact with us and get involved too!

Insight from an ECF Strategic Lead



My name is Emily Hatcher, and I am thrilled to have joined the East London School Teaching Hub's leadership team as the ECF Secondary Strategic Lead.

I have worked for the hub as a lead facilitator since September 2021, but joining the leadership team has given me the opportunity to engage with and learn more about the role of ELTSH and the intricacies and importance of every area, including data collection and event planning. I have thoroughly enjoyed our work on Facilitator Development, considering its importance in transforming lives. I have met with our ECT Facilitators half termly to support effective collaboration and planning for upcoming sessions, which have received positive feedback from our participants. We have started our session visits which so far have resulted in positive, meaningful and impactful discussion, as explained further by Katie Fox, one of our ECF facilitators.

"Emily observed me for my second session delivering to an ECT 2 cohort and we sat down for face-to-face feedback immediately after the session. It was a real pleasure to get time to deconstruct my delivery with an expert facilitator/ programme lead. Emily's feedback was motivating and helped me to celebrate and lean into strengths but was also clear in helping me to reflect on key target areas for development. We identified and discussed some tangible next steps to improve my facilitation. For example, we spoke about circulating to move away from selected participants who were contributing to maximize engagement across the whole space. Pairing this with the self-study UCL 'Art of Facilitation' professional learning modules, it's been really rewarding to reflect on how circulating for engagement differs regarding children and adult learning. I have really valued how the feedback has supported me to identify times when I slip into pedagogical mode (and out of andragogical mode) when providing training to teachers. It has made me both more confident and curious about my facilitation, both in wider professional learning contexts (such as ELTSH) and in my own school."

If you would like to find out more about what it is like being an ECF strategic lead contact Emily [here](#).

Appropriate Body local officer perspective



East London Teaching School Hub is the sole local provider of Appropriate Body Services for Early Career Teachers (ECT) and the schools which employ them in Tower Hamlets and Hackney. We currently work with over 600 ECTs working in 140 schools to quality assure ECT induction experiences, including moderating and making the final decision about induction assessment outcomes, providing guidance and support to ECTs and school leaders. (More information about our services [here](#)).

To provide a highly quality local service, we employ Local Officers who get to know our schools really well to ensure they can offer highly contextualised and personalised support and quality assurance. They work closely with the central team, within tightly defined structures and regulatory oversight. As our service expands, we are currently seeking further experienced leaders to join our team. More information can be found [here](#).

We also include two school leaders on our Assessment Panels which meet twice per year. They provide an additional perspective on our assessment processes and insight into school experiences to ensure our service meets local needs.

Saiqua Zaneb, Assistant Headteacher of Central Foundation Girls School, Tower Hamlets

"Being on the AB Assessment panel is exceptional CPD for me as an Induction Lead, allowing me to improve the experience for ECTs at our school. I'm also really pleased to know that our ideas and perspectives can contribute to shape future work across the region."

To express your interest in this role, please complete this [short form](#).



View of an NPQ facilitator

Shereka James has recently joined the East London Teaching School Hub facilitation team and facilitates the NPQH. She has worked over 2 decades in education, including being a secondary school principal in Hackney, and now works as a consultant helping school leaders think about their next steps in their own journeys. Shereka shares her experiences of NPQH facilitation so far.

What do you find to be most professionally rewarding about your role?

The most rewarding part of this role is getting to be a part of someone's leadership learning journey, that's really special. There's an immense sense of fulfilment in seeing teachers and leaders gain confidence, embrace new strategies, and take innovative ideas back to their classrooms and teams. Facilitating isn't just about sharing knowledge—it's about empowering others to thrive and succeed in their roles. The amazing thing is that it's a reciprocal process of learning and development; participants are encouraged to engage with research, challenge themselves and work



out ways to improve student outcomes in their own settings. Facilitators too are challenged to ensure a diverse group of teachers and leaders are continually motivated and engaged to confidently turn theory into practice.

How has this role contributed to your own professional development?

Facilitating has significantly sharpened my communication, leadership, and adaptability skills. Just as our schools are different with a diverse range of students, so are our leaders and their approaches so I've learnt that when facilitating discussions how important it is to navigate diverse perspectives effectively so that all participants feel heard and seen.

How do you use your expertise to ensure the content is meaningful for East London teachers/leaders?

East London is a vibrant, diverse community with unique challenges and opportunities. I draw on my expertise to tailor content that resonates with this context—whether it's addressing issues like social equity or fostering collaboration among staff. By integrating real-life examples and encouraging participants to share their own experiences, I've found the level of engagement increases tenfold! In this way, the thinking and strategies conceived become practical, relevant, and immediately applicable in their schools and leadership roles.

ELTSH National Professional Qualifications: Join our facilitator and speaker team!

We have an exciting opportunity at East London Teaching School Hub. We are looking to recruit school leaders from Tower Hamlets and Hackney to facilitate our 2025 NPQ programmes.

Please review the Facilitator Expression of Interest pack which gives further information about the different NPQs, time commitment, payment and how to apply.

Contact Vicky Wright, the NPQ Strategic Lead for ELTSH, for further details: vwright@mulberryschoolstrust.org.

Apply here: Expression of Interest pack

Practitioner Insight Speakers

Our cohort of NPQ participants really value hearing from leaders in Tower Hamlets and Hackney and from colleagues who have completed the NPQs with ELTSH.

The East London Teaching School Hub is looking for guest speakers to share their leadership experience around a given topic or to share the impact of their implementation projects.

If you are interested, please email Vicky Wright, the NPQ Strategic Lead for ELTSH, to find out further information: [here](#).

NPQ Spring 2025 Cohort: How to Apply

Across the year, East London Teaching School Hub offers a range of new and reformed National Professional Qualifications. Each year, there are two start dates for the NPQs, in October and April.

The DfE NPQ registration portal for the **Spring 2025** cohort will open on **Monday 10th February**. [Please apply here](#). 'Select UCL' and then 'East London Teaching School Hub'

In the Spring 2025 cohort, East London Teaching School Hub will be offering:

- NPQ SENCO
- NPQ Headship
- NPQ Leading Teaching

UCL will run the following NPQs centrally:

- NPQ Leading Literacy
- NPQ Leading Primary Mathematics
- NPQ Early Years Leadership

ELTSH's facilitator team are all experienced senior leaders with expertise in teaching and leading in inner city schools.

To find out more about the NPQs we offer, visit our [website](#).

Follow us on social media to keep up with all the latest ELTSH events and information



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Contact us

Please do contact us if you have any queries or questions:

For Early Career Framework Lead Provider Programme enquiries: ecf@eastlondontsh.org

For National Professional Qualification enquiries: npq@eastlondontsh.org

For Appropriate Body enquiries: ab@eastlondontsh.org

For ITT enquiries: ITT@eastlondontsh.org

For all other enquiries: info@eastlondontsh.org

Visit us on the web at
[East London Teaching School Hub](#)

East London Teaching School Hub
Richard Street, Commercial Road
London, E1 2JP
Phone: 0207 791 7212