



The  
**Mulberry  
Bush Outreach**

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# School Improvement Partner Training 2024/25 An Overview



*'I have found the SIP training very interesting and suitably challenging. It has been great to learn from the presenters and also from a highly talented group of fellow SIP trainees.'*

Former participant

# School Improvement Partner Training **An Overview**

The Mulberry Bush training and network programme, endorsed with a Crossfields Institute Quality Mark, will provide experienced, effective special and AP school leaders with the skills and knowledge to become a School Improvement Partner (SIP).

This will be of benefit to leaders' own schools, as well as helping them to provide support and share good practice with other schools. Our regular network events provide a regular forum for updating your skills, and provide a good level of peer support once you have completed the initial SIP training. Throughout our training there is a continual focus on current educational research.

A SIP helps leaders maintain high quality school provision. They do this by providing professional challenge and support to schools, helping its leadership evaluate its performance, identify priorities for improvement, and plan effective change.

## **This includes:**

- Acting as a critical professional friend to the school, helping leadership teams with their self-evaluation process, identify priorities for improvement and plan effective change.
- Contributing to whole school improvement, including all education, health and care outcomes.
- Sharing practice ideas and increasing networking opportunities.
- Helping leaders stay in touch with current requirements.
- Providing information to governing bodies on their school's performance.
- Supporting governors to performance management their headteacher.



## **Aim**

The course aims to enable experienced, successful school leaders and people already holding school improvement responsibilities to develop the skills and knowledge to become a special school and/or alternative provider (AP) SIP.

On successful completion participants will be invited to join the Mulberry Bush Network of SIPs, which will include 3 network meetings per year, including ongoing professional development.

## **Training model**

We will deliver the training over a 9-month period. There will be 4 face to face days and 1 two day residential.

Participants will also have 2 placement days, where they will develop their SIP skills in another participants' school. SIP's performance will be evaluated against the core competencies. After each placement day, a course leader will discuss the effectiveness of the visit with the SIP and the headteacher of the school being visited.

Assessments will be completed using the core competencies. High attendance is expected in all aspect of the course. A certificate will be awarded to successful candidates.



*‘A really valuable course which is enabling me to develop as a SIP, improve my own provision and network with likeminded professionals. It’s not just a course but a long-term opportunity for professional development.’*

Former participant

### The Mulberry Bush SIP Network

Participants who complete the training and meet the core competencies will be invited to join our SIP network. We will run 3 network meetings each year. These will provide members with training updates, and an opportunity to share ideas and resources, and problem solve.

### Criteria for joining the training

The course will be limited to 16 delegates. Applicants will be required to complete an application form and supply the name of a referee. Required criteria will include:

#### Either

- Holding responsibility as a headteacher/principal/head of education in a special school or AP for three years or more.
- Leading a school through an Ofsted inspection with an outcome of overall effectiveness of good or outstanding.

#### Or

- Working currently in a school improvement role
- A supportive reference from their chair of governors/CEO/ current SIP or similar.

### How much does it cost?

£3,200 per person.

### Learning Outcomes

The course will help participants:

1	Understand the range of functions of the SIP role
2	Understand how to structure a SIP visit
3	Understand how to report on a visit
4	See the value of collecting evidence from different sources
5	Follow up on agreed actions from previous visits
6	Work with staff holding different roles and responsibilities, and with governors/trustees
7	Explore common SIP challenges/barriers
8	Understand and manage emotional aspects of the role
9	Develop a style of work that empowers leaders to take ownership and delegate responsibilities
10	Develop a coaching style of work
11	Understand an effective performance management process
12	Have an awareness of current key educational issues
13	Look at the benefits of being part of a supportive SIP network



*‘Meeting regularly with other head teachers on this course, with the most knowledgeable of tutors, has not only taught me a great deal but become a highlight in the calendar. Everything needed to become a SIP has been thought about, documented and delivered with skill.’*

Former participant

# Course Outline

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Friday 13th September 2024</b>	<b>9:30 – 15:30</b>
<b>What makes an effective SIP? Practicalities, protocols, and process.</b>		
<b>Goals of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For you to have clarity on what makes an effective SIP.</li><li>• For you to be clear on where your current strengths and areas for development lie.</li><li>• For you to know how the areas of development can be addressed in the programme.</li><li>• For you to be clear about some of the practicalities and protocols that will support you in being an effective SIP.</li></ul>		
<b>Structure of day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What makes an effective SIP, key competencies &amp; knowing yourself.</li><li>• The visit practicalities, protocols and process.</li></ul>		
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Tuesday 15th October 2024</b>	<b>9:30 – 15:30</b>
<b>Diving in deeply! Triangulation of evidence.</b>		
<b>Goals of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For you to have clarity about the most effective documentation to scrutinise and discuss, in order to support the school in making judgements about themselves and what to do next.</li><li>• For you to understand the best types of questions about documentation which will illicit informative answers.</li><li>• For you to understand how to conduct an effective curriculum review.</li><li>• For you to understand how to interrogate someone else's' data.</li></ul>		
<b>Structure of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of the different evidence available and how best to analyse it.</li><li>• How to conduct a curriculum review.</li></ul>		
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Wednesday 13th November 2024</b>	<b>9:30 – 15:30</b>
<b>Coaching, supervision and managing feelings.</b>		
<b>Goals of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand and recognise that a school may be anxious about your visit (especially the first one) and understand how to alleviate fears so you get the best from the staff and pupils.</li><li>• To understand how to be an effective coach and be able to practise effective coaching techniques throughout the course and beyond.</li><li>• To be able to identify when staff may need supervision and be able to signpost them to this.</li><li>• To understand the range of strategies that could be used to manage difficult conversations when they arise.</li></ul>		
<b>Structure of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing difficult conversations, supervision and being an effective coach.</li><li>• Preparation for the first school visit.</li></ul>		
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>First placement day (December or January)</b>	
<b>Practice SIP visit to school followed by one-to-one coaching from course leaders.</b>		
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Tuesday 4th February 2025</b>	<b>9:30 – 15:30</b>
<b>Lessons learnt, report writing and safeguarding.</b>		
<b>Goals for the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through discussion with the group, for you to explore learning from the visit – what went well? What you would change and what is the impact on preparation for the next visit?</li><li>• For you to explore and understand what is valued about report writing and be able to write an impactful report.</li><li>• For you to understand how to support the school in checking and helping to ensure effective safeguarding.</li></ul>		
<b>Structure of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feedback from first SIP visit, QA, common problems and issues. Effective report writing.</li><li>• Supporting effective safeguarding.</li></ul>		

<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Second placement day (March or April)</b>
<b>Practice SIP visit to school followed by one-to-one coaching from course leaders.</b>	

<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Wednesday 7th May 2025 (residential)</b>	<b>9:30 – 18:00</b>
<b>Lessons learnt, what to do with governors and trustees and Headteachers Performance Management.</b>		
<b>Goals of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through discussion with the group, for you to explore how the last school visit went. What did you do differently from the first school visit? How successful were you? How did you know? What practise would you keep and what would you change?</li> <li>• To understand how to effectively work with governors/trustees and the different types of activities that could be undertaken.</li> <li>• For you to understand how to effectively conduct a Headteachers Performance Management.</li> </ul>		
<b>Structure of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from last practise SIP visit.</li> <li>• Working with Governors. What's the agenda? Headteachers PM.</li> <li>• Evening: Celebration!</li> </ul>		

<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Thursday 8th May 2025</b>	<b>9:00 – 16:00</b>
<b>Current key educational issues. What the research says! Wrap up and next steps.</b>		
<b>Goals of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For you to have an effective understanding of some of the key educational issues that may impact on your role.</li> <li>• For you to be able to reflect on the course – what you have learnt and what you need to do to perfect your role going forward.</li> </ul>		
<b>Structure of the day:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An exploration of the current key educational issues.</li> <li>• Reviewing course, wrap up and next steps.</li> </ul>		

## Core Competencies

Course assessment will be based on the following abilities:

### Approach

- To work collaboratively with members of the school team.
- To develop trusting relationships with colleagues.
- To recognise that you may not be seeing the whole picture, so to maintain an open enquiring mind.
- To use a coaching approach.
- To pay attention to underlying reasons beneath adult and pupil behaviour.

### Professional Skills

- To recognise there are different ways to get good outcomes.
- To be able to use different leadership styles, and to use these appropriately.
- To be a good listener.

- To plan and use time effectively.
- To produce accurate and timely written note of visit.
- To self-reflect and evaluate your own work.

### School Coordination

- To be led by the directions of the school to ensure that they get what they have asked from you.
- To be mindful of the particular challenges facing the school, taking care to help them become more resilient overtime.
- To support the contribution of others to your visits, taking care not to be too dominant.
- To stick to the commitments you have made around all aspects of the visit.

### Knowledge

- To have secure knowledge of key current educational thinking including inspection framework.

# Course Leaders



## Deirdre Fitzpatrick

Deirdre has been a school improvement partner for over 10 years and is currently a SIP for over 40 schools. She currently works with a vast range of schools including all through generic special schools, hospital schools, SEMH, PRUs and APs, residential and mainstream schools as well as schools in the maintained and Independent sector. Deirdre also works to monitor schools for a number of organisations including Challenge Partners and Local Authorities. She is a DfE expert advisor and has supported both free schools and schools in challenging circumstances. She has been a Director of Education, a National Leader in Education, Headteacher and overseer of three Outstanding Special Schools (one of which won TES School of the Year).



## Andy Lole

Andy started his career as a mainstream primary school teacher. He has many years of leadership experience in special schools. As a headteacher his school was judged outstanding by Ofsted. He had led many school to school improvement projects. He has worked as a SIP since 2007, after being accredited by the National College of School Leadership. He currently supports 10 schools as their SIP. He has carried out monitoring and support work on behalf of several local authorities.



## Dominic Salles

Dominic was an English teacher for 28 years in 5 mainstream secondary schools, spending 9 years as a senior leader leading on teaching, learning and curriculum in 3 of those schools. His first 4 years were spent as a graduate tax inspector. He became obsessed with finding out how educational research can be scaled across a school, writing his first book, *The Slightly Awesome Teacher: where edu-research meets common sense* in 2016, and has since written 3 more books on education. As a consultant, he helps leaders apply research to improve student progress in a range of schools. He has written over a dozen guides for GCSE students, and runs the UK's second largest YouTube channel devoted to English GCSE, with over 105,000 subscribers. 27% of his viewers report improving by at least 3 grades from their mocks.

## Course Venue

The course will be run at the Mulberry Bush Third Space, Toddington, Gloucestershire. On site bed and breakfast accommodation is available for each night prior to the course day. This will be hosted by a course tutor. This will provide additional networking and support opportunities. The accommodation is fairly basic, including a shared bathroom between each pair of rooms. Please note that accommodation for day 7 of the course is included in the cost.

## Further Information

Please contact Angie Brown on **01865 594700** or email [abrown@mulberrybush.org.uk](mailto:abrown@mulberrybush.org.uk)

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