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The course leaders don't just provide learning, they provide real experience, alongside a safe space to discuss your experiences and offer real practical advice and ideas. The content is clear, specific and delivered in a way that is easily absorbed
Feedback from 2026 programme participant



AMANDA MASON
Pathways for Excellence

PROGRAMME LEADER



PROGRAMME LEADER

IAN MASON
Neos Learning

NASS Leadership Development Programme 2027

Now in its 8th year! We are again very proud to announce that due to popular demand and testament to its continued success that the NASS Leadership Development Programme will be delivered again in 2027 by Caboodle Education.

If you are an existing or aspiring leader looking for a practical 'toolbox' for leadership then this programme is for you!

January to July 2027

Six face-to-face monthly sessions at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Solihull

Applications now open

Applications must be received by
4pm on 16th October 2026

PROGRAMME AIMS

This immensely practical and inspiring programme is designed for leaders / aspiring leaders and;

- Develops and applies a range of practical tools to enable you to be even more effective in your leadership.
- Enables you to move beyond formal leadership qualifications to a programme that helps you 'walk the walk' of leadership.
- Explores the key issues that arise in the day-to-day life of a special school leader.
- Enables you to learn alongside others in similar roles and benefit from the wealth of experience that the programme leaders bring to the programme.

What our highly talented 2026 cohort said...

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I have learned so much, and have been furnished with the toolkit needed to take my leadership forward with me into the future

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The programme has provided me with such valuable tools that I will, and have already implemented within my role

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Insightful, knowledge driven, tools for our toolbox

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Even if you feel you have completed some of these modules before, you probably haven't, not in this way at least

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I would thoroughly recommend to any leader or aspiring leader

A leadership development programme for existing and aspiring leaders

We know that heads/principals need to carefully balance time for their own professional development whilst developing aspiring leaders for the future. We believe that the professional and personal wellbeing of our school leaders is key to school success. By participating in the 6-day programme, you and your aspiring leaders will explore the following:

PROJECT WORK THROUGHOUT PROGRAMME

Each delegate will undertake a 'Leadership Project' specific to your setting throughout the programme that reflects on and reinforces the learning from the programme back into the workplace.

The learning and impact from these projects is the basis for a presentation in day 6.

DAY 1 AND 2: MANAGING YOURSELF

Day 1 AM	UNDERSTANDING YOUR BEHAVIOURAL STYLE Understand personal behavioural style and how that can positively and negatively impact on your role as a leader within your setting.
PM	MANAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS A practical guide to managing difficult conversations.
Day 2 AM	MANAGING YOUR TIME MORE EFFECTIVELY Explore how personal effectiveness is impacted by your ability to manage time effectively.
PM	DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE Explore how to develop and promote an appropriate level of emotional resilience in others and in yourself as a leader.

DAY 3 AND 4: MANAGING AND MOTIVATING OTHERS

Day 3 AM	PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT An exploration of how to use performance discussions as developmental tools to promote and reinforce organisational culture and the delivery of outcomes for young people.
PM	COACHING FOR PERFORMANCE A guide for how to coach others in relation to their performance using a distinct and simple to follow model.
Day 4 AM	DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE How to instil a sense of ‘the way it is around here’ in your organisation. Developing the underlying culture.
PM	WORKING WITH STAFF / GOVERNING BODIES TO ALIGN AN ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Developing an organisational development plan that is effective, manageable and that drives performance and outcomes for young people.

DAY 5 AND 6: DEVELOPING YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

Day 5 AM	LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE OFSTED FRAMEWORK Exploring the Ofsted framework and how the Leadership Judgement is demonstrated across all of the other judgement areas.
PM	PRESENTING WITH CONFIDENCE How to design and deliver presentations for differing audiences that are engaging, succinct and provide for maximum impact and results.
Day 6 AM	FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS Presentation of learning and impact from Leadership Project to representatives / sponsors from organisations represented.
PM	REVIEW OF PROGRAMME LEARNING, PROJECT OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS A final review of learning from the programme and guidance on next steps.

Programme leaders

Caboodle Education Ltd is an exciting and innovative company that combines the very best of Amanda and Ian Mason from Pathways for Excellence and Neos Learning to unite expert knowledge and skills in special school and business leadership to meet the challenges of senior leaders and aspiring senior leaders.



AMANDA MASON
Pathways for Excellence

Amanda is a highly accomplished Head Teacher, inspector and school improvement partner.

Amanda is passionate about school improvement. She closely supports leadership teams and teachers to significantly improve standards for pupils, delivering rapid results. In an immensely successful career in special education spanning 30 years,

Amanda has worked with schools and leaders across all phases of education, care, governance and regulation. This has included the maintained, non-maintained and independent sector.

Amanda places great importance on the development of leaders, giving them the skills and tools, they need to be outstanding leaders of the future.

She now works nationally offering practical support, guidance and validation for schools, academies, local authorities and residential providers supporting their continuous cycle of improvement.



IAN MASON
Neos Learning

Ian is a highly skilled and experienced facilitator, consultant and coach. Ian has worked successfully over the past 25 years with a wide range of industries and varying sizes of organisations both in the UK and Europe. He has a passion for assisting leaders in organisations, including in Special Education, in aligning individual, management team and organisational cultures through behavioural development and leadership coaching using his creative and inquiring facilitation style.

Drawing on his vast experience as a company Director and a background in Senior Leadership, he delivers immensely pragmatic development interventions that have a meaningful impact on the organisations that he works with.

He is experienced in the monitoring, review and measurement of the impact of plans and initiatives and instilling the importance in organisations in being able to clearly demonstrate this impact to stakeholders and regulatory bodies.

Your ongoing development with NASS

A key role of NASS is to provide opportunities to support and develop staff within our member schools. We do this via a range of routes, including special interest groups, development programmes and bespoke training.

As current or developing leaders in special schools, we recognise that you have one of the most diverse and challenging briefs in education leadership. In addition to managing teaching and learning across the school – challenging enough with children's complexity of need – you are also responsible for running multi-agency, multi-million pound businesses. Although formal qualifications, such as NPQH, set you up with leadership and knowledge skills, we are creating something to take you beyond this with time and space to think about what it really means to be a leader in a special school.

Applying for the programme

Each school may send 2 delegates. The programme is open to existing, new and developing leaders who want to introduce fresh thinking, inquiry-based learning and reflection to their work.

Please complete the application form and email to admin@nassschools.org.uk **by 4pm on 16th October 2026**

Cost of the programme

£2,000 per delegate (NASS members)

£2,200 per delegate (non-NASS members)

Dates, times and venue

The programme will take place at The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Solihull on the dates below. **Each day will begin at 10am and finish by 5.30pm:**

Day 1 : Tuesday 26th January 2027

Day 2 : Tuesday 16th March 2027

Day 3 : Tuesday 27th April 2027

Day 4 : Tuesday 18th May 2027

Day 5 : Tuesday 15th June 2027

Day 6 : Tuesday 6th July 2027

Belong at nassschools.org.uk

☒ Be informed ☒ Be recognised ☒ Be represented