

# Becoming the CEO

Information Pack



BeReady



# Welcome from John Murphy

I am delighted to introduce you to our programme: Becoming the CEO – Accelerate your growth. This transformational programme is designed for aspiring, newly appointed, and experienced CEOs from across the country, representing Multi-Academy Trusts of all sizes and phases of education.

We are equally proud to introduce an esteemed group of faculty speakers, who will inspire and guide your leadership development. Their expertise will empower you to build the confidence and capability required to excel in the unique and demanding role of a CEO.

As educators, we hold one of the most privileged responsibilities: shaping society and transforming life chances for children and young people. This programme is built on the belief that exceptional leadership is essential to achieving these ambitions.

Drawing on my ten years of experience as a CEO—among the most rewarding and challenging years of my career—I recognise the importance of dedicated training and development for CEOs in the education sector. This programme addresses that need by working alongside you to understand your context, refine your vision, develop strategy, and prioritise the outcomes that matter most.

Through coaching, mentoring, and bespoke support, we'll help you enhance your personal and professional development, enabling you to lead with authenticity, clarity, and confidence.

We are thrilled to be part of your leadership journey. With the support of BeReady, we look forward to helping you shape a brighter future for the children and communities you serve.

Very best wishes,

John



# Timeline

**Evening dinner gathering with John Murphy to start the programme and meet each other.**

## **Day 1 – A High Quality Inclusive Curriculum**

Mary Myatt, a world-leading Curriculum expert will lead a day on a high-quality and inclusive curriculum.

## **Day 3 – Workforce (People and Culture)**

Mandy Coalter, Founder of Talent Architects and former Director of People United Learning will lead a day on developing your workforce and talent strategy.

## **Day 5 – Providing High Quality Digital Learning**

Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith, Founder of One Life Learning will lead a day on developing digital learning.

## **Day 7 – Governance and Leadership**

Samira Sadeghi, Director of Governance at the Confederation of Schools trusts will lead a day on the vital role of trust governance.

## **Day 2 – School Improvement**

Peter Hughes, CEO of Mossbourne Federation and author of Outstanding School Leadership will lead a day on school improvement.

## **Day 4 – Finance and Operations**

John Barneby, CEO of Oasis Community Learning will lead a day on finance strategy and high-quality and efficient operations.

## **Day 6 – Knowing Yourself as a Leader**

Andy Buck, Founder of Leadership Matters – will lead a day on understanding and developing your leadership styles and the impact on culture and climate you create across your trust.

## **Day 8 – Leading Organisational Development and Growth**

Professor Toby Greany, Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham will lead a day on organisational development, system leadership, knowledge management and growth  
Final evening dinner with John Murphy to reflect on the learning and next steps.



# Session overviews

Our esteemed faculty will help shape your thinking and leadership development, enabling you to accelerate your growth and become a truly confident and competent CEO.

Please scan the below to register interest.





## Mary Myatt

Mary Myatt, an education adviser and author, focuses on curriculum, leadership, and school improvement. She co-authored the Huh Curriculum series and founded Myatt & Co and the Huh Academy for professional development. Committed to meaningful educational progress, she has served in various advisory roles and advocates against quick-fix approaches.



### Session overview

## A High Quality Inclusive Curriculum

A brilliant curriculum is every young person's entitlement, with leaders working to ensure every student experiences rich, challenging education. Delegates will explore how to create a coherent, well-sequenced curriculum from early years to KS5, building knowledge and skills over time.

The day will focus on themes such as aligning curriculum vision with implementation and impact, setting high expectations through challenge and low threat. Delegates will examine the misconception that students with low starting points cannot access a demanding curriculum, drawing on research and case studies of schools achieving exceptional outcomes for all pupils.

Through the 'principles of implementation,' delegates will assess whether resources match curriculum goals, highlighting the importance of high-quality materials. We'll discuss representation of protected characteristics in curriculum resources, ensuring young people have access to authentic voices. Insights from alternative provision professionals will help explore proactive inclusion strategies, and we'll hear students' views on inclusion.

Delegates will also explore low-cost enrichment opportunities, utilising resources, the local community, and pupil premium funding. Finally, they will consider ways to work collaboratively and explore effective strategies to meet Gatsby Benchmark goals.



## Peter Hughes

Peter is CEO of the Mossbourne Federation and Founder of ProgressTeaching, an education platform improving teaching and student outcomes. He led Mossbourne Community Academy to top rankings before becoming CEO in 2016. Peter is also the author of Outstanding School Leadership and holds a Bachelor of Education and Executive MBA from Oxford.



### Session overview

### School Improvement

As CEO of Mossbourne and author of Outstanding School Leadership, I'm excited to lead the School Improvement section of this course for future CEOs of Multi-Academy Trusts.

We'll explore key aspects of school improvement, starting with understanding yourself, your context, and the theoretical foundations of trust and school leadership. Self-awareness is critical; knowing who you are and what you stand for allows you to develop and communicate a compelling vision, especially during turnarounds.

Understanding your context is equally important. Recognising the unique needs of your schools and communities helps build trust and a supportive environment. Educational theory is vital but must be applied to create a positive school culture.

Great organisations are built on three pillars: the right people, effective use of data, and strong systems. Having the right team in place is essential, while data should inform decisions and drive improvement. Systems must be refined to ensure self-sustaining processes.

Throughout this course, you'll reflect on your leadership style and the trust you want to lead. You'll assess your leaders' skills, identify areas for development, and appreciate the roles of data, systems, and theory in driving school improvement.





## Mandy Coalter

Mandy is the Founder of Talent Architects, focused on making schools great places to work. She authored *Talent Architects: How to Make Your School a Great Place to Work* (2018). Mandy previously served as Director of People at United Learning, winning HR awards, and is a trustee of E-ACT and National Teaching Awards Trust.



### Session overview

### Workforce (People and Culture)

People are at the heart of schools, and we can only achieve our goals for students with talented, motivated teachers, leaders, and support staff. The UK faces a recruitment and retention crisis, but trust and school leaders hold the power to attract and retain great people.

#### During the day, delegates will explore key themes:

- ▶ The importance of a “people first” culture and how to develop a meaningful strategy.
- ▶ The CEO’s role as “Chief Talent Leader” and how leadership style impacts culture.
- ▶ Latest research on attraction and retention strategies.
- ▶ The Talent Architects 4-pillar model for a great place to work, covering leadership, recruitment, wellbeing, diversity, workforce planning, and talent management.
- ▶ Case studies, group work, and shared learning.
- ▶ Developing a cost-effective HR model beyond traditional approaches. Understanding the legal status of trusts as one employer and statutory requirements.
- ▶ Introduction to the Real World Group leadership 360 feedback tool and follow-up coaching.





## John Barneby

John Barneby is the CEO of Oasis Community Learning, the third-largest Multi-Academy trust in the UK. With 20 years of experience, John transitioned from the commercial sector to education, leading Oasis' rapid growth. He holds qualifications in IT service management, is an RSA Fellow, and enjoys outdoor activities with his family.



### Session overview

### Finance and Operations

Effective finance and operational services are crucial for Multi-Academy trusts, enabling leaders to focus on improving teaching and learning. When misaligned with a trust's strategy or of poor quality, they can hinder school improvement. This session will provide CEOs with a practical approach to developing finance and operations strategies.

#### Delegates will explore key themes including:

- ▶ Culture and Resource Allocation – The CEO's responsibility for managing public money and how organisational culture affects resource use.
- ▶ Developing Long-Term Financial Strategies – Aligning capital planning and revenue budgets with curriculum design.
- ▶ Reserves and Treasury – Understanding reserves policies and balancing risk/return in treasury strategies.
- ▶ Financial Management and Reporting – Identifying essential financial information and KPIs for CEOs and Boards.
- ▶ Target Operating Models – Designing operations that align with the trust's strategic goals.

This session offers real-world examples to help CEOs enhance their leadership in finance and operations.



## Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith

Dr. Fiona Aubrey-Smith, named one of the Top 5 Visionary Women in Education (2024), is an award-winning teacher, leader, and academic. Founder of PedTech and Director of One Life Learning, she supports schools, trusts, EdTech companies, and universities. Fiona co-authored From EdTech to PedTech and holds multiple fellowships.



### Session overview

## Providing High Quality Digital Learning

The purpose of this session is to refresh delegates' own vision for contemporary education, with a particular focus on the role of digital technology.

**Across the day delegates will consider the following themes:**

- ▶ By unpacking our own belief systems about the purpose of education, we will explore the ways in which these influence what we say, think and do as leaders of organisations that exist to support learners and learning.
- ▶ We will consider research about the impact of effective uses of digital technology within schools and trusts, and what these insights might mean for our own specific strategic development plans.
- ▶ We will embed thinking that focuses on the people across your trust - both children and adults - and the relationship between intentions, perceptions and lived experiences.
- ▶ The day will bring a combination of engaging with contemporary research insights, supported reflection on our own thinking, and structured support when setting out thoughtful and impact-centric development plans for the future.



## Andy Buck

Andy is the CEO of Leadership Matters, creator of the BASIC coaching model, and Founder of Cadogan Press. A former headteacher and director at National College, Andy led an outstanding school in East London and later helped establish key educational programmes. He's authored seven books on leadership and coaching.



### Session overview

### Knowing Yourself as a Leader

This session will help you reflect on the key behaviours required for effective CEO leadership.

#### Themes include:

- ▶ Leadership overview – Defining the aspects of effective leadership and assessing your balance.
- ▶ Leadership starts with you – A Jungian personality analysis to identify strengths and blind spots, alongside an EQ diagnostic.
- ▶ Building motivation and psychological safety – Exploring leadership styles that foster a culture of autonomy, motivation, and retention, inspired by thinkers like Daniel Pink and Simon Sinek.
- ▶ Holding to account – Reflecting on effective accountability and how to handle challenging conversations.
- ▶ Making great decisions – Understanding decision-making and how unconscious bias affects it, with strategies for clearer, more confident choices.
- ▶ Feeding forward – Reflecting on the day and setting goals to apply your learning.



## Samira Sadeghi

Samira is Director of Trust Governance at the Confederation of School Trusts (CST). With over a decade in school governance, she previously served as Head of Governance at Academies Enterprise Trust and as a regional governance officer at Ark Schools. Samira also worked as a criminal defence attorney in California.



### Session overview

### Governance and Leadership

Even the most effective leaders need external counsel to navigate the complexity and stress of running schools. Strategic governance is key to a trust's success. To maximise its impact, CEOs must understand how governance adds value and move beyond traditional, compliance-driven models.

This session will explore modern governance practices and culture shifts that are driving change in the sector. We'll discuss the importance of psychological safety in decision-making, managing relationships with boards (especially chairs), and balancing stewardship vs. ownership mindsets. We'll also focus on concise, solutions-focused reporting, avoiding data overload, and intentionally designing governance structures that meet local needs.

Key topics include improving governance alignment, succession planning, measuring what matters, subsidiarity, and over-communication for effective stakeholder engagement. Additionally, we will highlight the crucial role of the governance professional in building a strong governance community that drives trust success.





## Professor Toby Greany

Toby is Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham, with previous roles at UCL Institute of Education and the National College for School Leadership. His research focuses on school leadership, leadership development, and MATs. He has advised the OECD, EU, and governments on education system reform.



## Eleanor Bernardes

Eleanor is a researcher and consultant specialising in education leadership. She has held roles in business, teaching, school leadership, and consultancy, including Head of Engagement at CFEY. Currently, she leads the APSEND National MAT CEOs Network and is pursuing a PhD on Executive Founder Succession in MATs.



### Session overview

## Leading Organisational Development and Growth

This session recognises that each trust is unique and cannot be led by a one-size-fits-all approach. Trusts evolve over time and face external changes, making it risky to rely solely on government quality indicators or personal school leadership experience. We'll explore how some trusts excel at engaging staff and stakeholders in collaborative learning.

### Key themes include:

- ▶ Forging collaborative cultures that support growth.
- ▶ Organisational development for continuous learning and improvement.
- ▶ Leading values-based change in a complex world.


Drawing on over 20 years of research, including large-scale studies and international work, we'll discuss organisational theories and insights from action learning with 20 trusts. We'll address challenges in structural integration, autonomy, knowledge mobilisation, and collective sensemaking, with findings from five case studies due for publication in 2025.

Please scan the below  
to register interest.



**Dan Windsor**  
Head of Partnerships,  
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