



Connecting
Hackney and
Tower Hamlets
Schools

MARCH 2026

NEWS

A message from the Director of East London Teaching School Hub



Welcome to our Spring 2026 newsletter. This edition highlights the collaborative spirit driving our work across East London Teaching School Hub - from our termly ITT Provider Engagement Forum to the inspiring progress of our Early Career Teachers, mentors and facilitators. You'll also find reflections from colleagues engaged in our NPQ programmes and insights into the expanding impact of our Appropriate Body service.

Across all areas, a shared thread is clear: our community is strengthened by partnership, professionalism and a deep commitment to inclusive, high-quality teacher development.

If you're considering your next step, I encourage you to register for one of our programmes, or get in touch if you are interested in joining us as a facilitator or contributing to an NPQ Practitioner Insight session. We would be pleased to hear from you.

Ruth Smith

Director of East London Teaching School Hub

Highlighting Underrepresented Voices in Education

The Department for Education has launched a new case study series spotlighting teachers and leaders from underrepresented backgrounds. Hosted on the DfE [Teaching blog](#) and [Train Others in FE](#) website, the stories explore how representation shapes equity, recruitment, and inclusive cultures. The first four case studies—featuring [Raakhee](#) (who started her career in Tower Hamlets), [Monique](#), [Amjad](#) and [Jasbir](#)—are now live, with more coming this spring and summer.

Advancing Educational Leadership: A unique opportunity with UCL



One of the key reasons we partner with the UCL Centre for Educational Leadership for our ECT and NPQ programmes is the exceptional master's-level study and leadership development opportunities they offer. We're delighted to share that UCL is currently running a Postgraduate Leadership Bursary Scheme, providing 75% funding for eligible colleagues to study for the MA in Educational Leadership.

As a university provider, UCL is uniquely positioned to offer access to the UK's largest university-based centre for research, teaching, development and innovation in educational leadership. This makes the bursary scheme a truly distinctive opportunity for colleagues wishing to advance their professional and academic journey.

The scheme is open to anyone in a leadership role who is currently actively working within our East London Teaching School Hub network of schools, supporting or delivering to participants on our ECTP or NPQ programmes. This includes:

- NPQ or ECT Mentors
- facilitators
- induction tutors
- headteachers

The deadline for applications is 26th April 2026 for September 2026. Successful applicants will be notified by May 15th 2026. If you have any questions about this scheme, please don't hesitate to get in touch with ecf@eastlondonsh.org

Celebrating Collaboration: The East London ITT Provider Engagement Forum

The East London ITT Provider Engagement Forum brings together Teaching School Hubs and local ITT providers in a shared mission: to strengthen Initial Teacher Training engagement and ensure every child in East London benefits from exceptional teacher development. This collaborative group reflects a collective commitment to attracting, training, and retaining the next generation of teachers who will go on to shape our schools and lead our systems.

At the heart of the forum is a belief that, despite the competitive nature of the ITT landscape, there is far more to gain by working together. Members meet termly to share local engagement challenges, exchange policy updates, and offer peer support that is open, constructive, and deeply

rooted in integrity. The forum creates a space where good practice can flourish, challenges can be met collectively, and practical solutions can be developed for the benefit of all East London schools and trainee teachers placed in the region.

The forum is chaired by the Directors of East London TSH, London District East TSH and North East London TSH. By valuing openness and mutual challenges, the group is helping to build a strong, sustainable teacher workforce—one that reflects the diversity, vibrancy, and aspirations of East London itself.

If you lead an ITT provision in East London and would like to join the forum, please contact [Ruth Smith](#) (Director of ELTSH) to find out more.

Introduction to the Early Career Entitlement

Across East London, the early years of teaching are increasingly recognised as a powerful stage of professional growth. Through our Early Career Entitlement, bringing together the Appropriate Body service and the Early Career Teacher Programme, we work with schools to create the conditions where new teachers can develop with confidence and purpose.

As the largest provider in the region, ELTSH is proud to work with more than 140 schools and over 500 Early Career Teachers. This work is strengthened by our collaborative partnership with secondary colleagues and local primary-phase organisations, THEP, Hackney Education, Primary Advantage, LETTA and HTSA. Together, we bring deep local expertise to ensure our programmes are evidence-informed while remaining closely connected to the realities of East London classrooms.

The impact of the ECT programme continues to grow across our network. This year many ECTs describe experiencing “revelatory moments” as they encounter new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. We are delighted that 98% of participants are satisfied with the programme, frequently highlighting the value of facilitated learning sessions and the rich professional dialogue they encourage. These conversations are supporting teachers to deepen subject knowledge, strengthen the climate for learning and refine questioning to meet the diverse needs of pupils in our schools.

Our work is guided by the values of inclusion, transparency and collegiality. Whether through mentoring conversations, facilitated learning, practitioner inquiry or the quality assurance of our Appropriate Body team, our goal is the same: to build a professional community where new teachers feel supported, challenged and empowered to grow in their practice.



Dr Tessa Blair
Deputy Director of East London Teaching School Hub



Strengthening Classroom Practice: Year 2 ECT Practitioner Inquiry project



Emma Burton
ECTP Local Partner
Strategic Lead



ECTs in their second year of induction have started their practitioner inquiries. These small-scale lessons-based investigations enable ECTs to explore key ideas from the ECF framework in their own context.

This term, ECTs have identified a key question they have about their classroom teaching to investigate over a period of 18 weeks. As 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. ECTs have reported that they have deepened their pedagogical content knowledge, enriched their practice and improved outcomes for their pupils.



ELTSH facilitators Ruby Kaur and Katie Fox with second year English, Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages, Social Science and Economics ECTs for Spring term facilitated learning.



Ruby and Katie help ECTs turn their knowledge into confident, actionable practice.



Second-year ECTs across Maths, Science, Expressive Arts, and PE meet at the UAL Campus at the Olympic Park to complete their final facilitated learning session with ELTSH.

“The practitioner inquiries have helped develop my analytical skills through careful observations of pupils during lesson input, gathering evidence to better understand and assess my class ... I have been able to make consistent positive changes at the planning stages ensuring I have good subject knowledge ready to teach along with prepared retrieval activities which help children to recall prior learning and boost engagement in the lessons”

Early Career Teacher, Woolmore Primary School



ELTSH facilitators Syed Ahmed and Alexandra Bowers create a collaborative and inclusive space where every ECT feels supported, valued, and empowered to explore their practitioner inquiry questions.



Emily Hatcher
ECTP Secondary
Strategic Lead



Second year ECTs explore how they can continue to develop their pedagogy and make productive use of assessment.

“Engaging with research helped me understand that resilience is taught through routines and expectations, not just encouragement”.

Secondary Early Career Teacher

“This module has played a large role in helping me understand investigative and research skills when developing my pedagogical practice and inquiry cycles. It has built my confidence. I am proud of the investigation I have conducted this term. This process has allowed me to focus closely on my existing practice but also measure its effectiveness - something I haven't had the opportunity to do yet in my teaching career.”

Early Career Teacher,
Morpeth Secondary school

Sophie Evans ECT Facilitator

This year, we welcomed Sophie Evans to our Secondary ECT facilitator team. Our team of facilitators meet regularly to reflect on their practice and the feedback from our participants, and to plan and contextualise upcoming sessions to ensure these are most impactful.

Here, Sophie shares her experiences so far this year working with East London Teaching School Hub.

Why did you want to join the Hub as a facilitator?

I wanted to join the hub to work within my local community of East London, to share good practice and to enable ECTs to strengthen their skills and knowledge within the profession of teaching. The East London Teaching School Hub has enabled me to achieve all these things through their materials, guidance and support.



**ELTSH ECTP
Facilitator -
Sophie Evans**

How have you been supported to develop as a facilitator?

I have felt so supported, encouraged, and inspired by my co-facilitators and by the programme leaders, who've really helped my confidence. Their modelling of good practice has been paramount in my development. Access to high-quality academic content through the UCL facilitator development modules has been invaluable in broadening my practice. Thanks to the session visits by ELTSH colleagues, I've been able to reflect on my facilitation and gain valuable insight into how sessions are received, as well as being supported in making effective changes.

What do you enjoy most about being a facilitator? What do you look forward to?

I love working with the next generation of practitioners, the feeling of 'giving something back' and to ultimately support keeping teachers in teaching! I look forward to leading new practitioners through the curriculum changes of the recent 2025 government report. Exciting times ahead!

East London Teaching School Hub is looking forward to continuing our close collaboration with facilitators, and excited to come together as a whole team across all programmes at our Facilitator Meet Event on 24 March 2026.

If you would like to learn more about joining the ELTSH ECTP facilitator team, please contact ecf@eastlondontsh.org

Our ECTs - Meet Vishal Patel

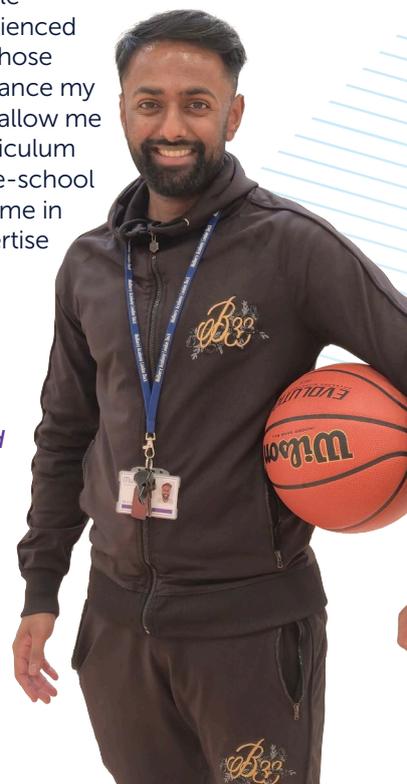
As Vishal begins his second year of the ELTSH ECT programme, he reaches an important milestone in his professional journey. We caught up with him to reflect on his experience so far – what he has learned, what has inspired him, and how he is continuing to develop as an educator. Vishal works at Mulberry Academy London Dock, a new school that opened in September 2024.

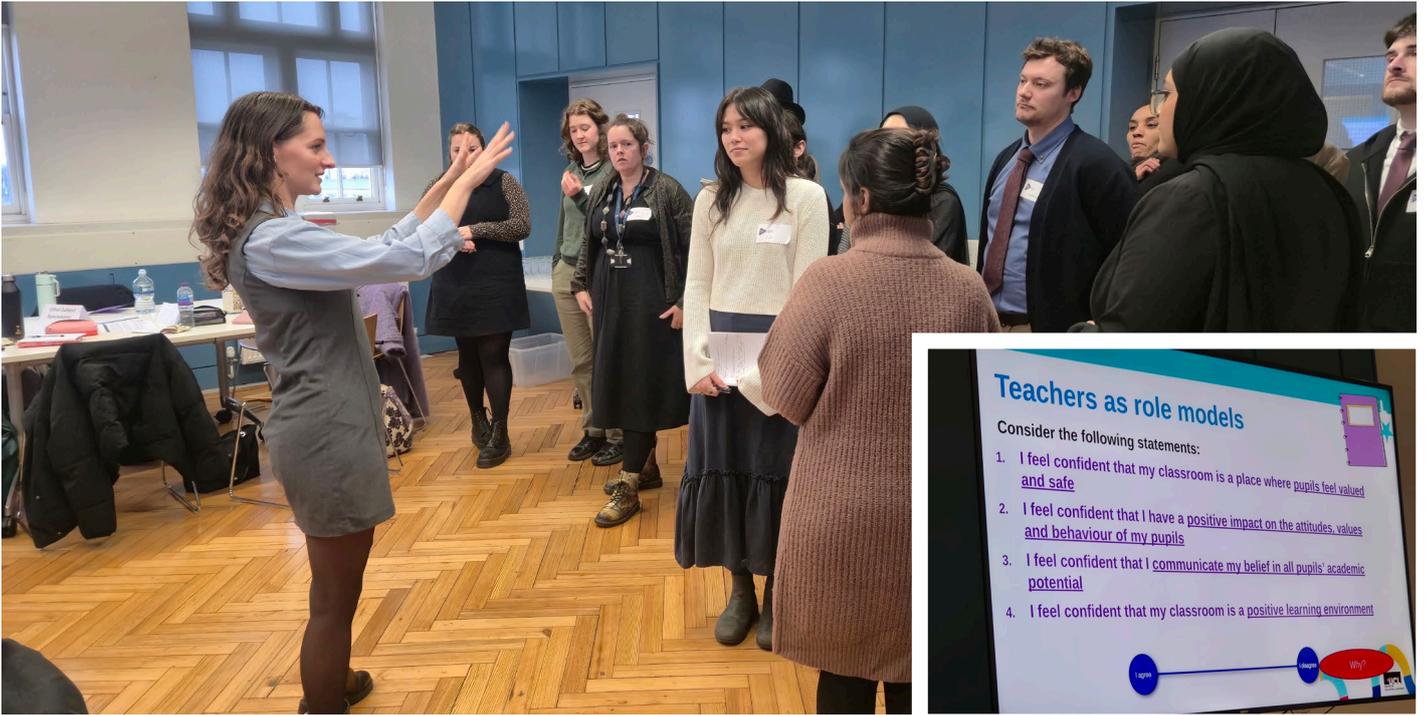
In my second year as an ECT, I've grown significantly as the sole PE teacher for Years 7 and 8, becoming more confident in planning, delivering and adapting an inclusive, values-based curriculum that supports every pupil to feel successful in PE. I've seen students who once disliked PE develop real confidence and even go on to represent the school, and I've been proud of the positive culture built in my lessons, where pupils show empathy, resilience and teamwork. The UCL modules and support from my mentor have helped me strengthen my behaviour management, organisation and reflective practice, and have encouraged me to think more critically about how to improve engagement and participation. My practitioner inquiry - focused on how an inclusive, values-driven curriculum can boost engagement and confidence - has helped me refine my teaching and make more informed curriculum decisions. Overall, the ECT programme has played a major role in shaping my development as a teacher and has supported my longer-term ambition to progress into roles such as Head of KS3, Head of KS4 and eventually Head of Department.

We asked Vishal how he sees qualifications like NPQs supporting his next career steps.

I see NPQs as a valuable next step in strengthening my leadership knowledge, refining my decision-making, and preparing me for greater responsibilities within the PE department and wider school community. I feel I am on the right path, having had the valuable opportunity to work alongside experienced and knowledgeable professionals, whose guidance I apply thoughtfully to enhance my lessons. Completing an NPQ would allow me to deepen my understanding of curriculum design, behaviour culture, and whole-school improvement. It would also support me in developing the confidence and expertise needed to lead others, contribute to strategic planning, and have a wider impact on pupils' experiences.

We wish Vishal every success as he takes forward his practitioner inquiry project, and we look forward to welcoming him at the End of Year Celebrations at Poplar Union, where we'll have the opportunity to acknowledge his hard work and the impact of his research along with all other ECTs engaged in our programme.





ECTs break into subject specialism groups to explore how teachers act as role models.



ECTP facilitator, Lynn Wooldridge, leading a high-energy Maths breakout session, motivating ECTs to step out of their comfort zone.

Mentor Development in Focus: Strengthening Classroom Practice Through Year 2 ECT Practitioner Inquiry



Adele Page
ECTP Strategic Lead



In the penultimate week of last half term, we were delighted to host several one-day mentor development sessions, involving over 70 of our ECT mentors from the ELTSH region. Across two of the three sessions, colleagues explored active inquiry within the ECT2 year, sharing thoughtful reflections on their mentoring journeys and deepening their understanding of how inquiry-led practice empowers Early Career Teachers.

These sessions were rich with professional dialogue, collaboration, and shared expertise. Mentors engaged critically with how active inquiry supports ECTs to develop their knowledge and conceptual understanding, and how it enables them to apply new learning confidently within their own school contexts. We explored and reflected on the ONSIDE and educative mentoring approaches used to support and challenge ECTs and how we might employ either or both methods to meet the needs of individual ECTs and where they are on their learning journey.

We were also thrilled to welcome a number of new mentors who have recently begun working with an ECT, sharing with them how pivotal their role is. Through skilled guidance and reflective dialogue, mentors are instrumental in supporting ECTs to achieve UCL's programme outcomes: valuing

professional learning, developing voice and confidence, strengthening professional identity, and building reflective capacity so they can recognise and celebrate their progress.

Mentors who attended the sessions reflected positively on how it strengthened their confidence and practice, noting that "it has allowed me to plan more effective mentor meetings going forward," and that conversations with their mentees were already beginning to focus on "what practical inquiry we can do for next year."

Others highlighted a shift in their mentoring approach, aiming to *"move my mentee towards more critical thinking in their own practice rather than me providing the solutions and answers."* The session also helped mentors *"understand the second-year requirements and how to best support my ECT,"* while many valued the opportunity to *"learn about practitioner inquiry"* and appreciated the *"good practical feedback and ideas"* that they could take straight back into their roles.

Thank you to every mentor for your commitment, generosity and expertise. Your work truly shapes the next generation of teachers, and we look forward to continuing to work with you all.

APPROPRIATE BODY SERVICES

Local Officer Impact

East London Teaching School Hub is the sole local provider of Appropriate Body Services for Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and the schools which employ them in Tower Hamlets and Hackney. We currently work with over 500 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](#)).

We are delighted that our team of Local Officers has grown this term. Our Local Officers go beyond administrative oversight to build close, enduring relationships with their dedicated group of schools. By acting as a primary point of contact, these officers nurture and champion Early Career Teachers (ECTs), ensuring they feel supported and valued throughout their induction journey and support Induction Tutors to ensure there are robust assessment processes in place. Their deep local knowledge allows for bespoke quality assurance, offering highly contextualised and personalised support.

Local Officer introductions – what do they enjoy most about their work with schools in the region?



// As the Hackney Local Officer, I continue to cultivate strong partnerships with schools, navigating intricate challenges together."

Emma Burton



// I love my Local Officer role because it is, at its heart, support, and this support matters to the staff we work with in schools and to the children being taught in their classrooms"

Adele Page

// It allows me to act as a safeguard for professional standards, ensuring schools provide the right environment for Early Career Teachers to grow and succeed."

Helen Ruskin



// I value the opportunity to ensure Early Career Teachers deliver high quality education and opportunities to children."

Lynn Willis



Join our Appropriate Body Services Assessment Panel

We also include two school leaders on our Appropriate Body services 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. Induction Tutor colleagues who have been part of the panel really valued the insight into the assessment experience across the region. To express your interest in this role, please complete this [short form](#).

Reflections on Leadership Development



Over recent weeks, I've enjoyed reviewing participant feedback from the first module of the leadership NPQ programmes. Reading these reflections has been both grounding and encouraging, reminding me how strongly ELTSH's commitment to collegiality, inclusion and transparency shapes the experience of our NPQ programme participants.

NPQH: Honest Reflection and Strategic Growth

In the NPQH reflections, I was particularly struck by the openness with which leaders explored their strengths and areas for development. Many described how the NPQ learning audits, wider reading and structured dialogue provided meaningful space to think more deeply about their leadership behaviours. Leaders acknowledged both what they do well and the challenging aspects of their roles that they are learning to face more confidently. This willingness to be transparent about development reflects the relational, supportive learning environment fostered jointly by ELTSH and the UCL programme. It was clear that participants valued the programme's balance of strategic leadership development, trust-building and evidence-informed practice.

NPQSL: Confidence Through Community and Clarity

The NPQSL reflections highlighted the power of collaborative learning and the importance of our place-based approach. Participants repeatedly shared how reassuring it was to hear others articulate similar challenges, which in turn strengthened their own confidence. The combined strengths of UCL's research-led content and ELTSH's contextual understanding helped leaders make practical sense of the theory. Balancing the course with busy school-based roles, leaders valued the consistency, quality and approachability of facilitators, reinforcing our belief that leadership development thrives in supportive, open environments.

NPQSENCO: Inclusion in Practice

The NPQSENCO reflections demonstrated how leaders are taking steps to shape more inclusive systems in our schools, strengthen staff practice and build confidence in

their SEND leadership. Several participants described still finding their leadership identity yet growing steadily through structured reflection and shared dialogue. An emerging theme was the way SENCO participants were developing a more strategic approach to their whole-school role while also strengthening the expertise of their wider staff teams, grounded in the belief that everyone has a contribution to make.

Thank you to all who shared their reflections. Participant insights enable us to refine our programmes so they stay responsive to the needs of our leaders and schools, ensuring that our collective work continues to translate into better experiences and outcomes for the students we serve.



Sharing excellence – NPQ Practitioner Insights

A distinctive feature of the Leadership NPQ programmes is the practitioner insight element. These sessions give participants the chance to learn directly from colleagues with practical, hands-on experience of key elements of the NPQ frameworks. They also provide an excellent opportunity for practitioners to expand their professional network and showcase strong practice from their own school settings.

If you would be interested in delivering a 45 minute practitioner insight session on one of the listed themes below, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact Deborah Gostling, NPQ Strategic Lead, at npq@eastlondonsh.org for further information.

- **Effective Professional Development for School Improvement**
- **Leading School Culture**
- **Curriculum and Assessment**
- **Working with others to identify and meet need**
- **Working in partnership to improve pupil outcomes**
- **Working with other leaders and families**
- **Leading teaching**
- **The role of governance in school improvement**



Deborah Gostling
NPQ Strategic Lead

If you missed them, find previous editions of our newsletters here [↗](#)



Autumn 2025



Summer 2025



ITT Brochure

Stay Connected

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Contact us

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

ECF: ecf@eastlondontsh.org

NPQ: npq@eastlondontsh.org

AB: ab@eastlondontsh.org

ITT: itt@eastlondontsh.org

General: info@eastlondontsh.org



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Website:
East London Teaching School Hub

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