



Headline sponsor:

schoolblazer

BSA Annual Conference for Heads

*Boarding perspectives:
Learning within, Leading beyond*

CONFERENCE CHAIR: DR CHRIS PYLE, HEADMASTER, LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR

VENUE: YORK RACECOURSE, KNAVESMIRE ROAD YO23 1EX

Annual Conference for Heads ~

Boarding perspectives: Learning within, leading beyond

It is a great pleasure to host this year's BSA Annual Conference for Heads as Chair for 2025. I look forward to meeting and connecting with many of you.

It is undoubtedly a challenging time for the boarding sector. This is particularly true in the UK, where we have seen the introduction of VAT and removal of business rates relief for independent schools, as well as an increase in employers' national insurance. Schools are also competing in an increasingly global marketplace and tackling rising levels of student anxiety. The stakes have never been higher and the to-do list never longer.

What remains unchanged, though, is the sector's commitment to excellence. Boarding provides a holistic education setting that cannot be matched. Each school has a unique identity, but we all share goals: to inspire, to build communities, to build resilience. Not just amongst our students, but amongst our teams and in ourselves.

It is fitting, therefore, that the theme for this year's conference is 'learning within; leading beyond'. We will hear from Heads as well as leadership experts on topics ranging from managing teams to finding opportunities in challenges. Perhaps most importantly, we will also learn from one another and from this year's award winners, who will be celebrated over dinner. I very much look forward to it and to welcoming you.



Dr Chris Pyle

Conference Chair 2025 and Head, Lancaster Royal Grammar School

AUDIENCE:
Heads | Principals

VENUE:
York Racecourse

COST:
UK full members - included in 2024/25
membership (an RSVP is essential)
International full members - £750
Affiliate members and day schools - £1,125
Non-members - £1,500

*Includes: two-day conference, conference
refreshments and BSA annual awards dinner.
Please note the cost does not include hotel
accommodation this should be booked separately.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK>](#)

Day 1

Tuesday 06 May: *Learning within, leading beyond*

10:30 **Registration and refreshments**

11:00 **Chair's address**

Dr Chris Pyle, Conference Chair 2025 and Head, Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Our conference chair will look at how the boarding sector can learn within and lead beyond in today's changeable world.

11:10 **The CEO's compass: Navigating teams through turbulent times**

Jonathan Bowman-Perks MBE, CEO's Trusted Leadership Advisor

Practical lessons for you to draw on from your peers worldwide in your rewarding yet lonely job at the top with commercial and personal pressures to navigate.

12:10 **Global boarding trends**

David Walker FTIOB, Executive Director, Boarding and Director BSA/TIOB

The latest trends, concerns and opportunities as reported by BSA member schools around the world.

12:25 **Networking lunch**

13:15 **Boarding perspectives: learning within**

- **Jane Gandee**, Head, St Swithun's School
- **Gareth Jones**, Head, Bilton Grange Prep School
- **Mark Lauder FTIOB**, Head, Strathallan School
- **Geoff Marsh**, Head, Frensham and Head, Frensham Schools

Our panel will compare their experiences of leading different types of schools, including prep, all-through, single-sex – and Australian.

14:00 **Keynote**

Why is school so difficult? In conversation with Dr Carrie Herbert MBE

Dr Herbert will share insights from Red Balloon's programme for bullied or anxious self-excluded students, which sees 93% achieving educational success as well as gaining confidence and a plan.

15:00 **Refreshments and networking**

15:30 **Aiding the anxious generation: Strategies for improved student outcomes and retention**

- **Adam Beeson**, Strategic Enrolment Director, New Summit Academy and The Bridge – Costa Rica
- **Dr Heather Tracy**, Executive Director & Co-Founder, New Summit Academy and The Bridge – Costa Rica

In this interactive session, facilitators will share tried and tested strategies for supporting students with social-emotional challenges.

16:00 **Global village round table**

1. **EVIDENCED-BASED DESIGN: UNCOVERED**
 - **Karl Hearn**, Boarding Consultant, Noble + Eaton
2. **SAFEGUARDING AND COMPLIANCE**
 - **Dale Wilkins FTIOB**, Executive Director Scotland/Wales and Accredited/Compliance, BSA Group
3. **INTEGRATING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**
 - **Beth Hudson MTIOB**, Executive Director, Consultancy and Director, BAISIS/HIEDA, BSA Group
4. **IMMIGRATION 101**
 - **Kate Hollyer MTIOB**, Executive Director - Legal, BSA Group
5. **MARKETING BOARDING**
 - **Aileen Kane FTIOB**, Deputy CEO and COO, BSA Group
6. **CAREER PLANNING WHEN YOU'RE AT THE TOP**
 - **Emma Hattersley**, Head of Schools' Practice, Saxton Bampfylde
 - **Martin Reader FTIOB**, Senior Adviser, Saxton Bampfylde
7. **HORIZON SCANNING IN BOARDING**
 - **David Walker FTIOB**, Executive Director, Boarding & Education and Director, BSA/TIOB, BSA Group
8. **LINKEDIN AND YOUR PERSONAL BRAND**
 - **Robin Fletcher MTIOB**, CEO, BSA Group
9. **POLITICAL LANDSCAPE**
 - **Julie Robinson**, CEO, Independent Schools Council (ISC)
10. **SHOWCASING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TO FUTURE-PROOF STUDENT RECRUITMENT**
 - **Ben Mason**, CEO, globalbridge
11. **STATE BOARDING**
 - **Alex Foreman**, Principal, Duke of York's Royal Military School
12. **FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR BOARDING**
 - **David Woodgate**, CEO, ISBA

17:00 **Close of day one**

17:30 **Evensong at York Minster**

Delegates may wish to attend Evensong; the postcode is YO1 7HH and Evensong is between 17:30-18:15.

19:00 **Drinks reception**

Sponsored by IGTM

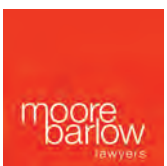
Music kindly performed by pupils from St Peter's School, York



19:30 **Annual conference dinner and awards**

Sponsored by Moore Barlow

After-dinner speaker: Alice Philips, Head, St Catherine's, Bramley



Day 2

Wednesday 07 May: *Learning within, leading beyond*

07:00	Head to the city <i>A 5-mile run taking in the sights and schools of York, departing from Delta Hotel at 07:00 and The Grand at 07:10.</i>
09:30	What next? Lord Black of Brentwood <i>BSA Honorary President, Lord Black, will share his thoughts and unique insights.</i>
09:50	The new world order <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fiona Boulton OBE, Director of Independent Schools, United LearningEmma Goldsmith, Head, Dragon School OxfordNick Wergan, Global Education Director, Inspired Education GroupLeo Winkley, Head, Shrewsbury School <i>Four leading figures will discuss the future of boarding school management, which for some may feature becoming part of a group.</i>
10:45	Refreshments and networking
11:15	Breakout discussions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. EDUCATION LAW UPDATE: UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERSITY<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ben Collingwood, Partner, Moore BarlowJoanna Lada-Walicki, Partner, Moore Barlow<i>Specialist independent education lawyers will give an update on neurodiversity: the increase in requests for support, latest guidance and regulation, reasonable adjustments, and practical tips.</i>2. A PROFILE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY BOARDING SCHOOL PARENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">Guy Schady-Beckett, Director and Head of Research, Next Step Education<i>Guy Shady-Beckett will draw on his global experience dealing with boarding families to lead this breakout session on what parents look for and common concerns.</i>3. LIFE OUTSIDE SCHOOL: FRAMEWORKS FOR POSITIVITY AND RESILIENCE<ul style="list-style-type: none">Simon Pither, Director, PRS TrainingJamie Daniels, Director, PRS Training<i>Understand how developing self-advocacy systems can help young people manage confrontation.</i>4. UK COMPLIANCE<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kate Hollyer MTIOB, Executive Director, Legal, BSA GroupDale Wilkins FTIOB, Executive Director, Scotland/Wales and Accredited/Compliance, BSA Group<i>Discuss the latest updates and implications for boarding with compliance specialists.</i>5. WHERE ARE YOUR STUDENTS COMING FROM? INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS<ul style="list-style-type: none">David Williams, CEO, I-GTM<i>Actionable insights on how student movement shapes boarding school logistics.</i>

12:15	Networking lunch
13:15	Converting challenges to opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">Jim Lawless, CEO, SYMMETRY & Bestselling Author <i>Jim helps leaders do the things they never thought they could, and will share his secrets in this thought-provoking session.</i>
14:15	Breakout discussions repeated from the morning session
15:00	Refreshments and networking
15:30	Emotionally intelligent leadership to maximise your people power <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gina Buckney, Founder and Director, Your People Power <i>TEDx speaker Gina Buckney will share insights from her extensive experience in corporate transformation and workplace wellbeing.</i>
16:30	Close of conference



Dr Chris Pyle
Conference Chair 2025
and Head, Lancaster
Royal Grammar School

Chris has been Head of Lancaster Royal Grammar School since 2012. The school has grown significantly over that period and has welcomed Sixth Form girls as boarders and day students. It has been judged Outstanding in all categories in three successive Ofsted boarding inspections. Chris was previously Deputy Head of the Perse School, Cambridge. Before becoming a teacher he completed a PhD in Geography at Cambridge University and also worked in the water industry. He holds the NPQH, is currently studying for the NPQEL in school leadership, and is Executive Lead of the NNW Maths Hub. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and regularly writes resources for schools on natural hazards and environmental change.



Jonathan Bowman-Perks MBE
Trusted Leadership Advisor

Jonathan has learnt from the brightest and the best CEOs, Chairs, Principals, Heads, Vice Chancellors, Generals, Partners and Managing Directors. His forthcoming third book, "The CEO's Compass: Navigating Teams Through Turbulent Times", does what it says on the tin. As a Leadership Advisor and Coach to world-class CEOs and Top Teams, there are few messy problems or challenges that he has not yet come across. He has the privilege of meeting fascinating leaders, Politicians, Special Forces Soldiers, Generals, Explorers, Olympians and Entrepreneurs. As host of the Inspiring Leadership Podcast (rated in the global top 1.5%), he draws on their personal stories and wisdom to help others navigate the least-worst outcomes to survive and thrive in the turbulent leadership world. Jonathan was Assistant to the Head of the British Army, Chief of Staff of the Army's largest Brigade and commanded his Company on three operational tours. He was a leader in PwC, IBM and as Penna PLC's MD of Board and Executive Coaching. He was awarded the MBE for his services to leadership in training UN leaders who helped prevent the East Timor massacre.



David Walker FTIOB
Executive Director
Boarding and
Director BSA/TIOB

David joined the BSA group in 2023. He has over 20 years' experience in boarding schools and has worked in a range of schools in the UK and Africa, alongside being a prep school governor and a trustee of a MAT. Before taking up his post at the BSA, David was Deputy Head Pastoral at a large co-ed independent school in the South-East.



Jane Gandee
Head
St Swithun's School

Jane began her teaching career in 1993 having dabbled briefly in accountancy after a degree in French and Spanish at Girton College, Cambridge. She taught languages at Lord Wandsworth College and Oakham School before becoming head of Spanish and then head of languages at Queenswood School. In 2005, she became director of studies at City of London School for Girls and she took up her current post in 2010. Jane is a keen sportswoman, having represented Cambridge at athletics and cross country and captained the university women's football team. She still runs competitively when time allows and particularly enjoys running with colleagues at BSA conferences.



Adam Beeson
Strategic Enrolment Director
New Summit Academy and
The Bridge – Costa Rica

With nearly two decades of international school teaching and leadership experience in Europe and the Americas, Adam is an educator with a passion for creating meaningful relationships with learners and facilitating experiences that lead to cross-cultural understanding and global competencies. From 2015-2020, Adam served in a number of roles within the Academic Department at NSA. He is actively involved in the wider field of international school education, adding his insight as a presenter at the International Baccalaureate (IB) Global Conference of the Americas, serving as an IB Examiner and member of the International Schools Anti-Discrimination Taskforce, and contributing to various publications, including the Wellbeing in International Schools Magazine, for which he was also a founding member of the editorial team. Adam is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global Seminar, an Austrian-based think tank and policy centre, and serves in a volunteer capacity as Community and Outreach Coordinator for the Global Citizenship Alliance.



Dr Heather Tracy
Executive Director & Co-Founder
New Summit Academy and
The Bridge – Costa Rica

Heather studied at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, earning a Master of Education in Human Development & Psychology. In 2014, Heather completed her Doctorate in K-12 Leadership with a dissertation about the importance of academic enablers for at-risk adolescents to build resilience and learn and live more effectively and efficiently. Previously, Heather researched Math and English support programmes for the MCAS in Boston Public Schools, taught English as a Second Language to teenagers and adults, taught college reading and writing courses, and served one year as a volunteer English teacher in the Costa Rican public school system. Being a part of the founding team of New Summit Academy in 2004 has been the highlight of her career, and she feels blessed to be able to be a part of the team creating innovative, holistic, and quality education for unique young men. Heather co-authored Supportive Immersion theory (2016) and articulated PROPS skills as the 21st century skill set needed to thrive in today's world.



Karl Hearn
Boarding Consultant
Noble + Eaton

Noble + Eaton is an education design consultancy based in London. At Noble + Eaton, Karl works closely with boarding schools to reimagine and reshape their environments into Thriving Spaces™, emphasising how physical space can enhance student outcomes. With a deep understanding of the dynamics of boarding life, he has a keen eye for identifying hidden potential within existing spaces—transforming underutilised areas into purposeful, student-centred environments. His work bridges strategy and design, helping schools align their physical settings with USPs and evolving educational and wellbeing priorities. Having recently led the 'State of Boarding Spaces' research project Karl shared his insights at the Future of Boarding Spaces Conference, contributing to discussions on the future of boarding environments. By combining practical expertise with visionary thinking, Karl supports schools in creating spaces that foster a strong sense of belonging and academic growth—unlocking the full value of their environments for students and staff alike.



Dale Wilkins FTIOB
Executive Director
Scotland/Wales and
Accredited/Compliance
BSA Group

Dale joined the BSA in 2017. Dale leads on all safeguarding and inspection matters for the BSA, including managing the Commitment to Care Charter, and has developed a process of BSA Accreditation for international members. He also liaises with ISI, Ofsted and DfE on matters relating to compliance and inspection standards, and compiles the BSA Self-Assessment toolkit. For 31 years Dale was a boarding practitioner. After boarding positions at Norwich School and Tettenhall College, Dale became a Housemaster at Old Swinford Hospital in 1992, and was promoted to Deputy Head in 2007, and subsequently also DSL. He has also been a multi-agency trainer for the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board.



Gareth Jones
Head
Bilton Grange Prep School

Gareth has worked in prep boarding schools for over 25 years, leading two over the last 10 years. Formerly a Housemaster and Director of Sport at the Dragon School, Oxford, he then became Head of St Andrew's Prep, Eastbourne before taking up his current role as Head of Bilton Grange Prep, part of the Rugby School Group, in September 2021. Gareth sits on the IAPS Pastoral Committee, having also sat on their Sports Committee previously, and has experience of governance in both the independent and state sectors.



Mark Lauder FTIOB
Head
Strathallan School

Mark began his teaching career at Shiplake College in Henley-on-Thames, where he was Head of the History Department, Resident Tutor and Master I/C of Rowing. He then headed to Oxford in 1999, to become Head of History at St Edward's School, as well as a Housemaster. While there, he continued with his rugby refereeing, coaching U16s rugby and U15s rowing, and ran the naval section of the CCF. In 2007, Mark was appointed Deputy Headmaster and Head of Boarding at Felsted School, where he maintained his coaching and teaching roles. It was from there, in 2010, that he headed north, to take on the role of Headmaster at Ashville College in Harrogate. In 2017, Mark moved to Strathallan School.



Geoff Marsh
Head
Frensham and Head
Frensham Schools

Geoff has been Head of Frensham Schools for the past two years (coed P-6, girls' boarding and day 7-12). Prior to this he was Principal of the Riverina Anglican College in Wagga Wagga (coed K-12). Before going to Wagga Geoff was Deputy Head of Frensham Schools for 17 years. Geoff had a brief interlude helping run the Sydney 2000 Olympics for three years. Prior to this he worked as a physics and chemistry teacher at Chevalier College in Bowral for six years where he also worked in boys' boarding.



Carrie Herbert MBE
Chair and Founder
Red Balloon Learning

Carrie trained as a teacher before emigrating to Australia, returned to the UK in the eighties to complete a Master's Degree at UEA and a PhD at Cambridge. Carrie worked as a consultant in equal opportunities before founding Red Balloon in 1996. She has written a number of books on the subject of bullying and harassment in schools and in the workplace. Carrie Herbert was Master of the WC of Cutlers from 2020-2022.



Beth Hudson MTIOB
Executive Director
Specialist Services and
Director BAISIS, BSA Group

Bethan joined the BSA team as Training Manager in 2017. Bethan has worked in two independent boarding schools in the UK and Switzerland, the latter as Housemistress to 36 pupils. Following her time in Switzerland, she was a Pastoral Manager for an inner-city state academy before working in the charity sector for Debrett's running the 'Debrett's Foundation' training programme. In her role, Bethan plans and manages all day seminars, conferences, INSET and consultancy, as well as being Director of BAISIS. She believes boarding can be a positive force for young people and in order to fully support their needs staff can never learn too much. As such she is passionate about the CPD BSA delivers to our pastoral communities in the UK and worldwide.



Kate Hollyer MTIOB
Executive Director
Legal
BSA Group

As a qualified solicitor with more than 10 years' experience advising clients on UK immigration law, Kate assists members with all immigration and safeguarding legal matters. Prior to joining BSA in 2022 Kate was Partner and Head of Department at a leading full-service UK law firm. Having resided in state, preparatory and senior school boarding houses since 2014 with her Housemaster husband, Kate has a unique perspective of boarding life.



Aileen Kane MTIOB
Deputy CEO and
Chief Operating Officer
BSA Group

Aileen is Deputy CEO & COO of BSA Group. She leads operations at BSA Group and works closely with members to provide guidance and training. Aileen also works with government departments, local authorities and other agencies to support members and heads up the group's work to find places for refugee children escaping from conflict countries.



Emma Hattersley
Partner and Head of Schools Practice
Saxton Bampfylde

Emma joined Saxton Bampfylde as a consultant in 2022. Emma worked in a variety of educational settings for more than three decades. She has experience of day and boarding schools, co-educational and single sex, prep and senior. Emma was Head of Godolphin School between 2014 and 2022. Prior to joining Godolphin, Emma was Housemistress at Canford School and then moved to Sherborne Girls to take up a Deputy Head position. Emma has examined for OCR and the ABRSM and is a Governor at Fairley House School and Port Regis. She has chaired the HMC Inspection sub-committee, served as an inspector for ISI and is a former member of the ISI Educational Advisory Forum.



Martin Reader FTIOB
Senior Advisor
Saxton Bampfylde

Martin is a former Head of Cranleigh & Wellington Schools who now works as a consultant. He served as BSA Chair in 2018-19. Martin is an Emeritus Fellow of the BSA and Trustee of the BSA Foundation.



Robin Fletcher
CEO, BSA Group

Robin was a journalist, editor and communications director before joining BSA in 2014. Robin now has responsibility for the BSA Group, which serves 4,500 organisations and individuals working in boarding, health, inclusion, and safeguarding in more than 50 countries. Robin is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Fellow of Cardiff Metropolitan University, a Governor of Rugby School, President of the Rugbeian Society and a non-executive director of the national trade body Make UK.



Julie Robinson
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Schools Council (ISC)

Julie was head of Ardingly College Junior School and then Vinehall Prep School in Sussex before becoming education and training director for the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS). At IAPS, she served on the Standing Group of Teachers Associations and the Independent Schools Examination Board. Julie also chaired the Independent Schools Council's Cross Association Leadership Group. In 2015, Julie became General Secretary of the ISC, representing schools across the independent education sector. She serves on the School Partnerships Oversight Board for the Department for Education promoting independent-state school partnership work. Julie liaises with influencers in education across schools, government and the media, serving the interests of ISC constituent associations and member schools.



Ben Mason
CEO
globalbridge

Following 16 years in teaching across the state and independent sectors, Ben founded globalbridge, a pioneering EdTech platform, to level the playing field of opportunity and help schools evidence student outcomes via a multimedia learner profile. globalbridge was created to support how schools evidence student talent and skills by enabling them to utilise the digital media advances in the emerging talent recruitment space. Listed in the Business Cloud UK EdTech top 50 for most innovative education technology creators, Ben himself was also listed in The Sunday Times top 100 entrepreneurs. Ben and globalbridge co-lead a number of OECD 'Future of Education and Skills 2030' projects. One looking at how educational outcomes can be more inclusive and equitable for all learners.



Fiona Boulton OBE
Director of Independent Schools
United Learning

Fiona became Director of Independent Schools in 2022. She joined United Learning in 1995 when it was the Church Schools Company. She was Head of Guildford High School from 2002 – 2022 and is currently Executive Head there. Guildford High became a Teaching School in 2013 and Fiona was appointed an NLE, leading the United Learning Teaching School Alliance from 2013 – 2020. She has a variety of governance roles; she is an Associate Director of Cumbria University, on the governing body of Epsom College and St Ives Prep School and a member of the 'Learning Partners Academy Trust'. Fiona is on the Advisory Board of the School Partnerships Alliance and has helped to establish the West Surrey Partnership of state and independent schools. She was Chair of HMC in 2019-2020, and on the Advisory Council of the Institute for Ethical AI in Education (IEAIED) between 2018 – 2021. In 2023, Fiona was awarded an OBE for services to education.



Emma Goldsmith
Head
Dragon School Oxford

Emma is the twelfth person to lead Dragon School Oxford, a co-educational prep school, since it was founded in 1877 and the first female to do so. Emma joined the Dragon after a successful few years as Head of Winchester House Prep. Emma taught at Oakham and Rugby Schools and went on to become Deputy Head at Bloxham School where she also worked as Housemistress, setting up the first girls' boarding house. Emma is a board member of IAPS. She is an experienced governor having been on the board of Cheltenham College and is currently a governor of Wellington College and Gordonstoun. She is also host of the podcast 'The Educational DiEmma'.



Nick Wergan
Global Education Director
Inspired Education Group

Nick joined Inspired in 2020 and is now the Chief Executive Officer for the UK. This followed six years as Headteacher at Steyning Grammar School. Nick was elected Chair of the BSA in 2019, appointed National Leader of Education by the UK Department for Education, and founded the Pavilion and Downs Teaching School Alliance. Following a successful international career in Investment Banking (leading Emerging European Equity teams at US, UK, and European investment banks, including Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch, and HSBC), Nick began his career in education following his teacher training at Pembroke College, Oxford in 2004. Presently, Nick is an elected fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a winning recipient of the 2007 UK National Teaching Award and holds an MA in Education Studies (University of Sussex).



Leo Winkley
Head
Shrewsbury School

Leo has been Headmaster of Shrewsbury School since September 2018. Before that he was Headmaster of St Peter's School in York for eight years. He was Chair of the Boarding Schools' Association in 2017.

Leo is a passionate advocate of partnerships. He is a founding Trustee of the School Partnerships Alliance and the Chair of Trustees of Shrewsbury House, known as 'The Shewsy', a youth and community club in Everton, founded by teachers from Shrewsbury School in 1903.

He has a Master's in Education and a Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration from the Open University. He is also a member of HMC, serving on the Public Benefit and Partnerships Committee, and the G30 group of Schools.



Alex Foreman
Principal
Duke of York's Royal Military School

Alex gained his Theology & Philosophy degree from Surrey University, initially teaching PE and Religious Education at Uppingham School in Rutland. He became Head of Year at an all-boys Leicester city comprehensive and then went on to become Assistant Headteacher and later Headteacher, at King's School, an MoD school based in Germany. Alex joined the Duke of York's Royal Military School in 2017. He has an indestructible attachment to Leicester Tigers and highlights of the year are playing the pupils' First XIs at cricket and hockey, where he still thinks 'he's got it!'.



David Woodgate
Chief Executive
Independent Schools Bursars
Association (ISBA)

David was appointed Chief Executive of ISBA in 2016. Prior to this he was Chief Executive of the Institute of Financial Accountants from 2007-2015 after which he spent a year as the Strategy Consultant to the Institute of Public Accountants in Australia. David qualified as a Barrister before moving into the City, holding several senior management and executive positions in the National Westminster Bank and the Royal Bank of Scotland. He ran an outsourcing business and a specialist consultancy providing market intelligence and competitor analysis. He completed an MBA at Warwick University Business School. A former Chief Executive of the Institute of Administrative Management, he also holds a postgraduate diploma in Charity Management from the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators and South Bank University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a Chartered Banker, a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights. David is also a former Chairman of Governors of an HMC school and a Governor of the City of London School.



Alice Philips
Head
St Catherine's, Bramley

Alice was educated at Kendal High School for Girls and went on to read English at Newnham College, Cambridge. After ten years as an English teacher, and then Head of English at the Royal Masonic School, Rickmansworth, she moved on to Deputy Headship at Tormead School, Guildford in 1993 and has been Headmistress of St Catherine's, Bramley, an independent school for girls aged 4-18, near Guildford, since 2000.



Lord Black of Brentwood
Honorary President, BSA

Lord Black of Brentwood (Guy Black) has been a Conservative member of the House of Lords since 2010. Educated at Brentwood School and Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he graduated in history, Guy has spent his career in the media and politics. He has worked at the Telegraph Media Group since 2005, as Deputy Chairman since 2018. Previously, he had been Director of the Press Complaints Commission and Director of Communications for the Conservative Party under Michael Howard. Guy has been a Governor of Brentwood School since 2013, and Chairman of Governors since 2024. He is President of the Boarding Schools Association and the Institute of Boarding. Guy has been a longstanding campaigner on education issues, including music education: he has been on the Council of the Royal College of Music since 2009, and its Chairman since 2017. He speaks in the House of Lords on a range of other issues including music and the performing arts, osteoporosis and bone health, animal welfare and media freedom.



Ben Collingwood
Partner
Moore Barlow

Ben specialises in advising independent schools and other charities on wide ranging areas of education law, with particular focus on reputation issues, pastoral, safeguarding, historic abuse allegations, SEN, exclusions, parent/pupil complaints, data protection, parent contracts, admissions and staff matters of all types. He has written and spoken widely on issues facing the independent schools sector, providing comment in The Times, The Guardian, The Lawyer and Law Society's Gazette and at the national conferences and training programmes for the various associations that support independent schools including BSA, ISBA, HMC, IAPS and AGBIS.



Joanna Lada-Walicki
Partner
Moore Barlow

Head of the Schools Team, Joanna is recognised nationally as a leading adviser on complex and high profile employment and pastoral issues that impact schools, including allegations of abuse (against staff and child-on-child), other safeguarding issues as well as staff departures within the senior leadership team. Joanna also has niche expertise on the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), including on issues arising from claims from Teachers' Pensions for arrears of contributions. She is frequently requested to speak at industry sector events and has written many articles on a range of issues.



Guy Schady-Beckett
Director and Head of Research
Next Step Education

Guy has served as Director and Head of Research at Next Step Education Limited (Independent Schools Show & Bonas MacFarlane) since 2014. Previously he ran Drayson Beckett Limited, a specialist education consultancy working long-term with schools and universities on business development (with a focus on digital transition), market research and brand / product repositioning for 20 years. Prior to that he taught English at Windlesham and Durston House. He holds a PhD and an MA in History from Birkbeck, University of London, with distinction honours, as well as a second MA from University of the Arts London. His BA was in English from UCL.



Simon Pither
Director
PRS Training

Simon started martial arts at a local Judo club when he was 14. Ten years later he got his first instructor qualification and has been teaching martial arts and running self-defence courses ever since, culminating in his current role as the President of the UK Sector of the European Federation of Krav Maga. While running courses for students, teachers, nurses, community clubs, charities and corporate organisations over the years, it became apparent that everyone wished they had learned it earlier.



Jamie Daniels
Director
PRS Training

Jamie has been interested in and teaching self-defence and martial arts for thirty years, culminating in learning and instructing Krav Maga. In that time he has seen again and again how it's not martial arts people need, rather it is some simple physical techniques and a healthy dose of understanding as to what constitutes a dangerous situation, how to spot one developing, and what to do about it. As well as a history in the security industry, Jamie has been working in the education sector for over 15 years. This has also helped Jamie understand the pressures and demands that young people face today.



David Williams
CEO
I-GTM

David is the co-founder of I-GTM, the leading provider of a travel record-keeping and management solution designed specifically for UK boarding schools. His mission is to ensure that schools receive precisely what they need from I-GTM — capturing accurate records of the boarder roll and streamlining travel planning while enhancing safeguarding, efficiency, and compliance. I-GTM's technology addresses the challenges of student travel, offering a centralised platform that empowers schools to oversee, monitor, and manage travel records with confidence.



Jim Lawless
CEO
SYMMETRY
and Bestselling Author

Beginning his career as a solicitor, Jim is now the CEO of SYMMETRY and helps clients adjust to the future of work and the constant rate of change in modern society. He has worked with the likes of ITV, BP, Fiat, Virgin, Vitality, Xerox, Microsoft, Unilever and Apple. Author of "Taming Tigers: Do Things You Never Thought You Could", Jim has developed several rules to change a business or an individual's life around. These rules have been tried and tested by Jim himself, by becoming a Jockey in 12 months and taking the British freediving record, becoming the first Briton to dive deeper than 101m in a breath, and by others such as the CEO that turned the bank, Northern Rock, around. Jim was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts in recognition of his business writing.



Gina Buckney
Founder and Director
Your People Power

Gina is a 2 x TEDx Global Speaker and has been pioneering large-scale corporate change for 20 years. Gina combines personal experience working in high-pressured environments alongside science-led and solution-driven programmes. Some of her early positions include Head of UK Retail Customer Services for BT and IT Transformation Programme Manager for Lloyd's Banking Group. At 27 she became the youngest BT Contract Director and was awarded the largest managed service banking contract with a value of over £400m and a global team of 450.



BSA Supporting Excellence Awards categories:

- Emma Pattison Award for Compassionate Leadership
- Sustainability in Boarding Award
- Best Community Work via BSA ‘On Board’ Initiative
- Boarding House Extension or Refurbishment Award
- Boarding Innovation Award
- Belonging and Inclusion Initiative Award (formerly the INDEX Initiative Award)
- International School of the Year Award
- Stephen Winkley Award
- Supporting International Boarders - School Award
- Supporting Junior Boarders Award
- Wellbeing and Mental Health Initiative Award
- Khadija Saye Photography Award
- Best Artwork Project Award



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