

Pre-Prep and Early Years Conference



Thursday 14 May

09:30	Registration and exhibition opens - refreshments available
10:00	Welcome
10:15	Affluent Neglect - Cleo Lawrence (DSL at St Margaret's School, Bushey)
11:15	District meetings with a grab and go coffee
12:15	Lunch and exhibition
13:15	EYFS Regulatory Compliance Q+A - Katie Paynter
13:45	Seminar Session 1
14:30	Break and exhibition
15:00	Seminar Session 2
15:45	Seminar Session 3
16:30	End of day one
19:00	Drinks reception followed by dinner

Friday 15 May

08:30	Management time and checkout of rooms. PPEYG Committee meeting
09:00	Refreshments and Exhibition
09:30	Welcome to day two
09:45	It's not what's wrong with them - it's what has happened to them! - Phillipa Hardesty
10:30	Break
11:00	Supporting the mental health of seriously ill children and their families - Sarah Parish
11:15	Drop-in clinics: Solutions not problems
12:15	Lunch
13:15	Network meetings (leadership responsibilities)
14:15	Break
14:30	Thriving with ADHD: Lessons from the other side - What I wish my teachers knew - Alex Partridge
15:30	Reflections
15:45	End of day two



Pre-Prep and Early Years Conference

Seminar sessions



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Seminar Session 1	Seminar Session 2	Seminar Session 3
EYFS Compliance - Katie Paynter	EYFS Assessment - Katie Paynter	Let love lead - Rebecca Perdrix
How to create an effective structure for EYFS supervision- Rosie Heywood	How to create an effective structure for EYFS supervision - Rosie Heywood	Unlocking learning potential: The importance of neuromotor maturity in early education - Elizabeth Cordle
Inclusive culture throughout your school - Allana Gay	Inclusive culture throughout your school - Allana Gay	Little school, big brand - How Pre-Preps can stand out where it matters - Rachel Hadley-Leonard
Little school, big brand - How Pre-Preps can stand out where it matters - Rachel Hadley-Leonard	Managing parental complaints - HCR Law	Managing parental complaints - HCR Law
Outdoor play and development - Pete Dean	The power of continuous provision - exploring inclusive practice for successful transitions - Emma Lewry	The power of continuous provision - exploring inclusive practice for successful transitions - Emma Lewry

Drop-in clinics

Subject:

HR - staff illness/absence, unpaid leave, maternity/paternity leave, contracts

Ask the expert about inspection of the EYFS

Safeguarding - levels of training, compliance in Early Years, scenarios

Complaints - levels of complaints, managing conversations with parents, scenarios

Staff management - leading a team, managing difficult staff, staff development

Opening a pre-reception class - pros and cons, problems arising, success rate

Support for families who are going through a bereavement



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Conference Directors



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Katherine Bluck

IAPS Head of Professional Development:

Katherine transitioned from her role as an IAPS member Head to become the Head of Professional Development. A primary specialist and someone who started her first holiday job in a Nursery, Katherine brings a wealth of experience and passion for our younger learners, having worked in four IAPS schools, including two as Head. She is deeply committed to fostering continuous development among IAPS school members, emphasising collaboration and mutual support as key drivers of professional growth.



Camilla Webster

Chair of IAPS Pre-Prep and Early Years Group:

Camilla has been Head of Pre-Prep at King's School, Canterbury, for the past three years and leads an Early Years and Pre-Prep department based in a beautiful Kentish oast house.

Before joining King's, she was Head of Pre-Prep for seven years at Old Buckenham Hall (OBH) School in Suffolk, and prior to that, Head of Lower School at Hornsby House in South London.

Camilla has recently been co-opted onto the King's School Canterbury International team and, alongside leading the Pre-Prep, works as an educational advisor for their sister schools in China and Cambodia, with more schools in the pipeline.

Camilla is an ISI team inspector and currently serves as the IAPS PPEYG Chair.



Keynote Sessions

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Affluent Neglect - Cleo Lawrence

Cleo Lawrence, the Director of Safeguarding at St Margaret's School, Bushey will be starting our conference with a compelling keynote on affluent neglect, a frequently overlooked form of vulnerability affecting young people in high-achieving, well-resourced families. Cleo explores how emotional absence, intense pressure, and hidden struggles can exist behind outward success, and why these signs are often missed by professionals.

Drawing on her experience as a social worker, safeguarding consultant, current Designated Safeguarding Lead, and her training as a psychotherapist, she brings a deeply informed, trauma-aware approach to supporting children, families, and professionals. She offers practical guidance on spotting indicators, building trust and delivering effective pastoral and safeguarding support for pupils whose needs may be hidden behind achievement and privilege.

EYFS Regulatory Compliance Q+A - Katie Paynter

This interactive keynote will provide delegates with the opportunity to explore regulatory compliance within the EYFS in a clear, practical and professionally supportive forum. Through an open question and answer format, the session will address statutory requirements, safeguarding expectations, documentation and inspection readiness.

Designed to respond directly to the needs and experiences of those in the room, the keynote will offer informed, experience-based guidance and up to date insight. It will support Leaders in strengthening understanding of regulatory expectations and navigating the statutory demands placed on settings with confidence and assurance.

Keynote Sessions



It's not what's wrong with them, it's what happened to them! - Philippa Hardesty

This presentation explores how early experiences shape children's behaviour, emotional regulation, and capacity to learn in the early years. Using research from attachment theory, neuroscience, and trauma psychology, the session will show how adversity (whether that be visible trauma or hidden stressors) can affect young children.

Through short video examples, practical frameworks, and reflective exercises, we will explore:

- How safe, attuned adult relationships act as a secure base for learning and exploration
- The neuroscience of stress and regulation, including the window of tolerance
- The role of play, co-regulation, and empathic engagement in fostering emotional wellbeing
- How small, consistent daily practices can activate positive hormones, improve regulation, and transform classroom experiences

This is designed to help leaders recognise the impact of trauma, understand behaviour as communication, and create trauma-informed early years classrooms, where every child can thrive.

Supporting the mental health of seriously ill children and their families - Sarah Parish

Sarah Parish talks with Katherine Bluck about her daughter's story and her experiences that led towards starting the charity Imagine This alongside her husband, which supports the mental health of seriously ill children and their families. This introduction to Sarah and her work opens up the conversation for her later drop in session where she will be able to offer support and guidance surrounding families going through a bereavement.

Thriving with ADHD: Lessons from the other side - What I wish my teachers knew - Alex Partridge

Alex Partridge shares his lived experience with ADHD and about how schools can better support neurodiverse pupils. This keynote is both personal and practical, offering educators a deeper understanding of ADHD and strategies to create inclusive, empowering environments for all learners.

Seminar Session 1



EYFS Compliance - Katie Paynter

This seminar will provide a comprehensive overview of the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, effective 1st September 2025. Delegates will engage in an in-depth exploration of the new Safeguarding and Welfare requirements, as well as key information on changes to full and relevant qualifications, and address frequently asked questions related to the Framework.

The session is designed to equip Leaders with a thorough understanding of this complex phase of education, and up to date information on regulatory changes. It will support Leaders in navigating the rigorous statutory demands placed on schools

How to Create an Effective Structure for Early Years Supervision - Rosie Heywood

Supervision is a statutory requirement in Early Years, yet many schools are still unsure how it differs from professional development meetings, or why it requires its own space.

This session will demystify Early Years supervision, exploring what it is, what it isn't, and why it matters. When practitioners feel supported and have space to reflect, they are better able to respond to children's needs, strengthening both staff wellbeing and outcomes for children.

Drawing on the Quality Standards Framework for Supervision in Education, Rosie will share what effective supervision looks like and how schools can create clear, manageable and sustainable supervision structures that work in busy school environments.

Delegates will leave with greater clarity, practical ideas and the confidence to strengthen supervision in their own settings.

There will also be the opportunity to sign up for a micro 1:1 reflective supervision experience during the conference.

Seminar Session 1

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Inclusive culture throughout your school - Allana Gay

Learn how to create inclusive environments where all families feel welcome. Allana Gay shares strategies for building trust, engagement, and cultural awareness.

Little school, big brand:

How Pre-Preps can stand out where it matters - Rachel Hadley-Leonard

In a crowded and competitive Pre-Prep market, a strong and authentic brand is key to attracting and retaining families. This informal seminar offers tailored advice on how Pre-Prep schools can define their brand, express what makes them special, and communicate it effectively to parents. Delegates are invited to bring specific questions or challenges for discussion, gaining practical, real-world guidance on standing out, and building a brand that truly reflects their school's strengths.

Outdoor Play and Development - Pete Dean

In this session Pete will share his story; a Head who ended up working for an award winning play company and how this all happened. He will share some ideas of how learning can be more fun at school and share some great ideas to help all practitioners. Pete also will talk about inclusion at school and how to create a school that all children will love. He will tell his story and hope to inspire you to build on the great things you are already doing.

Seminar

Session 2



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EYFS Assessment - Katie Paynter

This seminar will explore the assessment of children from 6 months to the end of the EYFS, examining both formative and summative approaches and how they can be used purposefully to support progress and inform practice. Practical, classroom-ready tools will be shared and demonstrated, alongside trialed and tested assessment continuums that delegates can implement confidently in their own settings. We will also consider the pivotal role of assessment in inspection, particularly how it is articulated and evidenced during EYFS Lead interviews, ensuring leaders feel well prepared and assured.

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Seminar Session 2



Inclusive culture throughout your school - Allana Gay

Learn how to create inclusive environments where all families feel welcome. Allana Gay shares strategies for building trust, engagement, and cultural awareness.

Managing parental complaints- Kristine Scott

Learn how to handle complaints constructively and empathetically. Kristine Scott from HCR Law offers legal and relational strategies to achieve positive outcomes for all parties.

The power of continuous provision - exploring inclusive practice for successful transitions – Emma Lewry

This session explores the concept of continuous provision and play based pedagogy, delving into child development, research and impact examples. We will consider SEND and inclusion and the recent SEND White Paper when reflecting on meeting the needs of all pupils through the use of continuous provision. With clear examples of high quality practice delegates will leave with practical ideas and solutions to develop inclusive pedagogy at the EYFS to KS1 transition point and beyond.

Seminar Session 3



Let love lead - Rebecca Perdrix

In this seminar, Rebecca explores a model of leadership rooted in compassion, connection and professional love. Drawing on her experience in Early Years and Pre-Prep education, she invites delegates to reflect on and gently challenge traditional leadership approaches, considering how leadership can evolve to better support people, purpose and community.

Rebecca will discuss the importance of professional love in education: love for the children in our care, for colleagues and parents, for the subjects we teach, and for the hopeful future we are shaping together. She will explore how the most impactful leaders are often those who do not seek to be the star of the show, but instead create environments where everyone around them can shine. Through compassionate leadership, a shared sense of purpose can flourish, building cultures grounded in connection rather than correction.

Rebecca will reflect on how leaders can combine courage, empathy and conviction in their daily practice. She will also consider the particular nuances of leadership within the world of education, especially in EYFS and Pre-Prep settings, and reflect on the important distinction between leadership and management.

Unlocking learning potential: The importance of neuromotor development in early education – Elizabeth Cordle

Neuromotor development influences a child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities. This session explores education from a developmental perspective, highlighting the importance of motor milestones, the consequences of immature motor skills, and how maturing essential movement skills can enhance school readiness and break down barriers to learning. While immature motor skills can affect all children, the impact is often more significant for those with SEND. We will examine the research underpinning these issues and discuss inclusive, evidence-based solutions to help all children reach their full potential in the classroom and beyond. The session aims to help you understand:

- what essential movement skills are
- the impact of immature motor skills on a child's readiness to learn
- how we can support children in overcoming barriers to learning

Seminar Session 3



Little school, big brand:

How Pre-Preps can stand out where it matters - Rachel Hadley- Leonard

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Speakers

Elizabeth Cordle:

Elizabeth Cordle is an experienced Chartered Physiotherapist with 27 years in practice, specialising in neuro-musculoskeletal rehabilitation across all ages. Having worked in the NHS in London, she started her own medical services company. She has a particular interest in hypermobility and motor skills and their effect on both physical function and brain development, shaped by years of collaboration with leading experts. Passionate about early intervention, Elizabeth developed a strong interest in how motor immaturity can hinder a child's ability to learn. This led her to create Corefulness® - a practical, inclusive, evidence-based programme designed to mature essential movement skills to:

- Improve school readiness
- Help children break down barriers to learning
- Maximise children's learning potential



Pete Dean:

Pete has worked in Primary Education for over 20 years as a teacher and for the last 9 years he was the Head of a large Primary School near Norwich. He has a passion for creating a culture at school that is positive, and inspiring. As a Head, Pete started to really focus on how to make learning more active for children. He also specialises in how to maximise the outside space at school and now works for an award winning company CAP.CO who build incredible learning and play spaces at schools.



Speakers

Allana Gay:

Allana Gay is a teacher, education advisor and speaker. Her career began within inner city London secondary schools from where she was an independent preparatory Headteacher, sat on Advisory panels, written in publication and presented at conferences as an advocate for change to drive improvement within the education sector.

Allana cofounded the charity, BAMEed Network, to drive cultures of inclusion and belonging throughout the education sector in terms of race and other protected characteristics.

As an education consultant, Allana provides practical advice on all elements of leadership and education management, bringing inclusivity and accessibility sustainably to the forefront of culture for any organisation.



Rachel Hadley-Leonard:

Rachel brings over thirty years' experience in marketing, admissions and development within the independent education sector, complemented by roles in charitable and commercial organisations.

She has held Board Director and Chair positions, teaches on the AMCIS Diploma course, and delivers training in marketing and development for leading professional bodies including HMC, ISBA, AGBIS, AMCIS, IAPS, ISA and IDPE. Rachel is also a consultant for IAPS.

Through her consultancy, Rachel supports schools in driving financial growth and strengthening stakeholder engagement. While she has particular expertise in the Prep sector, her work spans Senior, all-through and International schools. Her core strengths lie in strategic planning, stakeholder research, audits, and the launch of development and fundraising initiatives.

Her company, RHL Consulting, also offers MAD Recruitment – a bespoke service helping schools appoint senior professionals in Marketing, Admissions and Development.

Widely regarded as one of the sector's most respected voices, trainers and consultants, Rachel is a seasoned mentor, a former judge for the TES Independent School Awards, and currently judges the InspirED Marketing & Fundraising Awards and the AMCIS Impact Awards. She has served as an independent school Governor, contributes regularly to educational publications, and is a sought-after speaker at conferences.



Speakers

Philippa Hardesty:

Philippa Hardesty is a trainee integrative child and adolescent psychotherapist currently completing an MA at the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education in London. She works one-on-one with children aged 5–11 in a primary school setting, providing therapy that utilises art, play, music and drama to support emotional expression and healing. Her work is informed by attachment theory, neuroscience, and a range of relational and integrative therapeutic approaches. Philippa is particularly interested in the therapeutic relationship and how, over time, children can use the safety of the therapy space to express feelings connected to early caregiving relationships. She has skills in supporting children experiencing anxiety, trauma, school refusal and neurodiversity, and is passionate about helping children develop greater emotional regulation and personal strength through creative and relational approaches.



Rosie Heywood:

Rosie Heywood is a former IAPS Head of Early Years and Pre-Prep and is now the founder of PropelEd, where her key passion is supporting the growth of Early Years educators and leaders through reflective supervision. Rosie has a deep understanding of both the rewards and the challenges of leading and supporting Early Years teams in independent schools. She now works with schools to develop reflective supervision that supports staff wellbeing, professional growth and better outcomes for children. She holds a Diploma in Reflective Supervision in Education and is part of the Supervision in Education Network at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and the Community of Practice for Supervision in Education by Educators (CoPSiEbE), contributing to the growing conversation around the importance of supervision in education.



Rosie works in partnership with schools to develop sustainable approaches to supervision, helping leaders embed reflective cultures that support both educators and the children in their care.

Speakers

Cleo Lawrence:

Cleo is a safeguarding consultant, systemic psychotherapist, and Director of Safeguarding with over twenty years' experience working across children's social care, education, and therapeutic services. Through her consultancy, Cleo Systemic, she supports organisations to strengthen their safeguarding culture by providing reflective supervision, training, audits, investigations, and strategic guidance.

Alongside her consultancy work, Cleo is the Director of Safeguarding at an Independent School in London, where she leads on policy, practice, training, and the development of a whole-school safeguarding culture. Her approach draws on her background in statutory social care, enabling her to embed reflective, trauma-informed, and relational safeguarding systems.

Cleo is a qualified social worker, practice educator, and systemic psychotherapist, committed to supporting professionals and organisations to think systemically, work reflectively, and safeguard effectively.



Emma Lewry:

Emma, is an experienced school leader, she has been Headteacher of three Primary schools, and School Improvement Officer and Early Years Lead for a Primary MAT. She is an Early Years and continuous provision specialist, supporting schools to develop autonomy, independence and play for both children and staff.

Emma works with Leaders on EYFS and Continuous Provision consultancy and curriculum development support. She leads training and key notes focussed on

developing autonomy, connection and creativity within the Primary phase and a wide range of Early Years focussed workshops. Emma is the creator of the C.O.O.L curriculum, a continuous provision based curriculum and pedagogical approach for KS1 and beyond, currently in its exciting trial phase with 6 UK schools and available for all schools in Summer 2026. She is currently co-authoring a book called 'Play On!' which aims to be a road map for schools wanting to implement continuous provision in KS1.

Emma has a Masters in Educational Leadership and Management, is a National College expert, has written Focus Education and the Chartered College Impact Journal and is a content reviewer for The Key.



Speakers

Sarah Parish:

Sarah has worked extensively in film, theatre and television for the past 35 years.

After starting her career on the West End stage she went on to star in such programmes as Peak Practice, Cutting It, Mistresses, Bancroft, Broadchurch, Trollied, W1A, Atlantis, Curfew, Industry and most recently Piglets and Geek Girl.

Sarah's film career has seen her working opposite

some top Hollywood names including Kevin Costner, Amy Adams, Bill Paxton and Debra Messing.

She and her husband Jim Murray run 'Imagine This', a charity that supports the mental wellbeing of seriously ill children and their families across the UK.

They reside in Hampshire with their 16 year old daughter Nell.



Alex Partridge:

Alex is one of the pioneers of social media content the way we know it today. At age 21, he founded UNILAD and LADBible, two of the most popular social news and entertainment Internet companies in the world with an astonishing following of 100 million people around the globe.

At 34 years old, Alex was diagnosed with ADHD and has quickly become a leading voice on social media

around neurodiversity. His impassioned views on entrepreneurship and neurodiversity has quickly amassed him a following of over four million people.

Alex now hosts the award winning podcast, ADHD Chatter. He shares everything he's learnt about ADHD in his Sunday Times Bestselling Book entitled 'Now It All Makes Sense: How An ADHD Diagnosis Brought Clarity To My Life'

Alex has spoken over 300 times for various brands, conferences and events including for Formula 1, BBC, Sky, Virgin, Google, Drapers, TED, Experian, Barclays, and British Airways.



Speakers

Katie Paynter:

Katie qualified with a BEd in 1996 and is a specialist in the EYFS. With 3 decades of experience, she has taught children aged 2–7 in independent schools across the UK and overseas. She also holds a Dip SpLD, the National SENCo Award, and an MA in Education.

Katie has served as Head of three Pre-prep schools, and held other senior leadership roles including Director of Studies and Director of Strategy and Development. She brings her expertise to

governance as EYFS and Safeguarding Governor of an IAPS school and serves as an experienced Inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

For over a decade, Katie was an active member of IAPS' Pre-prep and Early Years group, including serving as the Pre-prep and EYFS adviser. She now combines her role as IAPS' EYFS Specialist, with working as a Consultant, and delivering a breadth of training to member schools.



Rebecca Perdrix:

Rebecca is the current Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery at Wells Cathedral School, Somerset.

Having specialised in child development through her degree in Psychology and Cognitive

Neuroscience and subsequent MA Education, she is passionate about education during the crucial first 7 years of life. Rebecca also has a deep passion

for leadership within the nuanced and formative field of Early Years and Pre-Prep, believing strongly

in leading with love, compassion and a child-centred approach. Rebecca has a wealth of experience working from 0–7 years, which includes classroom teaching from Reception Class to Year 2, but also as part of a 2–18 school. Alongside life at Wells, and also working as a Team Inspector for ISI, Rebecca is the District 4 representative and the current subject advisor for Early Years and Pre-Prep Curriculum, Learning and Development.



Speakers

Kristine Scott:

Krissy Scott is a leading voice in the education sector, having qualified as an employment lawyer and soon developed a reputation as a trusted adviser to the full range of educational institutions in the UK. A Band 1 Leading Individual in UK-wide legal directories, Krissy is an expert in safeguarding and inclusion in schools and Head of HCR's Education sector. She has been advising independent schools for over 25 years and is recognised as a leading practitioner and expert in the field of education and employment law. Clients say 'the quality of response is great, as it is always right first time, and she is great to deal with on a personal level.

