



Spring One 2026

Newsletter

Welcome back to Learn with FA1!

Spring often brings a renewed sense of focus and possibility, and this term has certainly reflected that across our Learn community. Through all our programmes, we continue to see inspiring dedication from trainee teachers, Early Career Teachers, mentors, and leaders. This commitment to professional learning remains a real strength, and it's been wonderful to see this reflected in the energy participants have brought to our spring events.

I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself, having recently stepped into the role with the Learn team at Forward As One, following the wonderful Elliot, our former Director of Learning and Partnerships. I am privileged to be working with our ITT, ECF, NPQ and marketing leads within my role as Director of Operations, to get to know our participants, partners, and internal teams and the outstanding work they do ensuring high-quality, evidence-informed professional development, which truly serves our schools and communities.

Last term, Learn With FA1 has moved from strength to strength. We were delighted to complete highly successful first reviews of the year with Ambition Institute, a fantastic achievement and testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved. Feedback from the spring term's conferences have been hugely positive, highlighting the value of these opportunities for professional learning and collaboration. Our partnerships remain strong, with ECT associations across more than 70 schools and a combined total of 450 active participants across the 2024-25 cohorts. Our NPQ participants also continued to learn, develop and achieve together - congratulations to all those who passed their Specialist NPQ from the October 2024 cohort. We were very impressed to see a fantastic 94.5% pass rate with 67 teachers and leaders gaining an NPQ qualification!

As we move into the heart of the academic year, we have an important opportunity to reflect on progress so far and look ahead with clarity and ambition. Thank you for your continued partnership and the trust you place in Learn with FA1.

We look forward to the new term and to working closely with our outstanding partners over the months ahead.



Christina

Christina Derbyshire
Director of Operations

Important Spring 2 diary dates

Initial Teacher Training:

- **Specialist Placement Days Cross Phase Day: Key Stage 3 (Primary trainees)**- 26th February 2026

- **Cross phase - Primary Experience day (Secondary trainees)**- 26th February 2026

Early Career Framework:

- **Year 1 ECT Clinic 2**- 10th March 2026

- **Year 2 ECT Clinic 5**- 17th March 2026

National Professional Qualifications:

- **NPQ Headship conference**- 9th March 2026

- **NPQ Early Years Leadership conference**- 10th March 2026

- **NPQ SENCO conference**- 11th March 2026

- **NPQ Senior Leadership conference**- 12th March 2026



Initial Teacher Training

Applications for the September 2026 cohort are open!

We have already received a fantastic number of applications for the September 2026 [Initial Teacher Training programme](#), but there's still plenty of time to apply!

Our school-centred ITT route fully immerses you in the day-to-day running of a school, providing you with comprehensive support from high-quality in-school mentoring and weekly central training provided by our experienced facilitators.

Salaried & Assessment Only routes

To help budding teachers of all levels, we also offer two different pathways to QTS:

- **Salaried routes:** A salaried route is an employment-based pathway where you train to teach while earning a salary as an unqualified teacher in a school. This pathway follows the exact same structure as our tuition-fee trainees, with full-time trainees reaching QTS in just 11 months!
- **Assessment only:** The assessment only route is available to those who already meet the standards for QTS, but have not had the opportunity to complete the required assessment. The assessment can take up to 12 weeks and may include tasks such as lesson observations, providing a portfolio of evidence to show you meet teachers standards and written assessments.

In either route, you should already have experience in your school but not yet hold QTS.

How to get involved

If you're interested in hosting a salaried trainee or know someone within your school who would be an ideal fit for the salaried or assessment only route, please get in touch with the team.

[Contact our team!](#)

Opportunities beyond the classroom...

If you're interested in using your voice to share why others should get into teaching, please get in touch!

We're looking for passionate teachers at all stages of their career to share their experiences, inspire future educators, and help others take their first step into the profession.

Please email Lucy on jacksonl@fa1.uk for more details.





Initial Teacher Training

Take the Next Step: From Teaching Assistant to Qualified Teacher

Calling all teaching assistants...

If you're currently working as a Teaching Assistant, you already have invaluable classroom experience, strong pupil relationships, and a real understanding of school life. Partnered with Ambition Institute, our ITT programme is designed to help you build on that experience and step confidently into a classroom teacher role.

By training with us, you'll gain both **Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)** and a **PGCE qualification**, giving you the professional recognition and academic depth needed to thrive in today's classrooms. You'll learn how to plan and deliver engaging lessons, assess pupil progress effectively, and manage whole-class learning with confidence.

The programme combines evidence-informed teaching with high-quality school placements and expert mentoring, ensuring you're supported every step of the way. We understand the strengths that TAs bring, and our course is structured to help you transition smoothly from supporting learning to leading it.

If you're ready to increase your impact, enhance your career progression, and achieve full teacher status, our PGCE with QTS could be your next step. **Scan the QR code to apply today!**



Scan me to apply!

'I had real life hands on experience. The programme was sequenced with a lot of opportunity for recall. I liked the heavy emphasis on behaviour management and classroom culture. The facilitators and lead mentors were very supportive.'

- 2024 Graduate

Why host a trainee teacher?

Taking on a trainee teacher offers a wide number of benefits for a school, including:

- **Improved recruitment & retention:** Hosting a trainee allows schools to shape the development of potential future employees, ensuring upcoming talent aligns with the values and ethos of your school.
- **Professional development for your staff:** Mentoring trainees provides experienced teachers with a powerful opportunity for professional growth. By developing leadership skills, teachers enhance their own practice while also raising teaching standards across the school.
- **Access to ITT provider networks & support:** Partnering with an Accredited ITT provider, such as ourselves at Learn with FA1, grants your school access to wider professional networks, ongoing support and high-quality training materials.



Early Career Framework

Hello and welcome to the Early Career Framework section of the Learn with FA1 newsletter!

At **Forward As One Multi Academy Trust**, we are incredibly proud to be delivering a high-quality Early Career Teacher (ECT) Professional Development Programme that is making a genuine difference across our Trust and beyond. This year, we are supporting **30 Trust ECTs**, alongside a wider network of **over 400 ECTs and mentors across the North West**. The scale of this work is significant - but it is the quality, consistency and impact of the programme that truly sets it apart.

The power of instructional coaching

At the heart of our programme lies **instructional coaching**. We know that strong professional development is not built on one-off training sessions, but on sustained, deliberate practice and expert guidance.

Instructional coaching provides ECTs with:

- Focused, bite-sized targets
- Clear modelling of effective practice
- Regular feedback rooted in evidence
- Time and structure for rehearsal and refinement

Through this process, teachers steadily strengthen their **mental models** - moving from novice thinking, where working memory is overloaded, towards increasingly automatic and expert practice. This deliberate development is transformative. It not only improves classroom practice but builds confidence, clarity and professional identity.

We are seeing first-hand how powerful this approach is in accelerating teacher development and embedding high expectations for all pupils.



Celebrating our expert facilitators

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our outstanding facilitators:

- **Jonny Mills**
- **Connor Rooney**
- **Adam Heath**
- **Bev Ellett**

Their expertise, clarity and authenticity have been instrumental in the success of our conferences so far this year. Feedback from attendees has been exceptional, highlighting:

- The practical relevance of the sessions
- The clarity of instructional models shared
- The opportunity to collaborate with peers
- The motivational and energising atmosphere created

ECTs and mentors consistently report leaving conferences feeling better equipped, more confident and inspired to refine their practice.



Early Career Framework

Celebrating our Learn team

Exemplary quality assurance feedback

We are also delighted to celebrate that the **LEARN Team** has received **exemplary feedback** following a recent quality assurance visit from **Ambition Institute**.

The review recognised:

- Our unwavering commitment to improving programme delivery
- The precision and consistency of our facilitation
- The strength of relationships being built with schools across the North West
- Our culture of continuous reflection and refinement

This external validation reflects the hard work, dedication and moral purpose that underpin our programme. We are especially proud that the review acknowledged not just the structure of the programme, but the relational trust and collaboration we are developing with partner schools.



'The leaders are clearly knowledgeable and offer good examples from their own practice and experiences.'

- ECT Conference 3 Feedback

As we move forward, we remain committed to ensuring that every Early Career Teacher receives the highest standard of professional development - empowering them to thrive, grow and make a lasting difference in their classrooms.

Together, we continue to build expertise, strengthen practice and shape the future of education across our Trust and the wider North West community.



Paul Cowburn,
ECF Lead

Learn
to lead with
FORWARD AS
ONE

National Professional Qualifications

Spring one updates

As we pass another half term holiday, I am wondering where the time has gone. Our October 24 Specialist cohort have now finished their programme with the release of their results earlier this month and the October 24 Leadership and Spring 25 specialist cohorts are due to sit their assessments in April 2026. Our Nov 25 cohort are now well into their NPQ Specialist and Leadership programmes, with course 3 already being released to them.

We are looking forward to meeting up with those of you attending your conference 2's for the Spring Leadership cohort mid-March. It is always lovely to meet in person, especially at these second conferences, when participants are now confident in their programme structure and content and can network and share their experiences and impact so far of the NPQs in your role in school.

Within this issue you will find updated information on how to make sure your catch-up sessions are completed and count to your attendance and a reminder how to track your own % engagement.

I hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable break over this half term and welcome you back refreshed. A new half term to **Be Brave, Be Kind, Be Present** in your NPQ journey.

If you have any questions about the programme, please do not hesitate to contact us at: rushs@fa1.uk or learn@fa1.uk.



Sam Rush,
NPQ Lead

Important diary dates

90% deadline October 24
Leadership/ Spring 25 Specialist-
1st April 2026

Assessment window October 24
Leadership/ Spring 25 Specialist-
15th - 23rd April 2026

Assessment window Spring 25
Leadership- *1st - 9th October 2026*

Assessment window November
2025 Specialist- *3rd - 11th
November 2026*

Assessment window November
2025 Leadership- *4th - 12th May
2027*

October 24 Specialist results

Congratulations to all those who passed their Specialist NPQ from the October 2024 cohort! We had a fantastic **94.5% pass rate** with 67 teachers and leaders gaining an NPQ qualification. Well done, we are so proud of you and this is a testament to your hard work and dedication. When you think of the reach of schools and children across the North West that your learning has benefited – it is amazing.

94.4%

For those of you who have recently finished your NPQ, why not start to consider the next?

There are four Leadership NPQs (Headship, Senior Leadership, Early Years Leadership, SENCO) and five Specialist NPQs (Leading Teaching, Leading Teacher Development, Leading Behaviour and Culture, Leading Literacy and Leading Primary Maths) available to suit every stage of your teaching career / progression. We are hoping that we will have a new cohort in Autumn, so watch this space for more details.

Find out more!

National Professional Qualifications

StepLab & tracking your engagement

Catch up Clinics / conferences - making them count

If you have not been able to attend a conference or online clinic, a catch-up clinic will be added to your **Learn section of your Steplab Learning Platform**. You can't beat the live learning opportunity with your expert facilitators and peer discussions, but these will help ensure you can complete that missed learning. **It is essential that once watched these are marked as complete** so they count as your attendance and be reflected in your % engagement.

[Click here for detailed instructions](#)

Engagement tracking

As you will all be aware, to be able to sit the assessment your engagement in the programme you need to have **90% engagement across the programme content** by a given deadline. If you don't meet this deadline, you are no longer deferred to the next assessment window but are **automatically withdrawn** from the programme. We ensure that right from day one at your conference we discuss how we monitor and track every participant's engagement and the comms sent every six weeks.

However, it is essential that you are keeping a track of your own engagement.

NPQ Participants - Completion percentage view

1. Log on to MyAmbition

2. Select 'My NPQ Progress'

Here you will see a display of your name, programme name, participant status, and completion percentage on all programmes you are active on.

Please note: This percentage will decrease when new courses/modules are released on Steplab.

If you can see your engagement is below 100% then the next step is to log into Steplab and you can view what is left for you to complete in terms of modules – both study and apply and catch up clinics.

This can be found on your 'To Do list' on your home page under learn, and in more detail on your Learn tab.

My NPQ Progress

PARTICIPANT	PROGRAMME NAME	STATUS	COMPLETION
[Redacted]	NPQ for Leading Teaching	Active	79%

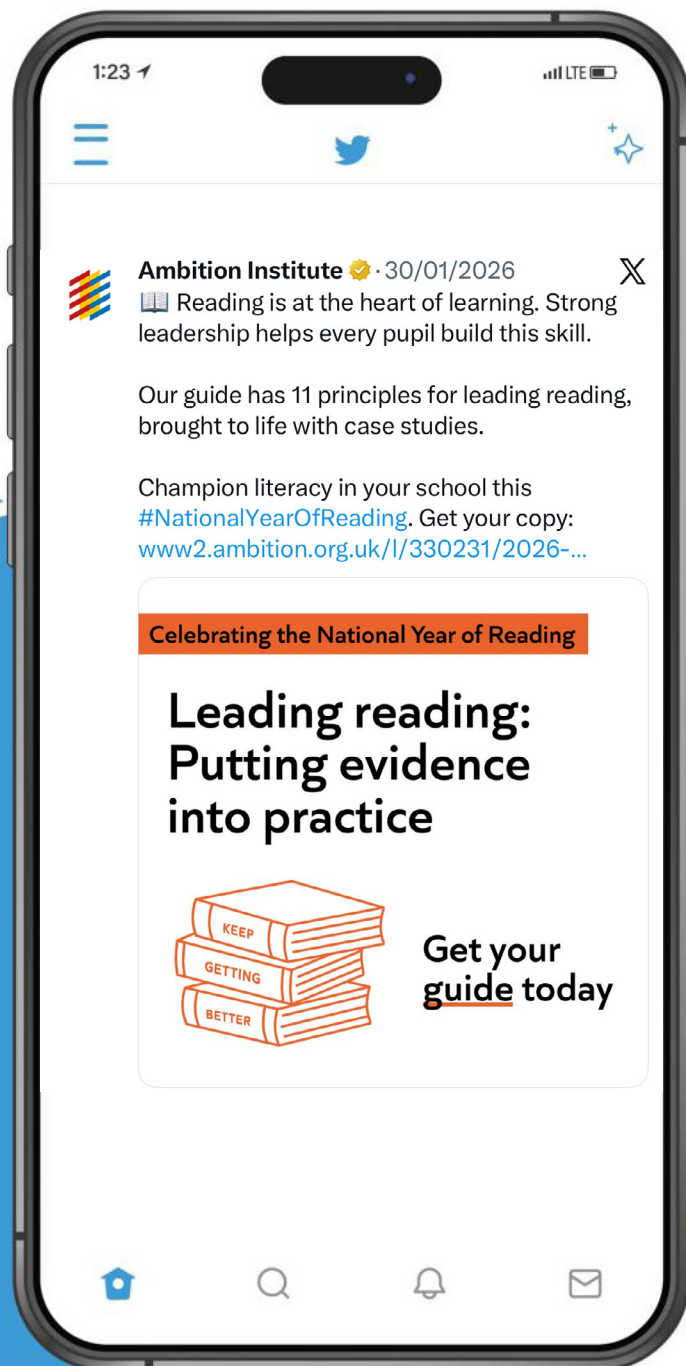
Welcome, Sam

My to-do list

- Lead**
 - Analyse data and send messages • Recurring task
- Learn**
 - Complete 2 courses ▾



Twitter/X



Learn with Forward as One

LEARN with FA1 believe that education holds the power to unlock the full potential of every individual, creating opportunities and fostering personal and professional growth. With this vision in mind, our hub serves as a catalyst for change, inspiring and equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to make a lasting impact in the lives of their students.

Drawing upon the expertise and experience of our dedicated hub, LEARN with FA1 offers a diverse range of programmes and initiatives tailored to meet the evolving needs of Teachers and Leaders across the North West.



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date!