

A message from Bridget Phillipson



Dear Colleague,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at your school achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

There are real opportunities available for you to support improvement for a wider group of pupils including through:

- engaging actively with [your region's RISE networks](#) and partnering with nearby schools and trusts;
- contributing to regional roundtables and professional communities to spread the approaches that are working in your context; and
- sustaining excellence by continuing to focus on disadvantaged pupils

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Your sincerely,



Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) - The Universal Service

RISE is the service to help every school improve. We want good schools to become great schools, and great schools to become leaders in driving change. Universal RISE is about making it easier for leaders to find relevant, high-quality resources, facilitating collaboration, and promoting the sharing of effective practice. We want every school to engage with Universal RISE, as a recipient and/or contributor.

What do I need to know about Universal RISE?

Universal RISE helps schools to:

- **Diagnose** improvement needs through DfE's data tools and, in future, by the "school profiles" digital service (planned for autumn 2026). School profiles will enable you to easily identify your school's strengths and performance gaps compared with contextually similar schools. It will signpost you to relevant resources and connect you with similar schools.
- **Identify** high quality support through RISE conferences, roundtables and networks.

- **Implement** improvement on the ground through toolkits, strategies and enhanced offers of support from hubs.

Universal RISE has four national priorities, each with a unique support offer:

Attendance

- Toolkits and data to identify the drivers of absence, adopt effective practice to improve attendance, and examples to help you communicate with parents and carers about school attendance.
- The RISE Attendance and Behaviour Hubs programme, a national initiative designed to support schools in improving pupil attendance and behaviour through reflecting on current systems, sharing and implementing effective practice.

Attainment

Maths

- RISE Maths Hubs, which bring together maths experts and teachers in a collaborative national network of 40 hubs, to develop and share excellent practice for the benefit of all pupils and students.

English

- RISE English Hubs – 34 across England, working with schools to improve the teaching of reading, with a particular focus on systematic synthetic phonics, through CPD programmes as well as intensive in-school support led by Literacy Specialists. This support is determined through an audit and may include access to resource funding.
- From 2025, RISE English Hubs began supporting reading in Key Stage 3 through targeted Literacy Specialist input and in 2026, CPD ‘Unlocking Reading’ is available to all secondary schools.
- From September 2026, RISE English Hubs will provide CPD and intensive support in the Reception Year, prioritising early language and literacy development.

Reception

- The Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme helps identify early language difficulties and improve children's language skills and behaviour in school and other programmes.

- Each local authority has a plan to increase Good Level of Development outcomes by 2028.

Inclusive mainstream

- Resources and CPD to support a whole-school approach to inclusion.
- Principles of promising practice and a set of case studies demonstrating how areas of promising practice are being implemented successfully in schools.

How can my school benefit from Universal RISE?

- **Stay informed:** Including via your regional RISE webpage, and through engagement with DfE data tools.
- **Get involved:** Attend regional RISE conferences (details shared termly direct with schools, and in your DfE Regional Director’s newsletter), find out about support available from your regional RISE hubs, join a high-quality local school improvement network (details of regional hubs and networks are published on your regional RISE webpage, linked above).

How can my school contribute to Universal RISE?

- By **recognising** that your school is a current or potential contributor to Universal RISE.
- By **identifying** your school’s areas of strong practice, as validated by, for example, Ofsted reports, recognised centres of excellence (eg RISE hubs), or peer feedback.
- By **considering** how can you share that strong practice, e.g. across your LA/MAT, with neighbouring schools, or via local RISE networks.

Universal RISE Attainment Projects

We have committed funding this financial year to support 31 school improvement projects. The attainment-related projects are listed below – please contact your regional RISE team for more information if relevant.

Region	Project name	Area of focus	RISE team email
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East of England	KS2 attainment	KS2 attainment	East of England
	KS2 writing	KS2 writing	
	KS4 attainment network	KS4 attainment	
	Closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Early Years	EY to KS1	
East Midlands	Priority Literacy	EY to KS4 literacy	East Midlands
	SEND in mainstream	CPD, SEND and AP Network	
North East	Firm Foundations	KS2 writing	North East
	Tackling the Disadvantage Gap	Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils	
North West	AI for improving attainment and mainstream inclusion	KS2 and KS4: AI tools to cut teacher workload and increase quality and consistency of feedback	North West
South East	Digital Partnership	Digital resources and tools to help improve attainment in English and maths	South East
South West (Bristol)	Bristol Futures	KS2 digital tools	South West
South West (Dorset)	Raising KS2 Attainment in Dorset	KS2 CPD and coaching	
West Midlands	EYFS to KS4 Literacy Project	EYFS to KS4	West Midlands
	English Ed tech platform	EYFS to KS4 digital platform and CPD	
Yorkshire & The Humber	White Working Class Boys	KS2 to KS4	Yorkshire & Humber

List of schools

Nottingham schools demonstrating strong attainment outcomes for disadvantaged pupils:

