

Margaret Houghton

School Principal



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Headteacher with 16 years in education, including 5 years in senior leadership. Took a school from Requires Improvement to Good in my first Ofsted cycle as head. I focus on strong teaching and learning, transparent data use, and building a culture where staff stay and develop. Previously led a maths department through a complete curriculum overhaul that raised GCSE results by 14 percentage points over three years.

Experience

Sep 2021 – Present

Headteacher, Fir Vale School, Sheffield

Leading a mixed comprehensive with 1,100 pupils, 85 teaching staff, and an annual budget of £7.2 million.

- Moved the school from **Requires Improvement to Good** in the March 2024 Ofsted inspection
- GCSE grade 4+ in English and Maths rose from **41% to 58%** over three years
- Reduced staff turnover from **22% to 9%** by introducing a structured CPD programme and coaching triads
- Secured **£340,000 in DfE funding** for a new SEND resource base opened in September 2023
- Managed a **deficit recovery plan** – brought the budget from -£180,000 to a £45,000 surplus in 2 years

Sep 2017 – Jul 2021

Deputy Headteacher, Meadowhead School, Sheffield

Responsible for teaching and learning, data analysis, and staff CPD across the school.

- Designed the whole-school CPD programme for **72 teaching staff** – external review rated it Outstanding
- Led the school's Progress 8 strategy – score improved from **-0.12 to +0.21** over 3 years
- Line-managed **6 heads of department** including English, Maths, and Science
- Oversaw the introduction of a **new KS3 assessment system** adopted across all departments

Sep 2013 – Jul 2017

Head of Maths, Silverdale School, Sheffield

Led a department of 9 maths teachers and oversaw curriculum, assessment, and results.

- GCSE Maths grade 4+ rose from **58% to 72%** during my 4 years as head of department
- Introduced the Edexcel modular approach for higher-tier students – **34% achieved grade 7+** in the final year
- Mentored **3 NQTs** through their induction year, all rated Good or Outstanding

Sep 2009 – Jul 2013

Teacher of Mathematics, King Edward VII School, Sheffield

Classroom teacher covering Maths across KS3, GCSE, and A Level.

- Taught **A Level Maths and Further Maths** to classes of 12–18 students
- Consistently achieved **above-average value-added scores** in departmental tracking
- Ran a weekly after-school **UKMT maths challenge club** – 4 students reached the national final

Education

Jan 2020 – Mar 2021

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in School Leadership, Ambition Institute, London

Completed the NPQH programme with a school improvement project on closing the disadvantaged attainment gap. Project focused on Pupil Premium strategy redesign.

Sep 2008 – Jun 2009

PGCE Secondary Mathematics in Mathematics Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield

Qualified Teacher Status awarded. Placements at Ecclesfield School and Tupton School – both rated Outstanding by mentors.

Sep 2005 – Jun 2008

BSc (Hons) in Mathematics, University of Sheffield, Sheffield

First Class Honours. Selected for the dean's list in all three years.

Skills

Ofsted Preparation & Self-Evaluation, School Budget Management (£7M+), Staff Recruitment & Retention, CPD Programme Design, Data Analysis (Progress 8, FFT, ALPS), Safeguarding Designated Lead, Curriculum Strategy (KS3–KS5), SEND Provision & EHCP Management, Stakeholder Communication, School Improvement Planning

Certifications

Mar 2021

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), Ambition Institute

Jul 2009

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Department for Education

Sep 2024 – Sep 2026

Designated Safeguarding Lead Training, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership

Languages

English (native)

Projects

Sep 2021 – Mar 2024

Ofsted Improvement Plan – Fir Vale School

Led the whole-school improvement strategy following a Requires Improvement judgement in 2020.

- Redesigned the **teaching and learning policy** with input from all 85 staff
- Introduced lesson observation triads – **92% of lessons rated Good or better** by the 2024 inspection
- Closed the **disadvantaged attainment gap** from 24 to 11 percentage points in English and Maths

Sep 2022 – Sep 2023

SEND Resource Base – Fir Vale School

Secured funding and oversaw the build of a dedicated SEND resource base on site.

- Won **£340,000 in DfE capital funding** through a competitive bid process
- Base now supports **18 pupils with EHCPs** in a specialist environment within the mainstream school
- Recruited **3 additional SEND staff** including a specialist HLTA

References

David Crossland, CEO, Tapton School Academy Trust, d.crossland@taptonschool.co.uk, +44 7700 900 102

Janet Briggs, School Improvement Adviser, Sheffield City Council, janet.briggs@sheffield.gov.uk, +44 7700 900 245

Extra Curricular Activity

Jun 2022

Trustee – Sheffield Schools Alliance

Serve on the board of a partnership of 14 Sheffield secondary schools focused on sharing best practice and joint CPD. Chaired the curriculum sub-committee for 2 years.

Jan 2019

Parkrun Volunteer – Graves Park, Sheffield

Regular volunteer marshaller at Graves Parkrun. Completed 180+ parkruns as a runner and volunteered at 45+ events.