



Association of Business
Leaders in Education

ABLE NEWS

SPRING 2025



Conference
04 March 25
Booking Now
Open



Message from the Chair

I hope you've all settled into the new term well. I can't believe how fast it's going – it'll be February half term before we know it! One thing I've always valued about ABLE is the sense of community among our members. As school business leaders, your roles can sometimes feel isolating, but the power of networking and learning from each other is invaluable. That's why I'm so excited to share some fantastic news: we're launching a brand-new forum within the ABLE Rewards App!

This new feature, with its WhatsApp-style chat, will give you a quick and easy way to connect with fellow members between events. You'll be able to share best practices, ask for advice, and even seek guidance from our corporate partners – all at your fingertips. Whether you've got a tricky procurement question or want to share a success story, the forum is there to help.

We'll officially launch this exciting new tool at our next conference on 4th March – a brilliant opportunity to come together, learn, and connect face-to-face. Booking is now live, so don't miss out! (Agenda below)

ABLE is all about creating opportunities to collaborate and support each other, and I hope this new forum helps you feel even more connected and empowered in your role.

Before I sign off, I'd like to apologise for the delay in getting your membership invoices out. We've been transitioning to a new finance system, and while it's an exciting change for the future, it's caused a few hiccups along the way. Thank you for your patience and understanding while we sorted things out.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the conference and hearing your thoughts about the forum once it's live!

Best wishes,
Emma Cripwell
Chair, Association of Business Leaders in Education



Atom IT



Agenda

Tuesday 04 March 2025

Eastwood Hall, Mansfield Road, Eastwood, Notts NG16 3SS

08:30 - 09:00

Registration, Exhibition and Coffee

09:00-09:15

Welcome update, app awards to members-
Chair, Emma Cripwell

09:15-09:30

Partner Updates- SAS, Breedon, Atom IT

09:30-09:45

Sponsor Presentation- TBC

09:45- 10:40

Keynote – Moving Feeds Your Positive Mental
Health - Charm Daley

10:40- 11:30

Refreshments, Exhibition and Coffee

11:30-12:30

Choice of workshops

1. Managing upwards, getting a seat at the table - Laura Williams, SAS
2. Staff Absence Management- Wisdom and Wellbeing for all – Chris Whitmore, The Schools People
3. Setting Boundaries-How to thrive as a School Business Manager – Gemma Drinkall, HeadSphere

12:30-13:30

Lunch, Exhibition and Networking

13:30-14:10

Keynote: Tie up your shoeLACES – Don't let life trip you up! – Frederika Roberts

14:10-14:30

Tea/coffee, complete evaluation, app questions

14:30-15:30

Choice of workshops

1. Summer planning - Laura Williams, SAS
2. Recipe for Happiness – Frederika Roberts
3. Supporting your whole school in riding the Ofsted wave – Andy Mellor, SAS

15:30

Raffle Results

Chosen Charity

Robin Hood Disabled Riders meet weekly to give children and adults with both physical and learning disabilities the therapy, sense of achievement and fun of horse riding.



Book Now! ➤



As of January 2025, several significant developments are poised to impact school business leaders across the United Kingdom. Staying informed about these changes is crucial for effective planning and management within educational institutions.

1. School Funding Enhancements

The Department for Education has announced an increase in core schools funding, with an additional £2.3 billion allocated for the 2025–26 financial year. This uplift brings the total funding to approximately £63.9 billion, including £1 billion dedicated to supporting children and young people with high needs. *(Hansard - UK Parliament)*

Despite this increase, headteachers have expressed concerns about the sufficiency of funds in the face of rising operational costs. Many schools are experiencing financial strain due to escalating expenses, leading to difficult decisions regarding resource allocation. *(The Guardian)*

2. National Funding Formula Adjustments

The government has released details of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools and high needs for 2025 to 2026. The NFF funding floor is set at 0%, ensuring that no school will experience a decrease in pupil-led per-pupil funding compared to the previous year. This adjustment aims to provide financial stability and predictability for schools as they plan their budgets. *(GOV.UK)*

3. Curriculum Reforms

In line with efforts to modernise education, the government is implementing curriculum changes to foster a more balanced and skills-oriented learning environment. These reforms are designed to better prepare students for the workforce's and society's evolving demands. School business leaders should anticipate resource allocation and staff training adjustments to align with the new curriculum requirements. *(Minerva Tutors)*

4. Policy Developments

The introduction of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024–25 signifies a shift towards increased regulation of independent educational institutions. The bill proposes expanding oversight to ensure that all institutions providing most of a child's education meet specific standards. Additionally, Ofsted's powers to investigate unregistered, and therefore illegal, independent schools must be strengthened. School business leaders should stay abreast of these legislative changes to ensure compliance and adapt to the evolving regulatory landscape. *(House of Commons Library)*

Conclusion

The educational landscape in the UK is undergoing significant transformations that directly affect school business leaders. Proactive engagement with these developments—from funding adjustments and curriculum reforms to policy shifts—is essential. By staying informed and adaptable, school business leaders can navigate these changes effectively, ensuring the continued delivery of quality education and the sustainable management of their institutions.



Join thousands of schools and nurseries across the UK and celebrate the 25th anniversary of NSPCC Number Day!

Sign-up to nspcc.org.uk/NumberDay for free maths resources and NEW number activities and get creative with 'dress up for digits'.

It's maths, but not as you know it! Get your school or nursery involved with NSPCC Number Day fun this February and every pound raised will help protect more children.

Number Day is an inclusive maths-inspired fundraising day for children in nursery right through to secondary school, with fun, free maths resources, and activities like 'dress up for digits' and the popular Buddy's Key Challenge, Number Day is the perfect way to get pupils involved with learning and fundraising.

After registering, schools and nurseries will receive everything they need from the Number Day resources site to make the event a success.

- resources they can use in class including games, quizzes and new activities for 2025.
- fundraising tips and ideas to help pupils raise money
- resources to help schools promote their event across the school or nursery
- access to resources to keep children safe from harm, supporting with safeguarding including a class lesson plan, presentation, and online safety quizzes for all age

Help make 2025 the biggest Number Day ever and sign up to your mathematical Number Day 2025 now.

[Sign Up](https://nspcc.org.uk/NumberDay)



Shining a Light on School Business Leaders: Recognition for the Vital Role of SBMs

As a School Business Manager (SBM), you are the backbone of your school's operations. Whether it's managing budgets, ensuring compliance, or negotiating contracts, the scope of your role is immense and invaluable. Yet, too often, your hard work goes unnoticed.

At the Association of Business Leaders in Education (ABLE), we firmly believe it's time to change that narrative. Your role deserves recognition, respect, and support that reflects the impact you have on the success of your school and its pupils.

Why Recognition Matters

Recognition isn't just about receiving praise—it's about valuing your expertise and ensuring others appreciate the strategic contribution you bring to your school. It's about fostering a culture where your role is acknowledged as vital to school leadership and enabling you to access the professional development and support you need to thrive.

At ABLE, we know how transformative it can be when SBMs feel seen and heard. Recognition boosts morale, strengthens your professional identity, and elevates the profile of school business management as a critical leadership role.

Share Your Success Stories

We know you're doing incredible work, and we want to showcase it. ABLE is committed to celebrating the achievements of our members by featuring your success stories in our newsletters, blogs, and social media platforms. This is your chance to share your experiences and inspire others within the SBM community.

From innovative cost-saving initiatives to streamlining operations or improving pupil outcomes through effective resource management—your stories matter. By sharing them, you not only gain recognition for your work but also help to raise the profile of the profession as a whole.

How You Can Get Involved

We are actively seeking:

- **Member Articles:** Share your insights, challenges, and achievements in your own words.
- **Case Studies:** Highlight specific projects or initiatives you've implemented, along with the outcomes.
- **Thought Leadership:** Offer advice or reflections on the evolving role of SBMs and the challenges you face.


These contributions will not only feature in our newsletters and blogs but also be promoted via our wider network, amplifying your voice and sharing your expertise with colleagues across the sector.

ABLE's Ongoing Commitment

We are here to champion you and ensure your role is properly valued. From hosting professional development opportunities to offering networking platforms and providing resources tailored to your needs, ABLE is dedicated to supporting SBMs every step of the way.

By sharing your successes and celebrating each other's achievements, we can continue to raise the profile of school business management and demonstrate just how critical your role is in shaping the future of education.

If you'd like to be featured or want to share your story, please [click here](#) to get in touch with Emma Cripwell.



**Look out for more info
about the ABLE SBM
Awards 2025!**



At Schools Advisory Service, we are more than just the UK's leading provider of whole school wellbeing and staff absence insurance, we are a dedicated partner in transforming education.

Last year, our experienced in-house nurses and wellbeing experts launched our new service: Happier Healthier You. This community-led platform offers a wide array of resources you can access, including programmes such as Mastering Mindfulness, Wellness Programmes and Weight Management Programmes. These programmes have been developed by our in-house experts specifically for teachers and education professionals.

We know that teaching and leading schools is incredibly rewarding, but it also comes with its challenges. To support you in this demanding role, our team has created a series of easily digestible blogs with practical advice on maintaining your mental health, thriving in your role, and better supporting your students.

- [7 Tips for Wellbeing at Work](#)
- [Managing Mental Health: A Guide for Teachers and School Leaders in a High-Pressure Job](#)

Additionally, we now offer a suite of insurance options tailored for schools, including Travel Insurance and Minibus Insurance. Learn more about these here: schooladvice.co.uk/additional-insurances

Finally, as a token of our commitment to fostering collaboration, we are offering £200 towards your next cluster meeting when you invite us to attend.

You can invite us by contacting your Account Manager or by visiting: schooladvice.co.uk/book-a-chat



As I write, we sit at the start of a new year with all the hope that this brings for a happy, healthy and productive new year. Christmas has come and gone and with it, all the rushing around and preparation, but amidst it all, I hope that you found time to relax and reflect on the year just passed.

We tend to be so busy that we move from one thing to the next almost like a series of stepping stones across a river. We become so concerned with the next step that we don't give ourselves time to look back on where we've come from for fear of falling or straying off track.

I have to say that all the signs are that the year ahead will be a tough one for schools with finances not easing and the likelihood of more being asked of fewer people as schools seek to make budgets balance.

At this point, I want you to stop what you're doing and reflect for 30 seconds. The last 5 years of my headship (and I stepped away from headship 5 years ago) were typified by less money in schools, having to cut staff to make budgets balance as there was nothing left to cut. We're now another 5 years on and the financial situation has worsened, so the remaining staff are now doing even more with less. The pressure of inspection hasn't gone away or more importantly the pressure we put on ourselves to do the very best for our learners.

So can we keep asking more of the staff that remain in schools? The answer is getting very close to the point where we have to say no and many schools tell me that they've already reached this point. The "point" which I refer to is one of burnout or being resigned to not being able to do everything that you want to do. Both situations mean that we become dissatisfied with ourselves that we are making a difference and many then question their futures in their roles in schools.

However, I'm going to suggest that there is a way to prevent us getting to this "point".

It is a series of steps which are going to be tough to take but which will liberate you and allow you to become the best version of you again.

1. Don't punish yourself

The first thing to remember is that even in the days of more school funding, we never had enough time to get "the job" done. There was always something that was deferred or left for another day, often never seeing that day arrive! Prioritise but then once you've prioritised, don't punish yourself for the things you've not been able to get around to and certainly don't try to work even more hours to get these things done.

2. Be strict with the hours you work

Set yourself a reasonable number of hours to work during the day and stick to it. Remember you're not going to get everything done so working 24/7 isn't going to help. What will help is being fresh for work when you are at work.

3. Plan time for you

Being strict with the hours that you work creates time for you in the evening and at weekends. Reflect on what you'd like to do with this time. For some it might be getting more sleep, for others it might be exercise and for others it might just be opportunities to rest or take up a pastime. None of this should make you guilty as it is a basic human entitlement. Where people are thriving in schools (and there are plenty of examples) it is because they are making non-negotiable decisions about their health and wellbeing, often because they've had a health scare or a family situation which has made them re-evaluate the hours they are working.

4. Lead by example

Modelling good wellbeing is a vital part of expressing who you are and what is important to you and it doesn't matter whether you are a senior school or trust leader or a mid-day supervisor. If you model good wellbeing and can explain why making time for you makes you more efficient and effective both in your role and with those you love, then you create space for others to do the same.

5. Be aware of the consequences of not prioritising your wellbeing

The final point is that if we don't do the things above, we are effectively writing a blank cheque on our health and wellbeing, which at some point in the future we will need to address. It is important that we recognise the long-term harm we do ourselves of working excessive hours in an attempt to make "the job" work and get everything done.

What I've outlined above is a 5-step plan towards better health and wellbeing and making sense of an undoable workload in 2025.

Taking the above steps isn't an easy option. Like any lifestyle change, it takes vision, courage, determination and thought. The status quo in terms of workload in schools is no longer sustainable, so what is going to give in 2025?

I will close by wishing you every good wish for health and happiness in 2025 and if you'd like a conversation about how you go about doing some of the things I've mentioned above then please do get in touch by emailing: askandy@uk-sas.co.uk. It's time to recalibrate our relationship with "the job" and there is no time like the present!

With an SAS policy, you can get access to a range of wellbeing resources and programmes.

Listen to podcasts or sign up to our latest live events and programmes [here](#).

Atom IT

Get a new instant quote online, for simple, tailored IT Support from Atom IT

At Atom we support the people who use technology to teach, learn and manage in schools. The IT systems and services you use every day are critical to the daily operation of your school, and can often seem complex, bewildering and frustrating!

We've tried to simplify things...

New procurement rules being adopted in February 2025 mean that you need to examine the value you receive from your IT supplier. DfE guidelines, cybersecurity requirements and closer Ofsted inspection of KCSIE standards are all increasing the demands on your IT provision - and your budget.

Atom aren't the cheapest provider, but we do believe we're the best value, and may well be cheaper than your current provider. You'll never know unless you take a look...

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Please read the info to select your options. You can print the quote or ask us any questions as you work through it.

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Online Quote

Embracing AI in Schools: A Guide for School Business Managers

In the rapidly changing world of education, technology is transforming the way schools operate. Artificial intelligence (AI), once a distant concept, is now at the forefront of innovation, offering opportunities to improve efficiency and enhance learning. For school business managers and leaders in the UK, adopting AI can ensure operational excellence and better outcomes for students.

How AI Supports Schools

AI is increasingly being integrated into school operations, from administrative tasks to personalised learning. It helps streamline processes, cut costs, and empower informed decision-making.

Automating Administrative Tasks

AI automates repetitive tasks, saving time and resources. Key examples include:

- **Attendance Tracking:** Automated systems reduce manual input and improve accuracy.
- **Finance Management:** AI can support budget forecasting and financial reporting.
- **Admissions Processes:** Chatbots handle queries, process applications, and update families.

Enhancing Learning

AI personalises education, tailoring content to individual student needs and offering real-time feedback:

- **Adaptive Learning Tools:** These adjust to students' learning speeds and styles.
- **Assessment Systems:** AI analyses performance and identifies areas for improvement.
- **Language Learning Apps:** Tools like translation and pronunciation assistants support EAL students.

Data-Driven Leadership

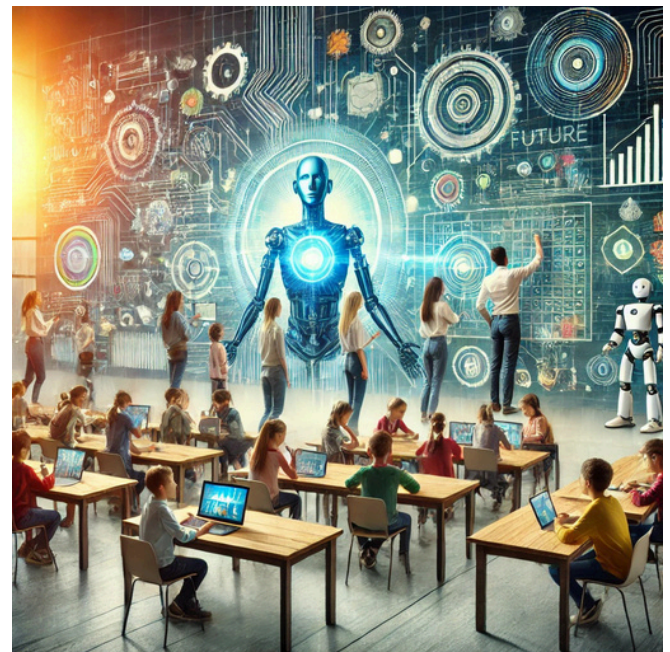
AI enables leaders to harness data for strategic decision-making:

- **Predictive Analytics:** Forecast enrolment, budgets, and resource needs.
- **Risk Management:** Identify potential issues, such as safeguarding concerns.
- **Performance Insights:** Monitor KPIs to achieve school objectives.

Challenges and Considerations

While AI offers many benefits, challenges remain. Leaders must address:

- **Data Security:** Ensure compliance with GDPR to protect personal information.
- **Staff Training:** Equip staff with the skills to use AI responsibly.
- **Equity:** Guarantee access to AI tools for all students, regardless of background.



Embracing AI in Schools: A Guide for School Business Managers Continued

Practical Steps to Get Started

Adopting AI doesn't have to be overwhelming. Begin with small, manageable steps:

- **Identify Needs:** Focus on areas where AI can save time, like transcription or data entry.
- **Research Solutions:** Explore tools such as Microsoft CoPilot or ChatGPT.
- **Ask for Guidance:** Use AI itself to find ways it can help and request step-by-step guides.
- **Pilot Programs:** Test AI in one area before scaling it across the school.
- **Train Staff:** Ensure everyone understands how to use AI effectively.

Funding AI in Schools

Budget constraints are common, but options exist:

- Seek government funding for EdTech.
- Partner with universities or businesses to trial AI tools.
- Invest in scalable solutions that grow with your school's needs.

A Final Word on Data Protection

Top tip: Ensure personal data isn't shared with AI systems unless you know where it is processed and confirm compliance with GDPR and your organisation's data protection policies.

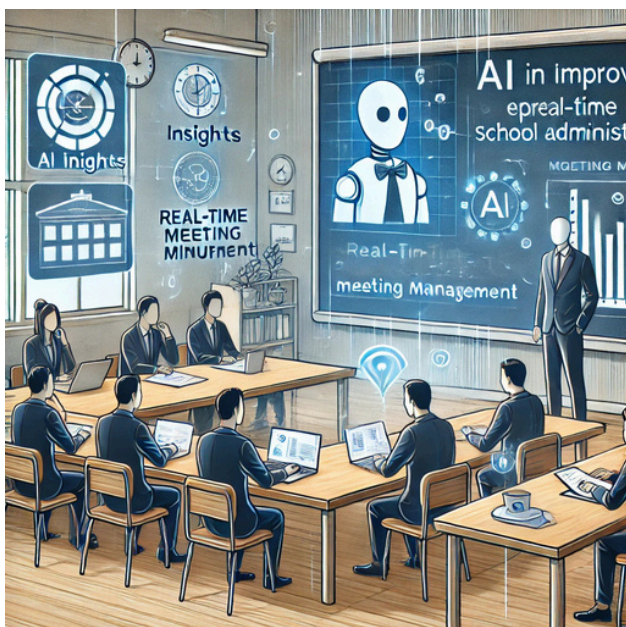
Looking Ahead

AI is poised to play an integral role in education. By understanding its capabilities, investing strategically, and addressing ethical concerns, school business managers and leaders can harness AI to create more efficient, inclusive, and future-ready schools.

AI is here to complement, not replace, the human touch in education. The message is clear: the future is now, and embracing AI is key to unlocking its potential.

Article by Emma Cripwell

Images by Chat GPT



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The UK's Leading Provider of Whole School Wellbeing and Staff Absence Insurance

Schools Advisory Service have been working with schools for over 25 years. DfE Recommended through the CPC Framework, our role is to make a difference to the schools of today by preventing and reducing absence, making the greatest impact for tomorrow.

Prevent and Reduce Absence

With our comprehensive wellbeing package, your school will benefit from a wide range of services and the expertise of our wellbeing experts dedicated to supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of your whole school community.

Complimentary Wellbeing

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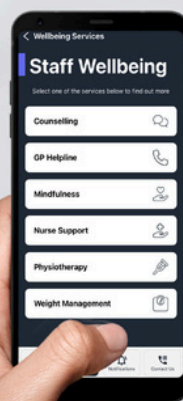
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Wellbeing App

Staff can download our app or call our team to access wellbeing. No referral required.

Supporting Real People, in Real Time.



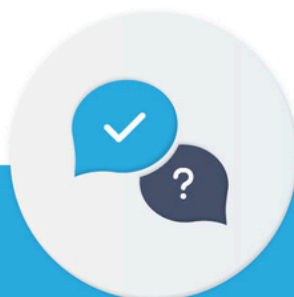
Leadership Supervision

Schools Advisory Service is now offering a dedicated supervision support service specifically for schools. This initiative helps school leaders manage job stress, foster emotional resilience and promote professional growth through reflective sessions.

Proactive



Supportive



Reactive

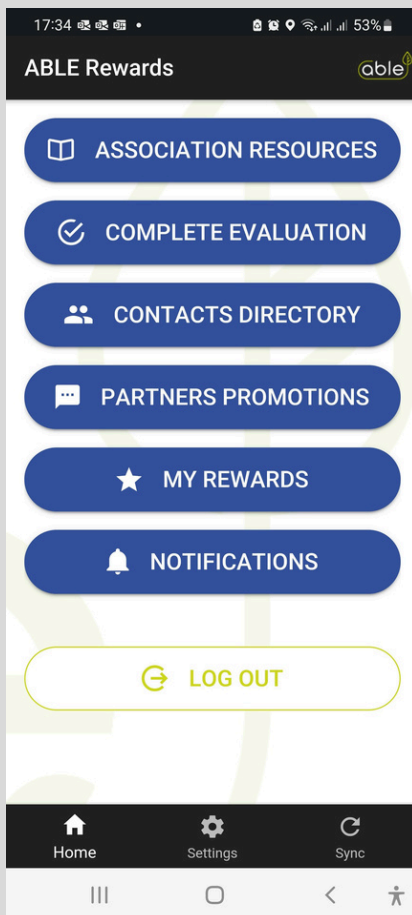


Enhancing Staff Wellbeing and Professional Growth

Contact our Sales Team to learn more:

01773 814 400 sales@uk-sas.co.uk

ABLE Rewards App



The ABLE Rewards app is our very own contacts directory and rewards scheme.

The rewards scheme also acknowledges the commitment you show as members by attending conferences and sharing your professional knowledge and expertise.

Our aim with the rewards scheme is for you to be rewarded for the things you already do as ABLE members. You can spend your rewards on treats and gifts.

**Don't forget points
mean prizes!**

If you haven't downloaded the app
yet please go to:

<https://ablepro.info/rewards/>

for details.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABLE is organised by a committee of volunteer educational professionals and supported by select partner companies as a non-profit organisation, to offer support, training and up to date educational guidance.



Director
Frances Rowland

E: director@able-pro.co.uk



Exhibitions & Partnerships
Clare Stokes

E: exhibitions@able-pro.co.uk



Chair
Emma Cripwell

E: chairchair@able-pro.co.uk



Business & Marketing
Jo Robinson

E: admin@able-pro.co.uk



Finance Support
Neil Beeson

E: finance@able-pro.co.uk



Business Network Training
Varinka Strong

E: training@able-pro.co.uk



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ABLE memberships are subsidised by the fees paid by our corporate partners and exhibitors. Without them all costs would be passed onto our members.



**Ruth
Humphries**



E: ruth@uk-sas.co.uk



**Gary
Hardy**
Atom IT

E: gary@atomit.co.uk



**Andrew
Springhall**



E: andrew@breedonelectricalservices.co.uk

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