

SPEAKER & WORKSHOP DETAILS

SPRING CONFERENCE

11 MARCH 2026

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Association of Business
Leaders in Education



Morning Keynote and Workshops

Jane Cappleman Jackson

As a Nottinghamshire Primary Headteacher who accessed Nottinghamshire education in Bassetlaw as a child and who has a child that has been through the Nottinghamshire school system, what happens to our Nottinghamshire children matters. I have over 30 years in teaching and although this has mainly been in Nottinghamshire, I have also worked in Barnsley Local Authority. My dream was to be an art teacher, which I was in the early days of my career and I believed being an art leader was the best job in the world. I do love my job despite the challenges getting greater and greater. I now live back in the village I lived in as a teenager and my husband and I have lived there just before our daughter was born, now over 20 years ago. With my parents 10 minutes' walk away, raising her has very much been a team effort.



Keynote Overview- Leading your School with Relationships

Relational practice building trust, respect and empathy to strengthen relationships between the school community. At my core, I want to help shape the community around the school and beyond and this starts with the relational practice in our schools. My teaching career has shaped my belief that relationships are everything in this world. Getting this right throughout the school community ultimately gains the best lives for our children. I want the children in my school to feel safe and loved, the feelings I had as a child and still do. It takes everyone in the school to be part of that and give our children happy memories of their education. This works best when we are all in this together. Relational practice is not just for the children, but for everyone in our school and in my key note speech I will share with you the journey and how this can happen. Making schools the best place for everyone.

Workshop Overview - Embedding Kindness into Your School Culture

Practical ways that everyone in school can shape relational practice and ultimately treat each other with respect and some awareness that the person you are talking to in that moment may have an element of trauma in their lives right now or in their past. On the flip side of this, if this is embedded through the school, then you will gain the same respect and understanding back. As the front line to the school community, if we get this right, your day should be a better one.

Workshop - Contract Management Made Easy- Lorraine Ashover, Minerva

Lorraine Ashover is Managing Director of Minerva Procurement Consultancy Services Limited. Fulfilling a long-standing ambition to be her own boss Lorraine set up Minerva in 2010 in direct response to feedback from the school bursar community. Lorraine and her team help schools reduce cost, streamline procurement practices, save time and stay compliant.

The company looks after many free, academy, MAT and maintained schools and manages significant spend on behalf of clients. In the past five years Minerva has tendered over £145m of contracts for our clients and made savings, refunds and generated revenue of more than £3m.

When not working Lorraine finds excuses to visit her daughter Maisie at University, escapes into a good crime or spy novel, and 'enjoys' watching her beloved Nottingham Forest in the Premier League (for now)!



Workshop Overview

Learn how to effectively manage contracts with suppliers to ensure value for money and alignment with your school's goals. We'll explore contract negotiation, setting clear expectations and managing supplier relationships to get the best results including a focus on the two key contracts of cleaning and catering. By the end, you'll have a clear strategy for managing contracts effectively.

What we'll cover

- Fundamentals of effectively managing supplier contracts for school services.
- Techniques for negotiating favourable terms to maximise value.
- Best practices for maintaining compliance with contract requirements.
- Tips for establishing clear communication with suppliers to avoid misunderstandings.
- Methods to monitor and evaluate contract performance regularly

Workshop - Channel your Work Stress into Creative Expression, Suzie Thompson & Sofie Dobbelaere

Suzie Thompson has worked in learning and organisational development for the past 25 years, with a career spanning both the public and private sectors. She supports organisations to create healthy, high-performing teams and embed wellbeing at the heart of organisational life. Suzie brings a creative, people-centred, and outcomes-focused approach to her work, providing facilitation, guidance, and strategic support across all levels.



Sofie Dobbelaere is a registered and qualified art psychotherapist, clinical supervisor, life drawing tutor and workshop facilitator with over 25 years experience of facilitating creative workshops and therapeutic interventions in the public, private and voluntary sector. She works with people of all ages and walks of life and has a particular interest in how working symbolically can enrich and deepen our understanding of self and the interpersonal realm.

Workshop Overview

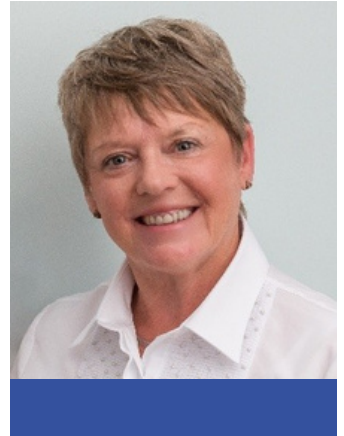
Your desk has multiple tasks coming in and out all day long. You never get to finish a cup of tea. You are spinning different plates every day. Book this workshop if you want to take a break from all of this.

Sofie and Susie will provide a fun and engaging workshop that encourages you to explore your creative potential within a supportive and relaxed environment. You will be guided through an hour of joyful yet calm creative exploration using techniques that are tailored to light up your right-brain functioning; tapping into your creative mind and offering a break from more prevalent daily left-brain activity at work. Regardless of experience, you will produce surprising pieces of art within one hour to foster a sense of accomplishment and self-discovery. No experience necessary, just bring your curiosity.

Afternoon Keynote and Workshops

Keynote – Networking to Build Relationships and Trust, Sue Tonks

For the past 20 years Sue has gained praise as an International Trainer and Speaker on “Networking”, where her regular clients include Birmingham University and MEDICI, London Business School, University College London, Said Business School Oxford, Durham Business School and a host of top legal firms, banks and accountancy firms. Sue’s energetic and fun approach creates a long-lasting impression and people take away many invaluable skills to help them be more confident and successful at all social occasions, life and in business.



Keynote overview

Being a ‘good networker’ is essential if you are going to build relationships, whether it’s with children, teachers, parents or networking at conferences like these.

Networking is about building relationships and creating trust.

Where can we network? Well ANYWHERE!! This is the fabulous benefit of developing relationship building skills.

This highly interactive, practical and fun Keynote will give you skills for life.

This Keynote will cover:

- Creating the right IMMEDIATE impression
- Breaking the ice with strangers
- The “Four Things” we all have in common with a stranger
- The power of “Body Language”
- Know how to answer to the “What do you do?” Question

Workshop - Dealing Effectively with Performance, Attitude and Behaviour– Sue Tonks

Have you ever had to say those words: “Can I Have A Word”. Scary isn’t it? It is also scary to be on the other side of that conversation too. This conversation could be with a peer, team member, teacher, parent or even your family or next-door neighbour! Where does it all go wrong? I’ll tell you.

This workshop is highly practical and fun development session has been designed to run alongside Sue’s best-selling book “Can I Have A Word”.

In this highly practical and fun session you will discover the RIGHT ways to approach individuals. We will learn what words NOT to say, and how to create long-term change. This highly practical session will provide long lasting skills in dealing effectively with people.

We will also unleash “The power of appreciation”

We may say “Thank you” but how is it received? Does it motivate? We will explore what the effects of “Thank you” can be on others at the true power of appreciation so that people will feel fully valued for the work they do.

Workshop - The Procurement Act 2023 – What You Need to Know–

Lorraine Ashover, Minerva

February 2025 saw the introduction of the biggest change in procurement legislation for a decade. Join Lorraine to gain an understanding of the key differences between the previous Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and The Procurement Act 2023. Learn some 'quick wins' as well as pitfalls to avoid. By the end you will have a

What we'll cover

- Key updates and requirements of The Procurement Act 2023, including thresholds, notices, and transparency obligations.
- Practical guidance on managing conflicts of interest, supporting SMEs, prompt payment rules, and contract performance monitoring through KPIs.
- How to use the Central Digital Platform for publishing tenders, supplier registration, and understanding the new Assessment Summary and standstill period changes.
- Insights into useful resources, training opportunities, and tools to help you prepare and manage public procurement effectively.
- What we've learnt from the first year of the Act being in force.

HR 1:1 advice surgery with SAS Doctor HR - Dr Chris J. Whitmore, MA PhD (Keele) ILM L7 MCCT FIoL

CEO; HR and Employment Law Consultant and practitioner; Fellow of the Institute of Leadership, Fellow of the Association for Coaching; lifelong active trade unionist, historian, and HRM/ industrial relations academic; Chris has spent over 35 years in workplace advocacy, employment relations and employment law practice.

Provided for delegates to book 1:1 30 minute appointments.

Bring along HR or employment law issues you are dealing with. Access confidential advice, guidance and prescriptions for action from SAS' own Doctor HR. Take away actionable advice back to your school, academy or MAT.

There are seven sessions held throughout the day during other workshops- Please indicate if you would like a 30 minute 1:1 HR session on your conference booking form- these will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Workshop: Dedicated Delegate Networking

This session is your opportunity for uninterrupted networking with peers, away from the usual agenda structure. Instead of a formal workshop, the time is yours to make valuable connections, share experiences, and discuss the issues that matter most to you.

The format is completely free-flowing: create your own discussion groups with fellow delegates, take the chance to revisit exhibitors you may have missed, or simply enjoy relaxed conversations with colleagues.

Spaces will be open throughout Eastwood Hall — from the Lawrence Suite and exhibition area to the seating spaces — giving you the freedom to connect in a way that suits you best.

Use this time to strengthen your professional network, exchange ideas, and take away insights you can put into practice back in school.

