



Flourishing Leaders
National Society for Education

Flourishing Leaders

Autumn 2025
programme
overview

Introduction



We are delighted to be launching the Flourishing Leader programmes across the country from autumn 2025. Our suite of leadership programmes seeks to provide a transformational space for growth for leaders at all levels across our school system.

We are launching 5 leadership programmes, delivered right across England:

01
**Flourishing
Emerging Leaders**

02
**Flourishing
Headteachers**

03
**Flourishing
System Leaders**

04
**Flourishing
Trustees**

05
**Flourishing
Leaders of EDIJ**

Flourishing Leader programmes

'The education system stands or falls on the extent to which it is led by adults who are themselves, flourishing. Children need to be empowered to think, create, analyse, debate and challenge by adults who are themselves well rested, valued, supported, paid and championed by society.'

Flourishing Together, 2025.

Our programmes are built on the following core principles:

Flourishing leadership begins within

Our programmes follow a twin-track approach that nurtures both personal growth and leadership transformation. Leaders are encouraged to reflect deeply on their values, beliefs, and identity—because flourishing schools begin with flourishing individuals.

Leadership grounded in purpose and people

We believe leadership is most powerful when it is purposeful and relational. Our curriculum explores how leaders can inspire hope, build trust, and foster belonging—creating school cultures where everyone can thrive.

Knowledge that transforms practice

We support leaders to master knowledge of self, leadership craft, and context—equipping them to lead with clarity, confidence, and compassion. We have developed a rich and robust research base for our programmes, drawing from

both the education domain, including the golden thread, but looking beyond and outside of education and the UK.

Big questions, bold thinking

Rather than focusing on problems, we invite leaders to engage with the big questions of school leadership. Through inquiry and reflection, participants develop the insight and courage to lead meaningful change.

Character at the core

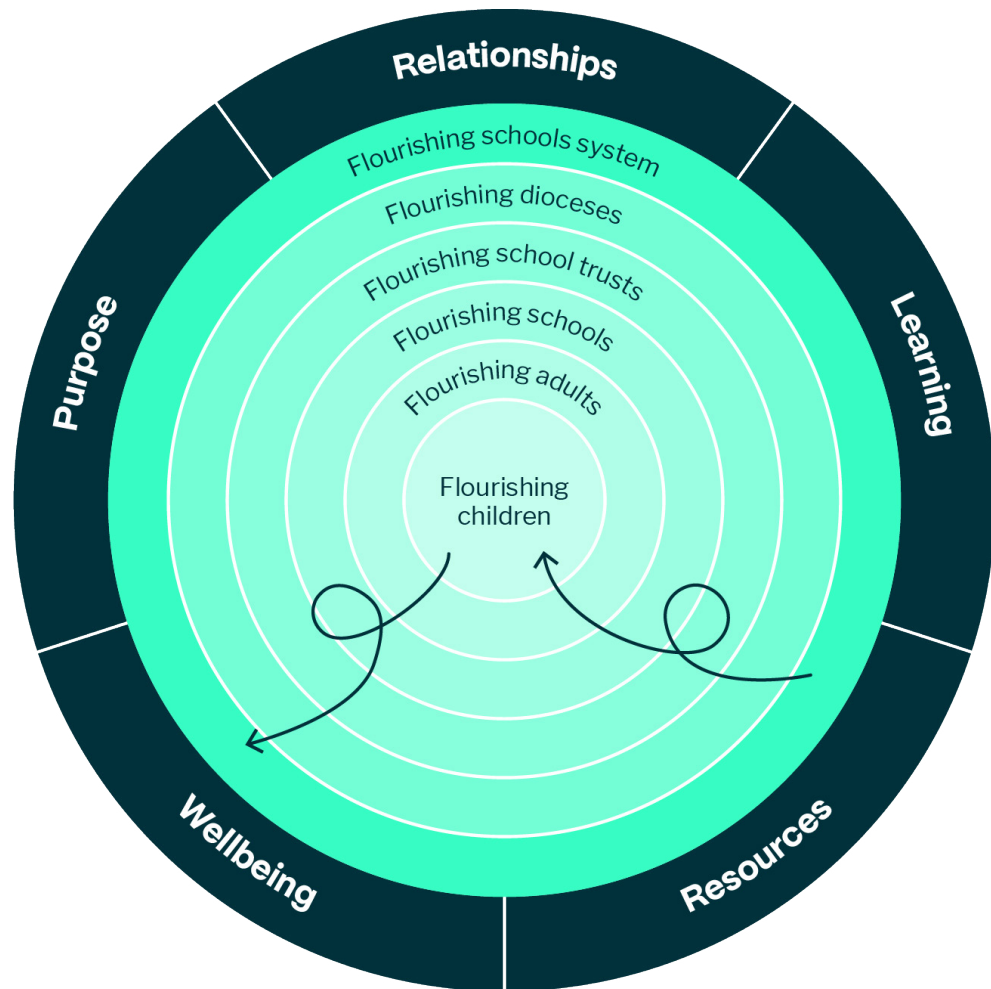
Leadership is not just about what you do—it's about how you do it. Our programmes cultivate essential leadership characteristics such as integrity, empathy, resilience, and wisdom, shaping leaders who inspire trust and drive transformation.

Designed for real impact

With a blend of coaching, peer learning, and practical application, our programmes are immersive and actionable. Leaders leave not just with new ideas, but with the tools and mindset to make a lasting difference in their schools and communities.

The Flourishing Domains

The Flourishing Leaders programme focuses on five interconnected domains that create the conditions for thriving in schools:



Purpose

A clear, shared purpose unites everyone in the school community, providing direction and meaning. It inspires collective commitment to a common vision grounded in the school's identity, mission and values.

Relationships

Flourishing depends on the quality of our relationships. When pupils, teachers, leaders and families feel valued and connected, schools become inclusive communities where everyone can thrive within a supportive and innovative environment.

Teaching and learning

Pupil success is closely linked to the ongoing learning of teachers, leaders and the wider school community. By working together as a 'community of practice,' leaders continually develop their skills, fostering intellectual growth alongside shared values and mutual respect.

Resources and expertise

The environment matters. Beyond having sufficient physical, technological and human resources, flourishing requires responsible stewardship—valuing, sharing and managing resources fairly to support all members of the school community.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of pupils and staff is vital. Healthy habits and resilience enable flourishing, but leaders must prioritise their own wellbeing first to maintain their capacity to lead others effectively into wellbeing and avoid burnout.

Flourishing Emerging Leader

About the programme

The Flourishing Emerging Leader programme is a 15-month programme for those who are new to leadership, whatever their career stage. It is for 'middle leaders' who are at the heart of school life—shaping curriculum, leading teaching, supporting pupil wellbeing, and creating environments where both staff and pupils can truly flourish. The programme caters for leaders of both academic and non-academic aspects of school life.

Learning environment

Emerging leaders join a local region, guided by a Regional Delivery Lead, where they become part of a supportive and collaborative Community of Practice. Participants are offered a mix of synchronous and asynchronous engagement. Surrounded by like-minded leaders working in similar contexts, participants are supported to build confidence, share ideas, and grow their leadership together.

Course content

The course provides carefully designed content, coaching and facilitation for participants to learn, reflect and connect with each other as they explore and develop their leadership through five domains of flourishing (Swaner & Wolfe 2021). These domains underpin the 5 themes of the programme. Below are the five themes with reflective questions that are covered by the course content:

Purpose – inspiring hope and aspiration for all

How does my purpose and vision help me to be the leader I want to be and to lead my team well?

Relationships – fostering a culture of belonging

How can I lead others with strong and compassionate relationships which show I listen, care and follow through?

Learning – nurturing growth and potential

How can I lead the teaching, learning and growth of pupils, and colleagues, building on theirs and my strengths?

Resources – building a legacy of sustainability

What do I already have around me (people, time, tools) that I can utilise to make a difference right now?

Wellbeing – championing health and wellbeing

What do I need to stay grounded, energised and flourishing as I grow and how do I support others in this?

Each theme within the course is rooted in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning and is made of the following key components. (Time commitments are detailed below each component).

Face-to-face and virtual sessions	2 x 1hr webinar per theme = 10hrs 4hrs per theme face-to-face = 20hrs
Interactive, self-led learning	Asynchronous 2 x 2hrs per theme = 20hrs
Flourishing Together coaching	2 x 60mins per theme = 10hrs
Total	60 hours

Flourishing Headteacher

About the Programme

The Flourishing Headteacher programme is a 15-18 month programme for aspiring or existing headteachers who are committed to leading their schools with hope, aspiration and heart so that they themselves, their pupils, colleagues and the school community can flourish. It will equip leaders with the knowledge, capabilities and characteristics to balance the complexities of the role with purpose, strategic vision, courage, and compassion for long term impact. This programme offers space to step back, reflect deeply, and reconnect with what truly matters, developing personally and as a leader.

Learning environment

Headteachers join a regional community led by an experienced Regional Delivery Lead, forming a supportive and collaborative Community of Practice. Through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous engagement, these local networks provide a space for peer learning, shared problem-solving, and collective sensemaking. Working alongside colleagues from similar school contexts, headteachers are supported to navigate challenges, exchange ideas, and strengthen their leadership through meaningful collaboration.

Course content

The course provides carefully designed content, coaching and facilitation for participants to learn, reflect and connect with each other as they explore and develop their leadership through five domains of flourishing (Swaner & Wolfe 2021). These domains underpin the 5 themes of the programme. Below are the five themes with reflective questions that are covered by the course content:

Purpose – inspiring hope and aspiration for all

What kind of school leader do I want to be and what kind of school community do I want to shape?

Relationships – fostering a culture of belonging

How can I create relational trust with those I lead for the collective flourishing of the whole school community?

Learning – nurturing growth and potential

How can I motivate those I lead through acknowledgement, recognition and investment in professional development?

Resources – building a legacy of sustainability

How can I utilise the resources available to best serve the needs of my school now and in the future?

Wellbeing – championing health and wellbeing

How can I sustain my wellbeing and support others to do the same as we fulfil the vision for the school?

Each theme within the course is rooted in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning and is made of the following key components. (Time commitments are detailed below each component).

Face-to-face and virtual sessions	2 x 1hr webinar per theme = 10hrs 7hrs per theme face-to-face = 5 days (35hrs)
Interactive, self-led learning	2 x 2hrs per theme = 20hrs
Flourishing Together coaching	2 x 90mins per theme = 15hrs
Immersion Visit	2 x 1/2 day = 1 day (8hrs)
Total	88 hours

Flourishing Systems Leader

About the Programme

This Flourishing System Leader programme is an 18-month programme for leaders and aspiring system leaders working across a number of schools (CEOs, executive heads, and trust leaders) but also caters for non-academic leadership domains within Education e.g. central services. The programme is for system leaders who are committed to strategic and values led leadership of our education system. It is for those who want to move beyond operational leadership to create lasting impact—fostering flourishing within themselves and across the schools, communities and for the children they serve. The programme includes two, two-day residential featuring national expert speakers and offering participants space for deep reflection and to develop knowledge, capabilities and characteristics to lead with purpose, clarity and compassion.

Learning environment

Systems leaders join a national programme that blends synchronous and asynchronous learning with opportunities for national networking, team residentials, and insight from thought leaders within and beyond the education sector. Participant groups form dynamic professional learning communities; spaces for deep peer collaboration, critical reflection, and innovative sensemaking. Together, leaders engage in forward-thinking dialogue to navigate complexity and respond boldly to the evolving educational landscape.

Course content

The course provides carefully designed content, coaching and facilitation for participants to learn, reflect and connect with each other as they explore and develop their leadership through five domains of flourishing (Swaner & Wolfe 2021). These domains underpin the 5 themes of the programme. Below are the five themes with reflective questions that are covered by the course content:

Purpose – inspiring hope and aspiration for all

How can I ensure our purpose goes beyond our organisation and meaningfully contributes to the wider sector?

Relationships – fostering a culture of belonging

How can I cultivate relationships built on trust, purpose and belonging for a collaborative culture?

Learning – nurturing growth and potential

How can I lead through authentic recognition, meaningful investment in professional growth, and the strategic development of leadership at all levels?

Resources – building a legacy of sustainability

How can I steward the system's resources (e.g. financial, human, and relational) to equitably meet the evolving needs of all schools and learners?

Wellbeing – championing health and wellbeing

How can I protect and renew my own wellbeing, and that of others, as I lead for long-term, systemic change?

Each theme within the course is rooted in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning and is made of the following key components. (Time commitments are detailed below each component).

Face-to-face and virtual sessions	2 x 1hr webinar per theme = 10hrs 2 x 2 day residential + 1 x 1 virtual day = 5 days (35hrs)
Interactive, self-led learning	2 x 2hrs per theme = 20hrs
Flourishing Together coaching	2 x 90mins per theme = 15hrs
Immersion Visit	2 x 1 day = 2 days (16hrs)
Total	88 hours

Flourishing Trustees

About the programme

The Flourishing Trustees programme is a suite of resources, spanning 2 years, that supports groups of trustees together in leading with greater purpose, clarity, and impact. It is for trustees who want to move beyond governance as oversight and step into a role that nurtures flourishing—within themselves, their schools and the school communities they serve. It offers a unique space to reconnect with what matters, grow as values-driven leaders, and embrace a reflective, and visionary approach to school leadership. This will include relevant knowledge for a trustee to fulfil their role, practical tools and the opportunity to collaborate with other trustees in the sector

Learning environment

Our resources blend synchronous and asynchronous learning to accommodate the demands of trustee responsibilities. Participants engage in professional learning communities with fellow trustees, with opportunities to connect regionally across trustee groups. These communities foster trusted spaces for peer learning, strategic reflection, and shared growth.

The resources are designed for flexible use—both by individual trustees and within trustee meetings—ensuring meaningful impact across the trust. Through purposeful collaboration, trustees deepen their understanding of effective governance and enhance their capacity to lead with insight, integrity, and impact.

Course content

The course provides carefully designed content, coaching and facilitation for participants to learn, reflect and connect with each other as they explore and develop their leadership through five domains of flourishing (Swaner & Wolfe 2021). These domains underpin the 5 themes of the programme. Below are the five themes with reflective questions that are covered by the course content:

Purpose – inspiring hope and aspiration for all

How can we ensure that our vision, values and schools inspire hope, aspiration, and flourishing for every learner and member of the community?

Relationships – fostering a culture of belonging

How can we build and maintain relational trust with school leaders, staff, families, and the wider community as we exercise our governance?

Learning – nurturing growth and potential

How can we ensure school leaders are motivated, supported, and developed through our recognition, challenge, and strategic oversight?

Resources – building a legacy of sustainability

How can we ensure that resources (e.g. financial, human, and strategic) are used effectively and equitably to serve the schools’ priorities and pupils’ needs?

Wellbeing – championing health and wellbeing

How can we as trustees sustain our own effectiveness, wellbeing, and purpose, and that of those we serve?

Each theme within the course is rooted in Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning and is made of the following key components. (Time commitments are detailed below each component).

Virtual webinar, live or recorded	2 x 1hr webinar per theme = 10hrs
Interactive, self-led learning	1 x 90mins per theme = 7.5hrs
Flourishing Together stimulus for use in trustee meetings	Organised locally. Flexible to suit trustees
Immersion visit	1 x 3hrs = 3hrs
Coaching	1 x 90mins per theme = 7.5hrs
Total	28hrs + use of stimulus materials in trustee meetings

Flourishing Leader of EDIJ

About the programme

The Flourishing Leaders of EDIJ programme is a 12–15 month programme for leaders of this crucial area of education who wish to champion and develop equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice in the life and work of their school or trust. Focusing on creating cultures where every individual is heard, valued, and able to flourish regardless of their background, it will equip them with the understanding, skills and characteristics to lead with purpose, authenticity and courage. Through deep reflection and practical strategy, the programme helps leaders understand the transformative impact of EDIJ work and embed it as a living, strategic priority.

Learning environment

Participants join a regional or national programme designed for leaders of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice (EDIJ), blending synchronous and asynchronous learning to support flexibility and depth. Participants engage as part of a committed professional learning community, a space for courageous conversation, mutual accountability, and collective growth. Through peer collaboration and shared inquiry, leaders are supported to challenge inequities, reimagine systems, and lead change with purpose and integrity.

Ultimately, the Flourishing Leaders programme is about more than just leadership – it's about building a life's work that resonates with meaning and purpose. It is an invitation to become the kind of leader who brings out the best in others, extending kindness, vulnerability, and humility at every turn.

Course content

The course provides carefully designed content, coaching and facilitation for participants to learn, reflect and connect with each other, exploring the five domains of flourishing (Swaner & Wolfe 2021). These domains underpin the 5 themes of the programme. Below are the five themes with reflective questions that are covered by the course content:

Purpose – inspiring hope and aspiration for all

How can I shape and sustain a purpose and vision of hope, aspiration, and flourishing, especially for those who may be marginalised by our systems?

Relationships – fostering a culture of belonging

How can I build and nurture relational trust across lines of difference to create belonging, healing, and systemic change?

Learning – nurturing growth and potential

How can I lead equity, inclusion, and justice for pupils and colleagues through teaching, the curriculum and professional growth?

Resources – building a legacy of sustainability

How can I leverage available power, privilege, and resources to meaningfully address disparities and redesign systems in service of equity and justice?

Wellbeing – championing health and wellbeing

How can I sustain my own wellbeing, clarity, and moral courage in the face of resistance, urgency, and complexity?

Each theme within the course is rooted in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning and is made of the following key components. (Time commitments are detailed below each component).

Face-to-face and virtual sessions

2 x 1hr webinar per theme = 10hrs
4hrs per theme face-to-face = 20hrs

Interactive, self-led learning

Asynchronous 2 x 2hrs per theme = 20hrs

Flourishing Together coaching

2 x 60mins per theme = 10hrs

Total

60 hours

Ultimately, the Flourishing Leaders programme is about more than just leadership—it's about building a life's work that resonates with meaning and purpose. It is an invitation to become the kind of leader who brings out the best in others, extending kindness, vulnerability, and humility at every turn.

Flourishing Leaders...

Transform within...

Flourish and lead beyond



Why work with the Church of England?

01

Over 98% of participants agreed that their coaches and facilitators were knowledgeable and engaging.

02

Over 98% of participants said that their self-study materials were comprehensive and expanded their knowledge.

03

Over 98% of participants agreed that facilitator and coach-led training sessions enabled them to develop their knowledge and think critically about their practice.

04

Over 98% of participants said that completing their NPQ with the Church of England has had a positive impact on my professional practice as a leader.



Ofsted report (2024)



Participants benefit greatly from the exceptional training they receive from highly skilled and expert trainers, facilitators and coaches.

The Church of England's vision of establishing a 'common good' for the whole community is at the centre of the lead provider's work.

Participants develop highly attuned professional behaviours that align to the lead provider's vision, 'called, connected and committed'.

The professional development and training provided is exceptional.

As a result of a skilfully crafted curriculum, and of the expert trainers, participants securely learn the knowledge that the lead provider intends.

Trainers skilfully use formative assessment. This enables them to reshape aspects of training to suit individual participant's needs.





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