

Senior Leadership Team

Tony Doran BEd (Hons) and NPQH - Headteacher



Tony is an experienced Senior Leader within education with a drive and passion in tackling disadvantage and underachievement. The last decade has been mostly spent within inner city and urban secondary schools in challenging situations, developing pastoral systems to support and engage all students in learning. Between 2003 and 2009 Tony developed, implemented and evolved his Attitudes to Learning System, which received national recognition in 2007. This later led to a secondment into the Prime Ministers Delivery Unit as a consultant behaviour expert, during their 2008/9 National Behaviour Review. The 2009/10 academic year was spent as a Behaviour and Attendance Adviser for the South East of England within The National Strategies which included significant work with the Narrowing the Gap Team. This offered Tony a unique opportunity to see local, area and national issues and effective practice. These experiences over the last ten years have solidified a real optimism that through an effective multi agency, strategically co-ordinated approach we can break down barriers that our most vulnerable children face. Together it is our duty to facilitate better outcomes for children in care.

Marian Smith BEd (Hons) and NPQH - Deputy Head - Achievement and Standards (East & South Kent)



Marian joined VSK in March 2012, coming from a primary school background where she was a teacher for nearly 20 years before deciding to move away from the 'chalk face' and do something different but still keep the connection with education. She is responsible for monitoring and supporting the educational progress and attainment of the children in care in schools in Folkestone and Dover localities and more recently has taken on overall management of the South Kent area.

Joanne Kelly MA and PGCE - Deputy Head - Achievement and Standards (Post16, North and West Kent)



I joined VSK as an Assistant Head in 2011 and took up the Deputy Head post in September 2017. Before that I supported children in different ways such as being a Specialist Teacher for Behaviour and Learning in Gravesham, a consultant in the Medway Behaviour and Educational Support Team, as a SENCO, as a Head of Maths and a class teacher. I have had the privilege of working in a variety of settings in the primary and secondary age groups, as well as in a PRU with a residential facility. My degree was in Economics and History from Cambridge University, I then went on to study teaching and achieved my PGCE and MA. I am currently studying to achieve the NPQSL and I hope to complete that this year. I've been working on a Solihull Approach training programme for professionals supporting fostered and adopted children in conjunction with STLS and CiC CAMHS - and I am currently working with the OCYPC to develop some training on 'In Care in School' for Kent. I look forward to continuing to develop the support for Kent CiC in our schools this year.

Rachel Calver BA (Hons) and PGCE - Deputy Head - Achievement and Standards (Post16)



I joined VSK in September 2013 after working within the Further Education sector since 2001. Starting as an FE teacher, I then moved across to join the Aim Higher Project to support widening participation in Higher Education where I started working with CiC and CL. Continuing with this project, and becoming a Careers Adviser, I developed an initiative that continues today, to have a Designated Member of Staff for CL in all of the Kent and Medway University and Colleges, acting as key contacts for the young person and professionals. I then supported the development of a publication for CL on their opportunities Post16. Whilst working in FE I became the Student Services Manager and was able to implement a number of strategies to support the education of CL, to ensure they were aware of the support available to support progression. It was in this role that I began working with VSK. I have been able to bring with me the knowledge of the Post16 sector, and the key contacts already established to ensure that networking is strengthened. We have been delivering training to Foster Carers and Social Workers on Post16, and plan to increase the uptake of the training to ensure the young person is clear of the options available to them. With the recent development of the VSK extending its remit to include those aged 16 to 18 years it will be an exciting year ahead, expanding on the Post16 team and support other key professionals in the midfield of Post16.

Gemma O'Grady – Participation Co-ordinator



Gemma originally worked as an accountant but decided to change her career path to something more people centred when she started a family of her own. Initially working in the voluntary sector as a Project Officer advising local community groups and charities on their constitutions, set up and growth, she began to support some of these organisations directly, and went on to be the Community Development Officer for a district council in Kent. Projects included Neighbourhood Renewal Projects, Regeneration Programmes, running advice centres and setting up a network of 26 community groups in a deprived area and developing an umbrella organisation to deliver social action projects and build social capital.

She was then invited to participate in the Working Families Everywhere (WFE) national pilot and was eventually seconded to KCC to manage the Troubled Families (TF) Programme in south Kent, which developed from WFE. The opportunity to become Participation Co-ordinator arose late 2015 and Gemma was keen to take her knowledge and experience forwards in working with children and young people under SCS, building on her involvement through the TF Programme.

Gemma's own involvement with SCS in her youth has been the 'driver' in supporting others, whether as communities, families or individuals, to reach their potential and to lead fulfilled and successful lives.

Joanne Carpenter – School Bursar and Project Officer

