

**Headteachers, Principals and CEOs
Shropshire Schools**

Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 13th January 2026

Dear Headteachers, Principals and CEOs,

As we begin 2026, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your unwavering commitment and hard work over the past year. Together, we have continued to navigate the challenges of our sector, achieving notable improvements in attendance and a reduction in exclusions—clear evidence of our shared dedication to supporting Shropshire's most vulnerable children and young people.

Last year, we celebrated a significant milestone as Children's Services was judged to be 'outstanding' following inspection by Ofsted. This achievement is a testament to the passion, expertise, and tireless efforts of staff across the county and within our schools and settings. The professionalism and care of so many, has made a real difference to the lives of children and families.

We have also seen important changes within Shropshire Council. We said farewell to valued colleagues Steve Ladd (Disabled Children's Team Service Manager), Jane Parsons (Education Access and Safeguarding Officer), and Beverley Jones (Early Years Quality Improvement and Learning Co-ordinator), whose contributions have left a lasting legacy. At the same time, we are delighted to welcome new colleagues, whose fresh perspectives and enthusiasm will help us continue to move forward.

We have made strong progress in SEND provision, and I am pleased to note that these improvements were recognised by the Department for Education during the recent Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) review. As we look ahead, we are preparing for our forthcoming LGA SEND Peer Review, which will offer valuable insights to help all parts of our system to further improve our services, as we recognise that there is more work to do. We also await the publication of the SEND White Paper with anticipation, ready to respond proactively to its recommendations. We are already working together to ensure that the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme reforms develop successfully in Shropshire, so that collectively, we can ensure that more children and young people



receive effective early support to avoid social care intervention, and where this is necessary, we engage the most family orientated approach to their care.

You will also have noted from the Education Update last week, that we are inviting attendance at our first SEND Roundtable for Shropshire Headteachers so that we can share some important updates and hear directly from you on what still needs to improve, as we continue on our journey to provide consistently positive experiences for children and young people with SEND. I look forward to seeing you at one of these important events and hearing your views. We look to hold these events regularly to maintain a constructive dialogue with school leaders with respect to SEND. This is an open invitation to all Shropshire headteachers, please visit [SEND and Inclusion Roundtable Event for headteachers - 22/1/26 | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

An important initiative this year has been the ongoing development of our first Education Excellence Strategy. This strategy outlines a clear and ambitious vision for high-quality education for every child and young person in Shropshire. It reinforces our commitment to offering both constructive challenge and robust support to schools, ensuring that all children and young people have opportunities to thrive and succeed. While we have made progress in several areas, we must also recognise that Shropshire's academic outcomes have not yet reached the level of excellence we aspire to. We are committed to working collectively to address this and to seek sustained improvement in educational achievement across all our schools.

Our strategy builds on established efforts to improve attendance, reduce exclusions, and support inclusive practice in schools, consolidating gains from past school-council partnerships and improvement plans. It also introduces new initiatives, such as quality assurance for non-school alternative provision, and strengthens support for maintained schools through a blend of sector-led and local authority-initiated work. We look forward to this important work being completed during this academic year.

Thank you once again for your dedication and I wish you and your colleagues well for the New Year.

Your professionalism and commitment form the strong foundations of our collective success. Together, we look forward to another year of progress, partnership, and striving for excellence to the benefit of all of Shropshire's children and young people.

Yours sincerely



David Shaw
Director of Children's Services
David.shaw@shropshire.gov.uk

