

More about the trainers



Durell Barnes, Head of Governance and Compliance, RSAcademics

Throughout his career Durell has worked with school leadership teams to support them with all aspects of governance and compliance. He was formerly Deputy Director and Head of Communications at the Independent Schools Inspectorate in England and before that taught in some of the country's best schools, latterly as a deputy head. At ISI, Durell was responsible for liaising with Ofsted, the Department for Education and all the independent schools associations, as well as schools, parents and other interested parties on matters relating to safeguarding and quality assurance. He was closely involved in the development and implementation of four different frameworks for inspection over several years. A governor of both maintained and independent schools, Durell has hands-on experience of the challenges faced by busy and highly committed governors endeavouring to exercise their responsibilities within time constraints. In September 2018, Durell was appointed Chairman of the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB), alongside his role at RSAcademics.



Russell Speirs, CEO and Founder, RSAcademics

Russell Speirs is CEO and Founder of RSAcademics and has personally worked with hundreds of schools providing strategic consultancy and advice to boards, heads and senior leaders. After graduating with first class honours from University of Oxford, he undertook a three-year Master's degree at The

European School of Management in Paris and Berlin before he began his marketing career at Unilever. Russell joined Uppingham School in England as the school's first Marketing Director in 1997. It was during this time at Uppingham that he fell in love with the world of schools. Alongside his role as CEO of RSAcademics, Russell has been a Governor of two K12 schools, one in the UK and one international school in France.



Deniece Wheeler, Lead Consultant – MENA, RSAcademics

Deniece has been based in Dubai working within the international education sector since 2008, consulting on behalf of education service providers across: education publishing; special educational needs provision; teacher recruitment; and teacher training. She served from 2019-2021 in a voluntary role to the board of British School in the Middle East (BSME) to help to represent the needs of supporting partner organisations. Deniece has a wide network of education stakeholders throughout the region and takes a collaborative and consultative approach to business development. Deniece has a BA (Hons) in Marketing, a CIM Professional Diploma, and is currently completing an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology & Coaching at the University of East London. She supports RSAcademics as a consultant, to contribute to MENA regional development.

RSAcademics

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Today's children will inherit a world of profound challenge and opportunity, and the world needs schools capable of preparing them. We exist to help schools thrive – as arenas of learning, creativity and excellence; as strong, sustainable businesses and as models for a harmonious society. We are the trusted consulting partner for schools in the UK and worldwide. We find and develop leaders, guide decision makers, solve practical problems and make connections so that schools can enhance their position in the market. We provide constructive challenge and friendly support. We are known for our network and market knowledge. Schools welcome us because of the results we achieve. Since 2002, our founder and CEO, Russell Speirs, has sought out exceptional individuals with the particular qualities schools need: world-class commercial experience and a shared heart-soul affinity

for schools. We exist entirely to serve schools. We care deeply about their goals, reputations and peace of mind. We do all this because, the world needs schools to thrive.