

Our HA Trust membership

Bryony Turford, Red Kite Alliance

We recently caught up with Bryony Turford, Associate Consultant for Primary CPD at the Red Kite Alliance, an alliance of 35 primary schools across Yorkshire, to share her experiences of HA Trust membership. Her responsibilities involve organising, co-ordinating and delivering the Trust's primary CPD offer across all foundation subjects.



“I've noticed huge professional growth in our history subject leaders.”

What motivated you to take up HA membership for all of the primary schools in the Alliance?

Thinking back to when we started this project four years ago, we were motivated to build professional support for our primary leads across all the foundation subjects. Thinking specifically about our primary history leads, we wanted to make sure they had well-researched, well-supported, well-created CPD and access to professional support and dialogue outside of their school, their alliance, or their trust. HA membership has been extremely valuable in meeting that need so far.

Were there any particular challenges that you were facing in history education across your schools before you joined the HA?

Many of the most common challenges in primary education in general are time and money. Time and money are extremely precious and are often spent in priority order. Primary history is not always at the top of the list, and we wanted to make sure that even if teachers weren't able to access in-person CPD, conferences or activities, they had constant support whenever they needed it, whether they were a new leader or an experienced leader. The resources, the conferences, the CPD, the online offer of the HA – it was exactly what we were looking for. The value for money is extraordinary and has helped overcome those challenges.

What kind of strategies have worked best for you for embedding HA materials across schools?

At the start of the project, we had two initial meetings with our history leads. Our first session was online, where the HA joined us and told us about what the HA was about so teachers could log in, create their online presence and explore the website. Then we had a second session in person, where we expected teachers to have looked at the HA website further and to share with each other. As the years have gone on, it's an expectation that everybody maintains their membership and shares with colleagues where relevant.

The HA provided fantastic support during onboarding. Thirty-five schools joining in one hit was a big deal. More importantly, the relationship we've built with the HA has been constant support throughout these four years. What we're doing is valued by the HA as much as what the HA offers is valued by us.

We meet subject leaders once a year in strategic leadership networks, offering ongoing support and reminding them of their membership. We make sure they are signed up to the regular newsletters so they have prompts and reminders. Time is a huge pressure, and making sure they've got access to things in a timely way is important.

What changes have you seen in the professional growth of history teachers since joining the HA?

It's been interesting to work with primary history leaders for four years, and in the last couple of years I've noticed huge professional growth. That has to be attributed to having HA membership, alongside other work we do with regular meetings. HA membership is a constant, and they can go back to it with questions. Being able to go to that expert voice is important to their professional growth. We don't have masses of turnover either; they're really engaged.

Can you share any specific examples of how HA resources or CPD have influenced primary history leads in the Alliance?

Many HA resources have influenced our primary history leads in different ways. Impact statements include:

- 'Historical Association membership is research- and evidence-led, and it's helped our history curriculum to be underpinned by an inquiry-led approach.'
- 'We've got Quality Mark Gold; we're going for our three-year renewal. It raises the status of the subject.'
- 'The free webinars are excellent; I've done quite a few to support my curriculum development, and the website has so many more resources across all year groups than I ever imagined.'

With 35 leaders, that's the tip of the iceberg.

How has your use of HA membership evolved over the last four years?

In year one, many subject leaders didn't know the HA existed, so it was about awareness. In year two, we moved to getting the most out of membership – digging into things, bringing something they wanted to know more about and using the HA as the source. Last year we looked at vulnerable learners in history

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and how HA resources can support class teachers as well as subject leaders. This year we've been looking at assessment and how assessment in history is different to every other subject. It's been an evolving process, in consultation with the HA. As an alliance, we've been looking at those same four themes across all our foundation subjects.

How has having membership for the Alliance helped you meet your own aims as an Alliance CPD Lead?

My goal was supporting foundation subject leaders. They're often forgotten and less supported than maths, English and science leads. Being able to offer expert, high-quality support was my number-one aim. We have a three-pronged approach: the HA is one aspect, our Padlet is another and our regular meetings are another. The aim of offering ongoing, high-quality, well-researched, well-supported help for primary foundation leads, particularly history, has been met and exceeded.

Overall, what makes HA membership a worthwhile, long-term investment for your Alliance?

Considering this as a long-term investment was a tricky financial decision at first. It's been worth it. The professional advocacy, reliability and trustworthiness of the resources that value, support and develop primary history leads has been so useful. It's an important retention and recruitment tool. When you are a history leader in one of our primary schools, you will have membership of the HA. It is a non-negotiable part of our offer.

Is there any particular advice you would give to other trusts or alliances considering HA membership?

For any trusts or alliances considering HA membership, particularly for your primary leads, my number one recommendation is: do it. Don't wait, don't consider – do it. But do it strategically, with support that wraps around that fundamental aspect, which is the HA membership.

For more information about Trust membership or to obtain a quote, visit:

www.history.org.uk/go/primaryMAT