

# Damian Knollys

## Pen Portrait

I am the new headteacher at Peasedown St John Primary School, as of January 2015. This is the largest primary school in Bath & North East Somerset, with 569 pupils, including an on-site Nursery. It is a successful semi-urban school serving the former mining village of Peasedown and the surrounding area.

Previously I was head for nine years at Midsomer Norton Primary School, after 5½ years as Deputy Head at Combe Down in Bath, and before that two years as Deputy in an international school in Prague. In 2010, at the request of the local authority (B&NES), I was seconded to a school in Special Measures for eight months, which was a great learning opportunity.

I first held LLE designation in 2008, and have recently done some support work for a local head whose school was receiving Ofsted monitoring visits. My experiences as a head have covered all the areas you would expect, but I have particular experience of:

- Effecting a fundamental change in school culture
- Undertaking a major building project with the local authority
- Leading a school that has slipped from 'Good' to 'Satisfactory' and worked its way back to 'Good'
- Facing a significant budget deficit
- Revamping assessment and curriculum
- Initiating and following through capability procedures and refusing threshold applications

As a head who has experienced work in schools with mixed fortunes, I know that achieving consistency of good practice is not straightforward. I also know that I do not have all the solutions. I do, however, know the power of collaboration and coaching, and strongly believe in peer-to-peer school development.

Working alongside colleagues is a real privilege and I believe the LLE role can prove vital in developing the capacity of school leaders to achieve the school improvement they desire.