



GRAPHITE CAPITAL

## **News release**

15 August 2011

### **Graphite Capital backs Teaching Personnel to acquire Protocol Education, creating the UK's leading education recruitment specialist**

Graphite Capital, the UK mid-market private equity specialist, has provided equity funding to enable Teaching Personnel to acquire Protocol Education, creating the leading provider of supply teachers and support staff to schools in England and Wales.

Both businesses provide short and long term temporary teachers, teaching assistants and nursery staff, primarily to English and Welsh primary and secondary schools, as well as to Academies and other specialist schools, including those serving special educational needs.

Graphite backed the £45 million management buy-out (MBO) of Teaching Personnel in July 2010. The acquisition of Protocol Education is consistent with Graphite's strategy to create the leading provider of education staff in the UK. In the period since the MBO, Teaching Personnel has achieved substantial organic growth. The acquisition of Protocol Education will now further strengthen its customer proposition.

Protocol Education has 18 branches in the UK and three offices overseas, collectively supplying 2,800 schools. It is the leading provider of staff to primary schools in London, where it has a strong presence.

Teaching Personnel serves more than 4,100 schools from 34 branches across England and Wales. Since the MBO, it has opened three new branches in Cambridge, Bournemouth and Middlesbrough.

Teaching Personnel and Protocol Education are ideally positioned to serve the evolving education supply market. They will continue to operate as independent businesses, preserving their own brands and branch networks, and serving their respective candidates and schools. Stephen Lawrence, who has been responsible for Protocol Education's strong performance since 2005, will remain as Chief Executive of that business and will join the executive board responsible for overseeing the enlarged group, of which John Bowman will be the Group Managing Director.

Graphite is investing additional equity into the new group, alongside Stephen Lawrence and other key members of the Protocol Education management team who are re-investing a substantial part of their sale proceeds. Clydesdale Bank, which arranged debt finance at the time of the MBO, and Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets Acquisition Finance, are providing acquisition finance and working capital facilities.

John Bowman said: "Graphite's on-going support enables Teaching Personnel and now Protocol Education to expand their product and service offerings in the education supply sector. Both businesses will continue to draw on their core values of quality, reliability and integrity at all times to provide schools with candidates of the highest calibre."

Stephen Lawrence added: "This is an exciting opportunity for everyone at Protocol Education. Being supported by Graphite, who already back a like-minded business in Teaching Personnel, represents a positive new phase for our clients, candidates and staff."

Graphite investment director, Mark Hall, commented: "We have been delighted with the progress made by Teaching Personnel since the MBO last year. This represents an opportunity to increase our exposure to an attractive segment of the education sector and to work with another high calibre management team."

The business has been acquired from Bridgepoint Portfolio Services who retain ownership of Protocol National, the UK's largest supplier of part-time and full-time staff to the Further Education sector.

Senior partner Mike Tilbury, Mark Hall and Simon May, investment manager, managed the transaction for Graphite.

## **Ends**

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### **Notes to editors:**

#### **About Graphite Capital**

Graphite is a specialist provider of private equity finance to mid-market companies in the UK. Graphite focuses on management buy-outs and buy-ins, expansion capital and turnaround opportunities. It invests in transactions with enterprise values of £25 million to £200 million. Graphite manages more than £1.2 billion through three private funds and the publicly-quoted Graphite Enterprise Trust PLC. The current fund, Graphite Capital Partners VII, is a £585 million fund raised in 2007, whose other investments include U-POL, a world leader in automotive refinishing products; Alexander Mann Solutions, the largest independent provider of recruitment process outsourcing solutions to blue-chip companies worldwide; and London Square, a new house-builder focused on prime sites within the M25.

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