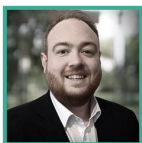


# CONFERENCE 2025

Thursday 19 June 2025 | 0830 – 1545 | Future Skills Centre, Exeter  
#SWIFTConf25 | [Book HERE](#)

## Summer Conference 2025



**Dan Fitzpatrick** | The AI Educator and Author  
| Leadership in the Future - Educational  
Strategy in the AI Era



**Lauren Rowles MBE** | Paralympic rowing  
champion and inspirational speaker |  
Mental Resilience and Overcoming Adversity



**Professor Rob Coe** | Senior Associate,  
Education Endowment Foundation | What  
makes the biggest impact on pupil outcomes?



**Bennie Kara** | Co-Founder of  
Diverse Educators and author | Embedding  
Diversity in the Curriculum



**Cassie Buchanan OBE** | CEO of The Charter  
Schools Educational Trust | Trust Leadership



**Jessica Trahar** | Deputy Director, South  
|West Regions Group | Update from the  
Department for Education SW Group



**Professor John Jerrim** | Education and  
Social Statistics, UCL | Improving Outcomes  
for High Achieving Children from  
Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds



**Krisha Gandhi and Caroline Leigh** |  
Head of Primary & Deputy Head of Campus,  
Assistant Head at The Maynard School |  
DEIB Best Practice in the South West



**Nick Wakeling** | Director of Colyton  
Foundation | Improving Outcomes for High  
Achieving Children from Disadvantaged  
Socio-Economic Backgrounds



**Stephanie Hamilton** | Director of The  
Engagement Platform (Part of ImpactEd) |  
Research around Pupil, Parent and Staff  
Engagement

### Sponsors



SWIFT Members £100 | Other Colleagues £150

[Book HERE](#)

# Agenda

0830 - 0900	<b>Registration</b>
0900 - 0910	<b>Welcome:</b> Tim Harris, Headteacher of Colyton Grammar School and Co-Lead for SWIFT
0910 - 0955	<b>What makes the biggest impact on pupil outcomes?:</b> Professor Rob Coe
0955 - 1040	<b>Embedding Diversity in the Curriculum:</b> Bennie Kara
1040 - 1110	<b>Break</b>
1110 - 1155	<b>Research around Pupil, Parent and Staff Engagement:</b> Professor John Jerrim and Steph Hamilton or <b>Trust Leadership:</b> Cassie Buchanan OBE
1155 - 1210	<b>SWIFT Updates, including ambitious new offer for 2025 - 2026</b>
1210 - 1255	<b>Leadership in the Future - Educational Strategy in the AI Era:</b> Dan Fitzpatrick
1255 - 1335	<b>Lunch</b>
1335 - 1405	<b>Update from DfE South West Regions Group:</b> Jessica Trahar
1410 - 1450	<b>DEIB Best Practice in the South West:</b> Krisha Gandhi and Caroline Leigh or <b>Improving Outcomes for High Achieving Children from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds:</b> Professor John Jerrim and Nick Wakeling
1455 - 1545	<b>Mental Resilience and Overcoming Adversity:</b> Lauren Rowles MBE
1545	<b>Close</b>



**SWIFT Members £100 | Other Colleagues £150**

**[Book HERE](#)**





# Speaker Information



## Cassie Buchanan OBE Trust Leadership

### More about Cassie

Cassie is the CEO of The Charter Schools Educational Trust in South London.

Under her leadership, the Trust has established and leads a Teaching School Hub, Challenge Partners Hub, EEF Research School (currently projects are focused on reading fluency and writing skills), Behaviour Hub, Flexible Working Ambassador School and Early Years Stronger Practice Hub.

Until 2021, Cassie also was the Headteacher of Charles Dickens Primary, in Southwark; which has consistently achieved significantly higher than national averages for all pupils in English and Maths.

Cassie has been an Ofsted inspector, a National Leader of Education and was awarded an OBE in 2021 for services to education.

Cassie is a member of the Department for Education panel reviewing the National Curriculum and assessments. Cassie is also a member of the Advisory Board for the London Regional Director and a member of the board for Oak National Academy, chairing the curriculum committee.



## Professor Rob Coe

### What makes the biggest impact on pupil outcomes?

### More about Rob

Rob Coe is Director of Research and Development at Evidence Based Education and a Senior Associate at the Education Endowment Foundation. A former secondary maths teacher, he was previously Professor of Education and Director of CEM at Durham University. Now a Visiting Professor at Loughborough University, he has contributed to key reports like The Great Teaching Toolkit and serves on advisory groups for various educational organisations.

Rob will discuss how the best available research shows that daily classroom practice has the greatest impact on student learning. He will explore which teaching strategies are most effective, how to support teachers in using them and why professional development should be a top priority for schools - but is often overlooked or done ineffectively.



## Krisha Gandhi and Caroline Leigh

### DEIB Best Practice in the South West

### More about Krisha and Caroline

Krisha Gandhi is Head of Primary and Senior Deputy Head of Campus at Ted Wragg Trust's Cranbrook Education Campus. Krisha has led a number of schools in the UK and internationally. Krisha was awarded the 2021 DIVA Magazine Diversity Champion of the Year for her work in diversifying approaches to diversifying PSHE Curricula in Central Asia.



Caroline Leigh is Assistant Headteacher at The Maynard School, Exeter and has worked as a senior leader in several schools across the South-West. Caroline has extensive knowledge and passion for ITT/ECF, leadership development, and retention and recruitment and is DEI lead in her current school.

Krisha and Caroline are co-Chairs of the SWIFT Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Partnership Group.

Caroline and Krisha's session will explore how schools and trusts in the South West are developing more inclusive learning and working environments with a focus on the pillars of Culture, Representation and Recruitment. Through exploring real life case studies in the region to sharing best practice takeaways, this session will empower attendees to take small steps in their journey to DEIB in the education sector.



# Speaker Information



## Dan Fitzpatrick

### Leadership in the Future - Educational Strategy in the AI Era

#### More about Dan

Dan is the author of the best-selling book *The AI Classroom: The Ultimate Guide to Artificial Intelligence in Education* and a regular Forbes contributor on AI in education. Recognised as a Top 30 K-12 Influencer by EdTech Magazine and winner of the Tech Champion Award, Dan has helped over 60,000 educators worldwide embrace AI.

Previously, Dan was Director for Digital Strategy at Education Partnership North East and a senior school leader. Now, he leads Thirdbox Ltd., supporting educators and businesses in leveraging AI. Dan holds an M.A. from Durham University, a PGCE from UCL, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Design Thinking & Innovation from MIT. A frequent media contributor, he has appeared on Good Morning Britain, Time Magazine, Sky News, and ITV News. His expertise and passion make him a sought-after speaker and strategist in AI and education.

Dan believes that strategy is about leadership in the future. If the only constant is change, then to earn our leadership in the future, we must adapt. The pace of AI and the emergence of unconventional competition have created an environment where the transformation of the education system is essential if it is to survive. Educational leaders are faced with a crucial decision point.

Dan will share the Three Box Solution to innovation in order to create non-linear solutions for your organisation and to develop your future leadership.



## Stephanie Hamilton

### Research around Pupil, Parent and Staff Engagement

#### More about Steph

Steph is the Director of The Engagement Platform (TEP), an organisation dedicated to enhancing school engagement to improve outcomes, culture and community relations. With over a decade of experience in education, Steph began her career as a Teacher of Science in the North East of England. She later served as Director of School Partnerships at The Brilliant Club, overseeing programmes such as The Scholars Programme, The Brilliant Tutoring Programme and Join the Dots.

At TEP, Steph leads efforts to provide schools with actionable data and insights on engagement and motivation, supporting sustainable working cultures and improved pupil outcomes.



## Professor John Jerrim and Nick Wakeling

### Improving Outcomes for High Achieving Children from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds

#### More about John and Nick

John is a Professor of Education and Social Statistics at UCL and Director of Research at ImpactEd Group. He has a long-standing focus on educational inequalities, particularly among high-achieving children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. He is currently leading a project, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, to investigate the long-term outcomes of these children. As Research Director at ImpactEd Group, John is also researching school engagement and how it changes as young people progress through school.

Nick Wakeling is the Director of Studies at Colyton Grammar School and the Director of the Colyton Foundation, a charity working with schools and universities in the South West to support high-achieving young people from under-resourced backgrounds in accessing higher education.

John and Nick will focus on the outcomes for high-achieving children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. John will present his recent research on this group, examining their school engagement and academic results, as well as their long-term outcomes in education, health, crime and the labour market.,

Nick will discuss the specific challenges faced by high-attaining disadvantaged children in the South West and will introduce the work of the Colyton Foundation, which is collaborating with schools and universities to address these regional challenges.





# Speaker Information



## Bennie Kara

### Embedding Diversity in the Curriculum

#### More about Bennie

Bennie Kara is a co-founder of Diverse Educators.

After a career of 20 years in schools as a teacher and leader, Bennie now works full-time as a speaker, trainer and consultant on the curriculum. Bennie is author of 'A Little Guide for Teachers: Diversity in Schools' and the co-editor of 'Diverse Educators: A Manifesto'.

Bennie will focus on establishing an overview of the social and moral imperative behind diversity in the curriculum, examining how diversifying the curriculum can avoid tokenism and align with current ideas in curriculum theory. She will also share practical strategies for how schools can successfully navigate process of diversifying the curriculum. There will also be insights into how to evaluate your current curriculum and sharing reviewing clear, defined and cross-phase/subject strategies that can be applied in adapting the curriculum.



## Lauren Rowles MBE

### Mental Resilience and Overcoming Adversity

#### More about Lauren

Lauren's journey began in 2012 when, at age 13, she was suddenly paralysed from the waist down due to Transverse Myelitis. Determined to become an Olympic athlete, she started her career as a wheelchair track racer aged 14, representing Great Britain internationally.

In 2015, Lauren transitioned to rowing and, within five months, won a silver medal at the World Rowing Championships, securing a spot for the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. Aged 18, Lauren won Gold at the Games and was appointed MBE for her achievements.

After three major surgeries, Lauren returned to claim her first World Championship title in 2019. Despite the COVID-19 delay, she won Gold at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics and again, at the 2024 Paris Games. Lauren was appointed OBE in 2025 for her services to rowing.



## Jessica Trahar

### Update from the DfE South West Regions Group

#### More about Jess

Jess is a Deputy Director in the South West Regions Group at the Department for Education (DfE).

Jess has oversight of the South West Team's intervention and improvement work with Local Authority areas on SEND and Children's Social Care, alongside overseeing the Department's delivery work on schools, working in partnership with schools and Multi Academy Trusts across a range of Local Authority areas in the South West.

Jess joined the Department's SW Regional Team in June 2020. Prior to which, she worked in Higher Education regulation and policy development/delivery at a national level for over 12 years, leading a range of national work, including widening participation for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and fair admissions; student mental health and safeguarding on campus; counter-terrorism and Prevent.

Jess will provide an update and overview of DfE's priorities, both nationally and specifically for the South West, including working in partnership with schools, Trusts and Local Authorities and an update on the initial rollout of RISE Teams in the South West and the next steps.



**Martin Smith**

Executive Director of SWIFT

Dear Colleague,

It is my pleasure to invite you to the SWIFT Summer Conference 2025 (#SWIFTConf25), a premier event dedicated to empowering educators, fostering innovation and driving excellence in education.

Taking place on **Thursday 19 June 2025** at the Future Skills Centre in Exeter, this conference promises to be an inspiring and enriching experience for all attendees.

This year, we are delighted to host an exceptional lineup of speakers who will share insights on some of the most pressing topics in education today. From Dan Fitzpatrick's thought-provoking session on AI's role in leadership to Lauren Rowles MBE's inspiring journey of resilience and perseverance, the Summer Conference offers invaluable learning opportunities. Additionally, experts such as Professor Rob Coe, Bennie Kara, Cassie Buchanan OBE and many more will provide key insights on leadership, diversity, pupil engagement and educational strategy.

At SWIFT, we are committed to supporting educators with access to world-class research and best practices. We recognise the unique challenges that schools face, particularly in rural and coastal communities and our conference is designed to provide practical strategies that can make a real difference in your schools.

We warmly encourage you to join us for this unmissable event.  
Secure your place today and be part of a transformative day of learning, collaboration, and inspiration.

I look forward to welcoming you to #SWIFTConf25!

Best regards,

**Martin Smith**  
Executive Director of SWIFT

#SWIFTConf25

**SWIFT Members £100 | Other Colleagues £150**

**[Book HERE](#)**



[www.sw-ift.org.uk](http://www.sw-ift.org.uk)