



Raleigh Education Trust

**Conference Programme
and Delegate Journal**

11th July 2025

Trent Conference Centre

#RETBigConversation25



Welcome

Sean Kelly - CEO, Raleigh Education Trust

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2024-25 Annual Conference—a time for reflection, celebration, and togetherness.

Togetherness is about being closely connected and united, which is why events like this hold great significance for us as a Trust. As Mother Teresa once said, "I can do things you cannot, and you can do things I cannot; together, we can do great things."

Today's schedule is filled with opportunities to embrace this spirit of collaboration. Our strong sense of unity flourishes in our schools and among our teams, and today, we have the opportunity to deepen our connections and celebrate being part of the Raleigh Education Trust.

I look forward to welcoming you all today.



Phil Willott - Director of Education, Raleigh Education Trust

Welcome to the Big Conversation 2025

Since its launch in 2021, the Big Conversation has become a cornerstone of celebration, reflection, and growth across the Raleigh Education Trust. Each year, we've proudly celebrated the collective achievements of our schools, children, and colleagues, and 2025 is no exception.

This year, we come together once again to honour the dedication, resilience, and successes of our children, families, and colleagues, and there have been plenty! The Big Conversation 2025 is a time to reflect, connect, and celebrate all we've accomplished as a community.

This year, we challenge colleagues to experience each session and every interaction through the eyes of a child. A child who deserves nothing less than the very best version of ourselves.



Beth Greville-Giddings - Learning and Development Lead, Raleigh Education Trust



Welcome to our fifth BIG Conversation!

This year we have continued to broaden our professional development offer, including the roll out of the Specialist Practitioner and Growing Leaders programmes, the former of which I had the pleasure of leading, and I look forward to repeating with a new cohort next year, along with a new suite of teaching assistant and coaching programmes as we continue to build our internal offer.

Today we have the opportunity to come together and reflect on how our professional learning can have a direct impact on pupil outcomes - whether that means academic or personal. I am delighted that, once again, we have a number of speakers from across the trust helping to facilitate sessions and I hope this will continue to promote positive professional collaboration between all our academies. Enjoy your day!

Thank you to our sponsors



Why 'The BIG Conversation'?

The title of the day reflects on common themes from each academy within the Raleigh Education Trust and the power of conversations to achieve real changes in teaching practice, improved pupil outcomes, create better solutions to problems and develop new practice. The day will encourage connection, participation and have a greater impact on learning.

The BIG Conversation Principles

- Workshops provide opportunity for **interaction**
- A **'take-away nugget'** either from speaker or self-made commitment
- **Evidence-informed** rationale - research, case study, suggested reading etc.

How will the day run?

The day will be held in-person and include a celebration of Raleigh Education Trust. There will be a choice of sessions where colleagues will be encouraged to view their professional learning 'through the eyes of the child'.

We are asking all colleagues to take some time to use the template provided and create an outline of a child - one they currently work with, have known in the past, or may know in the future. As the day goes on, please take some time to consider how what you are hearing may impact that child.

This year we have extended sessions of 75 minutes to allow for specialist input and facilitated reflection and discussion on relating your learning to your own context, role, pupils and families. To support this reflection, our programme includes a delegate journal with different templates you can use to make notes. Some facilitators may refer to these directly, or you may choose what fits you best.

Colleagues have been sent individual timetables in advance. The RET Education Support Service will facilitate follow up 'Small Talk' sessions (voluntary), in order to reflect, share, discuss, celebrate, problem solve, adjust and/or embed the practice with peers.

Evaluation and feedback

The evaluation form will allow academies to capture a record of the sessions attended by colleagues and is available here: <https://forms.gle/8xU22NbRDZwssydM8>



Structure of the day

8:15 – 8:45

Registration

11:35 - 11:45

Movement break

8:45 – 10:00

Welcome and introduction

11:45 - 13:00

Session 2

10:00 - 10:20

Break

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch

10:20 - 11:35

Session 1

14:00 - 15:30

Celebration

Through The Eyes Of A Child



No matter the role or job title we hold, all of us here today play a vital part in education. Whether that's through leadership, delivery of learning, enabling or supporting education to take place; we are all here to ensure the diverse needs of all our pupils are met and they leave us ready to take on their next challenge.

Through The Eyes Of A Child

This year, we are inviting colleagues to view their professional learning 'through the eyes of a child', and to support this we are asking you to create a profile of a child and keep this child in mind throughout the day as you hear about ideas and what they might mean in practice.

This child might be one you work with in a classroom every day, they might be the one who has a carer that regularly calls the school office, they might be the one you worked with ten years ago and you think about what might have worked differently. You may decide to think about a child you know outside of work, or a relative; and you may invent a child you are yet to meet.

It is our hope that by taking time to think of the intersectionality of needs that our children have, it will offer a lens to the day which shows how each session can be related to our different contexts.

Learning in Context

We acknowledge that in previous years, particularly for colleagues who are not regularly pupil-facing, some workshops, while engaging, may not have clearly aligned with day-to-day responsibilities. Additionally, with the summer break approaching, there is often limited opportunity to implement new ideas immediately. With this in mind, we have carefully considered the structure of the day to ensure it is both relevant and impactful for all staff.

Facilitators will be delivering longer sessions to accommodate specialist input and a space for guided discussion and reflection, where you will be able to consider how what you have learnt is relevant to your own role, and the children you work with. To support your thinking, the conference programme is combined with a reflective journal including some templates that you may wish to use to record your thoughts and think about your own practice. It is up to you how you use these.

The BIG Conversation 2025

Each year The BIG Conversation offers a space to reflect on each of our academies' development priorities; recognised both internally and through external partners, and also as a central element of the Raleigh Education Trust's values. We are once again joined by a host of experts in their fields and we are delighted that we have even more Raleigh Education Trusts facilitating sessions than before.

Since our first BIG Conversation in 2021, we have come together to explore a range of themes including communication, classroom practice, mental health and wellbeing, humour, and a focus on two of our 5 Cs - creativity and curiosity. This year we will take the opportunity to enact all 5 of the Cs - creativity, curiosity, character, challenge and confidence - in one day, reflect on the journey we have taken as a trust so far, and what is still to come.

Session 1: 10:20-11:35



Andy Spens

Flourishing Together

Andy will be exploring what it means to 'Flourish Together' by unpacking what it means to flourish in our profession. We will be looking at 10 seeds for change and reflecting on what that means for our context as we take a bold vision of the future for our staff and children.

Amanda Spruyt, Sandra Austerfield, Charlotte Tupper and Milee Lee, with Raleigh Education Trust colleagues

New Ground - Nottingham Contemporary Arts Partnership

Nottingham Contemporary and Raleigh Education Trust continue their connected project New Ground. Building on the first year of the project at Woodlands Academy and Westbury Academy. The session explores teacher development through artist-teacher collaborations to embed a creative and values focused curriculum. Projects across Denewood, Ambleside and Shape (Unity Academy) this year have explored themes of identity, belonging and connection.

Sally Boaden

Managing Your Workload: Strategies That Actually Work for You

The world of education is a fast-paced working environment. The demands on our time can often leave us feeling overwhelmed, leading to decreased productivity and negatively impacting our overall well-being. This session is designed to equip you with effective strategies for managing your workload and enhancing your productivity, even with shifting priorities and tight deadlines. Learning how to cultivate discipline with your time and implement proven techniques, you will maintain a clear focus on what truly matters. By the end of the session, you will have developed a personalised action plan tailored to your unique working style, empowering you to approach your responsibilities with confidence and efficiency.

Sarah Hepworth

Who are you beyond your role?

This wellbeing session focuses on helping develop a strong sense of identity beyond the classroom, supporting long-term mental and emotional health. Through guided discussions and reflective activities, delegates will explore their values, interests, and personal strengths outside academic achievement. The session encourages participants to recognise the importance of self-worth, hobbies, relationships, and personal goals in shaping who they are. By building a broader understanding of identity, you will be better equipped to manage stress, make meaningful life choices, and foster resilience. The session aims to empower you to prioritise your wellbeing and nurture a balanced, authentic self.

Session 1: 10:20-11:35



Kiran Satti

Building on Barbie

My chapter from Disruptive Women was the starting point for the Building on Barbie Project, focusing on three questions to close the confidence, gender pay, knowledge and diversity gap:

- If you're a 5 year old girl, what does leadership mean to you?
- Do you understand the concept?
- Do you have leadership role models?

♥ Building on Barbie is a response to Contextual Safeguarding Risks

♥ Building on Barbie is a response to internalised misogyny projected onto young girls and women by other women

♥ Building on Barbie is a response to the internalised perfectionism that hinders confidence

♥ Building on Barbie is in response to the inequitable status quo which is quietly insistent and seemingly to be strengthening.

We have to protect and educate our young girls (and boys) so they know how to navigate whatever landscape it is for them to lead their own paths - safely and equitably.

Jenny Quinn

Unlocking Potential: The Role of Sensory Processing in Pupil Behaviour and Learning

This introductory training offers an overview of how sensory processing influences pupil behaviour, attention, and learning in school settings. Participants will explore the basics of the sensory systems, learn to recognise signs of sensory challenges, and gain insight into their impact on classroom performance, along with practical strategies to support pupils effectively.

Raleigh Education Trust Literacy Network - Tom Few, Laura Martin, Elinor Page

Adaptive Teaching for Vocabulary and Grammar Development

A collaborative session led by English leads as part of the RET Literacy Network. The session will showcase strategies and toolkits being used across Trust settings to support vocabulary and grammar development through a SEND lens. It will explore the research and frameworks that underpin these approaches and share practical tools that support adaptive teaching for a wide range of pupil needs.

Harry White, Amalia Filiatris, Jake Anderson

Why Movement Matters

A collaborative presentation exploring how movement develops vital skills that underpin all learning, whilst enhancing children's self-esteem, confidence, and wellbeing. The session will cover: Movement as foundation for learning and development; Early Essential Movement Patterns - foundational development; and Fundamental Movement Patterns - core skills every child needs, through real implementation experiences from Raleigh Education Trust academies including proven strategies and practical classroom applications. Colleagues will learn how strategic movement programmes transform children's physical capabilities whilst developing crucial cognitive and emotional skills that enhance overall learning potential.



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Amy Fielder, Akos Tawiah, Lauren Townsend

The Power of Feedback!

An introduction to 'Live in the moment feedback' and how to implement this effectively across a range of subjects.

Fed up of sitting marking piles of books long after the school day has finished? If so, this session may be of interest to you. Join Amy Fielder, Akos Tawiah and Lauren Townsend to learn more about 'Live in the moment feedback' that has helped to significantly reduce workload and raise aspirations at Ambleside.

Jenny Quinn

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Andrew Morgan

Developing a Total Communication Approach

This session will examine the benefits of adopting a total communication approach. The session will look at the change journey at Woodlands and how this approach promotes wider inclusion and a sense of belonging on a whole school level as well as supporting individual pupils. Delegates will be provided with practical activities to inform mapping communication strategies to support pupil with communication needs.

Elizabeth Browne

Mental health Barriers to Education

This session will explore mental health barriers to education, focusing on how anxiety, depression, trauma, and low resilience can affect their ability to engage with school. It will highlight the emotional experience of school avoidance, the impact on learning and self-esteem, and the ripple effect on family life. Participants will gain insight into the child's perspective, learning to recognise subtle warning signs and understand how these challenges shape behaviour. The session will encourage reflection on current practice and offer approaches to better support children's emotional and educational needs.

Speakers



Jake Anderson - Ambleside Academy

Jake Anderson is a Year 4 teacher and PE lead at Ambleside Academy. He has been teaching for 3 years, and has 15 years experience in coaching athletics and martial arts.



Sandra Austerfield - Schools Programmer, Nottingham Contemporary

Sandra Austerfield is the Schools Programmer at Nottingham Contemporary, with experience in supporting artist-teacher partnerships and engaging with themes of belonging, accessibility, and creativity. She is also a Primary School teacher in Nottingham City, with a keen interest in multilingualism and Refugee Awareness Education."

Sally Boaden - Chief Finance and Operating Officer, Raleigh Education Trust

With over two decades of dedicated leadership experience in primary, secondary, and academy trusts, Sally is an established transparent and ethical leader. Her extensive background encompasses all aspects of business support services, including governance, procurement, estates management, health and safety, human resources, finance, and compliance. Sally has earned accreditation as a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) for the Department for Education (DfE) and has extensive networks including the Institute of School Business Leadership and the National Network of School Support Staff. Sally's Masters degree in Educational Leadership and Management supports her passion for operational excellence and drives her dedication to effective, efficient and purposeful learning environments for all.



X: @sboaden

LinkedIn: Sally Boaden

Speakers



Elizabeth Browne—Executive Principal - Raleigh Education Trust



Elizabeth joined the Trust in September 2022, having worked in schools/academies for 28 years in a range of roles including senior leadership, headship and at Trust level. She is a specialist in SEND, mental health, behaviour and safeguarding and has provided expertise nationally as part of a multi-academy trust.

Elizabeth is committed to improving the well-being of children and adults by delivering quality training to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace. She is an experienced Mental Health Instructor, delivering training for mental health first aid for adults and youth (MHFA England) for the past 10 years.

Tom Few - Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Raleigh Education Trust



Tom joined Raleigh Education Trust in January 2024 and has over 5 years of SEND leadership experience. Before joining the trust, Tom set up, and led, a satellite SEND provision in the heart of Derby City, which gained recognition in the local press for its aspirational teaching, particularly regarding phonics and reading experiences for all children. Tom values the importance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing in supporting connected working around best and inclusive practice.

@tfew_education

Amy Fielder



Amy Fielder is a Deputy Headteacher at Ambleside Academy. She leads on the quality of education in EYFS, Ks1 and Ks2. She is an experienced senior leader who is passionate about improving standards of education for all pupils.

She places high value on teamwork and the positive impact that this can have on the morale of a staff team and learning outcomes for pupils.

Amalia Filiantris - Year3/4 Nurture group teacher, Westbury Academy



Amalia has been teaching since 1982, having qualified as a Junior School Teacher at Johannesburg College of Education Witwatersrand University South Africa. She held positions in Senior Management, being HOD English and Maths and progressed to Principal. Worked with children from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

She joined Westbury as a part time TA at end of 2018. Westbury drew her back into full time class teaching the younger group, now the nurture group!

I am passionate about teaching and continue to learn how to adapt to meet needs of learners we teach.

Speakers



Karen Hazard - Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist and Advanced Sensory Integration Practitioner; Director, Children's Sensory Therapy Ltd

Karen Hazard is a Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist and founder of Children's Sensory Therapy Ltd (CST). Karen is an Advanced Sensory Integration Practitioner and holds further training in trauma and attachment including the Dynamic Maturational Model and The Child Attachment and Play Assessment.

Facebook: [ChildrensSensoryTherapyLtd](https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensSensoryTherapyLtd)



Sarah Hepworth- English Lead at Redwell Primary & English Champion at Nene Education Trust

Sarah is an experienced English lead who has worked in primary education for over ten years. She currently serves as an ELE at Derby Research School, where she supports schools with various areas including English and Teaching and Learning. Recently, she has focused on developing ideas around wellbeing and took part in the MTPT programme. This experience has deepened her understanding of wellbeing, both professionally and personally—as a teacher, a mother, and an individual. Sarah is passionate about creating positive, supportive environments that enable both staff and pupils to thrive academically and emotionally.



Milee Lee - Associate Artist, Nottingham Contemporary

Milee (Feng-Ru) Lee is an internationally acclaimed practicing Visual Artist and Associate Artist at Nottingham Contemporary and Lakeside Arts. Her work is often socially engaged and site-specific, with an intermedia approach that tends to incorporate different artforms, exploring her interests in current human conditions. She was awarded Taipei Prize in Taiwan in 2000 and has undertaken artist residencies in Jerusalem, Berlin, Oslo and Seoul. Lee has received various project grants and was featured in a recently published book by researcher Ming Turner: *Infinitely Ephemeral: Contemporary Women's Art in Taiwan 2003-2023*.



Ruth Lewis-Jones - Nottingham Contemporary

Ruth is a Derbyshire based freelance art educator, creative mentor and project manager who has worked in Nottingham's galleries and schools over a 36 year period. She is committed to the development of opportunities in the arts for those who have least access, and believes in the power of creativity to transform lives.

Speakers



Laura Martin - English Lead, Westbury Academy

Laura Martin is the English Lead at Westbury Academy. She has experience teaching English in KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 with six years working in SEND.



Andrew Morgan - Principal, Woodlands Academy

Andrew Morgan is Principal of Woodlands Academy. Andrew has previously worked as a science teacher with over 20 years' experience, predominantly in SEND, and is passionate about providing inclusive opportunities for SEND children.



Elinor Page - English and Maths Lead, Woodlands Academy

Elinor has over 30 years teaching experience in mainstream and specialist settings, and is a specialist in early reading, writing and communication. She is an expert in implementing and embedding effective strategies and utilising a range of professional development methods including coaching, team teaching and collaboration across teams. Elinor is a Raleigh Education Trust Specialist Practitioner, with a specialism in early literacy.



Jenny Quinn - Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist, Children's Sensory Therapy Ltd

Jenny Quinn is the Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist for Children's Sensory Therapy Ltd. She holds an MSc in Sensory Integration and further training in trauma and attachment including the Dynamic Maturational Model and The Child Attachment and Play Assessment.

Facebook: [ChildrensSensoryTherapyLtd](#)

Speakers



Kiran Satti - Deputy Principal, Oasis Community Learning



Kiran is an experienced primary teacher and leader, specialising in Reading and Literacy. Kiran has written several chapters for different Edu books, including Reimagining fairy tales for The DiverseEd manifesto and Reader Volition in the Reading Teachers book - Nurturing Reading for Pleasure. She is the 2023 UKLA Farshore Double Award Winner – Reading Champion and Author’s Choice Award, where her pioneering work on pupil voice, choice and DEI was celebrated. Kiran is currently Deputy Principal, leading Literacy, Safeguarding and oversees Teaching and Learning in EYS/KS1 - as well as National Lead Practitioner for Reading. She is passionate about advocating and diversifying the representation of intersectional lived experiences through reading and literacy.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kiran-s-0b886538>



Andy Spens - Head of Professional Learning, National Society for Education

Andy Spens is the Head of Professional Learning at the National Society for Education (NSE). His is based in Bristol, where his experience has been in primary teaching and leading. He has been a primary Headteacher and most recently an Executive Leader. Andy is responsible for teacher development and leadership development programmes at the NSE, including the NPQs and Flourishing Leader and Flourishing Teacher programmes



Amanda Spruyt - Head of Learning, Nottingham Contemporary

With her team of programmers and artists, Amanda works across the city with a focus on partnerships and growing projects together. Before that Amanda worked in schools and in neighbourhoods supporting children's voices in local decision-making.

www.nottinghamcontemporary.org



Akos Tawiah - Ambleside Academy

Akos has been teaching for 12 years, with six years at Ambleside Academy, and experience across KS1 and 2. Akos is currently a Year 2 class teacher & Maths Lead at Ambleside Academy



Lauren Townsend - Ambleside Academy

Lauren Townsend has taught at Ambleside Academy for nearly 8 years, teaching mainly in Year 2 and, more recently, in Year 6. She leads on Reading and Writing across the school and is a local authority moderator for Writing for the city council.



Charlotte Tupper - Associate Artist, Nottingham Contemporary

Charlotte Tupper is a multidisciplinary artist with a specialism in Textiles and a practice rooted in place making and participation. She coordinates projects shaped by community exchange, social connections and a collaboration of ideas. She is interested in the value of knowledge exchange within workshop settings and the relics and legacies we choose to leave behind

Harry White - Director - Aim Strong Sport



Harry White is Director and Physical Literacy Specialist, and Founder of Aim Strong Sport (UK) and High Performance Global (UAE), where he serves as SAQ Director of Education & Master Trainer. A University of Leicester graduate with extensive experience in education management and sports coaching, Harry specialises in designing programmes that equip teachers, coaches, and parents with skills to deliver high-quality physical literacy training. His mission is to positively impact one million children over three years by bridging gaps in physical education and addressing challenges like rising screen time and mental health struggles through innovative movement programmes that build healthier futures.

Instagram: @aimstrongsport
<https://aimstrongsport.com/>

Reflections - Adapted Cornell Notes



Session 1

Questions

Notes/ key thoughts

Actions

Reflections - Adapted Cornell Notes



Session 2

Questions

Notes/ key thoughts

Links to session 1

Actions

Reflections - Visualisation



Session 1

Where are you now?

Where would you like to be?

LOW

HIGH

What do you already do?

How could you be more effective?

Reflections - Visualisation



Session 2

Where are you now?

Where would you like to be?

LOW



HIGH

What do you already do?

How could you be more effective?

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Reflections - SWOT Analysis



Session 1

Strengths

(what it allows me to do)

Weaknesses

(what it doesn't allow me to do)

Opportunities

(How that might help me)

Threats

(How that might hinder me)

Session 2

Strengths

(what it allows me to do)

Weaknesses

(what it doesn't allow me to do)

Opportunities

(How that might help me)

Threats

(How that might hinder me)

Reflections - Whole-day



Session 1

Session 2

Whole Day

Notes

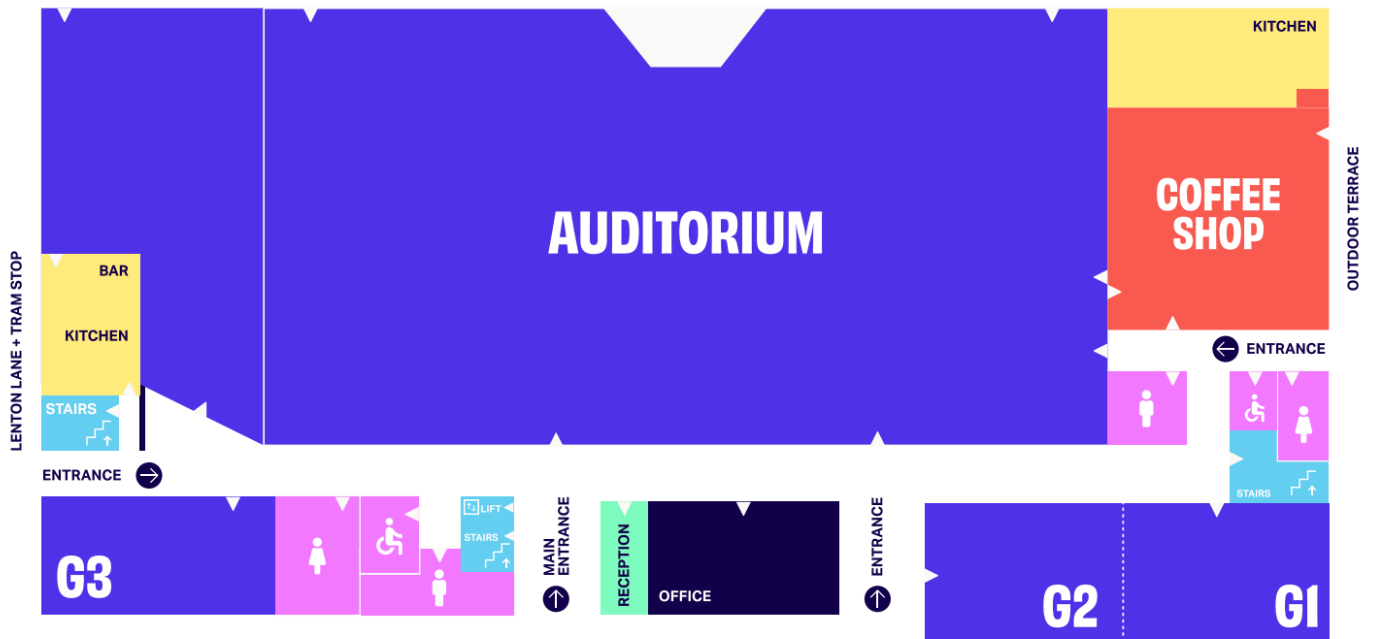


A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for taking notes.

Floorplan

Ground Floor, Warehouse

G



First Floor, Warehouse

F

