



Department of
Education
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Transform**ED**

ONE YEAR ON |
BUILDING ON SUCCESS



SCHOOL LEADERS' CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 14 MAY 26
9:30am–3pm



Programme

- 08:30–09:20 **Registration**
- 09:30–09:35 **Welcome and opening**
David Malcolm, Permanent Secretary, Department of Education
- 09:35–09:50 **TransformED – One Year On**
Minister of Education Mr Paul Givan MLA
- 09:50–10:40 **How knowledge and skills work together**
Daniel T. Willingham
- 10:40–11.00 **Questions and answers**
- 11:00–11:30 **Break**
- 11:30–12:00 **The evidence informed school**
Carl Hendrick
- 12:00–12:20 **Panel discussion and questions**
Supporting teaching and learning in the classroom
Carl Hendrick, Christine Counsell, Tim Oates and Harold Hislop
- 12:20–13:20 **Lunch**
- 13:20–13:35 **The opportunity of a new curriculum**
Noeleen Tiffney
- 13:35–13:50 **Bringing the curriculum to life with effective teaching**
Alistair Hamill
- 13:50–14:05 **What the new assessment model will provide**
Garry Matthewson
- 14:05–14:20 **Panel discussion**
Dr Suzanne Kingon, Hardip Begol, Noeleen Tiffney, Alistair Hamill
and Garry Matthewson
- 14:20–14:50 **Evidence informed curricula – what it means
for ambition and equity**
Lucy Crehan
- 14:50–15:00 **Closing remarks**
Dr Keir Bloomer

Meet our guest speakers



PAUL GIVAN MLA

Paul Givan MLA was appointed Minister for the Department of Education in Northern Ireland in February 2024. Since taking office, he has prioritised transforming teaching and learning through an ambitious programme of reform, focusing on curriculum development, modernising assessment, reviewing qualifications, driving school improvement and tackling educational disadvantage. His leadership is centred on raising standards, widening opportunity, and ensuring every child and young person regardless of their background enjoys a truly world-class education.



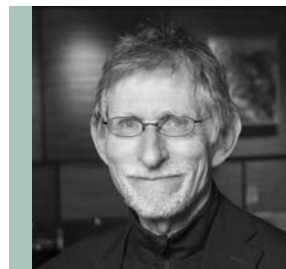
DANIEL T. WILLINGHAM

Daniel T. Willingham is a cognitive psychologist and internationally respected authority on the application of learning science to education. He is Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia and the author of the highly influential book 'Why Don't Students Like School?', along with several other bestselling titles for educators. Daniel's work focuses on how memory, attention, and motivation influence learning, and how research evidence can be translated into practical classroom strategies. Known for his clear, engaging style, he bridges the gap between cognitive science and everyday teaching practice.



CARL HENDRICK

Carl Hendrick is an internationally recognised expert in the science of learning and evidence informed teaching. A former secondary English teacher, he is Professor of Evidence Informed Learning and Teaching at Academica University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam. Carl is coauthor of 'What Does This Look Like in the Classroom?', 'How Learning Happens', and 'How Teaching Happens', which bridge cognitive science and classroom practice. He works with school systems and governments worldwide and is a sought after speaker on curriculum, instruction, and effective professional development.



TIM OATES

Tim Oates CBE is one of the UK's leading experts on curriculum, assessment, and international education systems. He is a Fellow of Churchill College, University of Cambridge, and former Group Director of Assessment, Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment (Cambridge University and Assessment), where he led national and international research on assessment and measurement for nearly two decades. He has advised governments and organisations worldwide on curriculum coherence, textbooks, assessment systems, and education policy, and was awarded a CBE for services to education.



LUCY CREHAN

Lucy Crehan is an international education consultant, author, and former secondary science teacher. She is best known for 'Cleverlands: The Secrets Behind the Success of the World's Education Superpowers', named one of The Economist's Books of the Year. Lucy specialises in comparative education systems, curriculum, and policy, drawing on ethnographic research across high-performing jurisdictions. She works with governments and NGOs worldwide, is International Director of the Centre for Education Systems, Associate Advisor for Curriculum at Swansea University, and teaches on a Master's programme at the University of Buckingham.



DR HAROLD HISLOP

Dr Harold Hislop is Adjunct Professor at Dublin City University's Institute of Education and Chair of the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). Formerly Chief Inspector at Ireland's Department of Education (2010–2022), he led major reforms in inspection, self evaluation and early learning and care. He has also worked with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and as a teacher, school principal and lecturer at Trinity College Dublin.



CHRISTINE COUNSELL

Christine Counsell OBE began her career teaching in state secondary schools before becoming a local authority adviser in Gloucestershire. She later served as a senior leader in a Bristol secondary school. Christine then spent 19 years as Senior Lecturer at the University of Cambridge, where she led the history PGCE course. Her pioneering work in historical writing, curriculum design and teacher training has earned her wide recognition and multiple awards.



NOELEEN TIFFNEY

Noeleen Tiffany is Principal of St Catherine's College, Armagh, where she leads a large post primary school recognised for strong academic outcomes, inclusion, and pupil wellbeing. She is a member of the Northern Ireland Curriculum Taskforce Advisory Committee, contributing classroominformed expertise to systemwide curriculum reform. Noeleen brings extensive experience in school leadership, curriculum implementation, and wholechild education.



GARRY MATTHEWSON

Garry Matthewson is an experienced educational leader and adviser, and former long-serving primary school principal in Londonderry. He is Chair of the Northern Ireland Nurture Group Network and a panel member of Northern Ireland's Independent Review of Statutory Assessment. His work focuses on inclusive practice, assessment reform, and system improvement.



ALISTAIR HAMILL

Alistair Hamill is Head of Geography and Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning at Lurgan College, Northern Ireland. He promotes cross-community education through Shared Education and integrates GIS into classroom practice. Awarded the UK Edtech Top 50 (2020), RGS Ordnance Survey Award (2022), and GA Awards (2024, 2025), he has presented for RGS, GA, and Esri. He leads curriculum projects for CCEA, including sustainability, and advocates for subject-rich, powerful knowledge and ambitious curricula that endure beyond schooling.



HARDIP BEGOL

Hardip Begol CBE was the former Director for Assessment, Curriculum, Qualifications and Accountability from 2012 to 2014 at the Department for Education (DfE). He was responsible for major reforms to the National Curriculum in England, GCSEs and A-levels, and school accountability. He is currently a Board member at Ofqual and Oak National Academy, a trustee of the Education Policy Institute, and a member of Eden Academy Trust.



Dr KEIR BLOOMER

Dr Keir Bloomer was Chairperson of the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland. He is Chair of Reform Scotland's Commission on School Reform. He was previously Chair of the Education Committee of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (Scotland's National academy) and the Scottish Book Trust and was Director of Education and later Chief Executive of Clackmannanshire Council, a post from which he retired in May 2007.

Important information

As we are expecting a large number to be in attendance at the conference we would ask that all delegates take note of the following important information to ensure that the event runs as smoothly as possible.

The programme provides details on the speakers, topics and expected timings – the conference will commence at **9.30am** and conclude by **3pm**.

Each session features experts who will offer insights on key themes in education and will allow time for question and answers. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions during the panel discussions.

LOCATION

The **Tullyglass Hotel** is located at **178 Galgorm Road, Ballymena BT42 1HJ**.

PARKING

Complimentary on-site parking is available for 400 vehicles at the **Tullyglass Hotel**. Additional overflow parking is provided at **County Hall**, which is just across the road.

Please factor in time on the day for parking and consider car sharing or public transport if possible.

REGISTRATION

Registration will be available from **8.30am**, with tea and coffee served on arrival. The conference will start at **9.30am**.

LUNCH

A variety of items will be available to suit all tastes with options for vegetarian, gluten free and other common dietary needs.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Please be advised that the speakers in the main room are being filmed and photography will be taking place for promotional purposes. Photographs may appear in the TransformED newsletter or on the Department's website and social media.

CONTACT US

If you've any questions feel free to contact us at:
transformED@education-ni.gov.uk

