

Local School Trusts Unite for an Inspiring 'Leading an Inclusive Culture' Conference at QE School, Wimborne



Pictured from left to right: Esther Curry, Jane Cottee, Jon Chapple, Laura Howieson and Alice Brown

Five local Multi Academy Trusts have come together to host an inspiring education conference with one shared goal: further strengthening the culture of inclusion across their schools.

Alice Brown from SAST, Esther Curry from Coastal Learning Partnership, Jane Cottee from Castleman Academy Trust, Jon Chapple from Twynham Learning and Laura Howieson from Initio Learning Trust organised the conference, believed to be the first where local trusts have come together in such a collaborative way, as an opportunity for leaders to come together and think about how they can strengthen inclusion across their settings.

The event welcomed around 140 visitors, representing more than 70 schools and over 27,000 pupils across Dorset and neighbouring local authorities. Throughout the day, attendees heard from a range of inspirational speakers, including keynote speakers: Shaun Brown from The Difference, Laura Page from Schools Supported as well as Alice Brown from SAST and Laura Howieson from Initio Learning trust who all spoke passionately about the importance of 'mattering', how to ensure that pupils are integrated into schools and that schools should reflect and represent the communities they serve.

In addition to keynote speeches, the conference featured workshops from Dr Clare Anderson, Senior EP for North Dorset, Tricia Nicoll from Gloriously Ordinary Lives, Kate Tuck from Linwood School, Ian Hunkin from South Central Teaching School Hub, Ellise Hollie Haywood, motivational speaker, Marianne Selby-Boothroyd, consultant, Irene Ogunseitun from The Difference and Ben Bryant from Isos Partnership on topics such as the importance of being 'ordinary', how to embed a relational approach, using internal appropriate provision, how to solve a problem like the SEND system and creating inclusive school environments. As well as workshops, there were roundtable sessions where participants heard from colleagues across the trusts on key topics, including how to work in a multi-agency way, creating a behaviour curriculum and the pitfalls and successes of setting up bespoke provision.

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive:

"To have so many leaders, speakers and colleagues share good practice, insights and research with the time to reflect and refocus our passion to ensure inclusion is for all was inspiring. To have the headspace to shape and firm plans for 25/26 was a gift."

"This conference has supported me in multiple ways, including reminding staff of simple messages such as 'relationships' and 'inclusion for all'. Thank you SO MUCH to everyone involved in this empowering conference!"

"The conference content was uplifting, motivating and interesting."

"Enjoyable and thought-provoking."

"Just want to say what a brilliant day it was."

"I found the day inspirational."

The organisers shared, ***'This event marked a significant step forward in our shared commitment to fostering truly inclusive learning environments. We're excited to see the ideas and energy from this day ripple across our schools in the year ahead'***.

