



ONE-DAY ACADEMIC CONFERENCE >>>>

TRANSFORMING TRADITION

How can schools adapt & innovate to thrive in the future?

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2025

9.45AM - 5PM

FOR EDUCATION LEADERS, TEACHERS, CONSULTANTS,
MARKETING & ADMISSIONS PROFESSIONALS

In partnership with:

REDWOOD
COLLECTIONS

BREAK OUT SESSION 1

11.30am-12.20pm

ALASTAIR CHIRNSIDE Warden of St Edward's, Oxford

Curriculum Matters: preparing pupils for the 21st century

As the Government carries out a major curriculum review, the first since the introduction of the current National Curriculum in 2014, and as independent schools start to make more of their independence by supplementing or even abandoning GCSEs, Alastair Chirnside will explain how recent curriculum reform at St Edward's, Oxford, could serve as a paradigm in a national context. He will consider how a school's curriculum can and should instil in young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes which they will need for future study and for their working lives, reflecting along the way on the importance of guarding against exclusivity and separateness in the independent sector.

CHLOE COMBI Best-Selling Author, Speaker, Researcher, Futurist & Consultant

A look into Gen A and Gen Z's future: their challenges, opportunities and mindset

In the leadup to the publication of her book on Gen-A, Chloe has been looking towards the next ten years and asking: what is in store for the two youngest generations? Looking at the future of work, culture and society, Chloe's session will reflect on her research and share what challenges young people (ages 8-22) face but how to best prepare for the changes coming in school, higher education, work culture, the online world and wider society in general – with the underlying question of how we can prepare young people, but also how can we make things better? How can we future-proof in uncertain times?



FIONNUALA KENNEDY Head of Wimbledon High School

Building challenging and innovative partnerships

In an increasingly solipsistic and individualised society, it is more important than ever for our educational offerings to include meaningful and challenging partnership opportunities for our students. Come and hear about the groundbreaking work Wimbledon High School GDST is engaged in with the women's prison HMP Downview, as we work alongside them to better outcomes for *all* girls and women, even those considered less worthy or deserving. What are the benefits and challenges? And, in a post-VAT world, how do we engage parents with the genuine need for this work in our schools?

Downview is just one part of **Advocating Girls**, which began as a shared campaign between three independent sector schools and their partners in the maintained sector. We need a justice system that understands and defends the interests of girls and women as part of meaningful equality, and our goal is to bring together school students and professionals to work towards that end.

CATRIONA SUTHERLAND-HAWES Admissions & Schools Consultant, Oppidan
Education / RSAcademics

Responding to changing parent priorities

In my 20+ years of being at the forefront of admissions I have seen parental expectations and priorities change so much – more than ever in the last few years with the cost of independent education rising, post pandemic issues and the pressures of social media on children.

Schools – and particularly admissions and marketing teams – need to be ready to respond. In this session we will seek to explore the challenges and offer solutions. Among others, key questions we will cover are:

- How have parental expectations changed and what are the implications?
- What do today's parents value?
- What knowledge, tools and support do we need to help meet these changing needs?

BREAK OUT SESSION 2

2.00pm – 2.50pm

JANE BASNETT Director of Digital Learning at Downe House

AI: taking education in a new direction

AI is not simply a tool to bolt onto existing practice — it offers critical opportunity for rethinking how we teach, what we value, and how we prepare students for a rapidly evolving world. In this session, we will explore how educators and leaders can harness AI to enhance pedagogy, deepen personalisation, and reimagine the teacher-learner relationship. Grounded in real-world examples, recent student voice data, and practical strategies for implementation, the talk offers both inspiration and actionable pathways for taking education in a new direction.

JONATHAN MITCHELL Deputy Director of Future Skills and Innovation at IfATE

Pathways with purpose: choosing between apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships) and full-time university

Young people in England can now select from technical and academic pathways of equal standing to meet their unique priorities when they leave school – including degree apprenticeships. Skills England's Jonathan Mitchell will demystify apprenticeships and how they work to provide a blend of workplace experience with off-the-job training, help learners internalise capabilities through authentic practice, build reciprocal loyalty between apprentice and employer, and set people up for great careers.

WILL ORR-EWING & ED RICHARDSON

Director and Managing Director of Keystone Tutors

Radical traditionalism: how schools can innovate and thrive

Will and Ed will argue that, during a time of significant change in both our relationship with technology and the education sector more broadly, schools cannot depend solely on tradition to guide them. Rather, schools should think carefully about how technology – and the challenges and opportunities it presents – relates to their core mission. To explore this, Will and Ed will focus on two current issues: smartphones and online curriculum delivery. They will discuss the risks and possibilities presented by these tools, and will seek to help delegates develop a dynamic, fully-considered, and appropriate approach to using digital technology within their schools.

Tough decisions: thriving under pressure

When Paul joined Brighton College in 2009, it was generating a surplus of £1m and had 50 years of underinvestment in infrastructure.

In the last 16 years, the College has been transformed – academically, financially, infrastructurally and internationally. Paul has overseen much of the last three of these with annual surpluses now at £10m and investment of £140m in 10 new facilities. When Paul joined, the College had two Prep Schools in the UK: it now has four Prep Schools in the UK, three schools in the UAE and schools in Singapore, Bangkok and Hanoi with other schools in the pipeline.

Paul is also one of three founder members of and is Chair of Finance for London Academy of Excellence – a free sixth form whose admissions criteria is weighted towards children from deprived backgrounds that over the last ten years has transformed the life of thousands of children from Stratford and Tower Hamlets.

Paul will explain how to improve school finances but he is equally happy to share tradecraft on how to plan and develop facilities, the internationalisation of schools, public benefit and opportunities for teachers looking to broaden their horizons.