

Programme and Abstracts for 2025 – pending finalisation

Friday 21st November

From 10-00	Arrival and registration.
13-00	Lunch
14-00-14-05	Opening remarks – Martin Smilnak and Dr Simon Uttley, Executive Co-Chairs and founders.
14-05 – 14-45	Shingi Hopkins and Sue Matthews- Embracing Uncertainty
14-50 – 15-40	The ‘Andrew Lockington’ Lecture: Maria Budzynska - Curriculum 2035: Reimagining Key Stage 3 to empower socially disadvantaged learners for a Human-AI Future
15-40 – 16-00	Refreshments
16-00 – 16-45	Professor Jacek Brant-‘Teaching with values; leading with values’.
16-50 – 17-35	Dr Olha Matychuk
19 – 15	Drinks reception followed by dinner and networking

Saturday 22nd November

9-00 – 9-50	Tash Coccia and Nicky Hardy - ‘Creating Spaces Where Neurodiverse Learners Flourish: The UK’s First ADHD-Focused Learning Lab’
9-50 – 10-45	Brian Grady ‘Teaching for the Best Start in Life’
10-45 -11-00	Refreshments
11-00 – 12-00	Professor David Oswell- ‘Cultivating Future Creative Talent in a World of Uncertainty’

Abstracts

Maria Budzynska

Curriculum 2035: Reimagining Key Stage 3 to empower socially disadvantaged learners for a Human-AI Future

In the face of exponential technological advancement and intensifying social inequality, schools are uniquely placed to prepare young people not just for a job market shaped by artificial intelligence, but for lives of ethical agency, emotional intelligence and social

responsibility. This paper explores a strategic curriculum redesign at Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) in a Salesian secondary school in inner London, where over 70% of students face socio-economic disadvantage. Anchored in the Salesian principle that young people must be “loved and know they are loved,” the proposed Curriculum 2035 framework places human dignity, character formation and future-readiness at the heart of schooling.

Drawing on secondary research, leadership theory, and Catholic social teaching, the project outlines a values-led, interdisciplinary curriculum architecture. It weaves together digital fluency, ethical literacy, powerful knowledge, and Salesian virtues to empower students for the complexities of a human-AI world. Particular attention is given to the cultivation of essential human skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and resilience, alongside emerging AI competencies. Leadership approaches such as servant and distributed leadership are examined as enablers of sustainable and inclusive reform.

This practice-focused case contributes to wider conversations about how schools can form the whole person while preparing students for rapid technological and societal change. It makes the case that a future-facing curriculum must not only respond to external demands but also draw from internal values and community identity. In doing so, it offers a hopeful vision for Catholic education and the role of schools in nurturing both capability and conscience in a time of uncertainty.

Shingi Hopkins and Sue Matthews
‘Embracing Uncertainty’

Whilst, for some, change is exciting, motivating and provokes curiosity, for others it creates anxiety and fear of what the future will bring and how to respond. How best can we prepare our children for the challenge of the constantly changing environment in which we live?

Join Sue and Shingi in this exploration into key strategies that we, as educators, can effectively employ to level the playing field such that most (if not all) have the best chance to achieve and succeed.

Tash Coccia and Nicky Hardy
‘Creating Spaces Where Neurodiverse Learners Flourish: The UK’s First ADHD-Focused Learning Lab’

With the global increase in diagnoses of ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other forms of neurodiversity, schools are facing new challenges — and new opportunities — in how they support learners. At Leighton Park School, over 50% of our current Year 7 intake are neurodiverse, including students with ADHD, ASD, and dyslexia.

In response, we have pioneered what we believe to be the UK’s first ADHD Focus Lab: a purpose-built, inclusive learning environment designed to meet the sensory, emotional, and cognitive needs of neurodiverse students, while benefiting all learners. Designed in partnership with Envoplan, the lab features a flexible layout with varied-height workstations, quiet and sensory booths, biophilic design elements such as plants and a moss

wall, and acoustic wall pendants to minimise auditory overstimulation. Specialist lighting supports focus and sensory regulation.

A standout feature of the space is the installation of video analysis technology — not for student surveillance, but to support staff continuing professional development (CPD). Footage is used to enhance teaching practice and promote a consistent, inclusive pedagogical approach for SEND students across the school.

As a qualified ADHD coach, Tash Coccia integrates targeted strategies into both curriculum and coaching. While the lab is newly launched, early indicators show improved engagement and reduced dysregulation.

This keynote will share our journey — from diagnosis data to design, pedagogy, and professional development — in building a learning space where neurodiverse students truly thrive.

David Oswell

‘Cultivating Future Creative Talent in a World of Uncertainty’

As educators we work with peoples’ subjectivities. Cultivating talent means addressing the integrity of the person. But as educational leaders we have to consider creative talent in terms of longer term societal needs. To educate, not simply for the creative capabilities needed now, but for creative capabilities for the future we have to consider the long term. We have to think strategically. We have to broaden our horizons. We can’t control the future but we can think, in terms of the information we have of where we are now and consider a range of probabilities of future risk and opportunity.

This talk considers these strategic horizons in terms of the current crisis of legitimacy of the global rules-based order and in the context of two longer term projections from two ‘big tech’ leaders, Peter Thiel and Alex Karp.

Professor Jacek Brant

‘Teaching with values, leading with values’

What is the purpose of education? There isn't one purpose of education, but many. In various parts of the world and over the centuries, schooling has been subject to different demands and expectations. One is to meet the needs of the economy so that school leavers can join the workforce as employees, managers and entrepreneurs. Schools are also expected to prepare students to pass high stake assessments such as the maturita skúška. Schools are also expected to help children learn through enquiry and to learn how to learn. Education is complex, and the demands of schooling compete against each other. What perhaps is missing from educational discourses is the importance of values in teaching, and in leading learning. My talk will explore the idea of teacher-leadership, exploring leadership within and beyond the classroom. It is my argument that teaching and leadership are inseparable.

Brian Grady

‘Teaching for the Best Start in Life’

This session will consider the international evidence and research on how children can have the best start in life. We will explore how the British Government education system is seeking to apply this research to support schools and educators.

We will explore how educators can apply approaches within their education setting with their pupils, to help pupils in their readiness for learning. The session will invite participants to “think child think family then think community” both in and outside of the classroom to help children be happy, safe and thriving learners.