

School: A place where I belong

THE HFL DISADVANTAGE CONFERENCE.

Tuesday 28th January 2025 - 8:45am – 4:30pm

A one day online conference for school leaders, EDI leads, Pupil Premium leads, and governors from any school or setting in the UK.

With a keynote from
Fatima Whitbread

HFL



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Time	Details	Location
8:30 – 8:45am	Conference registration Pre-recorded 'how to' and navigation	
8:45 – 9:00am	Welcome from Rachel Macfarlane , Lead Adviser for Underserved Learners, HFL Education	
9:00 – 9:45am	Fatima's Story , Fatima Whitbread, MBE <i>Introduced by Joanna Di Bella, District School Effectiveness Adviser, HFL Education</i> Talk and Q & A Fatima will talk about her rise to success as an Olympic medallist and the trials and tribulations as she reached her goal. In addition, she will discuss her TV career from I'm a Celebrity to her more recent documentary. She will talk about her work/that of her charity to support children in care and from underserved backgrounds.	Main Stage
9:45 – 10:00am	Break	
10:00 – 11:30am	Embracing equity in education , Lee Elliot Major, OBE FAcSS <i>Introduced by Jennie Ferguson, District Early Years Adviser, HFL Education</i> In his talk, Lee will highlight practical strategies to level the playing field in education. Lee's book 'Equity in Education' set outs a new approach to schooling which strives to make classrooms genuinely inclusive, while addressing some of the key impediments to learning outside the school gates. Lee Elliot Major argues that we need to ditch deficit mindsets to tackle persistent school achievement divides. This includes replacing unhelpful labels such as 'disadvantaged pupils', removing social class biases and barriers in the classroom and renewing relationships with pupils and parents.	Main stage
11:30 – 11:40am	Break	
11:40am – 12:10pm	Panel discussion: Wendy Wing, Headteacher of Cuffley School; Tracy Gaiteri, Headteacher of Wormley Primary	Main stage

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	School; Justine McDonald, Secondary School Effectiveness Adviser, HFL Education; and Tim Spencer, Headteacher of Fearnhill School. Chaired by Rachel Macfarlane, HFL Education.	
12:10 – 1:00pm	Lunch Break	
1:00 – 1:15pm	Making School Unmissable , introduced by Rachel Macfarlane and Paul Jenkins, Head of Secondary Curriculum Services, HFL Education.	
1:15 – 1:45pm	<p>Spotlights on making school unmissable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Early Years Unmissable, led by Jennie Ferguson, Early Years Adviser & Nicki Waller, District Early Years Adviser, HFL Education. <p>We want Early Years to be irresistible to all children: filled with discovery, exploration, and joy. Join us in a spotlights session where we will share practical strategies to engage all learners including multi-lingual learners, children from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities and the youngest children in schools, our 2-year-olds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Primary School Unmissable, led by Joanna Di Bella, HFL Education; with Claire Gibbs, Headteacher of Margaret Wix Primary School; and Mairead Waugh, Headteacher at St Philip Howard Catholic Primary School. <p>For every child and every day – school should be worth getting out of bed for! Our primary spotlight session will focus on the ways in which school leaders can and have taken actions, working with children and parents, to improve attendance to school and engagement in learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Secondary School Unmissable, led by Fiona Tobin, Secondary Schools Effectiveness Adviser (mainstream & special), HFL Education. <p>Leaders featured in our secondary spotlight are making their school unmissable, especially for students facing financial disadvantage. They will share practical strategies for addressing relationship building, race equity and mental health, that can be applied in any school or setting, to raise attendance rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Special School Unmissable, led by Becky Cox, Senior Secondary School Effectiveness Adviser, HFL Education. <p>Join us for an inspiring spotlight on how a primary special school has revolutionised its approach to attendance, through fostering high expectations and a culture where every child feels valued and eager to be part of the school</p>	Main stage/ Spotlights

	community. This session offers practical strategies that show how creativity, relationship-building, and inclusivity can empower schools of all types and phases.	
1:45 – 1:55pm	Break	
1:55 – 2:40pm	<p>Supporting refugee children in school, Catherine Gladwell, Refugee Education UK's Chief Executive and Schools Project Manager</p> <p><i>Introduced by Natalie Fogden, SEND Adviser, HFL Education</i></p> <p>Catherine's session will address the common challenges refugee children face in the classroom, and the evidence and practice informed strategies school leaders and teachers can adopt to support refugee children to thrive. REUK is the UK's leading refugee education charity, supporting several thousand refugee children through their frontline work each year, as well as carrying out training, strategy and research in partnership with schools, local authorities and UN agencies.</p>	Main stage
2:40 – 2:50pm	Break	
2:50 – 3:50pm	<p>Belonging in School: why exclusion is the end of belonging, Tier Blundell, Founder of Excluded from School</p> <p><i>Introduced by Rachel Macfarlane</i></p> <p>Talk and Q & A</p> <p>Tier will talk about the conditions which enable children to 'belong' in school and class. Speaking from personal experience, he will reflect on the ways in which exclusion damages a sense of belonging for life. His talk will contain contextual, functional and psychological examples as well as lived experience.</p>	Main stage
3:50 – 3:55pm	Break	
3:55 – 4:25pm	<p>Panel discussion: Wendy Wing, Headteacher of Cuffley School; Tracy Gaiteri, Headteacher of Wormley Primary; Justine McDonald, HFL Education; Tim Spencer, Headteacher of Fearnhill School; with Rachel Macfarlane, HFL Education.</p>	Main stage
4:25 – 4:30pm	Closing words from Rachel Macfarlane , HFL Education	