



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**COMMUNITIES
AND PLACE**

**South Belfast Primary Schools
Partnership Conference
2025**

Tuesday, 26th August | 9:30 AM to 3:00PM
Queen's University Belfast



Inclusion as Collective Praxis: Reimagining School and Community Relationships

This year our focus is on inclusion. Schools are working hard to respond to increasing demands around SEN, newcomer education, equity, and disadvantage, and the partnership's schools continue to play a leading role in this work. The programme you'll find here has been designed in collaboration with QCAP and colleagues from across Ireland, North and South. It offers a mix of tailored training, opportunities to share practice, and space to reflect on the year ahead. We hope the day gives you the chance to learn with others, connect across schools, and enjoy being part of a wider community of staff who are committed to supporting children and families across South Belfast.

Participating Schools





9.30-10.00am **Arrival and Registration** *Whitla Hall*

10.05-10.20am **QUB Welcome** *Whitla Hall*

Alistair Stewart

Director of Civic Engagement and Strategic Communications

10.35-11.30am **Breakout Session Block 1**

1. Inclusive Classrooms	Ruth Guildea	Peter Froggatt Centre 0G/024
2. Supporting Newcomer Pupils	Rebecca Loader, Sultan Turkan, Joy Johnston, Gillian McDowell, Julie-Ann Findlay.	PFC 02/018
3. Inclusive Numeracy	Julie Hamilton	PFC 02/026
4. Inclusive Literacy	Geraldine Magennis-Clarke	6 College Park 0G/026
5. Collaborative Planning	Self-Directed	PFC 02/025

11.30am – 12.00pm **- BREAK-**



12.00 -1.00pm Breakout Session Block 2

1. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing	Bill Dodds	Peter Froggatt Centre 02/026
2. Leaderships for Inclusion	Jonathan Gray	PFC 02/018
3. Inclusive Physical Activity	Daniel Tindall	PFC 0G/024
4. Universal Design for Learning	Rachel Ferguson	6 College Park 0G/026
5. Collaborative Planning	Self- Directed	PFC 02/025

1.00 – 2.00pm - LUNCH- *South Dining Hall and Great Hall*

2.05 – 2.50pm Keynote Adress *Whitla Hall*

Professor Martin Scanlan

Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College

2.55 – 3pm Principals Group Closing remarks and reflection

Ros Corbett

Finaghy PS



Keynote Speaker

Professor Martin Scanlan

Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College



Martin's research and teaching focus on inclusive service delivery, with particular attention to how school leaders can expand learning opportunities for marginalised students, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and students with special needs. His work also explores the intersectionality of diversity and place-based educational reform, examining the organisational routines, practices, policies, and procedures that shape schools' capacity to serve diverse student populations effectively across Catholic and public-school sectors.

Before entering higher education, Professor Scanlan spent more than a decade as a teacher and administrator in urban elementary and middle schools in Washington, D.C., Berkeley, CA, and Madison, WI. He currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Professional Capital and Community.

Social Media

*Follow QCAP on X (twitter) and share today's event using our conference hashtag **#InclusiveSouthBelfast25***



Facilitator Bios

Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke

Senior lecturer, Literacy and Education, St. Mary's University College.



Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke is a senior lecturer in Literacy and Education at St. Mary's University College, Belfast. Her research interests focus particularly on the teaching of reading in the early years and children's literature. She works closely with schools in translating the current educational research base into practice. More broadly, she is interested in comparative approaches to education, including those systems within the UK/ROI and the United States of America. Most recently (2017-2019), she fulfilled a Visiting Professorship role, teaching Elementary Literacy in the Education Department at Valparaiso University in Indiana, USA. She is the founder of the Science of Reading, Northern Ireland (SoRNI) online group as well as being a member of the Literacy Association of Ireland (LAI). In the academic year 2025-2026 she will take up a seconded position with the Department of Education for Northern Ireland as literacy advisor on the new Literacy Strategy.



Julie Hamilton

Senior Lecturer in Mathematics, St. Mary's College

Julie Hamilton is a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics at St Mary's College, where she teaches on the BEd and MEd programmes. Before moving to the College, she taught in a number of schools in England and



Northern Ireland. She loves teaching maths and numeracy, and much of her research and teaching is focussed on helping children to develop confidence and competence in their own mathematical thinking, as well as challenging negative attitudes to this subject. Her current research focusses on the role of creative methods in making maths more accessible to all pupils, arguing that creativity is an integral part of doing maths, and that all pupils have the capacity to both achieve in, and enjoy, maths and numeracy.



Dr Rachel Ferguson

Researcher, Middletown Centre for Autism

Dr Rachel Ferguson is a researcher at the Middletown Centre for Autism. She holds a Doctorate in Life and Health Sciences from Ulster University (2014), building on her undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy. Rachel has worked with autistic children, young people, and adults for over a decade across a range of educational and community settings. Her recent research with the HSCNI has focused on improving access to healthcare for autistic people across Northern Ireland and using the Autistic SPACE Framework in education. Rachel's research interests include autism, inclusion and flexibility in education, sensory processing, and quality of life for children and young people.



Dr Daniel Tindall

Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Limerick

Dr Daniel Tindall is an Associate Professor in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) at the University of Limerick, where he has taught since 2009. He is also Co-Director of the Inclusive Play and Leisure Activities for Youth (i-PLAY) programme and previously served as Course Director for the Physical Education programme (LM090) for five years. Daniel earned his BA in Social Science (with a minor in Physical Education) and his MA in Physical Education at California State University – Chico. He then spent seven years teaching in the Health and Physical Education Department and coaching track and field throwing events at Mt. Hood Community College in Oregon. He went on to complete his PhD in Sport Pedagogy, with a minor emphasis in Movement Studies in Disability, at Oregon State University. Before moving to Ireland, Daniel held faculty posts as Assistant Professor of Physical Education at San Francisco State University and the University of Central Missouri.

His teaching, research, and professional service focus on teaching and teacher education in physical education, sport, and adapted physical education. He has a particular interest in the attitudes and perceptions of pre-service PE teachers and the facilitation of inclusion within the Irish educational system. His current research projects examine the physical activity levels of children with disabilities and parent perceptions of assessment and IEP processes in relation to physical education in Ireland.



Aware Northern Ireland

Mood Matters facilitated by Bill Dodds

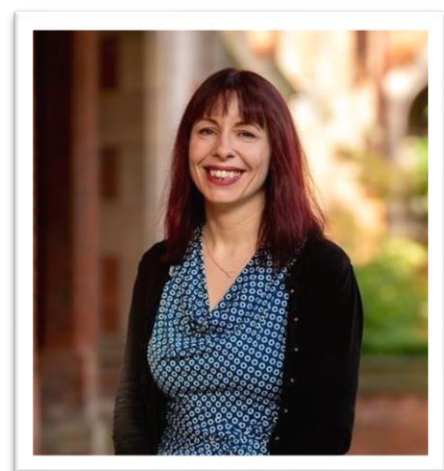
AWARE NI is the leading charity for mental health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland. For over 25 years, we have been working across schools, workplaces and communities to support people in strengthening their mental health and resilience. Our work spans a wide range of initiatives, including education and training programmes that build awareness and coping skills, peer support groups across Northern Ireland that provide safe and welcoming spaces to share experiences, and campaigns that challenge stigma while promoting positive mental health. The session delivered at this conference is based on AWARE's popular Mood Matters for Adults workshop, a practical and interactive programme designed to help people better understand and care for their mental health, recognise the early signs of stress or low mood, and develop everyday habits that build lasting resilience.



Dr Rebecca Loader

Senior Research Fellow, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, QUB

Dr Rebecca Loader is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. Her research focuses on education and peacebuilding, intercultural and anti-racist education, and educational inequalities. She has led and co-led a range of externally funded research projects on topics





including the educational experiences of minoritized ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, academic selection, and integrated and shared education. A policy-engaged researcher, Rebecca has collaborated with the Northern Ireland Executive Office, the Education Authority, and local legislators on issues relating to race, ethnicity, and education. Her work in this area was recognised in the Independent Review of Education. Rebecca's contributions have been acknowledged through awards for academic citizenship and research impact, and she was part of the Queen's University team awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education in 2020. Alongside her research, she is a trained dialogue facilitator and volunteers with an international organisation supporting virtual exchange among university students worldwide.



Dr Sultan Turkan

*Senior Lecturer, School of Social Sciences,
Education and Social Work, QUB*

Dr. Sultan Turkan is a researcher and educator specialising in language education, teacher learning, and educational equity for multilingual immigrant children. With a background in language teaching and teacher education, her work focuses on improving educational practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners by viewing language as a resource rather than a barrier to learning. Her research has examined the validity and fairness of assessments administered to immigrant learners and their teachers, as well as ways to design classrooms and assessments that recognise and draw on students' funds of knowledge. As the lead author of influential publications in the field, she has advanced the argument that teachers need to develop a specialised knowledge base and skill set to respond to the translanguaging practices of



multilingual learners. Dr. Turkan's scholarship is strongly shaped by Bakhtinian and Vygotskian perspectives, with a focus on language practices, cultural identity formation, and teacher learning in linguistically diverse contexts.



Ruth Guilda

EastSide Learning

Ruth Guilda is EastSide Learning's Project Officer, focused on supporting every child and young person in east Belfast to aspire, achieve, and thrive. She develops and supports projects that strengthen inclusion, wellbeing, and core skills, with particular attention to transitions in education and trauma-informed practice. Through EastSide Learning, Ruth has been closely involved in initiatives such as the rolling out NHS Solihull Approach to practitioners in east Belfast, ESP Reading Fair, and GCSE revision support, which all involved bringing together schools, community partners, and statutory agencies to co-design approaches responding to local needs. Her main areas of interest include inclusive school cultures, the role of classroom assistants in supporting diverse learners, and building meaningful school-community relationships. She holds a BA Joint Honours in Irish and Human Development from Dublin City University, an MSc in Psychological Science, and an MSc in Autism from Queen's University Belfast. Ruth's career has been shaped by a commitment to equity in education and supporting all children to flourish.



Fane Street Teachers

Mrs Joy Johnston- *Newcomer Co-ordinator*

Mrs Gillian McDowell- *Newcomer Teacher*

Mrs Julie-Ann Findlay- *Newcomer Teacher*



Fane Street Primary School is situated in South Belfast, just off the Lisburn Road. The school is proud of its rich cultural diversity, with 89% of pupils coming from overseas and representing 47 different languages, including English. Of these, 75% are classified as newcomer pupils. Fane Street is widely recognised for its inclusive, caring, and welcoming ethos, embracing children of all backgrounds, races, faiths, and abilities. This commitment to nurturing every child is further reflected in the school's recent achievement of the Silver Award for Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Schools from the Jenny Nock Foundation.



Jonathan Gray

Principal, Arvalee School and Resource Centre

Jonathan is the principal of Arvalee School which provides education for children and young people aged 3 to 19 with moderate to severe learning difficulties. The school is committed to delivering the highest possible quality of education by addressing the individual needs of each learner. Its approach is underpinned by effective resourcing, carefully designed curricula, and strong pastoral support, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to achieve their full potential. Arvalee places a strong emphasis on continuous school improvement, with staff actively engaged in professional development and collaborative practice to secure the best learning outcomes for every child.

This event is supported by



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