



The Educators' Trust

Awards 2026

The Educators' Trust Awards 2026



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF EDUCATORS

The Educators' Trust



The Charity of
The Worshipful Company of Educators

The Educators' Trust Awards 2026

Trustees

Dr Jennifer Somerville – Chair
Nicholas Bence-Trower
Paul Bowers Isaacson
Ruth Briant
Jasmine Dotiwala OBE
Professor Mark Littler
Hilary Hodgson
Professor Sir Deian Hopkin
Professor David Skidmore
Enid Weaver
Past Master Peter Williams CBE



Professor Mark Littler – Honorary Secretary
Valeria Locatelli – Honorary Treasurer
Adviser to the Board of Trustees – Martha Burnige



The Master David Wootton CBE DL
Foundation Master Professor Raoul Franklin CBE
Immediate Past Master Catherine McGuinness CBE



<https://www.educatorstrust.org.uk>

*The Educators' Trust is incorporated under
the Charities Act 2011
as Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1179353*

*Registered address for correspondence:
8 Little Trinity Lane, London EC4V 2AN*

FOREWORD

David Wootton CBE DL **Master of the Worshipful Company of Educators**



The Annual Awards Dinner is a real highlight in the Company's calendar as it both recognises and honours those enabling learners of all ages and backgrounds to succeed across a wide range of educational activities. Alongside education in schools, colleges and universities, it recognises those working in areas such as sports coaching, business, hospitals, the arts and design, governance, prisons and in the community, specialist provision, the military, careers, the environment, coaching, training and apprenticeships.

The Worshipful Company of Educators is both inclusive and philanthropic, and this commitment is best exemplified through the work of the Educators' Trust, which clearly demonstrates our commitment to supporting the work of those who make such strongly positive differences to the lives of so very many people.

As Master, I was honoured to be asked to make a nomination for the Master's Award for outstanding school leadership. Too often the breadth of skills of Primary leaders goes unrecognised and so I am delighted that this year's winner is an amazing Primary practitioner, leader and school improver who has gone on to lead a successful Multi Academy Trust. I am also delighted that the theme of the main 'Inspirational Educator' Awards is Exercise and Sport Education. Here we are able to recognise a talented and diverse group of eight outstanding educators who have achieved amazing things for learners.

I want to close this short introduction to tonight's celebration by thanking the Trust, its Chair and the judges of the awards and to conclude with my warmest congratulations to all those nominated and especially to our winners.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Wootton".

David Wootton CBE DL Master Educator 2025-2026



Introduction to the Awards Programme

Dr Jennifer Somerville

Chair of the Board of Trustees

The overarching aim of the Educators' Trust is '*to promote the development of the profession of educator*'. We mainly do this by awarding prizes, bursaries and grants to outstanding individual educators for innovation and excellence in professional practice. The winners may come from any level of education, any subject area and any setting in which learning takes place. We include in the term 'educator' all those professionals who contribute to creating a stimulating, diverse and supportive environment in which people learn and enrich their lives.

The Trust is able to make awards to these inspirational individuals because of the generosity of members of the Company of Educators and other individuals and organisations who share our values and aspirations for the profession of educator.

Thirteen of these awards will be presented this evening:

- ❁ **The Master's Award for Outstanding School Leadership**
- ❁ **The Mary Lou Carrington Award for a Businesswoman with a significant contribution to education**
- ❁ **The Trust Award for Art & Design Education**
- ❁ **The Keith Hutton Award for Theatre and Performing Arts Education**
- ❁ **The Robert J Jones Award for Environmental Education**
- ❁ **The Inspirational Educator Trust Awards** to eight impressive and inspirational educators working in the field of study chosen every year by the Trustees. This year, the theme is **Exercise and Sport Education**.

In addition, the Trust has a joint bursary scheme with City and Guilds Foundation to support professional development for peer mentoring, generously supported by Past Master Susan Fey and Past Master Peter Warren.

The Franklin Grants for Professional Development, named in honour of the Founding Master of the Company, Professor Raoul Franklin CBE, are open to individual educator applicants of any subject or level of education, whether full-time, part-time or freelance practitioners.



The Judges: The Trust is grateful for the expertise, time and diligence of its award judges: Prof David Skidmore, Enid Weaver, Peter Williams CBE, Dr Anne-Marie Brennan, Prof Martin Collins, Annie Eggar, and Specialist Subject Advisers Tony Willenbruch and Stuart Willis.

Guest Speaker

Freddie Hudson MBE

Freddie Hudson, MBE, is the Director of Arsenal in the Community, the charity arm of Arsenal Football Club. Arsenal in the Community is dedicated to driving social inclusion, raising aspirations, and improving wellbeing across North London, creating a sense of belonging in vulnerable and underrepresented individuals and groups, supporting them in reaching their potential.



Freddie Hudson joined in the 1987/88 season, shortly after its inception, when he supervised a group of young people on an 'Action Sport' scheme – a programme aimed at engaging unemployed people through sport. He now oversees a workforce at Arsenal in the Community of around 100 full-time and part-time staff who connect with 5,000 members of the local community every week across a range of education, employment, inclusion, wellbeing, and personal development programmes.

He was selected as a bearer of the Olympic torch on its journey from





Harrow to Haringey ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games, in recognition of his work in connecting and engaging young people to “be the best you can be” through Arsenal in the Community projects – reflecting the Olympics’ values and mission to defeat obstacles and reach potential.

Freddie is also Chair of London United, the 17 London-based Professional Football Club Community Organisations (CCOs) who share knowledge and best practice, and work with London-wide organisations to understand how football clubs and sport generally can help to address prevalent issues and deliver city-wide programmes to improve Londoners’ lives.



In recognition of his decades-long contribution, Freddie was named a Premier League Community Captain in 2022, and he was awarded an MBE in the King’s Birthday Honours in 2025 for ‘Services to Arsenal’s Community’.

The Master Educator's Award for Outstanding School Leadership

Winner: James Freeston

Nominator: The Master Educator, David Wootton



Aurora Academies Trust is sponsored by Pansophic Learning, which operates schools globally, mainly in the United States but also in Switzerland, the Middle East and in Africa. In the UK, the Trust oversees seven schools across the south-east of England, both primary and secondary, with over 3,000 pupils from 2-16 and over 400 teaching and support staff.

James Freeston held senior leadership positions in a number of schools and taught internationally, prior to being appointed to Aurora Academy in 2012, initially as Headteacher, then as Director of Education and in 2023 as Chief Executive Officer. He has a strong record in bringing about rapid school improvement and building sustainable and successful schools. James has also led and been a member of a variety of school-to-school support partnerships, working across the maintained and academy sectors.

James's achievements as a leader are remarkable. With the trustees and the staff, he developed a mission and vision for the Trust, which involved a culture of high expectations and collaborative relationships. He was personally engaged in moving two challenging schools from 'requires improvement' and 'special measures' to 'good' in all areas. Overall, the Aurora Academies have seen year-on-year improvements in pupil outcomes, resulting in becoming ranked as one of the top 50 most improved schools nationally for GCSE outcomes in 2024, and all the schools have been judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding. The reputation of the schools has grown with parents and in communities, so that they are now over-subscribed.

These notable results have been achieved by James's approach to school management and school improvement. He rebuilt trust and strengthened relationships with trustees and staff, emphasising

collaboration and shared learning. Building on his experience as an exceptionally effective primary practitioner, he invested in staff development, improved and enhanced curriculum and assessment practices and focused on a holistic, yet individualised, approach to students' learning.



James's philosophical approach to leadership is rooted in social justice and moral purpose, focused on removing barriers to learning so that all can thrive and achieve their potential. He is a highly effective communicator and listener, able to inspire staff and pupils to do their best.

On a broader front, James collaborates widely as an Ofsted lead inspector and a major player in local and regional fora and initiatives. His contribution as a significant school improver is acknowledged and valued by professionals, peers and educational agencies.



The Mary Lou Carrington Award for a Businesswoman with a significant contribution to education

Winner: CeCe Sammy-Lightfoot

Nominator: Lily Clifford, Head of the *Speakers for Schools* Programme, Futures for All



*Mary Lou Carrington was a businesswoman and a Common Councillor in the City of London with a passionate commitment to education. A founding member of the Educators, this award is in her memory. **Futures for All** is a charity founded by the broadcaster, Robert Peston. Its **Speakers for Schools** programme provides leading industry professionals and academics to speak, free of charge, to students in state schools, to share their knowledge, insights and experience, and to inspire and motivate them.*

CeCe Sammy-Lightfoot is a British vocal and performance coach, a singer-songwriter and television presenter. She has appeared on many popular television shows and has been the chairperson of the British jury for the Eurovision Song Contest, a judge for the Eurovision: You Decide 2017 show and a panellist on BBC One's 'Everyone's a Winner'.

A graduate of the London College of Music, CeCe's classical training led her to coach rising stars, like Charlotte Church, Will Young and Leona Lewis on the one hand, and to work in educational programmes such as BBC's Bring the Noise, the V&A and the Music Relief Foundation on the other.

CeCe has delivered 37 talks for the *Speakers for Schools* network, the majority in person, with some delivered virtually during the COVID-19 lockdowns. In her talks, she shares her life journey from singer to business owner and author. As well as sharing life lessons, CeCe offers practical workshops for students on how they can 'hack their voice'. This is a process of self-improvement involving tailored vocal exercises to enhance vocal projection, articulation and breath control,

allowing them to thrive when speaking or singing publicly CeCe has invited other musicians to join her in her school talks, providing students with opportunities to take part in workshops, hear performances and acquire insights into the variety of employment in the music and entertainment business.

CeCe is also an Ambassador for *Futures for All*, supporting the whole charity with new speaker introductions, employer connections and publicly promoting its work so it can reach more audiences. She coordinates mini tours of schools in an area, so that more young people can access the talks and workshops, learning how to aim high, build confidence and resilience.



The Trust Award for Art & Design Education

Winner: Dr Charley Peters

**Nominator: Dr Lois Rowe, Principal,
The City and Guilds London Art School**



*The **City & Guilds of London Art School (CGLAS)** was founded in 1854 for craftsmen of the City of London, and it remains true to its origins in 'learning through making', with an emphasis on the understanding of materials and developing the traditional skills of heritage conservation, while also offering courses in fine art and art history. It is independent, funded by trusts, foundations and individuals.*

Dr Charley Peters is Head of the new Graduate School at CGLAS. She brought together existing MAs in Carving, Conservation and Fine Art to create an interdisciplinary, collaborative and critically informed learning environment. The School offers the only undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Britain in architectural stone and wood carving and gilding. These disciplines are traditionally distinct, but Charley recognised that they are deeply interconnected through their engagement with materials, making processes, and cultural contexts. It is this shared intellectual and material underpinning that Charley built on in designing the interdisciplinary features of the Graduate School.

While each programme maintains its own specialist focus, the Graduate School provides a shared intellectual and pedagogic framework rooted in material thinking, critical enquiry and research-led studio practice. The separate artistic, craft and conservation disciplines escape their disciplinary silos and connect through dialogue, experimentation and professional practice.

Charley created a number of organisational structures to achieve this vision of meaningful integrated artwork. She established cross-disciplinary group tutorials where students analyse each other's work through shared materials and conceptual frameworks. She

established a digital research bank as an evolving repository where students across programmes exchange texts, exhibitions and visual references. Students have the opportunity to explore how emerging technologies, particularly AI, intersect with craft and material literacy.

This integration of traditional craft with contemporary digital practices is essential in preparing students for employment. Charley invites an array of visiting practitioners, scholars and industry professionals to enrich cross-course symposia and studio exchanges. Students develop an interdisciplinary outlook and confidence that reflects contemporary professional practice in the creative and heritage sectors.



The Keith Hutton Award in Theatre and Performing Arts Education

Winner: David Pickering MBE

**Nominators: Jillian Barker and Ruby Wolk,
Royal Ballet and Opera, Learning and Participation**



*The **Royal Opera House** is one of 10 national bridging organisations that work across England to connect children and young people with great art and culture. The Learning and Participation Department is central to that mission. Through its extensive national programme it works directly with schools, providing training for teachers and, through local cultural education partnerships, engages with families and communities. It attracts 100,000 participants every year.*

David Pickering is Creative Associate for Ballet in the Royal Ballet and Opera (RBO) Learning and Participation (L&P) Department, before which he was a Soloist dancer in The Royal Ballet.

David teaches creative ballet to an impressively wide variety of people in diverse settings. These include young people in formal and informal educational settings; young people with additional needs or disabilities; adults in marginalised communities, including refugees and asylum seekers; adults in health and wellbeing contexts; and professionals in the dance and education sectors. David has taught across Britain and across the world when on tour with The Royal Ballet.



Chance to Dance is Royal Ballet and Opera's flagship outreach talent development programme. David has not only taught children on this programme for the past 10 years, but also designed and delivered professional development for independent dance teachers. In

doing so, he plays a critical role in developing creative ballet teaching practice across the sector.

Similarly, David's work across the Learning and Participation Schools programme has contributed to exemplary creative ballet practice being shared with thousands of schoolteachers across the country. David facilitated the links to the Royal Ballet repertoire and artists to ensure that school teachers and children are inspired by the art form.



David's work extends to delivering participatory ballet workshops at Royal Ballet and Opera's popular *Family Sundays* and its *Creative Exchange* projects, where he has co-created choreography with marginalised and vulnerable adults and young people. David also delivered *Monday Moves* for years, a programme of weekly ballet classes for blind and visually impaired adults.

His deeply inclusive and creative way of introducing the art form to people of all ages and abilities is both extraordinary and exemplary. It has enabled a lifelong love of ballet in many individuals, as well as nurturing talent in the next generation of ballet dancers.

David was awarded an MBE for services to arts education in 2018.



The Robert J Jones Award for Environmental Education

Winner: Maggie Kanska

**Nominator: Dr Elyssa Livergant,
South London Botanical Institute**



The South London Botanical Institute is a small, independent educational charity with a century-long dedication to plant science. It runs a wide range of courses, workshops, school visits and events for people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of interest. The heritage building houses an herbarium, botanical library, education and community rooms.

Maggie Kanska is Learning and Communities Lead at the South London Botanical Institute. A former primary teacher, Maggie's role is to design, develop and deliver the Institute's formal and informal plant education programmes for children and families. She heads the Primary KS1 and KS 2 offer, blending science, art and history.

Maggie creates engaging, interactive, interdisciplinary learning experiences that promote curiosity, critical and holistic thinking and environmental awareness. Her programmes are closely aligned with curriculum standards and provide meaningful opportunities for children to connect with the natural world. She also produces innovative educational resources for teachers, families and community groups, extending the reach and impact of the Institute's learning offer.



Maggie guides hands-on enquiry, using microscopes to examine flower structures and identify the components we consume. She introduces systems thinking by demonstrating how

pollinators, plants, and humans are interconnected, highlighting the impact of pollinator decline on food production and ecosystem resilience. Sensory exploration of aromatic plants is combined with creative artmaking, as pupils craft ornamental clay tiles incorporating plant materials, embedding both scientific understanding and personal expression.



She extends this work far beyond the building and garden walls, regularly delivering programmes in local parks, housing estates, local libraries, community green spaces and even on street pavements, bringing environmental education directly into the urban spaces where children live and play. Over the 2024-2025 school year, Maggie worked with over 730 school children, over 39% of them coming from schools with over 30% of their pupils on free school meals.

Across both community and formal settings, Maggie combines scientific rigour with creativity and accessibility. Maggie's practice exemplifies the transformative power of environmental education, making living organisms, ecosystems, and sustainability tangible and exciting.



Note also that the Judges, unusually, awarded a Highly Commended to **Eve Armstrong, nominated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh**



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Kareem Brown

**Nominator: Anna Cain,
CEO of The Boxing Academy, London**



The Boxing Academy is an Alternative Provision Free School in Hackney that offers a full-time education to 40 KS3 and KS4 pupils at risk of exclusion, or who have already been excluded from mainstream education. The school's ethos reflects its origins, that of a boxing gym: a small, comfortable and familial environment with clear boundaries, a system of rewards and an emphasis on discipline, achievement and hard work.

Kareem Brown joined the Boxing Academy in 2018, having previously worked as a coach *for Arsenal in the Community* and overseas. Although not originally a boxer, Kareem embraced the Boxing ethos and upskilled himself to pass the Level 1 England Boxing qualification. Learning as a beginner gave him fresh insight into how a positive coaching relationship can help model an effective approach to academic studies. In short, by learning to box with a trusted coach, students gain skills and knowledge about the incremental nature of learning and the benefits of embracing failure to achieve success.

Kareem has a sports-based approach to academic learning that has been highly effective for students who often have a negative view of themselves as learners. As in sports, not every player learns the same way, and safety and well-being is as important as the technical skills being developed.

Two years ago, Kareem was appointed to Head of Year 11. He oversees the delivery of the Functional Skills qualification, which all students complete alongside their GCSE's, and he delivers the revision programme for all subjects, not just PE and Boxing. He is diligent in keeping his knowledge and skills current, whether it be Autism Awareness or the Middle Leadership Programme at the Institute

of Education. He has built strong relationships with partner organisations, such as Young Hackney, local schools and of course, the football clubs. Teachers involve Kareem when they need to unlock a resistant Y11 student.



The impact is remarkable. Since the pandemic, the Academy's outcomes had dropped significantly - not all students going on to education, training or employment. In the three years since Kareem became Head of Year 11, the Academy achieved 100% progression for its Y11 cohort.

By using the discipline and dedication of sport training, Kareem has transformed the outcomes for the school. He ensures that there is a personal pathway for every student to set them up for success, so they have clarity, skills and confidence heading into their adult life.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Jackson Gibbons BEM

**Nominator: Mickey Kelly MBE,
City of London Multi Academy Trust**



The City of London Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust with 11 schools in five London boroughs. It is non-selective, non-denominational, co-ed and free to attend. Most of the schools have been rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

Jackson Gibbons epitomises the definition of an Inspirational Educator in exercise and sports education. As founder and Head Coach of the City of London Academy (CoLA) Basketball Programme, he transformed a school initiative into one of the UK's most successful youth sports academies — an engine of personal growth, community cohesion, and national excellence.

Since establishing the programme in 2013, Jackson has built a structure that nurtures both academic and athletic achievement. Students combine A-level or vocational studies with up to 20 hours of weekly training under the Diploma in Sporting Excellence. The programme's holistic model balances elite sport with education, well-being, and life skills. Under his leadership, CoLA teams have won multiple national championships, and more than 80 students have secured scholarships to US universities — a record unmatched by any UK academy.

Jackson's coaching is evidence-informed, integrating psychological resilience training and reflective practice to promote confidence, perseverance, and self-esteem. His commitment to inclusion ensures that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds access high-level sport, often for the first time.

Beyond competitive success, his educational impact extends deeply into personal development and community renewal. He has created

pathways for alumni to return as peer mentors, building a self-sustaining culture of leadership and positive role modelling. Jackson also works closely with the City of London Corporation to provide wider enrichment — including employability skills, civic engagement, and exposure to professional networks.



A dynamic and innovative educator, Jackson continually evolves his methods. His forthcoming project — a purpose-built basketball facility with a show court and 450-seat capacity — will anchor sport and learning in a state-of-the-art environment. This facility will not only serve students but will also host community programmes, reinforcing the Academy’s role as a social hub in Southwark.

Jackson’s influence reaches well beyond his institution. Nationally recognised for his commitment to youth development, he was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2025 for “Services to Young People and to Basketball.” His story — from a challenging North-West London upbringing to becoming one of the UK’s leading youth coaches — serves as an inspiration to thousands, illustrating the transformative power of sport and education.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Ian Gregory

**Nominator: Steve Peyman,
Chance to Shine**



Chance to Shine is a national children's charity using cricket to inspire, educate and develop young people in primary and secondary schools and in community settings, including those in under-served communities. Its coaches reach around 600,000 young people every year.

Ian Gregory is a Schools Programme Manager with *Chance to Shine*, ensuring that children receive high-quality coaching experiences grounded in wellbeing, inclusion and physical literacy. His work is informed by evidence and an understanding of how physical activity supports confidence, resilience and positive lifelong engagement in sport.

Each year, Ian runs training for 200+ coaches who work nationwide, bringing cricket to over 4,000 state primary schools. Coaches repeatedly identify Ian's sessions as transformative, citing improved understanding of child-centred approaches, confidence in supporting diverse needs, and renewed commitment to creating safe spaces.

Ian's leadership extends into strategic national collaboration dedicated to strengthening coaching, including the *Children's Coaching Collaborative* and *Play Their Way* movement.

He has recently collaborated with the *Youth Sport Trust* to redevelop *Chance to Shine's* school resources, reshaping the structure and sequencing to ensure high-quality sessions for children and alignment with schools' needs. He ensured the resources reflect best practice, support accessibility for teachers and embed physical literacy and life skills.

Ian led *Chance to Shine* through cohort 1 of Sport England's *Patchwork Programme* — a pilot exploring the implementation of the Physical Literacy Consensus for England. He ensures that coaches receive both the conceptual clarity and practical tools needed to

embed physical literacy into sessions, with materials designed to be inclusive, adaptable and rooted in real-world coaching contexts.

The culmination of this work was a coaches' conference in Derby, which Ian coordinated in partnership with *Play Their Way*. Bringing together around 55 leading coach educators, the event strengthened national collaboration and upskilled coaches.



Ian was also instrumental in leading *Chance to Shine's* Guinness World Record attempt, achieving the largest ever cricket lesson (at a single venue), with 943 children involved. This achievement is a testament to Ian's deep understanding of coaching and providing positive experiences of exercise through cricket.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Sue Lynch

**Nominator: Alison Blackmore,
Head of Changing Lives Programme,
The British Horse Society**



Changing Lives Through Horses is an equine-facilitated personal development programme of education developed by the British Horse Society in 2017. There are over 160 BHS-approved Riding Centres to deliver and facilitate the programme for vulnerable children and young people within their communities. The primary area of need for 64% of participants is social, emotional and mental health. Many participants face significant barriers to accessing education in school settings and thrive in the alternative education setting of approved riding centres with nurturing, highly qualified coaches. Since 2017, the centres have worked with almost 5,000 participants.

Sue Lynch works at the Nuneaton and Warwickshire Equestrian Centre. As an experienced and qualified BHS Stage 3 coach, she leads the *Changing Lives Programme*, working with young people from a wide variety of social and educational backgrounds, all of whom have significant barriers to accessing education in a mainstream environment. Through riding, young people with additional needs develop a sense of connection and belonging as well as a range of kinaesthetic and mental skills.

Sue is a wheelchair user but does not let this put any boundaries in her way. Her love, devotion and knowledge of horses is immense. She started to deliver the *Changing Lives Through Horses* programme at Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Equestrian Centre (for both abled and disabled people) after the COVID pandemic and has built this provision despite the challenges that it has brought. Her passion and dedication to ensure that every child and young adult receives the life skills and education that they deserve are beyond measure.

A consummate professional, Sue attends regular CPD, from online specialist sessions on different SEN topics to the annual CLTH conferences, to learn, share good practice and network with fellow coaches and BHS staff.

Her delivery strategies work effectively. Starting from the premise that learners come with different needs of varying degrees, and different learning preferences and styles, Sue tailors each element of the learning programme to ensure that these are met. She has succeeded in developing a grounded and collaborative team to deliver this provision with empathy, passion, kindness and determination. The reward for the tireless efforts of Sue and her team is the growth of self-worth and confidence in the riders when they receive their BHS Achieve Awards.



The Inspirational Educator awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Iain Mills

**Nominator: Ali Oliver,
CEO, Youth Sport Trust**



The Youth Sport Trust is the UK's leading children's charity for improving the education and development of every child through play and sport. In 2024-25 2,254,331 young people participated in its programmes, 66,421 young people were trained to become health ambassadors, and 1,800 educational practitioners were trained.

Iain Mills is the Assistant Head Teacher and Sports Lead at Parkside School, a specialist SEND setting in Norfolk, catering for pupils aged 9–13 with a wide range of complex learning needs. He is also a Youth Sport Trust Lead. His innovations span curriculum design, workforce development, and system leadership in inclusive physical education

Iain has created an environment where every pupil can thrive. With *Outdoor Play and Learning* he developed the *OPAL Playtime Curriculum* which provides structured, active play encouraging risk-taking, teamwork, and joy. As a result, participation rates have risen, engagement among girls has increased, and previously inactive pupils now take part in daily physical activity.

Iain was involved in the Engagement Model in PE, a national innovation project across England. He tested how the model could best be reflective of each pupil's needs and abilities. His work led to valuable insights and practical suggestions for using the Engagement Model as both a baseline assessment tool and a way to track development in physical education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Iain created *Daily Sensory Circuits with Mr Mills*, a digital resource with adapted movement routines tailored to the sensory needs of SEND children. The impact was

immediate and profound, with some videos exceeding 3000 views. Iain went on to train schools beyond Norfolk to implement the approach, extending its benefits nationwide.

As a member of the Norfolk School Games SEND Board, he has driven system-wide change. In the past academic year alone, Iain trained 379 school staff, including 180 teaching assistants, through targeted CPD, and supported 24 schools to deliver inclusive swimming and water safety programmes, reaching over 300 pupils.

His work also has a national and international dimension. As part of the Youth Sport Trust's Lead Inclusion School Network, Iain regularly contributes to Inclusion Live and other national forums, sharing expertise and shaping inclusive PE practice across England. In 2024, he represented the network internationally, presenting on inclusion in physical activity for children with complex needs. His advocacy ensures that the UK remains a global leader in inclusive PE.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Eleanor Owen

**Nominator: Lawrence Uttley,
Skills & Apprenticeship Manager, Coach Core**



*Coach Core is a national employment and engagement charity. It engages 16-24 year-olds, who may traditionally face barriers, discrimination, and limited opportunities, in an inclusive and impactful sports coaching apprenticeship that develops their talents and equips them with a range of vital skills for sport, work, and life. Working with local and national employers, **Coach Core** has delivered 1,150 apprenticeships with 74% progressing to employment, education or training. It has many national awards for its coaching and apprenticeship programmes.*

Eleanor Owen is a Learning Coach with *Coach Core*. Grounded in her extensive expertise in sports and exercise education, she combines specialist knowledge with a dynamic and inclusive approach to teaching, inspiring learners to achieve far beyond expectations. Her educational practice consistently delivers tangible, sustained impact on apprentices' personal and professional development.

Ellie actively enriches learning by connecting apprentices with professionals across sports and educational contexts. She brings in external partners - ranging from GB Archery to specialists in deaf/blind awareness - ensuring learners experience a broad spectrum of skills and perspectives. These collaborations, built on sustainable relationships with employers and community organisations, expand apprentices' opportunities while embedding inclusive and diverse practice.

Her reflective practice ensures ongoing development and impact. Ellie gathers regular feedback, monitors outcomes, and adapts approaches to optimise learning. Evidence of her influence is clear: apprentices who once struggled with confidence or engagement

have progressed into leadership roles, delivered their own community projects, or achieved external recognition. Employers frequently acknowledge the lasting benefits of her guidance, requesting ongoing collaboration to support apprentice development.



Ellie's practice is innovative and deeply personalised. She adapts learning to meet individual needs, recognising barriers such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, anxiety, or language challenges. Her participation in continuous professional development - through peer learning, CPD engagement, and collaboration with national organisations - enhances her practice while benefiting each apprentice. Balancing professional expertise with genuine care, Ellie prioritises wellbeing, models professional boundaries, and ensures safeguarding is embedded across all learning environments. She not only delivers education but cultivates enduring personal growth, making her a truly inspirational figure in exercise and sport education.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Craig Winrow

**Nominator: Andrew Reid-Smith and Jessica Hill,
The Endurance and Performance Centre,
St Mary's University, Twickenham**



The Endurance and Performance Centre (EPC) at St Mary's University is one of only four England Athletics Talent Hubs. They exist to create exceptional training opportunities for young athletes. St Mary's EPC has a dedicated on-site athletics track named after Sir Mo Farah, an alumnus of the Centre, with access to world-class coaching and support services.

Craig Winrow is a Performance Coach at St Mary's Endurance Performance Centre (EPC). He blends technical expertise with an athlete-centred philosophy. His leadership has been central to St Mary's development as an England Athletics Talent Hub and to its national and international reputation for excellence in endurance running.

His grounding in the sports sciences underpinning endurance performance is used to design evidence-informed, individually responsive programmes. He also uses advanced technologies to bring high-performance methods, typically reserved for elite athletes, into daily practice for all EPC members. This ensures every athlete benefits from personalised, data-driven insight and develops a reflective understanding of their training.



A holistic educational approach is equally significant for Craig. He places strong emphasis on resilience, confidence, emotional regulation and personal responsibility, enabling athletes to grow in character as well as performance. Many describe his influence as transformative.

Craig has coached athletes across the full performance pathway—from

club runners beginning structured training, to national-pathway juniors and seniors, to international athletes who have achieved World Championship medals and reached Olympic finals. He has created an inclusive training-group environment where athletes are welcomed to train together. This approach builds a critical mass within event groups, leading to rich peer learning, shared motivation and a strong sense of community.



This emphasis on inclusivity was demonstrated by the British Milers Club Record Breaker Meet held during the University's 175th anniversary celebrations. Nearly 1,000 athletes—from local primary and secondary school pupils to Olympic competitors—competed within the same programme. The event reflected Craig's belief that aspiration and accessibility should coexist, inspiring emerging athletes while sustaining high-performance standards.

Craig is also a powerful collaborator. He has strengthened partnerships with organisations such as England Athletics and the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, expanding the physiotherapy and performance services available at St Mary's. His leadership creates valuable real-world learning opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students, who gain direct experience working with athletes in a high-performance setting. The applied research he supports benefits both the St Mary's programme and the wider endurance-running community.



The Inspirational Educator Awards for Exercise and Sport Education

Winner: Iain Williamson

**Nominator: Dean Pommery,
Head of Improvement & Innovation,
Youth Sport Trust**



The Youth Sport Trust is the UK's leading children's charity for improving the education and development of every child through play and sport. In receipt of public funding through Sport England, it supports the Well School Movement committed to taking positive action to improve education outcomes, as well as a broad range of open access and national programmes, targeted interventions, smaller projects and pilots which target a specific group or local areas. In 2024-25, 2,254,331 young people participated in its programmes, 66,421 young people were trained to become health ambassadors, and 1,800 educational practitioners were trained.

Iain Williamson is Head Teacher at Dame Dorothy Primary School in Sunderland, a school with a higher than average number of children eligible for free school meals, whose first language is not English, and who require SEN support.

He believes that a key cornerstone of all things that matter in education is pupils' physical and mental well-being. Iain has built a school community and culture at Dame Dorothy which celebrates exercise and sports as fundamental entitlements for all young people and staff, as well as promoting other rich and meaningful experiences in music, the arts and the wider curriculum.



Iain was seconded into Public Health, where he worked with schools to understand and minimise the health differentials that exist in deprived areas. On returning to Dame Dorothy Primary, he made use of that

experience to build a range of innovative systems across the school to promote the health and well-being of the pupils and the staff.

Among Iain's innovations was the rollout of active uniforms enabling all children to embrace movement and activity

throughout the day; the introduction of 'The Daily Mile', which included activating community fund-raising to pay for a permanent running track at the school; establishing Young Sports Leaders and volunteering programmes; and the provision of activity tracking bands, like smart watches, to track and benchmark activity and exercise across the school. The latter provided for the analysis of and insight into the positive impacts of exercise and sport in areas such as cognition, behaviour and belonging. These popular interventions changed the mindset and attitudes of pupils and the wider community.



SAVE THE DATE

The Educators' Trust Annual Summer Event

Monday 8th June 2026

5.30pm-8.30pm



The theme of Trust's annual summer event this year is '**Excellence in Exercise and Sport Education**'. It will be hosted in the Dance Studio of the City of London School for Girls in the Barbican in the City of London.

Three winners of the 'Inspirational Educator' 2026 Award in Exercise and Sport Education will briefly tell us about their different settings, their achievements and impact. Ali Oliver, CEO of the Youth Sport Trust, supported by Sport England, will paint the 'Big Picture' for us, picking up threads from the Guest Speaker, Freddie Hudson MBE, Director of Arsenal in the Community's speech at the Election and Awards Dinner on 24th April.

The format is one of a colloquy — an interactive discussion between the presenters and the audience — so **do come and join the conversation!**

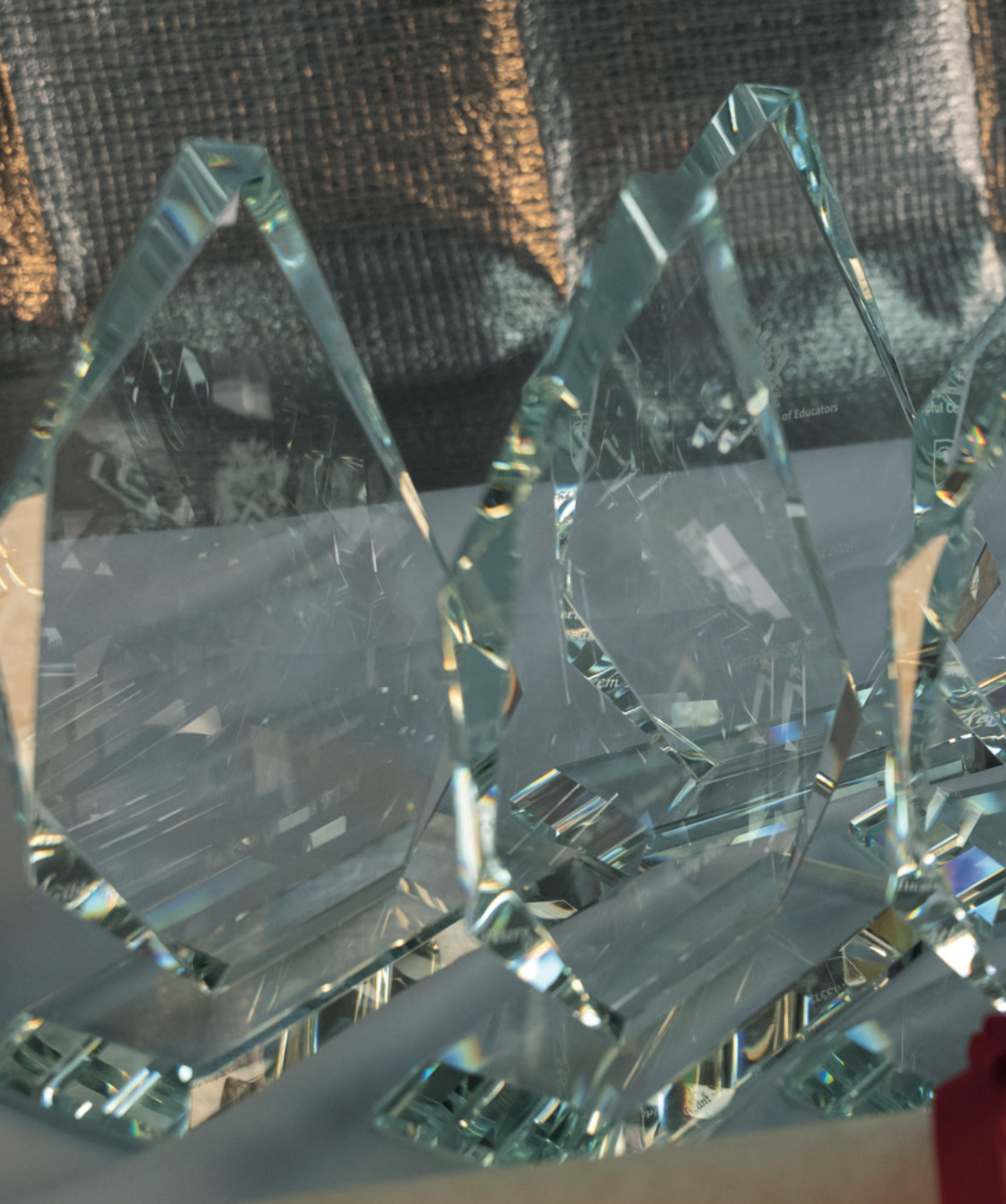
The session will be followed by a relaxed wine and canape reception.

Scan Me



Free tickets will be available after 27 April 2026

<https://qrco.de/EdTrustSummer>
or scan the QR code.



The Educators' Trust
The charity of the Worshipful Company of Educators



Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1179353