

## CASE STUDY:

### Xavier Catholic Education Trust - Leading a Trust-wide approach to Whole-School Inclusion

Zelia Munk - Director of Inclusion

The Xavier Catholic Education Trust runs 19 primary and secondary schools in Surrey. Their CEO, James Kibble was convinced of the value of inclusion. He wanted to develop the expertise of his senior staff, and make sure inclusion was led from the top, so all children would benefit and lost learning would fall.

*“If we get inclusion right, everything else within the trust will follow.”*

Inclusion became a core strategic priority for the trust. To support this three strategic leaders from the Trust joined The Difference’s Inclusive Leadership Course in 2023.

With learning and materials from the Course, the Trust designed a Trust-wide Framework that drives all of their work across the 19 schools. From there they developed a behaviour policy, and training materials that all teachers across the schools can make use of - with staff trained in building on children’s assets, restorative practice to repair broken relationships and parental engagement.



Since partnering with The Difference, persistent absence across Xavier Trust has fallen from 11% to 7% (moving in the opposite direction to national trends with absence increasing nationally from 7% in 2022/23 to 7.3% in 2023/24). Internal suspensions in Xavier primary schools dropped from 50 to two in just two years. And suspensions in Xavier secondaries have plummeted from 190 to 15.

As well as bucking trends on lost learning, the Trust is sustaining high outcomes for students, and achieved above average attainment in reading, maths and phonics.

*“We're always banging the drum of, it's not inclusion **or** attainment. You can't have one without the other... You can just see children want to be in school. If they are in school then they are happier. If they're happier, then attainment will follow and behaviour will follow. You can't just look at things like behaviour and outcomes separately. It's all linked.”*

Four more leaders joined The Difference’s training in 2024/25, with plans for further staff and a continued partnership in future years.

*“We've got this momentum and positivity. We just feel empowered through the knowledge from The Difference. It sounds really cheesy, but it has been life-changing for so many children in Surrey”*