

# Schools & Academies Show Birmingham 2025: Day 2 Recap

21 November 2025



## Inspiration, Reflection, and a Perfect Close

**Thursday 20 November 2025 | NEC Birmingham | #SAASHOW  
#FanSAAStic**

**As media supporters covering the Schools & Academies Show 2025, The School Network** wrapped up an extraordinary two days at SAAS Birmingham 2025 with a Day 2 that delivered practical tools, heartfelt legacy reflections, and a powerful sense of hope for the future. The energy stayed sky-high - packed theatres, vibrant exhibition halls, and cross-sector connections that made the co-location with the EdTech Summit, Independent Schools Conference, and Higher Education Transformation Expo truly shine.

From Dr Hilary Jones linking nutrition to attainment to a star-studded Question Time finale, today was all about turning insight into action. Here's your full recap, enriched with real voices and moments from the floor.

### **Day 2 Themes: Wellbeing, Efficiency, Legacy, and Hope**

Delegates focused on implementable strategies:

- Nutrition as a foundation for resilience and focus
- Embedding assistive technology as everyday infrastructure

- Stronger parent/carer partnerships under the new Ofsted lens
- Efficient, inclusive SEND provision
- The future of independent education
- Restoring curiosity and opportunity in a polarised world
- Evidence-informed, compassionate reform that lasts

## **Standout Sessions: The Moments That Mattered**

- **Main Stage Keynote - Robert Peston:** A stirring call that “Investing in schools should not be a marginal issue - it should be THE issue,” urging education to restore hope, opportunity, and curiosity for young people in a complex world.
- **Dr Hilary Jones on Nutrition:** Clear links between good food, pupil focus, resilience, and lifelong health - practical takeaways for school meals that boost attainment.
- **Assistive Technology as Core (EdTech Summit):** From staff CPD to seamless curriculum integration - “core principle, not add-on.”
- **SEND Efficiency Done Right:** Reducing costs while strengthening inclusion and outcomes - smarter systems, not cuts.
- **Parent & Community Engagement:** Proven ways to build trust, lift attendance, and improve perceptions aligned with Ofsted expectations.
- **Independent Schools Conference:** Navigating strategic challenges, empowering teams, and proving the sector’s value in 2025 and beyond.
- **High-Performance Insights:** Bradley Scanes (Max Verstappen’s coach) on thriving amid chaos - F1 data lessons for school leaders.
- **Legacy Reflections:**
  - Sir Nick Gibb celebrated evidence-informed reforms that raised standards long-term.
  - Baroness Estelle Morris on compassionate, courageous change for pupil outcomes.
- **Question Time Finale:** Interactive gold with Sir Nick Gibb, Lord David Blunkett, Leora Cruddas CBE, and Baroness Morris. Candid debate ended on Lord Blunkett’s uplifting note: “As parents or grandparents we need to cheer up a bit” to help children thrive.

## **Exhibition Floor & Community Highlights**

Footfall never dipped - stands buzzing with demos, giveaways, and charity selfie

competitions (SchoolGrid raised £450 for NARF!). Exhibitors like Learning by Questions (“brilliant conversations”), iplicit, and many more shared the love on social.

## **Real Voices from the Floor**

- “Investing in schools should not be a marginal issue - it should be THE issue.” - Robert Peston
- “As parents or grandparents we need to cheer up a bit.” - Lord Blunkett
- Official close from @SAA\_Show: “An amazing two days of education innovation and inspiration!”
- NGA: “Fantastic energy” at their conference sessions
- Delegates: “Powerful”, “fascinating insights”, “energised for the year ahead”

## **Key Takeaways from Day 2 - Action Today**

1. Nutrition powers attainment - make school meals a priority
2. Assistive tech is mainstream - invest in staff readiness now
3. Build genuine parent partnerships for better outcomes
4. SEND efficiency with inclusion at its heart
5. Education restores hope - prioritise curiosity and opportunity
6. Evidence-informed + compassionate = lasting reform
7. Cheer up and collaborate - the sector is stronger together

SAAS Birmingham 2025 has been nothing short of transformative - united, innovative, and ready for what’s next.

Huge thanks to GovNet, every speaker (absolute legends), exhibitors, and delegates for making it #FanSAAStic.

We invite **all exhibitors and attendees** to share your own insights, photos, standout sessions, and key takeaways so we can amplify your voice in and our full event wrap-up on Monday!

We’ll be back with the Day 2 recap tomorrow.

**The School Network** - keeping you connected to the heart of UK education.

Keep the conversation going!

