

PANEL REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



SESSION 1

On 13 May 2025, AI Edify convened the first meeting of its Learning and Teaching Innovation Panel. The purpose of the panel is to offer a structured, inclusive space for exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on education, from classroom practice to whole-school strategy.

This inaugural session was designed as a diagnostic exercise to surface emerging practices, highlight key challenges, and begin to identify areas requiring further clarity, collaboration, or support. Discussions were characterised by cautious optimism, with a consistent emphasis on safeguarding, pedagogical coherence, and professional trust. Key themes included the interpretation of JCQ guidance, differing approaches to AI use across departments, the importance of modelling, and the growing interest in AI-supported pedagogy. Disparities in access and confidence were also noted, alongside a shared commitment to collaborative, context-sensitive development.

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KEY THEMES



1 Navigating National Guidance and Authorship Expectations

Panel members expressed concern about the interpretation and application of JCQ guidance on AI-generated work. Many schools are finding it difficult to navigate expectations around authorship, particularly where pupils may use generative AI tools outside of class. The panel discussed recent updates in the JCQ guidance, where it seems that more onus is being put on schools. The panel expressed that further guidance and support was needed, in order for schools to navigate AI use in examined work effectively.

A key area of tension was the use of plagiarism detection tools, which were seen as both unreliable and potentially harmful to pupil-teacher relationships. Several educators noted that the desire to verify authorship had resulted in more 'silent essays'—tasks completed without digital access or collaboration—to reduce suspicion. However, there is a concern that this could limit interaction, feedback, and the opportunity for guided development.

2 Balancing Innovation with Institutional Coherence

Schools reported sitting at different points on a spectrum from cautious exploration to established policies. Some are piloting AI as tutors and tools for knowledge building or writing support. Others have reported more reluctance. The concept of individual departments banning AI use was addressed with questions being asked around whether departments should have autonomy over AI in their subjects or whether there should be a school wide approach.

The group explored the difference between striving for consistency across departments and encouraging cohesive but contextually responsive practice. Consistency can support clarity, but may risk reducing professional discretion. In contrast, coherence allows for shared values while recognising that different subjects and settings may require tailored approaches.

3 Policies and Traffic Light Systems

Traffic light systems are being explored as a way to communicate appropriate use of AI tools to pupils. For example, 'green' for independent use, 'amber' for guided or partial use, and 'red' for non-permitted tasks. Some educators found this helpful for simplifying expectations, and creating a baseline for both staff and pupils. The question was raised into how effective these had been for schools that have implemented them, and whether they have been successful in accounting for nuances within usage from different departments.

Across the panel, there was agreement that staff modelling is central to successful implementation. Pupils learn from what teachers demonstrate—intentional, responsible use is more powerful than written rules alone.

4 Opportunities to Demonstrate Practice

AI is beginning to support alternative models of teaching and learning, including flipped learning, where pupils engage with knowledge-building tasks before class and spend classroom time applying understanding. This approach was seen to work particularly well when AI is used to support initial concept acquisition. This also allow the opportunity for the educator to utilise the lesson time for assessment and understanding as opposed to knowledge acquisition.

There was some exploration of AI for administrative purposes, including report writing. Here, the importance of human oversight was consistently emphasised—not just in terms of accuracy and tone, but also safeguarding considerations and workload implications.

The idea of low-stakes experimentation was also discussed. Pupils need safe opportunities to try AI tools without fear of penalty. This supports critical reflection, fosters trust, and helps prevent misuse through curiosity.

5 Early Exploration of Strategic Use

While most AI engagement is currently at classroom level, some schools are beginning to explore the use of AI for whole-school strategic functions. Examples include analysing patterns and trends or engagement to support decision-making. However, there was acknowledgment that such use remains exploratory. Many schools have yet to articulate a clear strategy that links AI use across teaching, learning, leadership, and governance.

1.6 Pedagogical Practices and Platform Dependencies

A common reflection was that effective AI use does not depend on technical proficiency or coding skill. Instead, success with generative AI tools often relies on clarity of communication—particularly the ability to phrase precise, purposeful prompts. Prompting was seen less as a digital task and more as an exercise in literacy and reasoning.

The discussion also addressed digital ecosystems. Some schools are embedded in specific platforms (e.g., Microsoft or Google), which can shape the tools available. There were questions about whether these affiliations are pedagogically driven or primarily logistical, and what weight should be given to these considerations.

7 Parental Expectations and Communication

Parental perspectives on AI vary widely. Some are enthusiastic, especially when AI is framed as preparing pupils for future careers. Others are more sceptical or concerned, particularly around screen time, data use, or dependency.

In several schools, parents have begun asking about how AI is being taught or used. Where these conversations have been proactive and transparent, schools reported positive engagement. There was agreement that framing AI in terms of communication, ethics, and digital literacy—rather than purely as a technical skill—can support wider understanding.

8 Sector Disparity and Collaborative Potential

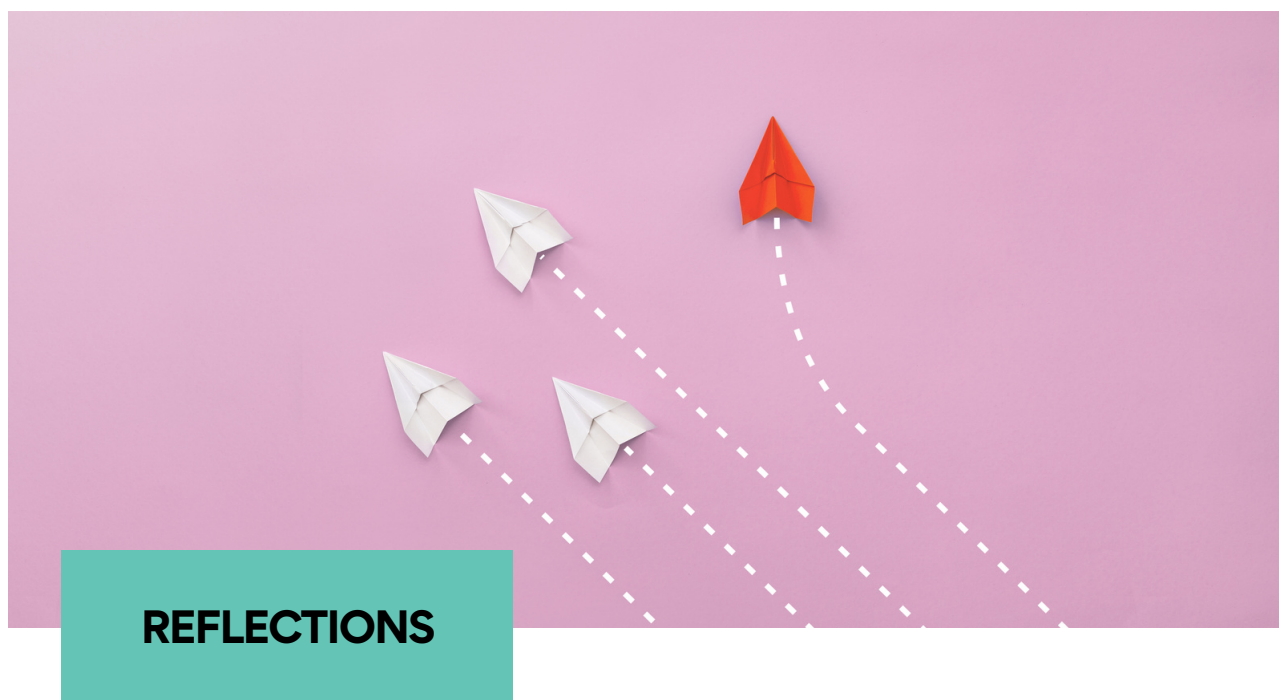
The panel acknowledged perceived disparities between independent and state-maintained schools, particularly in terms of access to training, resourcing, and decision-making autonomy. Independent schools may have more flexibility to trial new tools or invest in exploratory projects, while some state schools are facing structural and financial barriers.

This gap has implications for equity and pupil experience. There was interest in creating shared forums or exemplars to support collaboration across sectors, and to ensure that the benefits and risks of AI are addressed inclusively.

9 Staff Development and Professional Trust

Staff development emerged as a foundational need. There is a clear appetite for CPD that goes beyond technical demonstrations and instead supports staff to engage critically with the pedagogical, ethical, and practical dimensions of AI.

Several panellists noted the importance of trust—both within staff teams and between staff and students—in enabling professional learning and experimentation. Effective CPD should create space for dialogue, uncertainty, and gradual growth, rather than assume uniform expertise or confidence.



- **AI as Communication:** Prompting and interpreting AI responses is a form of communication. It requires clarity, purpose, and contextual understanding, not just technical skill.
- **Assessment and Integrity:** Concerns about academic integrity are valid, but responses need to be proportionate and relational. Overreliance on detection tools or surveillance methods can undermine trust and diminish learning.
- **Wellbeing and Trust:** Meaningful engagement with AI depends on safe, supportive environments. Pupils and staff alike benefit from opportunities to explore, reflect, and adapt without fear of punitive consequence.



FINAL THOUGHTS

CONCLUSION

This first meeting of the AI Edify Panel provided a reflective, open space for educators to articulate both enthusiasm and unease. AI is already part of school life, but the path forward is neither linear nor uniform. The session surfaced shared tensions and unique settings, making clear that AI strategy cannot be one-size-fits-all.

Instead, thoughtful integration must be grounded in values-led dialogue, careful modelling, and context-aware implementation. The insights gathered in this first panel meeting lay important groundwork for the collaborative development of responsible, inclusive, and educationally purposeful AI use in schools.

GOT ANY QUESTIONS?

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