



Case Study: Building a Coaching Culture Across the SEAX Trust

Organisation: SEAX Trust, Brentwood

**Essential Coaching Skills (ECS)
Programme
by Integrity Coaching**

Introduction

Context and Challenge

The SEAX Trust, comprising five special academy schools, was committed to evolving its professional development strategy to be inclusive of all roles across the organisation.

While existing CPD models had traditionally focused on teaching staff, the Trust recognised the importance of extending meaningful development opportunities to include all staff.

The aim was to foster a culture of shared learning, ownership, and collaboration—where every member of staff felt empowered to grow and contribute. Coaching was selected as a key strand of the Trust-wide professional development strategy to promote reflective practice, strengthen communication, and embed a culture of continuous improvement.

The Integrity Coaching Solution

To support this vision, the **SEAX Trust** partnered with **Integrity Coaching** to deliver its **Essential Coaching Skills (ECS) Programme** to staff in a range of roles across the Trust. The programme offered:

- **Training in coaching principles and models** (e.g. T-GROW, Compass Points)
- **Opportunities for safe rehearsal of coaching conversations**
- **Emphasis on active listening, self-reflection, and empowerment**
- **Practical coaching structures such as peer reflections and group coaching**

Importantly, headteachers were intentionally not included in the initial cohorts, creating space for middle leaders and support staff to lead the cultural shift from within. The programme ran over two years, with the first cohort receiving additional masterclasses in the second year to deepen their skills.

During this time, headteachers also came together for a dedicated session to explore the coaching work their teams had undertaken and to explore how to ensure this could be embedded across all schools in the Trust.

Impact and Outcomes

Cultural and Organisational Transformation:

- **Stronger Collaboration:** Coaching helped to foster a unified identity and cross-role collaboration.
- **Empowered Voice:** Staff felt heard and valued. Coaching equipped them to navigate difficult conversations and support others constructively.
- **Improved Communication:** HR and administrative teams reported enhanced dialogue, particularly around performance and wellbeing.
- **Sustainable Coaching Structures:** Peer and group coaching formats—such as walk-and-talks and reflection circles—were implemented across schools.
- **Inclusive Professional Development:** Coaching is now embedded in school improvement plans and includes both teaching and non-teaching staff.
- **Improved Motivation:** Both coaches and coachees reported increased engagement and appreciation for the sessions.
- **Values Connection:** Coaching enabled staff to align their personal values with those of the Trust, deepening their sense of purpose.



The ECS Programme has helped us create space for genuine dialogue, reflection, and growth. This has led to a system for Professional Growth being implemented to replace our traditional PMR system across the Trust.



— Kim McWilliam, Director of Education



- **100% of ECS participants** gave positive feedback on the training's impact and delivery.
- **Coaching rated as the most impactful CPD** ever received, according to internal surveys.
- **Coaching used proactively**, not just to address challenges but to build trust and foster independent thinking.
- **Efficient resource-sharing** across the Trust avoided duplication —coaching became a shared, scalable resource.

"It wasn't just aimed at teaching staff—our support teams, HR leads, and LSAs were fully engaged. Coaching is becoming part of how we work, not an add-on."

— Kim McWilliam





Embedding for the Long Term

- **Coaching now features in all school development plans** across the Trust.
- **Professional Development Leads appointed** in each school to sustain the coaching ethos.
- **A shared coaching language and toolkit** are under development to ensure long-term consistency and sustainability. This includes online training for new staff in the coaching model adopted across the Trust.
- **Coaching extended to all staff**, not just those trained - its influence now shapes the wider school culture.



*Even those who didn't attend training are benefitting.
Coaching is now key feature of our Culture.*



— Kim McWilliam

Strategic Value and Scalability

Despite limited budgets, the ECS Programme delivered outstanding **value for money**, enabling:

- Faster cultural change than traditional approaches
- High return on investment through improved staff engagement, and wellbeing
- Strategic alignment with the Trust's goal to foster cohesion as it grows

The ECS training, led by **Sam Jayasuriya**, received a **100% positive feedback rate**, with participants praising her ability to make coaching concepts practical, inclusive, and transformative.

"The structure and delivery were excellent. Sam created a supportive space for practice, reflection and deep learning."

— Kim McWilliam



Conclusion

The ECS Programme was more than a training initiative—it catalysed a cultural transformation across the SEAX Trust. By equipping staff with coaching skills, the Trust has built a more collaborative, resilient, and empowered workforce. Coaching is now central to how SEAX schools communicate, grow, and support one another. As new schools join the Trust, this foundation will be crucial for maintaining a strong, unified culture.

“As trainer for this Trust, I witnessed the impact individually in the leaders at all levels who undertook the course. They had time to think and process the huge workload they carry day in day out. The time given to coaching by the Trust left them feeling valued and listened to. The venue was particularly supportive to this programme - the internal and external environment lent itself to a calm and resourcing place to work in. That quality environment again led to the staff feeling supported and valued by the Trust leaders.

It was a great pleasure working with Kim, whose leadership from our initial conversation in April 2022 led to two cohorts and three masterclasses.”



**Sam Jayasuriya,
Associate Coach - Integrity Coaching and Lead Trainer on ECS**



If you would like to find out more about our Essential Coaching Skills Programme or other coaching programmes, please get in touch for a FREE call:



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