

## **Standards and Quality Report 19-20**

### **Introduction**

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has statutory duties to advise on educational needs and delivers on this through the nationally agreed framework of five roles encompassing consultation, assessment, intervention, training and development work and research, at the level of a child or young person, group or school and authority wide.

During 2019/20 staffing was stable and for the second consecutive year the service was able to support trainee placements, which in turn provides useful links to Dundee University and evidence based practice. The team simultaneously supervised both a Year 1 and a Year 2 trainee placement. The service continued with the re-charge funding method for intervention support for schools with PEF funding, expanding the use of Precision Teaching to incorporate both numeracy and literacy. Collaborative work took place with Navigate on the Scottish Government-produced trauma training materials for schools, 'Compassionate and Connected Communities' and a renewed focus on nurture training was also supported. In respect of the Raising Attainment strategy, the EPS worked with the DHTs (Support) and interested schools to look at whether best practice and research evidence was being fully utilised at secondary level around the study skills of young people. Critical work was also carried out to investigate the issue of emotionally based absence and agree appropriate interventions.

Like all, service delivery was swiftly re-orientated in March to best support children, young people, families and schools during the COVID 19 lockdown period. The service responded quickly to adapt its inputs and this area of work then dominated the remainder of the session. During this time however the EPS was able to lead on the introduction of CIRCLE as a vehicle for driving forward inclusive change as part of the Inclusion inset day on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. A full evaluative review of the lockdown work is not given in this report.

This report has been written under the four headings of the National Improvement Framework and then the 'Organised to deliver' section looks at self-evaluation and service delivery for the core delivery of a support service.

### **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy**

#### **Optimising Student Success 19-20**

Utilising action research methodology, a pilot was carried out with 13 secondary school subject teachers across 4 secondary schools within PKC. This targeted how they could best enhance and develop pupil capacity for effective studying and learning both in and out of the classroom. Over two sessions we supported participants to:

- develop their knowledge and understanding of evidence-based studying and learning strategies
- develop their knowledge of WHY these strategies work and why others may not
- test out application of these strategies in their school setting

Feedback from participating practitioners noted the positive impact for pupils' understanding of their own learning and its application but also on their own practice.

- "as educational professionals, we should all be fully invested in this, delivering the same messages"
- "the best CPD I have done for years, the way I am teaching my higher and advanced higher classes has really changed, they are using it in other subjects too"

Feedback from pupils to participants highlighted that, as result of applying these learning strategies, they had:

- increased understanding of how they learn
- greater understanding of what they know and don't know yet in a given subject area
- increased confidence in participating in regular low stakes testing, following initial apprehension
- valued the opportunity to revisit learning from earlier in the session, as they did not feel that this often happened ahead of examinations
- began to apply the learning strategies taught to other subject areas
- improved their attainment in that subject area

Following the positive response, next session the EPS will offer to work with a cohort of practitioners in each secondary school, as well as continue support for existing practitioners in development of their practice. New resources will also be compiled to support young people and parents in the use of these learning strategies outwith the classroom.

### **Literacy**

This session there were lower numbers of applicants for Wave 3 and High 5 training, resulting in the cancellation or rescheduling of training. High 5 training went ahead for 4 schools, primary and secondary. Pause Prompt Praise training also went ahead for a small number of settings. As a result, the need for continued training will be explored as well as the potential barriers to attendance at training and how these might be overcome.

### **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people**

#### **Attainment Gap**

The DPEP joined the Raising Attainment Board and has worked collaboratively with a QIO and ES Attainment Advisor on tasks arising. This has included updating the PKC Improvement Methodology Training, offering consultation on the 20/21 PEF guidance and supporting the development of a tool to support planning of interventions and gathering of impact data. Training has continued to be delivered in evidence-based interventions to close the attainment gap, including Wave 3, High 5, Pause, Prompt, Praise, self regulation and precision teaching, with the latter being extended from numeracy to literacy this session.

## **Nurture**

Working alongside the EASO Early Years the service was tasked with:

- reviewing the Nurture Group (NG) guidance
- reviewing staff training
- consideration of quality assurance / self- evaluation processes for NGs.
- developing nurturing approaches for all schools

Linking to the findings of the Inclusion Review, an implementation plan was devised, taking account of a needs analysis that was conducted with NG staff at the start of the year. This gathered information in 3 key areas: attachment theory; adult language and attunement; and behaviour as communication and how to respond. Staff confidence levels were discussed in relation to their own training needs and their confidence in offering training to others. Key themes were identified to inform the development of the training framework, which was core training for all current and prospective NG staff. In November two EPs delivered a whole day training for nurture staff focused on attachment theory and the importance of relationships. Work to review the Nurture Guidance was completed in April and this will be adapted to reflect the recent change to the delivery of nurture within the authority to a whole school approach.

### **Learning through play**

Over the past two academic years, the EPS have been working alongside ECS Early Years and QIOs to roll out the implementation of Learning through Play (LtP), with an initial focus on P1 classes. Work began on the third year of delivering LtP, with session one delivered virtually to approximately 15 schools, in June 2020.

Over the course of 2019/20, 9 schools were working on embedding LtP within their context. The model of delivery was refined in 2019/20 to incorporate an action research process reflecting our understanding of implementation science, sustainability and adult learning. There are four key outcomes within 'LtP':

1. To ensure progression in learning in line with CfE, through an increase in quality play experiences.
2. To increase engagement in classroom activities through play and play based learning.
3. To promote connectedness and relationships within the classroom.
4. To promote teacher understanding and confidence in the application of play based approaches to learning.

A comprehensive evaluation of LtP was undertaken across 2019-20, taking into consideration the four key outcomes and also the implementation process. The EPS are currently producing a full evaluation report. Preliminary indicators suggest that schools have found LtP to be a very beneficial approach within their context, particularly in relation to increased pupil engagement and motivation towards learning; increased Executive Function skills and increased pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil connectedness. Due to COVID-19 and school closures, participating schools were only able to deliver LtP across 3 terms.

*“Children have the freedom to explore and investigate their interests. They have no imposed limits and are curious and creative about learning. Provocations and adult intervention / questioning start things off or move the play along but the children come up with amazing things we may not have considered.”*

*P1 class teacher*

*“Since using play-based learning and teaching we now know all the pupils in our class extremely well – much better than previous years. The play breaks down adult – child barriers, helps the children see we are ‘fun’, helps them to trust us and share more with us. This in itself allows us to find out what motivates specific children and we can use this knowledge to tailor meaningful learning experiences for each child.”*

*P1 Class teacher*

### **Solihull Evaluation**

EPS support was provided for the evaluation of the Solihull Approach training being offered to practitioners across the Tayside area, including practitioners from Health, Education, Social Work and Third Sector. An EP attended implementation meetings to discuss aims and purpose of training and look at existing data, supporting thinking around how impact could be measured. Consultation took place with colleagues in Fife EPS regarding their own process of Solihull implementation and evaluation, and the Fife process and tools were shared with the Implementation Team. The observation tool from Fife EPS was to be piloted in Angus to assess validity of tool for the Tayside aims and context.

Further consultation and discussions with the Implementation Team led to the EP pulling together an evaluation proposal which was to be shared prior to lockdown. The proposed evaluation plan may also need to take into consideration the uptake of free Solihull training being offered online for parents and carers during the lockdown period.

### **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**

#### **Compassionate and Connected Community**

Supported by colleagues from Navigate, this Education Scotland resource was adapted by the EPS and shared with 22 members of staff from early years, primary and secondary settings. The training was designed to support schools to develop their understanding and skills around adversity, trauma, nurturing approaches and relationship-based practice through a practitioner enquiry model of learning. Staff welfare was emphasised at all sessions. Good practice at a universal and targeted level was explored and shared. Three of six planned sessions were delivered before lockdown and a session is planned for late August to round off the training and discuss learning from the Covid 19 situation. The feedback from the group will be used to inform future planning in relation to building resilience and connectedness within our school communities. Feedback gathered showed that staff valued the inputs, the focus on staff wellbeing and having the time and reflective space for professional discussion.

## **Bounce Back**

Refresher sessions were offered for primary schools to consider the effectiveness of their Bounce Back implementation and re-launch the programme in their schools. Two of the three schools who signed up to the pilot then implemented Bounce Back in Secondary. Gathering of interim evaluation information was interrupted by COVID 19, but will be picked up again in the new session. The relevance of the Bounce Back materials for recovery planning was highlighted to schools.

## **Excellent Relationships**

Through the Excellent Relationships, Excellent Learning and Teaching working group, collaborative work was undertaken to identify the features of excellent relationships in schools, and associated excellent practice exemplars and challenge questions. Alongside this, principles for supporting relationships and behaviour were developed. A virtual presentation was developed based on these as part of a whole authority INSET day on Excellent Inclusive Practice, and resources to support excellent relationships proposed for the new Sharepoint site.

Next steps include the mapping of current approaches and interventions on to the Excellent Relationships framework.

## **Emotionally Based Absence (EBA)**

A needs analysis of the scale and nature of EBA in PKC secondary schools was carried out in October 2019 using a questionnaire developed by EPS. Seven out of the ten PKC schools submitted returns with the estimated<sup>1</sup> figures in the table below, indicating that the prevalence of emotionally based absence increases from S1 to S4 with a decline in S5 and S6.

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
20 <sup>1</sup>	41 <sup>1</sup>	45 <sup>1</sup>	64 <sup>1</sup>	33 <sup>1</sup>	19 <sup>1</sup>

A draft Staged Intervention Framework was created, based on the framework shared by Edinburgh ECS, and presented to a multi-agency focus group involving SW, CAMHS, CLW, SYP, School Nurses and High School representatives for comment. All agencies welcomed the framework and committed to attending a further meeting to review its implementation. All expressed interest in the possibility of the SI framework being a shared multi-agency document.

Two schools were identified to participate in a pilot. Key staff received training about EBA which had been developed by the EPS and completed a questionnaire about their confidence in supporting pupils with EBA. The schools also agreed to pilot the draft EBA Staged Intervention Framework and School Experience Contextual Assessment Tool (SECAT) and intervene with individual target pupils to support their engagement and attendance at school. EBA training was delivered to one whole staff team. A leaflet for parents and carers about 'Managing School Anxiety' was developed in collaboration with one of the schools. The pilot was scheduled to run from January to May but was interrupted by the COVID19 school closures and so could not be fully evaluated. Informal feedback from DHTs in both schools was positive with reference being made to the usefulness of the resources.

The EBA training materials were adapted to cover potential impacts of COVID19 and a virtual presentation recorded and made available to all PKC schools to support recovery.

### **Counselling in Schools**

The Scottish Government announced in summer 2019 funding for counselling in schools, primarily secondary schools, with access 'in communities' for children ten years old and over and from special schools. Implementation was to be phased with a timeline set for full implementation by September 2020. The Principal Educational Psychologist led this work for PKC with the approach being taken forward on a Tayside wide basis, with local adaptations as appropriate.

A brief needs analysis was conducted with schools, principles agreed and the pilot phase was then initiated. Pilot 1 was set up around two LMGs and involved the national organisation, Place 2 Be and Pilot 2 worked with the local organisation Mind Space and the setting up of a 'wellbeing team', including a small amount of funding given to support Family Change consultation for staff.

A Steering committee was set up involving stakeholders. To support readiness for counselling, advanced training from Abertay University was procured for key staff to enhance their understanding of mental health in young people and specifically the assessment of counselling as an appropriate intervention.

Some of the pilot work was interrupted due to Covid-19 but there was a continued focus to ensure the supports are in place as close to the start of session as possible. Work continued on the Tayside procurement framework to put in place transparent awards for full implementation by the autumn. A Tayside wide 'Counselling in Schools' Co-ordinator was appointed to start in September.

### **Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people**

#### **Developing the young work force**

Further to evaluating the workshops for young people last year, delivery was expanded with the aim of maximising impact. A card was developed for young people with 5 "mind tricks" on one side and a planning aid on the other. Rather than just focus on one off workshops with the young people, a mentors' workshop also took place, to equip them to support the young people. Feedback was positive from both the mentors' and the young people's workshops. Unfortunately all mentors did not attend and there was a gap between the mentor and mentees workshops. Going forward, more effective ways of training all mentors, and optimum timing for mentee sessions will be explored. A further consultation session for mentors and collection of evaluative data on impact was affected by COVID-19 closures.

#### **Excellent Inclusive Practice – CIRCLE**

The EPS worked with the Inclusion Team to launch the CIRCLE resource on the whole authority Inclusion INSET day in May. This was a significant step in establishing a framework and tools for the development of excellent inclusive practice, starting with a focus on the learning environment. Further development and embedding has been mapped out in an implementation plan which will be actioned during 20/21, according to evaluation and feedback from schools and which will involve collaboration with multi agency partners.

## Organised to deliver

### Evaluation of Service Delivery

#### Consultation

EPs recorded consultation by school, defined as consultation which was not part of casework or part of a meeting which discussed multiple children, such as an ITM. Consultation figures were returned for 82 establishments, 5 nurseries, 65 primary schools and 12 secondary schools. The total number of consultations was 363, for a total of 376 children. Consultation numbers in the nursery sector, which tend to be supported through involvement of the Early Years Inclusion team, were much lower. In the primary sector there were 247 consultations, for 257 children. The range was 0-14 consultations, with the average being 4 per primary school. In the secondary sector there were 109 consultations for 113 children. The range was 0-26, with the average being 9.

Evaluation data was collected for a sample of these consultations. Issues brought for discussion included: low school attendance; limited engagement in learning; executive function difficulties; anxiety; emotional regulation and externalising behaviours; nurture/bereavement needs; literacy difficulties; impact of current diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorder; impact of parental mental health. Key actions following consultation included: EP to continue involvement through further consultation/open case; guidance given to school around gathering further information to support understanding of needs; strategies provided and/or plan discussed with school.

Overall, the process of consultation has been valued by schools. Key themes highlighted through evaluation feedback included:

- Time to reflect and process thinking
- Another person's perspective
- Reassurance and building staff confidence
- Helpful discussion and supports thinking around planning and next steps
- Helpful to move forward a situation which had become 'stuck'
- Useful to explore ideas and strategies

*"The opportunity to chat and bounce ideas was particularly useful. X is very open to discussion which has made it very easy for us to ask questions and develop our understanding"*

*"Thank you for sending all of this across – I found this morning really helpful in planning the support for these three young people."*

It was also noted that at times staff felt overwhelmed and didn't think they would have the time to take plans forward.

EPs also noted reflections regarding the process of consultation. Themes raised included:

- Timing of consultation is important: helpful for schools to feel that they can use this process to support early intervention. Key times are following transitions – helpful to advocate seeking consultation support early on.
- Important to support expectations and understanding of consultation process
- Consultations feel beneficial when it helps support schools' thinking around factors giving rise to additional needs and most appropriate next steps

### **Casework**

In addition to the sampling of cases by EPs for evaluation, quantitative data gathered at the point of case closure as to changes in the situation for the child or young person was also available for analysis.

Impact was reported most frequently in the areas of:

- Increased staff confidence in meeting needs (63%)
- Improved emotional wellbeing (50%)
- Improved relationships (38%)
- Improved engagement (38%)
- Reduced behaviour incidents (32%)
- More appropriate individualised planning (25%)
- Including transition planning

This is the first year of using the revised form, reflection on the categories would be helpful to ensure relevance.

Casework summary records are an opportunity for EP reflection, practice sharing and review of impact and outcome. Casework is agreed where there is the greatest likelihood of impact or where there is significant vulnerability. Information was gathered across the team and a range of themes were noted: Pupil engagement and barriers to learning; supporting assessment and planning, including risk assessment; supporting parental confidence in relation to school planning and parenting; problem solving and generating strategies; staff development. Collaboration was with a range of partners, parents and carers and pupils.

Schools valued the support of the EP to provide consultation and a problem-solving approach, including supporting the development of home-school relationships.

Parents and carers appreciated good communication, contribution to planning and helping them understand their child within the school context.

Improved outcomes were in relation to: relationships, attendance, motivation and engagement, teacher/staff confidence and meeting learner needs.



## Training

The EPS delivered 36 training events over 76 sessions throughout 2019/20.

- 31% of training delivered was in evidence-based interventions to support closing the attainment gap
- Continued training was offered in the areas of Self-Regulation in Action, Precision Teaching, Learning through Play, Resilience and Wellbeing and Nurturing Schools
- Pilots this year were – Emotionally Based Absence, Optimising Student Success, CIRCLE resource, Compassionate and Connected Community, Resolutions Mentoring
- Pupil Support staff professional development was again supported by a variety of sessions including:
  - Mindfulness, Attunement, enhancing playtimes, Precision Teaching in Numeracy and Literacy and Hi 5 Literacy Intervention

The EPS led on the virtual delivery of the authority-wide Inclusion focused INSET day in May. This was a first venture into this method of delivery. Virtual presentations were recorded by members of the team introducing the CIRCLE resource as a framework for supporting inclusive practice across PKC schools. Feedback from schools was extremely positive as both an alternative method of presenting and a useful resource.

Following this, members of the team have now created virtual presentations on supporting Emotionally Based Absence and also Attunement, as part of the resources for Recovery planning. The EPS is now exploring further opportunities to deliver training in this way moving forward.

Gathering evaluative data from training for pupil support staff was problematic this year due to glitches in online recording systems and inability to access data due to building closure. Evaluative feedback from other EPS training events highlighted that participants valued:

- Using evidence- based practice as foundation of training development
- Opportunity for discussion, reflection of own practice and identification of next steps with colleagues
- Connecting the theory, evidence and practice
- Real-life examples and walkthroughs of topic in practice
- Sharing of supporting resources
- Learning new skills and strategies to apply to areas of challenge (for themselves and others)
- Interactive delivery of sessions
- Positive reinforcement of existing areas of individual practice

The most commonly used words to describe EPS training events this session were:

- Interesting, helpful, thought-provoking, well delivered, relaxed, motivational and challenging

## **Schools' Evaluation**

Interviews with leaders from 31 schools were completed virtually by link EPs before and after the summer break. The following themes emerged:

### **What do schools value from EPS?**

- Personal support for staff *"Really value the relationship, someone can speak to confidentially"*
- Support with ECS processes
- Observations and consultation with staff around meeting children's needs *"value your advice immensely"*
- Small schools group consultation
- Specific assessment approaches, e.g. SCERTS
- Individual and group intervention work with young people
- Training for staff
- *"I value the contribution of our EP as part of school improvement discussions around Pupil Support issues as well as through the problem-solving aspect of working as part of the Integrated Team."*

### **What is the impact of EPS support?**

- Strengthening relationships with families *"Families see we are all working together, joined up approach around a family"*
- Developing staff understanding of additional support needs
- Highlighting areas for systemic development
- Staff feel supported
- Scaffolding thinking and providing support and challenge
- *"helpful engagement around transition and support of new pupil with additional support needs to school"*

### **How is communication with EPS?**

- All comments were very positive, with communication described as open, responsive, helpful and with actions followed up upon. *"Always at the end of the phone, or e-mail or can pre arrange meetings when necessary. Easy to speak to."*
- Planned consultation slots were consistently mentioned as helpful

### **Impact of accessing development opportunities from EPS**

- Changing thinking *"Has informed her thinking about how she works with individuals – and considers and understands behaviours"*
- Evidence based interventions embedded and having impact, e.g. self regulation, high 5, precision teaching – *"all but 1 child made the hoped for progress in literacy" (wave 3)*
- Several schools mentioned how helpful they had found the recent CIRCLE training, and that it had helped them think more about creating inclusive environments for their young people on return to school

### **What did you find helpful from EPS in relation to COVID 19?**

- Wellbeing guides for parents, staff and young people were mentioned by many school leaders as particularly valuable *"Staff were grateful and valued that their wellbeing was clearly a priority for PKC and communications were not just about planning/work"*

- Virtual support for vulnerable young people via consultation at ITMS and direct support for families
- Accessibility, telephone consultation line was mentioned often
- CIRCLE training

### **Improving the effectiveness of working with EPS**

Many school leaders wished to continue with the existing model of service delivery with no changes suggested. Where there were suggestions for improvement, these included:

- More written feedback, e.g. reports for meetings, consultation records
- Clearer understanding of EPS priorities and range of services
- Development of clearer processes for prioritising work in a secondary school
- Input into developing the vision of inclusion and support in a school

These tended to be school-specific suggestions rather than general themes and so will be taken forward at that level.

Small school leaders discussed the **small school group consultation** process. Only 1 expressed dissatisfaction with the model. Most headteachers valued small schools group consultation, as well as the opportunity for individual contact with their link EP. Positive evaluations included:

- *“found it very helpful to scaffold thinking and support/challenge reflection on practice.”*
- helpful to hear the views from other schools
- *“useful way to work, share ideas with colleagues and access to expertise of EPs. Overall a supportive model where issues can be explored. Have found the strategies transferrable to other situations”*
- *“While I didn’t manage to attend small school group consultation this session I like the concept. When I have previously attended I can recognise similar difficulties and therefore shared solutions.”*

There were several comments about wishing to attend, but there being barriers to participation

- timings conspired against attendance
- other priorities coming up meaning that HT can’t leave school
- travel

Suggestions for development next session:

- Provide dates early in the year
- Review timings
- Meet virtually on Teams, both as a short term but also potentially longer-term solution. However, there was also a point made about a balance between face to face and virtual means
- Initial date in September to share experiences as everyone is developing their own recovery plans and others may have found alternative solutions.

## **Recovery planning**

Many school leaders were uncertain about what their school communities would require in the new term, given the frequently changing situation with the virus and return to school arrangements. Others noted:

- Support for individual young people who were likely to find the return to school difficult
- Support for staff wellbeing, at individual and whole school levels
- Support for parents who are concerned about the return to school
- Support for wellbeing of the school community, e.g. through resilience programmes, reconnection activities
- Support around bereavement and loss

## **Capacity for Improvement**

The EPS has again continued to adapt its service delivery in response to feedback and to changing needs. While this was particularly apparent during COVID 19, there were already examples such as expanding the opportunities for attendance at small schools group consultation in response to feedback from 18/19. These changes appear to have led to rising satisfaction rates with this aspect of service delivery. The EPS has adapted to changing needs by responding to the request to support excellent inclusive practice through the introduction and implementation framework for CIRCLE and for the Raising Attainment strategy by bringing forward some of the latest educational research evidence, this year through the 'Optimising Student Success' work. It has also responded to requests to support the evaluation of 'Learning Through Play' and the Solihull approach. Further work has been carried out on the Relationships framework and on nurture.

It is important that the EPS can be responsive but also plan effectively to ensure effective delivery. The delivery of the interventions and supports mentioned above must take place whilst the quality of core service delivery is maintained. To ensure on-going improvement in this area it is important that the self-evaluation cycle is not just supported, as it has been but also undergoes enhancements as appropriate. Work was undertaken this year to commence more quantitative analysis of casework and it is important this step is reviewed as part of a general review and refresh of the self-evaluation cycle during 20/21. 20/21 will also include an ongoing focus on effective service delivery for the early years. The EPS will be keen to continue to be adaptable as possible to support the changing needs of the schools as they return and to learn to capitalise on new ways of working in doing so.

## **Summary**

With a settled team the EPS took forward significant developments in 'Compassionate and Connected Communities', 'Optimising Student Success' and 'Emotionally Based Absence' in order to drive improvement in ECS priorities and the 'Raising Attainment' strategies. Outcomes have included changes in how schools plan their work and approach the current challenges they face.

This work was alongside on-going attainment gap interventions such as Self-regulation and Precision Teaching and health and wellbeing supports such as Bounce Back. This work is part of the research and development function of the EPS and takes place in conjunction with the core service delivery of statutory functions through the school link EP, involving consultation, assessment and

intervention. Self-evaluation data informs that this work is valued for relationships that allow support and challenge and systematic thinking and that it impacts upon understanding and planning for need, attendance and engagement, staff confidence and relationships with families. Statutory work beyond the school link includes Fostering and Permanence and Child Protection Committee. Review of school placement work for panels and work undertaken in the monitoring of outwith school placements is a significant proportion of EPS delivery time.

It is important that the EPS links to the education evidence base and brings what up-to-date research tells us should best meet current identified needs. COVID-19 provided examples of this in action and inputs have been well received. Much of the advice has focused on the important of key relationships and how best to foster and support these within the education setting.

As we go forward into 20/21 it is critical that the EPS continues to seek feedback and take the learning from this time, is able to use technology with discernment and cement relationships that can best support the wellbeing of education staff and so place all of us in a position to best manage change and uncertainty to support our children and young people.