

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY NEWS

This newsletter is written by Portsmouth Educational Psychology Service and is intended to share knowledge about quality, evidenced-based practice happening at both a national and local level.

What's in this issue?

Fully funded, evidence-based Literacy support for Secondary schools

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Masking of Literacy needs: what behaviours to look out for and a FREE resource to support students - Page 3

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In-house Support for Secondary Aged Pupils

In 2022, the Educational Psychology team carried out focus groups with secondary age pupils in years 7-11. The findings show that pupils are less keen to come out of class to receive literacy interventions because for the following reasons:

- They feel that they have been doing **similar phonics-based interventions** for many years and **not made the progress**;
- They **want to be with their friends**;
- They will **miss out on enjoyable learning** activities;
- Students who had been **exposed to metacognitive strategies** during interventions still **did not identify them as support systems** that they are familiar with or feel that they use them in their learning within the classroom.

These findings stress the importance of getting in-classroom support for our students right.

“Good classroom teaching is the bedrock of effective practise” (Snowling and Hulme, 2011)

Taking students out of class for interventions should be considered very carefully, and when important in-class learning is missed, opportunities to catch up on this should be provided. Any intervention should be carried out alongside, and not instead of, the universal support that schools put in place within the classroom.

How do we evaluate and grow the way that we carry out interventions?

Free whole school training is available to secondary school staff, plus follow up support, from the Educational Psychology team. Secondary schools interested in this should contact the Principal Educational Psychologist Victoria Parker for more details.

Victoria.Parker@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Spotlight on...

The Importance of Reading and Books at Home

In our digital society, there are less and less books at home. However, evidence suggests that having access to real books in the home and classroom for children to pick up and share with others is key to children's engagement and enjoyment of reading.

Family hubs and local libraries can be a good source of support for families to enable them to access books and educational settings should continue to signpost these fantastic resources to enable families to have access quality books, emphasising their importance in helping instil a love of reading from an early age.

Tips: Supporting children to enjoy reading



Read with children to support their understanding of language for thinking.



Use props, change your voice and use expression to help to convey tone and feeling.



Help children to choose the right book: model strategies like looking at the cover, the blurb, the amount of text on pages and reviews from others.



Praise effort rather than performance. Providing specific feedback alongside the reading can help: "I liked the way you worked that word out for yourself".



Use of questions and prompts to draw children in and monitoring levels of engagement.

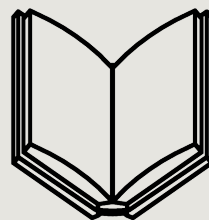


Provide opportunities for co-operative reading with other children, eg friends or a sibling.



"Family hubs and local libraries can be a good source of support for families"

If parents' own literacy levels are poor, it could be that the use of an immersive reader app (like the one listed in this edition's Technology Corner) could help when sharing a book together with their child. A lot of existing software has similar technology inbuilt and is accessible to children and adults for free.



Advice to schools: Encouraging Access to Books



Ensure books are updated regularly.



Provide dual-language texts and encourage the child's home language.



Provide opportunities for both fiction and non-fiction reading.



Provide texts written in different formats: picture, text, comics, audio etc.



Link with children's prior knowledge and interests where possible.



Ensure texts are shared across educational and home settings.



Emotional Needs and Literacy: Spotting the Link



Shouting, work avoidance, shutting down: these are just some behaviours which we see frequently in the classroom. But did you know that sometimes **these can be literacy-related** and a manifestation of fear or anger when a child cannot access the work?

Being attuned to a child can help to identify their literacy barrier(s). To help with this, we have created **visual prompts, based on the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy model, which can help to identify a student's strengths and meta-cognitive preferences.** They provide a quick and non-confrontational way for the child to communicate their challenges and preferred way of working to you, in the moment, allowing the adults in the room to respond to their needs swiftly and effectively.

Click [here](#) to access your free copy.

Who's Who and Who can Help You

Victoria Parker: Principal Educational Psychologist, PCC

Please contact Vicky if you would like Literacy support in your Secondary school.

Victoria.Parker@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Gary Green and Jo White, both local Secondary English teachers and leaders

Gary and Jo have devised fantastic whole-school literacy tools, including an audit tool. They have funding to enable them to work with you in your setting to identify ways to improve whole-school literacy. Email them on ggreen@bohunt.hants.sch.uk and joanne.white@springfield.uk.net

Ella Harbut, Early Years Advisory Teacher, PCC

Ella can provide signposting, guidance and support for Year R and other EYFS provisions, eg Early Years settings.

Ella.Harbut@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Gemma Gwilliam: Head of Digital Learning, Education and Innovation and Strategic Lead

Gemma is an expert and pioneer in using technology to support all learners. If you would like to know more, visit the Digital City website.

**Technology corner:
tech to reduce
stress!**

Microsoft Office Lens

This is an app which is great for children and parents/carers. Simply take a photo of what you're reading and Lens gives you immersive reader options, such as having the text read aloud and the ability to click a button to access explanations of word meanings. This could be a great in-class support tool for less confident readers.