



# St Helena Government

## Educational Psychology Service

### REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

#### ST. HELENA EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The role of the Educational Psychology Service is to help identify and support children experiencing barriers to their learning. This is achieved through the five core functions of consultation, assessment and intervention, training and research (Currie Report). EPs work at the level of the child/individual, the class, the school, and the wider community, to effect change at both an individual and systemic level.

This brief report shows a selection of the work completed or planned through the Educational Psychologist role on St. Helena from February 2020 to February 2021. Work from August 2010 to February 2020 is already detailed in a previous report. As requested, the report is arranged under the three headings of achievements, challenges and next steps.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

##### 1. Organisational Level

- Maximising the Impact of TAs – Presented research and a proposal for how to maximise the impact of TAs to the Education Wider Senior Leadership Group, as well as working with individual schools to rethink the deployment of their TAs, and providing training to TAs to enable them to work more effectively.
- Critical Incident Guidelines – Produced Critical Incident Guidelines for all educational establishments, outlining how to deal with incidents such as the covid pandemic or sudden deaths within the school community.
- Dyslexia Guidelines – Produced a working document for schools to outline effective procedures for identifying dyslexia.
- Early Years SEND Pathway– Produced a pathway outlining how we can ensure children with SEND are identified and supported before entering the school system. This has been presented to education, health and social care managers and is now operational.
- Covid Support – Worked on a number of initiatives to support schools during the time of school closures such as social stories for children with communication needs, information leaflets for parents, and radio school.
- ELSAs – Continuing to supervise the ELSAs, following training of seven new ELSAs last year.
- Children’s Support Team – Continuing to ensure the smooth running of this multi-agency forum which was developed last year, and to collect statistics to inform planning.

## 2. School/Class Level

- Nurturing Approaches – Worked with a school to develop a nurture-informed group (the Busy Bees) and to help all staff understand the principles of nurture. This allows the needs of a small number of children who require support to develop social and emotional skills to be addressed successfully in their school.
- Emotion Coaching – Trained staff across several schools in emotion coaching, which gives staff an effective way of helping children to regulate and manage their emotions, and so their behaviour.
- Staff Wellbeing – Ran a workshop for staff to support their resilience and wellbeing.
- Study Skills – Ran workshops for PAS students to improve their study skills.
- Promoting Language and Communication in the EYFS – Supporting primary schools to develop an environment which effectively promotes language and communication development, following the recognition that many children were entering school with impoverished language skills
- WOWW – Running an initiative which helps a class improve their learning behaviours through target-setting and positive feedback.

## 3. Individual Level

- Working with parents – Supported parents in managing their children’s emotions, behaviour and development through parenting sessions and the use of VIG (Video Interactive Guidance).
- Direct work with children and young people - Worked directly with children and young people to address a number of issues including: loss and bereavement, emotional regulation, mental health symptomology, life story work.
- Staff consultations – Worked with teachers and TAs to help them understand particular children’s behaviour and come up with actions to address their needs.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance – Worked with a pupil to develop a phased return to education. This also involved addressing some organisational issues about how we manage children with EBSA.
- Dyslexia assessment – Assessed children for specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

## CHALLENGES

- Placement of EP service  
At present, the EP post sits within the Health Directorate rather than the Education and Employment Directorate. A key skill which an EP should bring is the ability to make and manage systemic changes for the wider benefits of all children. Placing the EP post within the Education and Employment Directorate could make this easier and allow the Directorate to maximise the use of the island EP.
- Code of Practice and shared vision  
The Code of Practice is a very valuable document in creating a shared vision across all of education as to our values and the principles of inclusion. When dedicated time can be given to complete and launch this, it will make it easier to work with schools in a co-ordinated and effective way.

## **NEXT STEPS**

As well as continuing with all the work listed above, some initiatives I believe would benefit the island are:

- Maximising the use of TAs – Supporting schools to use the recommendations from the Education Endowment foundation to deploy TAs in a more effective manner.
- Nurturing approaches – Extending and building up the use of nurturing approaches across all schools, which would include training staff and setting up nurture-informed groups, would address many of the social and emotional needs of children at a young age, before they become mental health problems in the teenage years.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidelines – Guidelines and procedures for staff on how to identify which children are at risk of becoming poor attenders and what support to put in place would be beneficial, given the small but significant number of children who have poor attendance or are school refusers.
- Early years and parenting strategy – In the longer term, developing an Early Years and Parenting Strategy would allow the island to look at and address needs right from birth, ultimately saving money as children grow up more resilient.

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