

East Renfrewshire
Educational
Psychology Service

**Self Evaluation of
National Theme 1
Learning and
Teaching**

January 2017



Introduction

Education Scotland's *Guidelines for Validated Self Evaluation (2015)* outline that VSE is 'a collaborative, evaluative process which aims to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners by providing support and challenge to the work of educational psychology services.'

The purpose of the VSE process is to support, extend and challenge our own self-evaluation to help us evaluate our strengths and areas for improvement. VSE uses many principles which underpin a collaborative enquiry approach to evaluation, intervention and improvement.

The Guidelines note that, 'to address national objectives, the focus of the partnership between the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and Education Scotland is on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This is achieved through working together with partner agencies and stakeholders, to improve outcomes for all.'

There are two themes:

National Theme 1: Learning and teaching - 'The EPS' contribution to learning and teaching with a focus on raising attainment and achievement for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap'.

National Theme 2: Partnership working / Impact on the wider community - 'To capture health and wellbeing, Getting it Right for every Child and partnership working. Prevention and early intervention will be central to this area.'

Both themes are interconnected and fit well with the Scottish Government priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and the publication of 'How Good is Our School 4' (HGIOS4).

VSE presents an opportunity for East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service to improve its self-evaluation and inform developments that will strengthen its impact on improving outcomes for children, young people and families. To this end the following key question has been developed to guide self-evaluation activity in Theme 1:

What impact is our contribution to practitioner enquiry and professional learning with schools having on learning and teaching, particularly for our most vulnerable pupils?

Where are we now?

Where are we now?

Key Outcome 5: We are working in partnership with the Quality Improvement Team and schools to improve the attainment of the most vulnerable learners

The EPS is working to improve wellbeing outcomes and the attainment of East Renfrewshire's most vulnerable learners by improving learning and teaching through our approach to practitioner enquiry and our delivery of Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL).

We have chosen East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service's (EPS) involvement in Practitioner Enquiry and Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) as our theme for validated self-evaluation as these areas demonstrate how we contribute to:

- improvement in learner experiences
- improvement in teacher performance
- improvement in teacher's practitioner enquiry skills
- improvement in the wellbeing and attainment of East Renfrewshire's most vulnerable learners

The EPS is committed to effective self-evaluation and would like to take the opportunity, through VSE, to establish its capacity for improvement in these areas and determine how good we are now, and how good we can be.

Key Drivers

The relevant key drivers for our approach to practitioner enquiry and Career Long Professional Learning include:

GIRFEC:

- Building solutions with and around children, young people and families.
- Enabling children and young people to get the help they need when they need it.
- Supporting a positive shift in culture, systems and practice.
- Working better together to improve the life chances for children, young people

Our Sources of Evidence

Education Standards and Quality Report 2014-15

Attainment trends

CfE Action Plan 2016-19

CLPL evaluations

School Evaluations

Exclusion statistics

Out-with authority placement trends

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
Getting It Right for Every Child

<p>and families.</p> <p>National Improvement Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve attainment for all, particularly in literacy and numeracy. • To improve the learning progress of every child, by reducing inequality in education. • To improve children and young people’s health and wellbeing. • To improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people. <p>Single Outcome Agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. • We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk. • We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. • Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. <p>East Renfrewshire Council’s key local outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed. • East Renfrewshire residents are fit and active and have the skills for learning, life and work. <p>East Renfrewshire Education Department’s (2016-2019) improvement outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people. • An increase in activities which support prevention and early intervention, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. • A culture based on getting it right for every child. • Practices and experiences which ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults are identified and addressed. • Maintain and where possible improve upon the already low exclusion rates in our schools, especially for looked after children. • A positive culture in health and wellbeing in every school and service. <p>Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower individuals and communities. 	<p>National Improvement Framework for Scotland (2016)</p> <p>East Renfrewshire’s Single Outcome Agreement</p> <p>East Renfrewshire Education Department Local Improvement Plan</p> <p>Christie Report (2011)</p>
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- Integrate service provision.
- Prevent negative outcomes.
- Become more efficient.

Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015)

- Improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing among primary school children.
- Tackle inequity in order that every child can succeed in school and gain the skills for life.
- Raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas in order to close the equity gap.

Strand One: Practitioner Enquiry

Effective Practitioner Enquiry is advocated by the General Teaching Council for Scotland as an example of best practice:

“Practitioner enquiry, as defined by Menter et al (2011), is a ‘finding out’ or an investigation with a rationale and approach that can be explained or defended. The findings can then be shared so it becomes more than reflection or personal enquiry.”

www.gtcs.org.uk

Practitioner Enquiry is considered to be an effective way to improve learning and teaching due to the impact it can have on practitioners. Specifically, practitioners develop an ‘Enquiry as Stance’ approach to their practice, seeking to question, challenge and cultivate a deep understanding of effective teaching and learning practices. In doing this, teachers are required to adapt, change and critically appraise their practice and the context in which they work, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of learning, teaching, attainment and achievement. The GTCS summarises Enquiry as Stance as ‘Knowing Deeply, Knowing What, Knowing Why and Knowing How.’

In essence, there is now an acceptance that practitioners across the teaching profession are required to develop the skills and abilities required of a practitioner-researcher. This dual role has long been advocated within the discipline of

Scottish
Attainment
Challenge
(2015)

GTCS Website

<p>Educational Psychology, making EP Services across Scotland well placed to contribute and, where appropriate, lead systemic change in this area.</p> <p>The core features of practitioner enquiry are: that it can be individual or collaborative; that a research question is being addressed; that knowledge is enhanced and shared; and that teachers develop the ability to critically reflect on their practice in a way that facilitates improvement in self-evaluation. In so doing, teachers can begin to challenge existing thinking and constructs about effective learning and teaching habits, and bring about improvement in practice and learner experiences through sustainable, systemic and transformational change, as they gradually become ‘agents of their own professional learning’ (GTCS, 2017).</p> <p>The GTCS identifies four common approaches to practitioner enquiry, namely: Professional Enquiry; Spiral of Enquiry; Lesson Study; Action Research. Through VSE, we are seeking to evaluate the impact of the EPS role in supporting East Renfrewshire’s School Improvement Partnership (SIP) model of professional enquiry, and our role in leading an Action Enquiry Project (AEP) due to our involvement in the Educational Psychology Action Enquiry Programme (EPAEP).</p> <p>School Improvement Partnerships (SIPs)</p> <p>Three years ago, the EPS was involved in supporting two local authority primary schools through a School Improvement Partnership Programme in collaboration with the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Research at the University of Glasgow. In this project, the schools collaborated to evaluate the impact of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in Maths. Due to the success of this project, namely the positive impact on learners progress in numeracy at the early level, and the positive impact reported by the staff on their teaching practice and their developing skills as researchers, the model was adapted and introduced across all local primary and early learning and childcare centres to support practitioner enquiry.</p> <p>A key outcome of the Local Improvement Plan is to improve the attainment of East Renfrewshire’s most vulnerable learners and there is recognition across the Education Leadership Team (ELT) that practitioner enquiry has a significant role to</p>	<p>Robert Owen Centre for Educational Research</p> <p>Local Improvement Plan</p> <p>Advancing Excellence and</p>
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<p>play in the achievement of this outcome. The EPS has therefore supported the introduction of School Improvement Partnerships (SIPs) across the authority in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Team. We are now into the second year of driving this approach, and there are 10 partnerships, involving all primary schools and early learning and childcare centres.</p> <p>The EPS has supported the introduction of the SIP model in several key ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing guidelines for partnerships in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Team, addressing the core features of effective practitioner enquiry, its purpose, and the roles that each staff member involved should fulfil. • Delivering training in the SIP model with Head Teachers and Class Teachers. • Delivering training in research / practitioner enquiry skills at launch events. • Developing an action research methodology for practitioners to use in their partnerships. • In collaboration with Class Teachers, Quality Improvement Officers and an Education Development Officer, identifying ways to form partnerships on the basis of schools having a shared focus on factors that impact on the attainment of vulnerable learners. • Allocating time for individual Educational Psychologists to support each partnership. <p>The SIP model provides practitioners with the opportunity to be innovative in their attempts to tackle educational inequality. Practitioners are encouraged to draw on the wealth of international educational research and practice which demonstrates that the most effective school improvements are: locally owned, led by teachers and school leaders, and involve working in partnership and collaboration with like-minded professionals. The EPS recognises that there is a unique role for Educational Psychologists to fulfil in supporting partnerships by developing practitioner knowledge, understanding and skills in action research so that they can be effective in the dual role of practitioner-researcher and successfully adopt an ‘Enquiry as Stance’ approach.</p>	<p>Equity in East Renfrewshire (2016)</p> <p>East Renfrewshire SIPP guidance</p> <p>SIPP CLPL evaluations</p> <p>Video Interview with practitioner</p> <p>Video recording of SIP meeting</p> <p>EPS Allocations</p>
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The EPS has worked to develop a set of core principles for SIPs across the authority:

- Partnership working across schools and clusters with a focus on exploring specific issues relating to educational inequity.
- The use of Action Research and evidence to identify key challenges, experiment with innovative practices and monitor developments.
- The creation of leadership opportunities and professional learning of staff at all levels.
- A commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit to all involved.
- The development of arrangements to support long-term collaboration and new approaches to capacity building.
- Explicit links to strategic improvement planning in schools and local authorities.
- The involvement of a diverse range of partners including schools, local authorities, Education Scotland and other agencies.

The EPS has also worked to establish the key features of a SIP:

- They should target the achievement of a small key group of learners using the school's performance data, teacher judgements and with reference to factors of vulnerability such as SIMD, EAL etc.
- They should understand and take account of the importance of context and local ownership.
- Partnerships should be using and gathering evidence to inform practice.
- Teachers should be leading change.
- Practitioners should be learning from similarity and diversity across clusters.
- Experience, practice and expertise should be shared around the partnerships.
- They should help build relationships and networks across the cluster and authority.

Each of the School Improvement Partnerships is formed by the following:

- 2-4 Class Teachers
- Link Quality Improvement Officer
- Link Education Development Officer (consistent across all SIPs)
- Link Educational Psychologist

Within partnerships, Educational Psychologists are fulfilling the following key roles:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contributing to the work of each partnership, encouraging creativity and innovation. • Contributing to professional discussion regarding child development and effective learning and teaching. • Supporting the implementation of an action research methodology. • Facilitating the identification of effective evaluation measures. • Signposting and, where required, accessing relevant research. • Contributing to meeting the professional learning needs of teachers. • Looking for opportunities to develop links with Universities. • Facilitating the sharing of best practice across partnerships. • Developing and implementing quality assurance processes across partnerships and across the EPS. • Supporting some schools who are taking forward the Scottish Attainment Challenge through the SIP model. 	<p>Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015)</p>
<p>Action Enquiry Project (AEP)</p> <p>The Scottish Government (2016) launched the National Improvement Hub to support the achievement of the ambitious outcomes outlined in the National Improvement Framework. The aim of the Hub is to develop an evidence base of what works in the Scottish context by: synthesising existing educational research with local information; developing practitioner enquiry skills; and, giving a platform to action research that contributes to the field and which can be shared across local authorities to improve our education system as a whole. Nationally, practitioners across Educational Psychology Services in Scotland are coming together to contribute research articles to this National Improvement Hub, forming an Educational Psychology Action Enquiry Programme (EPAEP).</p> <p>East Renfrewshire EPS is participating in the EPAEP and has been working with Education Scotland to explore the impact of a peer mentoring system on the wellbeing and attainment of disadvantaged children and young people in one of our local high schools. East Renfrewshire EPS is seeking to address the following key research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact will a peer mentoring system have on the wellbeing of 	<p>National Improvement Hub</p> <p>National Improvement Framework</p> <p>Educational Psychology Action Enquiry Programme (EPAEP)</p> <p>EPAEP Research Proposal and Draft Methodology</p>

<p>disadvantaged children and young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact will a peer mentoring system have on the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people? • Can a peer mentoring system contribute to the closing of the attainment gap? <p>The AEP study aims to explore the impact of a peer mentoring system on the resilience, wellbeing and attainment of 14 pupils in S1 from social backgrounds that are characterised nationally as SIMD 1-3. It is argued that this study complements the core objectives of Curriculum for Excellence (2004), that all children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens, and contributes to the development of children and young people’s wellbeing by taking a GIRFEC approach. The EPS was recently involved in conducting a survey of young people’s views on local mental health support. This survey was produced and delivered in collaboration with multi agency practitioners through the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Sub-Group. Analysis of the feedback from local young people outlined that they prefer to talk to other young people about their mental health needs. Given the widespread recognition that poor mental health is having a significant impact on the wellbeing and attainment of young people across Scotland, and that this trend is compounded by factors relating to social deprivation, it was decided that the impact of a local peer mentoring system, targeting children from areas of multiple deprivation, would merit research.</p> <p>Youth mentoring can take many different forms and in its broadest definition can include many naturally occurring relationships where knowledge, guidance and support are provided to facilitate a young person’s development. Through the AEP, we decided to create and evaluate a formalised peer mentoring system. The evaluation of this intervention is being undertaken using a mixed method approach, making use of non-parametric quantitative data from a standardised assessment of resilience pre and post intervention, and qualitative data gathering at the post intervention stage.</p> <p>Fourteen S1 pupils have been selected as mentees to participate in the project. The mentees are aged 11-12 with a gender spread of 6 boys and 8 girls. Selection</p>	<p>Youth Mental Health Survey (2016)</p>
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<p>of mentees was based on participants meeting the following two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC and / or SIMD 1-3 • Principal Teachers of Pupil Support recommendation that they would benefit from involvement in a peer mentoring intervention <p>Initial data gathering indicates that, on the basis of a standardised assessment of resilience, almost all participating mentees have reported low levels of resilience, either through a low sense of mastery, a low sense of relatedness or a high sense of emotional reactivity. This data would suggest that the pupils that have been chosen to participate in this intervention are a vulnerable group of learners. Fourteen S6 pupils have been selected as mentors to participate in this project to facilitate fourteen mentor-mentee pairings. The mentors are aged 16-17 with a gender spread of 3 boys and 11 girls. The measurement tools that we are using in the project evaluation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (Sandra Prince-Embury, 2006) • Semi-structured interviews with mentees, mentors and Principal Teachers of Pupil Support • Round Robin Data • Teacher expectations / forecasts on curricular levels / outcomes. • Test results across subjects • Late-coming and Attendance Levels <p>The first phase of intervention involved two half-day training sessions for all mentors facilitated by members of the educational psychology team within the school. The training programme incorporated a combination of teaching, discussion, activities and video clips. Following this training, a 'Meet Your Mentor' session was held featuring a range of 'getting to know you' activities and initial timetabling discussion between finalised pairings.</p> <p>We are currently at the stage of allowing the mentoring relationships to develop and liaising with the school to ensure there are no barriers, for example through</p>	<p>SEEMIS Information</p> <p>Resilience Scales for Children and Young People, (2006)</p>
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<p>timetable clashes and exams. Fourteen structured activities have been created and are accessible on-sight with the expectation that mentoring pairs are working through these activities, albeit in no set order. We are approaching the post intervention data collection phase of our evaluation.</p> <p>Strand Two: Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)</p> <p>Through our contribution to the Career Long Professional Learning of practitioners across early learning and childcare, primary and secondary school contexts, the EPS has sought to bring about systemic, positive change in schools that impacts on learning and teaching, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable learners.</p> <p>The EPS is involved in the delivery of CLPL across a wide range of areas, however we have chosen to focus on four key themes as these are directly related to our impact on vulnerable learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASD • Dyslexia • Learning Centre / Nurturing Approaches • GIRFEC Single Agency Assessment and Planning. <p>The EPS has delivered high quality CLPL to embed the role of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Advisors, Dyslexia Advisors and Learning Centre (Nurture) Practitioners in all educational establishments, which has developed the capacity of staff to provide evidence-based assessment and intervention for children and young people with additional support needs. The EPS has also been at the forefront of developments relating to GIRFEC, specifically in creating our local Single Agency Assessment guidelines, procedures, paperwork, and delivering the CLPL that is required to take this forward. The service has also been heavily involved in decision making around the role of the Named Person and has delivered training to practitioners who are expected to fulfil this role.</p> <p>Across all educational establishments, the service continues to provide high quality support to school staff, children and parents, which contributes greatly to the inclusion and achievement of children and young people with additional support</p>	<p>Handouts of training delivered</p> <p>Staff evaluations</p> <p>GIRFEC CLPL Evaluations</p> <p>GIRFEC School Implementation Group</p> <p>GIRFEC Leadership Group</p>
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<p>needs. This support has had a major impact on the consistent achievement of low exclusions rates as well as decreasing numbers of learners requiring educational placement in provision out-with the authority. Exclusions within primary and secondary schools are the lowest of any mainland authority. We are achieving this in the context of rising schools rolls and rising numbers of children and young people with identified additional support needs. A major factor in our success is the way in which we build capacity by developing staff skills and contributing every day to an ethos of solution focused, inclusive practice across the authority.</p> <p>The EPS ascribes to an advisor model within schools as there is evidence to suggest that this can be a successful model for children with additional support needs (Reid, Deponio & Davidson Petch, 2005). In our existing model, one representative from each of our educational establishments (as appropriate) is invited to attend ongoing training in a particular specialist area:</p> <p><i>Dyslexia and ASD Advisors</i></p> <p>Advisors are invited from schools and where appropriate early learning and childcare establishments to meet as a group at least twice per academic year. The EPS delivers training, often in partnership with highly specialised teaching practitioners, on a variety of relevant topics. Information sharing and peer support are core features of the advisor forum approach. Advisors are very involved in shaping the content and direction of the training they receive through ongoing evaluation and critical reflection. Advisors are also expected to fulfil a number of key functions in assessment, intervention, planning, support for colleagues, shaping of whole school practice and delivery of in school training.</p> <p><i>Learning Centres Practitioners Training and Network</i></p> <p>Practitioners attend termly meetings as a group coordinated and led by an educational psychologist. Training is provided by the educational psychology team on a variety of topics related to nurture and attachment. Opportunities are provided for sharing good practice and resources. Practitioners are responsible for leading Learning Centres in their school for small groups of children with additional support needs related to nurture.</p>	<p>GIRFEC Single Agency Guidance</p> <p>School data on attainment, exclusions and out-with authority placements</p>
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<p>GIRFEC Single Agency Assessment and Planning</p> <p>Training has been delivered across the authority, with enhanced support given to two pilot clusters in order to review and evaluate local authority guidelines and practice relating to GIRFEC, Named Person, information sharing, Single Agency Assessment, and SMART-outcome focussed planning.</p> <p>We know from CLPL evaluations that practitioners feel they are able to develop their skills and knowledge and benefit from the support of colleagues through the EPS approach. However, we are keen to further investigate the role of the EPS in improving teaching and learning for vulnerable learners through this system.</p>	
<p>What are our strengths?</p>	
<p>The EPS considers its approach to practitioner enquiry and CLPL to be strong as we are leading evidence based practices that can impact positively on: learner experiences; teacher performance; teacher knowledge and skills of enquiry; and, as a result, bring about improvement in the wellbeing and attainment of East Renfrewshire’s most vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Our approach is reported through teacher feedback to be impacting positively on children, young people and staff, and is aligned to the education authority priorities. We have established robust and systematic models of working and we have a very good approach to self-evaluation, using authority data to demonstrate progress and improvement. In this, and our gathering of evidence of our impact on learning and teaching, we believe we are addressing two of the key themes and areas for development identified in ‘Educational psychology in Scotland: making a difference’ (2011).</p> <p>The EPS considers that its approach to practitioner enquiry and CLPL is consistent with the priorities outlined previously in the National Improvement Framework. Our approach also supports the delivery of two of the key areas for improvement identified in the NIF, namely that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality teaching and excellent classroom practice are delivered consistently and teachers know how to help all children make progress • School leadership is strong 	<p><i>Our Sources of Evidence</i></p> <p>SIP Evaluations</p> <p>CLPL Evaluations</p> <p>Educational psychology in Scotland: making a difference (2011)</p> <p>National Improvement Framework (2016)</p>

<p>Furthermore, the EPS approach sits at the core of the Local Improvement Plan (2016-2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Support and challenge schools to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements, the target setting process and improved learning and teaching • Support school improvement partnerships for key groups e.g. gender, ethnicity, lowest performing pupils and pupils from SIMD deciles 1-3’ <p>Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire (2016) outlines strong local evidence using Insight Points that the department is raising the bar for all groups of learners and closing the gap. For example, average total cumulative insight points for S4 pupils SQA data between 2011 and 2015 shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an 24% increase for those from SIMD 1-3 • an 18% increase for those from SIMD 4-7 • a 6% increase for those form SIMD 8-10 <p>The work of the EPS contributes to this success due to our collaborative approach to improvement that is built on the solid foundation of our highly effective partnership working with the Quality Improvement Team and our schools. Through practitioner enquiry, we are embarking on a new way of working with the Quality Improvement Team and schools that has a clear rationale and emphasis on advancing excellence and equity.</p> <p>The practitioner enquiry approach and our delivery of CLPL can bring about improvements that lie at the heart of How Good Is Our School 4, specifically relating to school leadership and management, learning provision and success and achievements. In summary, and in line with ‘Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective (2015)’, the EPS is ‘sharing information for better learning’, and using its position within the local authority to ‘be rigorous about the gaps to be closed and pursue relentlessly ‘closing the gap’ and ‘raising the bar simultaneously.’</p>	<p>Local Improvement Plan (2016-2019)</p> <p>Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire (2016). Insight Points Data</p> <p>How Good is Our School 4</p> <p>Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective 2015</p>
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How do we know?

Strand One: Practitioner Enquiry

School Improvement Partnerships

The strengths of this approach are beginning to emerge through feedback from teaching staff. Summary evaluations from SIP training tell us that:

- Networking across the authority and out-with local clusters is valued by staff
- Staff value the opportunity to engage with current research
- A robust data gathering process was adopted
- Staff value the opportunity to share practice between and across schools
- Staff value working closely with the educational psychologist

Staff were asked to evaluate the SIPs by considering a number of key statements:

- 96% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *Following training, I felt supported and confident in contributing to school improvements partnerships*
- 96% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *The improvement methodology guidance was helpful.*
- 100% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *I received appropriate opportunity to participate in School Improvement Partnerships.*
- 92% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *I worked collaboratively with teachers from other schools to plan, implement and evaluate intervention.*
- 100% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *I felt confident to share my thoughts and opinions throughout the process.*
- 96% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *The data gathered about the children's strengths and needs informed intervention.*
- 92% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *I engaged with research to inform my understanding of pupil's needs and subsequent interventions.*
- 79% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *The SIPP has had a positive impact on my day to day practice.*
- 96% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that: *I believe that School Improvement Partnerships can improve the attainment of vulnerable learners.*

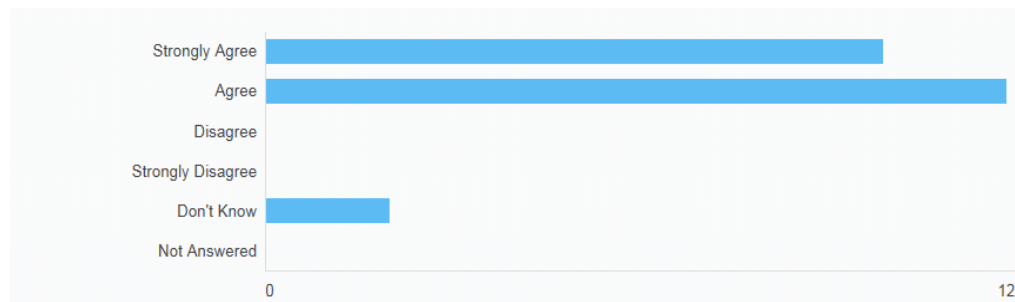
Furthermore, in evaluating the role of the Educational Psychologist in the SIP, it was found that:

The Educational Psychologist positively contributed to the work of the School

CLPL
Evaluations

CLPL
Evaluations

Improvement Partnership.



Option	Total	Percent of All
Strongly Agree	10	41.67%
Agree	12	50.0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Don't Know	2	8.333%
Not Answered	0	0%

Action Enquiry Project

The strengths of our approach to the EPAEP project are that we have:

- staff who are enthusiastic about embracing the challenge of conducting research that is of an appropriate standard for the National Improvement Hub;
- recognised the importance of supporting, and trying to raise the profile of, educational psychology services nationally through the EPAEP;
- addressed research questions that fit with national and local priorities and build on information that we know about local service users;
- clear focus on improving outcomes for children and young people from SIMD 1-3 and / or who are Looked After;
- developed a replicable approach to our intervention that would enable us to roll it out and build capacity across secondary schools in the locality if the evidence suggests that the intervention impacts positively on attainment and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable children and young people;
- allocated service time for practitioners to ensure that they can meet the deadlines and standards set by Education Scotland;
- recognised the importance and value of participating in Education Scotland training and development sessions, and sharing our research questions and interventions with other services that support the EPAEP project.

EPAEP
Research
Proposal and
Key Drivers

EPS
Allocations

School Data

Intervention
materials

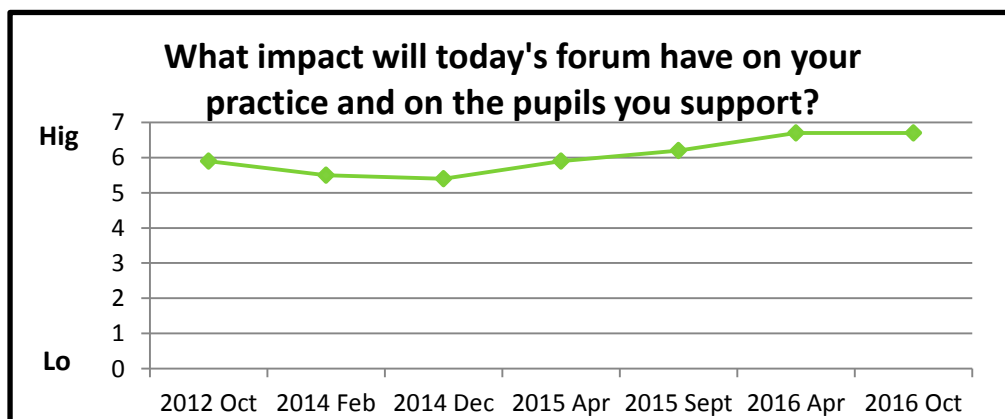
Attendance at
Education
Scotland
EPAEP Events

Strand Two: Career Long Professional Learning

Evaluation of our CLPL delivery is an ongoing, iterative process that enables us to identify the strengths and challenges in our approach, and our capacity for improvement. Summary evaluations of CLPL delivered by the EPS are generally of an exceptionally high standard. The most recent summary evaluations of ASD advisors, Dyslexia Advisors, Learning Centre and GIRFEC training can be found in appendix 1. However we are interested in analysing our evaluation data further through VSE, to identify what we need to do to improve. Our current impact on staff who support vulnerable children and young people is very good:

CLPL
Evaluations

ASD Advisor's Forum



ASD Advisor
Evaluation
Data

The graph above demonstrates staff perceptions of the impact of ASD advisor forum training over time.

Comments from participants at the most recent forum included:

- *The presentation on Autism in girls was really interesting and enlightening. WWHS pupils inspiring*
- *Very good consolidation of previous learning at ASD forums and lovely to hear from pupils with first-hand experience*
- *This was my first forum and I found it very informative and interesting*
- *Interesting and thought provoking*
- *This forum is extremely valuable in keeping ASD advisors up to date with current thinking/practice around ASD*
- *This is my first ASD advisors meeting; it was so useful and has really helped me in my new role!*
- *Thank you so much for inviting us to this fantastic training day – Visiting EP from East Dunbartonshire*

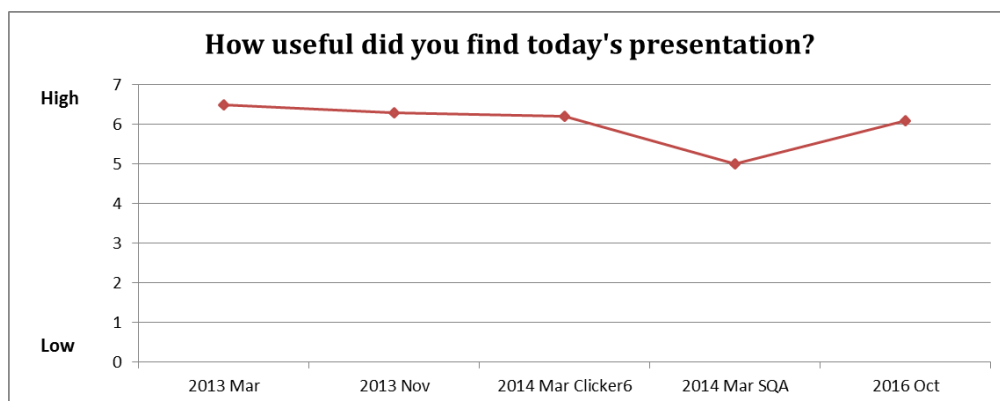
In addition, participant summary feedback from the most recent forum indicated that:

Tick one box in each line	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The presentation was clearly structured	29 100%			
The information provided was interesting	29 100%			
I enjoyed the workshop	29 100%			
The content was staff friendly	29 100%			
The presenters were effective	29 100%			
I will be able to use the information provided in the presentation in my practice	28 97%	1 3%		

Furthermore staff have communicated that they:

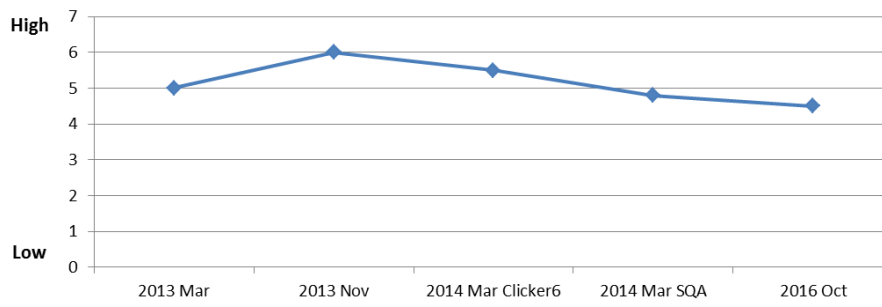
- prefer the format of a full day training approach (2015 – to date) over the previous half day approach;
- value the input from a variety of speakers, but specifically children and young people themselves;
- value and enjoy the use of various mediums such as video clips, presentation, workshop activities, as well as the opportunities they have for discussion, and sharing of good practice, resources and practical strategies.

Dyslexia Advisor Forum



Dyslexia
Advisor
Evaluation
Data

Is there anything that you will change in relation to your practice as a result of today's presentation?



The graphs above demonstrate staff perceptions of the impact of Dyslexia advisor forum training over time.

Comments from participants as to what was most helpful in a recent forum included:

- *Looking at the resources/activities used to support children currently in the school. Share list of memory skills activities with teachers at school.*
- *Use of activities to develop visual memory skills – will provide this for parents.*
- *Use of activities to develop visual/auditory memory for those who struggle. Ideas to send home to parents to support children always useful!*
- *I will share the list of 'Activities to develop memory skills with staff and parents of children who have problems with memory.*
- *Interesting and thought provoking.*
- *Feedback at next staff meeting and share with staff the activities to develop visual and auditory memory.*
- *I am certainly more aware of memory difficulties faced by dyslexia pupils.*
- *More aware of children's learning styles/preferences, and how this effects learning.*
- *Try to do a visual/audio test as part of a lesson.*

Learning Centre Training

The following data is taken from the most recent summary evaluation of Learning Centre training:

What do you feel your level of knowledge concerning Learning Centres was before the presentation?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High
Responses:		1	1	5	1	2		
%		10%	10%	50%	10%	20%		

Learning Centre Evaluation Data

What do you feel your level of knowledge concerning Learning Centres is after the presentation?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High
Responses:						6	4	
%						60%	40%	

Tick one box in each line	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The presentation was clearly structured	10 100%			
The information provided was interesting	10 100%			
I enjoyed the presentation	10 100%			
The presenter was effective	10 100%			

How will this training impact on your practice?

Comments from participants included:

- *Increased knowledge and understanding will help me run my own group in an effective manner but also be able to offer CPD to teaching staff and SLT to increase their understanding of nurture.*
- *Lots of info and ideas to take back to my school to share with staff and develop our lunch time in groups.*
- *I will have a different attitude and approach to dealing with challenging behaviour. I will look to implement the ideas I have learnt on the course into my practice.*
- *I have gained knowledge about the positive impact learning centres have on individual children and on the wider school. I will feel more confident in advising less knowledgeable staff about nurture.*
- *I have a better understanding and therefore more confidence in setting up and implementing ideas regarding nurture in the Learning Centre.*
- *Hopefully will be able to use training in school.*
- *I have much more knowledge of the theory behind the practice now and found this really interesting and worthwhile.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of good ideas and suggestions to try and used in practice. • Particularly enjoyed Learning from others about their own experiences of Learning Centres and from C as to how she conducted her daily routine. <p>GIRFEC Single Agency Assessment and Planning</p> <p>Comments from ASD Advisor participants in GIRFEC training included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful, especially in terms of feedback about the types of support • Was really interesting to get ideas from everyone • This was useful and also reassuring to know that the strategies we came up with were appropriate and relevant • Excellent discussion with Colleagues – I got lots of great ideas for strategies to use • Good to work on practical case study and gather lots of ideas for support • Very helpful to hear some others alternative strategies; approaches they'd used • Time to work together to share strategies • This was useful to discuss strategies with other colleagues. It was reassuring that we all agreed on similar intervention • Very informative and enjoyable/inspiring learning how two pupils cope/views of their school experience 	<p>ASD Advisor Evaluations</p>
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What are our challenges?

<p>Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire (2016) is our key local driver in reducing the poverty related attainment gap. This paper cites McKinsey and Company's 'How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better' as the key underpinning reference that informs the East Renfrewshire approach. The paper outlines that there is a persistent and significant gap in the attainment in the senior phase between the most advantaged (SIMD 8-10) and disadvantaged young people (SIMD 1-3). The EPS is challenged with supporting practitioners through SIPs to close this gap by encouraging a specific focus on key groups of vulnerable learners using local authority and school data that tells us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attainment of boys throughout the broad general education and senior phase lags stubbornly behind girls. • There is room for improving the attainment of Asian Pakistani boys. • There is room for improvement in the attainment of young people with additional support needs, including those with English as an additional language. • Fewer children and young people from the least affluent areas (west) of the authority feel they are getting the same opportunities to celebrate 	<p>Our Sources of Evidence</p> <p>Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire (2016)</p>
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achievements or to support them to grow in confidence as their counterparts in the more affluent (east) area of the authority.

- There is room for improvement in pupil’s perceptions of their engagement in learning, which is lower than teaching staff perceptions.

The EPS shares with teachers the challenge to deliver curricula and experiences for learners that are based on:

- Teacher-led research and pedagogy, to ensure we get it right for every child;
- A focus on key points of transition, so that learners experience continuity in their learning and progression in attainment and achievement; and
- A culture that is based on nurturing, inclusive approaches to protect and promote health and wellbeing.

(Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire, 2016)

The paper identifies the key role of the EPS in the SIP approach, and the authority has renewed its emphasis in this area by looking to realign resources to ensure that they are properly funded in order to progress action research. Looking forward, the EPS is therefore challenged with ensuring that SIPs are effective in addressing the attainment gap and that they are providing stakeholders with best value as an approach.

In addition, the EPS shares in the responsibility of the Quality Improvement Team to provide guidance and CLPL on the most up to date pedagogical research (0-18) that is appropriate to age and stage of development and curricular content, and the authority drive to develop partnerships and approaches to community engagement, especially in areas of deprivation, to improve the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. The EPS is also tasked with refocusing its attention to the responsibility of all in teaching health and wellbeing, and ensuring that the whole child is developing through learning experiences which offer opportunities to foster good mental and physical health.

[Strand One: Practitioner Enquiry](#)
[School Improvement Partnerships](#)

Some of the more practical challenges encountered were identified through staff

SIP
Evaluations

evaluations:

- Partnerships were established late in the academic year, making it difficult to plan around existing school commitments
- The partnerships did not form part of the school improvement plans as these were written in advance of the decision to roll out SIPs
- As a result, the partnerships were not factored in to the staff collegiate agreement, making it difficult to manage time, meetings, research, lesson design and cover alongside other school commitments.
- Once further discussion between partnership members took place, it became apparent that some initial target groups were not appropriately matched
- It took time for staff to fully understand the process and methodology

From an EPS perspective, these challenges were responded to for the year 2016-2017:

- Refresher training for teachers and head teachers was delivered in September 2016.
- The EPS held discussions with each individual school to identify a vulnerable group of learners.
- The EPS supported staff to gather data on these learners.
- Rather than liaise with colleagues to identify shared target groups, as teachers had done in the previous year, partnerships were allocated centrally with involvement from the EPS on the basis of them having a similar research question.

One of the key challenges looking forward will be to evaluate the impact of SIPs on the attainment of vulnerable learners, and we will be required to gather data to evidence impact in this in the coming years. Furthermore, while we firmly believe in the merits of the SIP approach, we acknowledge that there are some limitations and risks involved in any form of practitioner enquiry, as the GTCS details:

- Limitations - enquiry tends to be 'situationally unique' (Stoll, 2003) meaning that what works in a particular context and why, can be very specific to that school or place of education. However, this is not to say that there can be lessons learned or some transferable knowledge which would apply in other settings.

GTCS Website

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks - some enquiries that simply seek to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prove or test out 'best practices' ○ make claims about 'what works' ○ test or implement (and evaluate) latest initiatives ○ introduce an 'intervention'. <p>Action Enquiry Project</p> <p>The hard work and ongoing contribution of educational psychology services has been somewhat overlooked in Scotland, particularly in recent years. The EPAEP is therefore an important opportunity for services to demonstrate that there are practitioners already in the Scottish education system who have the research skills required to lead advancements in localised research and practitioner enquiry to bring about improvement in the attainment of vulnerable groups of learners. The EPS therefore considers the EPAEP to be a high priority and critical to the national profile and therefore the future of the profession. Essentially, the EPS recognises that it shares in the responsibility of meeting the challenges that are facing the discipline and services across Scotland.</p> <p>Strand Two: Career Long Professional Learning</p> <p>One of the key challenges in our evaluation of the impact of CLPL is evidencing the chain of impact, or 'Golden Thread', between what we are doing to build capacity in schools and how this links directly to improving the attainment of these identified groups of vulnerable learners. We have specifically chosen to evaluate this area of our work through VSE to improve our approaches to evidencing impact.</p> <p>At the most recent ASD Advisor's forum, summary evaluation tells us that staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would like to continue being updated on research/strategies • would like further training in relation to running social skills / Sulp groups and social stories • would value more discussion around practices and procedures for transition to ensure consistency. 	<p>EPAEP ASPEP Workforce Data Scottish Government withdrawal of Training Course Funding</p> <p>ASD Advisor Evaluations</p>
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Dyslexia Advisor Forum

Dyslexia Advisors forum summary evaluations tells us that there are particular topics, issues and activities that staff would like to be covered in future:

- Implementation of Clicker 6
- Support for mathematics
- A review of appropriate screening and assessment tools for literacy, numeracy, and language comprehension
- Assessing the impact of new National Qualifications on dyslexic pupils re literacy unit and use of a calculator in maths
- Revision of the early indicators of dyslexia and how to support children in the early years.
- Use of ICT and apps for young people with dyslexia.
- Updated training on visual stress
- Further opportunities to share good practice.

Dyslexia
Advisor
Evaluations

Learning Centre Training

The EPS has conducted an audit of learning centre training and is looking to bring this training and the practitioner network meetings in line with the practice model used for ASD and Dyslexia Advisors, once they have been evaluated through VSE.

GIRFEC – Single Agency Assessment and Planning

The following key challenges have been identified for the EPS looking forward:

- supporting practitioners to become more confident, experienced and skilled in wellbeing assessment using the national practice model, the writing of SMART outcome-focussed wellbeing plans, and implementing interventions;
- supporting staff in their roles as named persons;
- leading the development of whole school, systemic approaches at both a targeted and universal level that get it right for every child;
- leading the way in ensuring that the values, principles, key questions and ten core components of GIRFEC are embedded in day to day practice across schools;
- further building upon our effective partnership working with other agencies to ensure that all children and young people are getting the right help when they need it.

Learning
Centre CLPL
Evaluations

Named Person
Training
Evaluations

GIRFEC
Guidance
Evaluations

GIRFEC Pilot
Study

Looking forward, more general challenges in building capacity through CLPL also include:

- meeting the development needs of new practitioners while continuing to develop the practice and expertise of experienced practitioners;
- managing the challenge of practitioners having reduced time to fulfil the role of advisors in schools due to managerial restructuring;
- supporting staff to embed what they learn through CLPL in their practice across and throughout schools (i.e. through sharing what they learn with others), and moderating this.

Analysis of evaluation feedback tells us that practitioners are generally positive about the content and the direction being taken in their CLPL. The EPS is however keen to drill down and evaluate whether the existing approach to CLPL is the most effective, or whether there are better ways to build capacity in schools. Critically reflective dialogue between EPS practitioners would suggest that there is some variability in how effective some schools are at supporting pupils with ASD, Dyslexia and attachment related needs, and we are keen to ensure excellence and equity for the children and young people who make up these categories of vulnerable learners.

What do we need to find out more about?

We need to find out the following:

In order to establish our capacity for improvement and deliver an action plan to deliver improvement, we need to find out the following:

- How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for East Renfrewshire’s most vulnerable learners through practitioner enquiry and CLPL?
- How good is our leadership and approach to improvement through practitioner enquiry and CLPL?
- How good is the quality of support and education we offer to staff through practitioner enquiry and CLPL?
- What information, knowledge and data do we currently have? Are we making best use of this and, if not, how can we improve?
- What is the unique contribution of the Educational Psychology Service?
- What are we trying to accomplish?

- Is this building capacity? If so how?
- What are the strengths of our approach?
- What weaknesses and barriers are there and how will we address and overcome these to improve?
- Is our approach to Practitioner Enquiry and CLPL evidence based and, if so, how do we know?
- Is our approach equitable / does it promote equity across schools?
- Are wellbeing outcomes being improved for children and young people as a result of Practitioner Enquiry and the CLPL we provide and, if so, in what way?
- Is our approach to Practitioner Enquiry and CLPL raising attainment? If so how?
- How are we measuring this?
- What opportunities are there to improve our performance? (What could / should we be doing differently?)
- Do we have all the information we need? / Is there anything else we need to consider?

If the EPS can establish the answers to these questions through the activities that have been agreed upon with Education Scotland, then we will have made some progress towards answering our key question, which is:

What impact is our contribution to practitioner enquiry and professional learning with schools having on learning and teaching, particularly for our most vulnerable pupils?