

Since our last newsletter there have been some significant changes in the Education Department. We were delighted that Mhairi Shaw became our new Director. We were sorry to lose Mhairi as our line manager but happy to welcome John Fitzpatrick (headteacher of Williamwood High School) who has been seconded to Head of Service position from February.

## Staff News

Congratulations to Chris Atherton and his wife

Nikki on the birth of their new baby Sophia Lauren who was born on the 23rd November 2013.

Mardi Alexander retired from her post in February. We wish Mardi well for the future.

We know what a busy year this has been for everyone and we wish everyone a relaxing well deserved break.

## New CAMHS Team

On 7 May the Psychological Service met with the new Barrhead Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Team. Both services provided an overview of how the service operates and the different work that is carried out.

The Barrhead CAMHS went live on the 1 November 2013 and currently have a consultant psychiatrist, clinical psychologists, nurse therapists, a child and adolescent therapist, speech and language therapy and an assistant psychologist. The team functions to assess, treat and manage the mental health and psychological wellbeing of children and young people (0-19 yrs). Intervention can be undertaken in groups and individually and is collaborative with young people and their families.

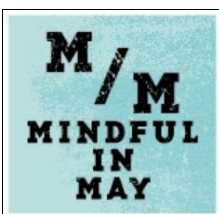
lies.

We are hoping to look at how we can work more collaboratively together and learn from each other to strengthen partnership links to improve our service to children and young people in the community with mental health needs.



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## 'Mindful May'

Following on from the article in the last newsletter about using mindfulness (a programme designed to

help improve the happiness, general behaviour, concentration and confidence of pupils) we were excited to hear P5's in Thornliebank Primary School took part in 'Mindful May'. It involves pupils taking part in daily relaxation 6 minutes per day (3 minutes in the morning and 3 minutes after lunch). We look forward to hearing how they got on and will let you know in our next newsletter.

## Confident Parenting

Eilidh and Ainsley are working in collaboration with Pamela McCulley from Young Persons' Service to support a group of young mums from across the authority. The 20 week programme covers a range of topics including resilience to stress, child development and healthy living. While the children are looked after in the crèche the girls can get to know other mums, build their confidence and skills in interacting with their children and develop their own self esteem. This programme is one small part of the Psychological Service's involvement in the early intervention initiative.

## Kinship Care Research

Jennifer Howitt (Trainee Educational Psychologist) is undertaking research to investigate the views and needs of kinship care families within the local authority. There is a lack of research in this area, however previous research has shown that children in kinship care often experience attachment related issues and behavioural difficulties.

It is hoped this research will inform Educational Psychologists and other services how they could support kinship care families in the future. It is also hoped the information gathered will help in the design of a pilot intervention to support the specific needs of kinship care families. The results of the research will be available later in the year.



Through self evaluation the therapeutic team within the service identified a need to further develop non-talk therapies offered to children and young people. The service provides support to young children and children with additional support needs and there are many who are unable to engage with therapies which rely on verbal discussion. Two Psychologists within the team recently attended a course on the principles of art therapy. Art therapy

allows children to express feelings and experiences through drawing, painting and craft activities.

Children are encouraged to lead sessions and over time helped to explain what the art work means to them. Research suggests that expression through art is therapeutic in itself. However it can also be possible to use art activities to encourage children to learn about and verbally express their emotions more effectively. Therapeutic art has been used within sessions for two children so far and has been found to be a helpful approach. The children are engaging well and the approach is assisting with assessment of emotional wellbeing.

## IMS GIRFEC Day



On the 7th February Isobel Mair School held a multi disciplinary event with a focus on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Staff from PAMIS, Inclusive Support, Cosgrove, School Health, Sleep Scotland, Sensory Support Service, Social work, education staff and parents were all present to share knowledge and expertise on the different services all working to get it right for every child.

The day consisted of a number of presentations including Nick Smiley and Vicky Murray presenting alongside Charlie Johnston (QIO) on the national and local picture of GIRFEC as well as some of the senior children in the school showing a video of how well the school uses GIRFEC. There were 3 workshops people could attend including: Out of School Activities; Post School Transition Planning and Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and time for all the different agencies to network and share knowledge which everyone enjoyed!

## Inclusive Technology

Chris Atherton and Siobhan Wilson have been working as part of a multi agency group to look at how we can support the young people in the authority using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). The group consists of Isobel Mair School staff, speech and language therapy, inclusive support, CHCP and parents.

We recently carried out an online survey to gather the views on the strengths of supporting the use of AAC and possible areas of improvement/ development from staff and parents. 9 parents and 25 members of staff from Isobel Mair and Inclusive support completed the online questionnaire. The feedback was very positive highlighting that staff's knowledge and expertise in using AAC as well as supporting children to

use AAC was a major strength. It was also felt that across Isobel Mair school there was a consistent approach in the use of AAC and AAC was used in a variety of setting out with the classroom. It was also identified that there were strong partnership links within school, with parents and with partner agencies.

There were also some areas highlighted that we could further develop for example additional staff training and further improving the partnership links.

We are hoping that the training calendar put in place for January–March will further develop staff knowledge and expertise and the multi agency AAC Strategy Group will further enhance the links between agencies.

## Restorative Approaches

We recently invited Derrick Bruce from Education Scotland along to our staff meeting to give a brief overview of the restorative approaches training school staff in the authority have been attending. Restorative approaches have become a local priority in East Renfrewshire as a part of the National agenda - 'Better Relationships, Better Behaviour, Better Learning.'

Derrick emphasised the importance of having strong values and positive relationships between staff and pupils to

***"Training very relevant and helpful for work which is planned this year"***

creating a positive ethos. Restorative approaches are about building and repairing relationships rather than a focus on controlling or managing behaviour.

Members of staff from each school in East Renfrewshire have been invited to

attend 2 days of training with Derrick which has been highly evaluated by staff who have already attended as well as the input to the psychological service. We are now going to look at how we can best support in taking this approach forward.

***"The input that Derrick provided was interesting and useful"***

## Resilience to Stress

Every year we run a Resilience to Stress workshop which involves attending a one full day workshop and a half day follow up session. The sessions consist of presentations, discussions and exploring a number of strategies for reducing and managing stress. These workshops aim to promote resilience

***"Being able to identify the causes of stress and how to deal with it."***

both around work place and personal issues.

The latest one which was run by Yvonne Coyle, Carole Campbell and Christine McGovern took place on the 30 August 2013 and a follow up on the 24 January 2014. Members of staff from a wide range of organisations in East Renfrewshire attended. We were delighted to see the feedback from the delegates was very positive.

***"Will be able to use new skills and put them in to practice"***

The next workshops will be held in Eastwood House on the 29 August 2014 (full day) with a half day (pm) follow up on the 28 November 2014. To sign up please visit the East Renfrewshire insider training via the intranet.



We were delighted to see a great turn out for the parent workshops this year which took place over four Tuesday evenings in May at Eastwood High School. The course aims to promote positive parenting and to help parents understand their children's (sometimes challenging) behaviour and develop more effective ways of handling a range of situations. It aims to provide an opportunity for parents to

learn from each other in a friendly, supportive environment. The evaluations were very positive with parents commenting:

"It was very encouraging and supportive, gave time to concerns, listened and gave appropriate advice."

"I think it is an excellent course and I commend ERC for providing this as a service to parents."

"We hope this is a beginning of a new chapter for us as a family."

In previous years there have been three groups of workshops; preschool, primary and teenage. However, this year we included an additional group focused on autistic spectrum behaviours which was positively received:

"I feel I could spend a year on a course like this."

"The course supported my views of my son's diagnosis and help me understand him better."

# Relaxation

## **Feet Breathing**

This is a method of dealing with anxiety by taking a short relaxation break in which you link slower and more even breathing with mental imagery.

Using Feet Breathing enables you to take a short relaxation break whenever and wherever you wish. Relaxation/meditation is not a mysterious or mystical experience; it is a natural and valuable ability that we all possess, even though we may not have practiced the skills for many years.

Relaxation is the bed rock of effective anxiety management and with a little persistence you can quickly become skilled at it. You can use feet breathing with your eyes open or closed, in company or alone, at work, at home, while travelling on public transport, or while taking a break on a long car journey (although it is not suitable for use whilst driving).

You can also use this method to help you get to sleep at night, or if you awake during the night, to get back to sleep.

### **Directions:**



1. let your body relax
- A. tense and relax your feet X5
- B. tense and relax your legs X5
- C. Tense and relax your torso/  
stomach X5
- D. Tense and relax your arms X5
- E. Tense and relax your chest X5
- F. Tense and relax your face X5

2. Use 'circular' breathing – where you breathe in through your nose (3 seconds) and out slowly through your mouth (5/6 seconds)

Repeat this for 3 to 5 minutes

3. As you do this, imagine that with each in-breath you are drawing the air in through the soles of your feet, up through your legs, and into your torso.

4. As you let go and exhale imagine the reverse happening. The air leaving your torso, flowing down through your legs and out through the soles of your feet

Repeat steps 3 and 4 for 3 to 5 minutes

5. On the in-breath silently think I am... and on the out-breath think feeling calm.

Repeat step 5, 5-10 times.

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