**LCFE Focus Group Evaluation**

**What did we ask?**

Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are implementing the Language and Communication Friendly Establishment (LCFE) in early year’s settings and schools across Glasgow. The initiative aims to build capacity of all establishments to support and develop the language and communication skills of all children. Glasgow Psychological Services conducted this piece of work to evaluate the impact and benefits of LCFE based on staff perceptions. We wanted to explore what difference LCFE makes and how it improves outcomes for children and young people.

**What did we do?**

Six heads from a range of early years and primary school LCFE validated establishments and a Speech and Language Therapist, involved in the delivery of LCFE, took part in an hour-long focus group. With permission from participants, the discussion was videoed to support the transcription process. Initial themes were then identified following the Braun & Clarke (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis, these were then narrowed down in relation to the research question.

**What have we found?**

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| What is the impact of LCFE? |
| Impact for children and young people | Positive impact on reading, talking and listening | *“I think in our school cooperative learning has really had an impact, and it’s impacted on reading and listening as a result.”* |
| *“You can observe it, you can see it through class visits and with teachers observing as well, and you can see it then in the outcomes, obviously their attainment, but as well as that, their work.”* |
| Positive impact in the playground | *“Support for learning workers, who are seeing children within the playground setting, so their language is crucial and that has really impacted on incidents in the playground, so that’s much less.”* |
| *“My door opens less about behaviour, there’s less foot fall coming through”* |
| Staff development supported by LCFE | Enhanced understanding of the SALT/EP role | *“the staff had more understanding of the EP role and Speech and Language Therapist’s role within that, in terms of what support you give us”*  |
| *“the wider understanding of role to train and mentor, rather than treat individual disorders”*  |
| Increase in staff confidence with language development | *“Increased confidence and ownership, communication is our responsibility, we need you (SALT) to do that but it is our responsibility.”* |
| *“We are a language, communication, friendly establishment, here are all things that we are doing, staff are empowered to say that, they are confident to say it and do it”* |
| Consistent use of LCFE strategies | *“A big drive for me has been developing that consistency through the school, and LCFE has been one of the vehicles, or one of the catalysts that allow you to do that.”*  |
| *“This empowered my staff to have a more consistent approach, you (SALT) wouldn’t have got that, coming in and working with one child never had got those results”* |
| Impact for parents | Improved confidence in the establishment | *“So it’s increasing parent confidence for the early years”* |
| *“It has been a huge impact for our parents, so it goes through staff”* |
| Recognising the importance of parental involvement | *“Staff being able to speak to parents in how to support their children and creating opportunities for parents to be involved and know what is going on”* |
| *“Makaton sign of the week, goes home at the end of each week, and that now goes home, sign of the week, for everybody”*  |
| Impact for the wider school | LCFE as part of the School Improvement Plan | *“For me in leading school improvement, LCFE has become kind of a cornerstone of that, so we developed a curriculum rationale this year and LCFE was a central pillar to that”* |
| *“It’s still part of my SIP and will always be on my SIP”* |
| Building cohesion across the establishment | *“I think in terms of pupil impact, it makes it much easier for our pupils working across two sides of the provision, it facilitates more meaningful conversations between staff”* |
| *“ We really saw the difference, all the staff took it on board, and we changed practice and the wider impact on the whole school was significant”* |
| Creating an LCFE school culture | *“LCFE is so holistic, it permeates through so many different levels of your establishment, your practice, interaction styles, the environment, it means that when you are implementing something new, it articulates with that”* |
| *“I would say, what you see as an outside person coming, what you see is a culture change”* |
| Key principles for the success of LCFE | Ways to continue building LCFE | *“The first in-service day back, the first slide is Welcome back to TB, and at TB, we do professionalism……….we do helping each other, we do LCFE.”* |
| *“It’s always on staff meeting agendas.”* |
| Importance of staff support and development | *“You can train people that modifying your language for different children, in different way is really important”* |
| *“SALT are very good at teaching staff to be mentors, and we used video for that, that in itself has had a huge impact”* |
| Involving pupils in LCFE | *“Sometimes we were doing it to the children… now….the children understood the power of language and what the adults are trying to do”* |
| *“We do mediators, so our PT has modelled mediating, peer mediation, so that’s been really useful in the playground”* |

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| Summary findings: |
| * Children/young people:
	+ Improved reading, talking and listening data
	+ Improved behaviours in the playground
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| * Staff:
	+ Enhanced understanding of other professionals’ roles
	+ Increased confidence relating to language development
	+ Improved consistency of practice
	+ Reduction in time spent on behavioural issues
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| * Parents:
	+ Improved confidence in establishment
	+ Importance of parental involvement highlighted
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| * Wider school:
	+ LCFE as part of the school improvement plan
	+ A cohesive way to consider practice issues
	+ The development of an LCFE culture
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| What do we plan to do next? |
| We are planning to widen the data collection and conduct an electronic survey with establishments validated in the last two years using the themes identified through the Focus Group evaluation to structure the questionnaire.The LCFE Steering Group will continue in a quality assurance role and collate data around impact and outcomes. The Focus Group findings will be used to inform future planning and improvements. |

**References**

Braun, V, & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in*

*psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

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