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STIRLING COUNCIL

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

STANDARDS & QUALITY NEWSLETTER



2016-2017

INTRODUCTION

The Standards and Quality newsletter outlines the work of Stirling Educational Psychology Service (EPS) during the academic session of 2016-2017.

Our transition from a shared service with Clackmannanshire took place in December 2016. We have returned to a single service however we hope that we will have further opportunities to work in partnership with our colleagues in Clackmannanshire at some point in the future. The Principal Psychologist is now full time in Stirling and is a Team Leader within the ASN and Wellbeing Team, which is part of the wider Children's Service.

Our newsletter will provide you with an update on our progress and evaluations for 2016-2017 based on:

- The main activities within our improvement plan and,
- The recent validated self-evaluation (VSE) process with Education Scotland, which took place in May 2017.

We will then outline the priorities that we intend to take forward into the new academic session 2017-2018, based on our developing role within the Children's Service and on the outcomes from our VSE.

We hope that our Standards and Quality newsletter provides you with a helpful overview of our work.

Further information on our service can be accessed at:

Website: www.stirling.gov.uk/eps

GLOW Blog: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/stirlingeps/>

Twitter: [@Stirlingedpsych](https://twitter.com/Stirlingedpsych)

A SUMMARY OF SOME OF OUR WORK IN 2016-2017

201

Requests for assistance were received & responded to through a consultation meeting by the EPS from August 2016

32

Training sessions were delivered by our service from August 2016, on a range of topics

674

Education staff, partners, parents/carers & students were provided with training on a number of topics from August 2016-March 2017

91.4%

Of participants who received training from our service, they reported an increase in their knowledge base following input

72%

Of parents/carers reported that the EP's input helped to make a difference e.g. assessment provided clarity; improved awareness of need & strategies; importance of psychological perspective

87%

Of teachers reported it was helpful to meet with an educational psychologist for a discussion to explore solutions, analyse need and to inform planning

KEY OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

From evaluations, we know that we have contributed to improved outcomes for children & young people such as: -

Children & young people demonstrated improved coping strategies to deal with loss through Seasons for Growth groups in schools

Children & young people demonstrated improved concentration & attention in the classroom due to the use of a mindfulness approach

Some children & young people demonstrated a reduction in the frequency of distressed behaviours in the classroom due to the use of self-regulation strategies

We have provided a significant contribution to staff development over the past 5 years, delivering 225 training sessions to a wide range of professionals, children & young people and parents/carers

A direct impact on teacher practice & planning was reported following our input for example, on training in nurture and brain development

A positive change of pupil attitude in the classroom was observed following input on growth mindsets

OUR LOCAL CONTEXT:



Stirlingshire is positioned between the lowlands and the highlands, in central Scotland. It has over 90,000 residents with, on average, 65% residing within the city of Stirling and 35% residing in the rural areas. Some parts of the Stirling area are amongst the most affluent in the country with other areas where there is a high level of concentrated deprivation.

Stirling council has 7 secondary schools, 40 primary schools, 29 council early learning & childcare establishments, 18 partnership providers and 7 additional support needs (ASN) provisions. All of the education establishments belong to a learning community. There are 7 learning communities across the council.

During 2016-2017 the EPS became fully integrated within the new Children's Service in Stirling. We moved, as part of the Children's Service to the Wolfcraig Building, which has provided an excellent opportunity to increase our collaborative working with a range of teams and professionals.

We are positively focused on developing our role within the Children's Service, in delivering excellence and equity by using psychology and evidence based practice to raise attainment and close the poverty related gap to improve outcomes for children and young people.

We recognise that improving a child or young person's readiness to learn contributes significantly to securing better outcomes in raising their attainment and achievement. Through the ongoing work of our service in delivering training on topics such as attachment and trauma, nurturing principles, brain development and the impact of stress on the brain, the team have had a key role in building the capacity of education staff and partners in their understanding of the need to promote positive relationships, build resilience and provide safer environments for children and young people in order for them to learn more effectively and achieve their potential.

OUR VISION & SERVICE DELIVERY

Making a difference: using psychology to improve outcomes for children and young people



Partnership working is at the heart of Stirling EPS' practice, collaborating with education establishments, parents/carers and partners to improve educational outcomes for Stirling's children and young people through the implementation and development of evidence based interventions.

The work of the service is varied but largely consists of the following:

- Improvement work – which can consist of training, research and development work. We work at a whole school and learning community level and at a local authority and national level.
- Children & Young People – our main aim is to work with and through those who know a child or young person best, providing consultation, advice and analysis of assessment information to the Team around the Child (TAC). Sometimes we work directly with a child or young person to inform a child's plan.

There is a link educational psychologist for each of Stirling's seven learning communities, which consist of early year's establishments, primary and secondary schools and specialist provisions. We continue to deliver our five core functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research, working at a universal and targeted level.

Educational Psychologists are trained to help others understand about child development. For example:

- How a child or young person learns,
- How a child or young person behaves and regulates their emotions,
- How a child or young person develops positive relationships with others.

Each educational psychologist is registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Our team currently consists of:



OUR KEY PRIORITIES:

We had three key improvement priorities for 2016-2017:

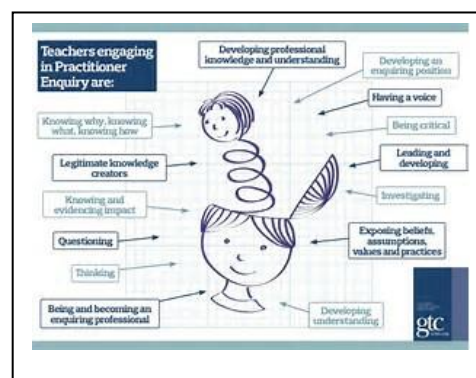
- **Key Priority 1:** To raise educational achievement and attainment by providing evidence based interventions
- **Key Priority 2:** To improve the emotional health and wellbeing for children and young people
- **Key Priority 3:** To evidence continuous improvement in EPS service deliver

We will now report on the progress and evaluation of our main activities linked to these priorities.

PRACTITIONER ENQUIRY:

Practitioner enquiry is an increasingly popular approach for developing and improving learning and teaching practice. The practitioner enquiry approach was highlighted in 'Teaching Scotland's Future' (Donaldson, 2010) as a way of supporting teachers to become more engaged in research, to support their own and ultimately, pupils' experiences.

It is a key part of the General Teaching Council in Scotland's 'Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning: Supporting the Development of Teacher Professional Learning' (2012) and the approach is now embedded within Stirling Council's educational leadership framework.



This session the service took account of the key priorities for schools i.e. closing the poverty related gap and raising attainment for all and of the GTCS standards and developed a practitioner enquiry programme, which was offered to education establishments to support the development of their own research skills.

Our progress so far:

A series of workshops took place during 2016-2017, with eight education establishments accessing the practitioner enquiry programme on a monthly basis. The group had up to fourteen project managers, mainly from schools, who had identified individual projects to take forward.

The workshops were led by two educational psychologists who linked practitioner enquiry to the work already being undertaken within the authority on the Model for Improvement. They incorporated this framework into practitioner enquiry, as a tool to evaluate whether a change led to an improvement.

The projects consisted of a range of topics such as the transitions process, improving numeracy skills, consistency of pedagogy and parental engagement.

We looked outwards to other examples of the practitioner enquiry approach being used and liaised with other educational psychology services in Scotland.

We have also been part of the development of an educational psychology national network for practitioner enquiry, which includes a representative from the GTCS.

What difference have we made?

We gathered feedback from those who participated in the practitioner enquiry sessions. We found that:

- 100% had gathered data and analysed data to clarify the nature of the problem.
- 86% had carried out a review of existing literature

Feedback from participants highlighted the following:

- "It has definitely helped us keep focused on 'why do we want to do that, and how do we know we are making a difference?' It gives us evidence that we are reflective practitioners."

- “If there is a change we know we will be measuring it. Working with our parents, they have told us that our project has made a difference – before we would just do it (and not measure it).”

We have made good progress in developing this approach within the wider educational leadership framework. Overall, participants identified that their reflective practice had improved allowing them to consider more robustly the reason for implementing a piece of work or intervention within their classroom or school as well as identifying ways of how to measure their work before implementing it.

What are our next steps?

We have made good progress in embedding the practitioner enquiry programme within the Children’s Service’s professional educational leadership framework.

We are liaising with the Broad General Education Team, to ensure that practitioner enquiry remains a key approach within the educational leadership framework, which staff can adopt to improve professional reflection and research skills.

We have developed practitioner enquiry sessions that will be delivered to all probationer teachers next session as part of their ongoing professional development and we will continue to offer sessions to staff within Children’s Service.

An updated information leaflet for staff will be made available at the start of the new academic session.

Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) & Video Interactive Guidance (VIG)



The service currently has two educational psychologists who are accredited supervisors in Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) with the Association for Video Interactive Guidance UK (AViGuk) and another 3 educational psychologists in training. VIG involves using video as the main tool to help people understand and improve their communication and interaction with others. It is mainly used to help people bring about positive change in their relationships. VIG is mainly used with parents/carers and children.

Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) can be used within a small group setting with staff and is an effective way of building on strengths and looking at the impact of change. Evidence to date shows that a cycle of three VERP sessions can bring about sustainable change in practice.

Our progress so far:

The service has contributed positively to the implementation of VIG and VERP in various contexts such as in individual casework with children and young people; leading VIG training with an external supervisor for Alloa Family Centre staff to enhance parent-child interaction; using VERP to help staff of the Big Noise Project consider pupil and staff interactions. Positive feedback has been provided by staff on the use of video in enhancing their reflective skills.

This session we liaised with the authority’s numeracy coordinator who wanted to identify an

approach that would help teachers share and increase their confidence and knowledge in teaching numeracy. VERP was identified as a strong evidence based approach to support teaching skills and reflective practice.

We offered VERP sessions to a small group of numeracy champions; all of whom were teaching staff from either nursery, primary or secondary stages. Staff were tasked with taking video clips of teaching numeracy in the classroom, with the sessions encouraging staff to review their clips in order to identify the times when they noted positive attunement with the pupils.

Our service has also contributed positively to, and led, on an annual national VIG/VERP conference for professionals, which was very well received.

What difference have we made?

From teacher feedback it was clear that staff found VERP a valuable tool, helping them to look more at their teaching and learning interaction such as noticing when a child required additional support prior to the child disengaging from a task. In this instance it allowed the teacher to provide input at an earlier stage to avoid the child from disengaging.

One teacher reported “(using video) I looked more at what the pupil was doing. It was easy to miss how they were working out a math’s problem. I would now do more ‘show me’ activities (to support the pupils and to understand how they are trying to solve the problems).”

Another teacher reported, “I do think it is a very powerful method; in just 2 videos you can look at the tiny things you do, which can imply something really big for the child.”

What are our next steps?

We aim to use VERP as an evidence based approach, with a focus on supporting the implementation of nurturing approaches in classrooms and schools and with the implementation of the PEEP programme, which we will refer to later in the newsletter.

We intend to offer VIG as an approach that can be used in individual work with children and parents/carers, which would be accessed through our request for assistance process.

We will work with Children’s Service staff to ensure that we are measuring effectively the impact of VERP & VIG on the attunement between parent-child and teacher-pupil relationships.

NURTURE APPROACHES:

There are three emerging themes outlined in Stirling’s Children’s Service Plan (2017-2020):

- Improving children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing
- Improving life outcomes for looked after children and young people
- Tackling the impact of low income on children and young people’s participation and achievement



Our service is developing an authority wide strategy for

whole school nurture approaches, which will contribute to the Children's Service priorities, providing a framework for promoting children and young people's wellbeing, resilience, attainment and achievement.

In response to the national priorities of raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap, Stirling Council's strategy for whole school nurture approaches has at its core a universal approach to promoting inclusive practice in all early years settings and primary and secondary schools leading to improved positive behaviours and positive relationships.

Our definition of nurture approaches will be based on Education Scotland's national definition:

"A nurturing approach recognises that positive relationships are central to both learning & wellbeing. A key aspect of a nurturing approach is an understanding of attachment theory and how a child's early experiences can have a significant impact on their development. It recognises that ALL school staff (and partners) have a role to play in establishing the positive relationships that are required to promote healthy social and emotional development and that these relationships should be reliable, predictable and consistent where possible. A nurturing approach has a key focus on the school environment and incorporates attunement, warmth and connection alongside structure, high expectations and a focus on achievement and attainment. It is based on the understanding of the 6 nurturing principles:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally*
- Environment offers a safe base*
- Nurture is important for the development of wellbeing*
- Language is a vital means of communication*
- All behaviour is communication*
- Transitions are significant in the lives of children and young people"*

Our progress so far:

Two secondary schools in Stirling have been supported by our service in piloting 'nurturing approaches in secondary schools'. A video of how St Modan's High School implemented nurturing approaches, with support from our service, can be accessed on, <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sacfi12a-implementation-science.aspx>

Between August 2015 and April 2017 our service has contributed positively to training in nurture and nurturing approaches with eleven training sessions delivered to education establishments. A sample of 141 evaluations demonstrated a positive increase in participants' knowledge and reaction to the topic of nurturing approaches.

Head Teacher's reported that:

- *"An increased awareness of nurture has impacted on staff vocabulary when describing or seeking to understand a situation which has changed adult responses."*
- *"The impact has been seen at an individual pupil level because staff are moving from a behaviour approach to a more nurturing approach."*

Pupils and parents reported on their views of nurturing approaches:

- *"The (nurturing) classroom helped me to stay calm." (secondary pupil)*
- *"We have learned about (the importance of) sharing and respect." (secondary pupil)*
- *"You make me smile each day and when I am sad or upset you always find a way to cheer me up." (primary pupil reporting on nurturing staff)*
- *"I am really pleased with the support my child is getting. He is more positive about going to school." (parent/carer)*

Three educational psychologists have now attended the Education Scotland training on nurture approaches, along with five education staff from identified schools, with the aim of contributing to and leading on further staff development opportunities across the authority.

So far, staff have reported on the positive impact of receiving training input on nurture approaches on their level of knowledge and skills, whilst there is evidence that some pupils and parents are reporting improved outcomes in relation to their wellbeing and positive relationships.

What are our next steps?

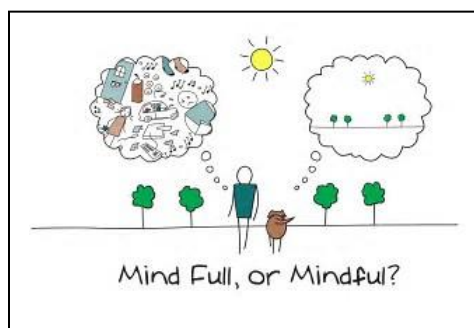
We have made good progress in delivering training to education establishments on nurture approaches. The service will now take on a strategic lead role in delivering nurture approaches across Stirling.

A number of schools have been identified who we will support through a coaching and mentoring role. We will support nurture leads, who will be identified within establishments and/or learning communities, to have a key role in driving forward improvements.

A steering group and a training implementation group will be created by our service, to ensure that we achieve our stretch aims and can evidence improved outcomes for children and young people. We will work with schools and the local authority to establish how best to use existing data sets for the evaluation of improved outcomes such as attendance and exclusion figures, improved wellbeing based on the wellbeing indicators.

MINDFULNESS:

Mindfulness is a mental skill which teaches us to pay attention to what is happening now, rather than thinking about the past or worrying about the future. Practicing mindfulness can help us to develop skills in observing our own thoughts, experiences and emotions without feeling compelled to act upon them. Current research on mindfulness and adults highlights a strong evidence base of reducing stress and anxiety. There is a developing research base for the use of mindfulness with children and young people, of which our service has been contributing to.



A number of schools and early years establishments across Stirling council have been introducing Mindfulness approaches, supported by the Educational Psychology Service. The aim of this is to improve the long term emotional health and wellbeing of children, based on the current evidence base on the use of mindfulness skills.

Our progress so far:

Our service has provided a significant level of focused input to one learning community in Stirling, the Balfon cluster, which consists of a number of early years, primary and secondary schools. We have had a significant impact on developing a knowledge base in education establishments. For example our service has led and support the following:

- 82 practitioners from a range of Stirling education establishments attended information sessions on mindfulness and the model for improvement.
- 11 Social work colleagues attended training which incorporated mindfulness approaches.
- An educational psychologist presented alongside Stan Godek (a mindfulness consultant) at a 'creative conversation' in May 2017, to an audience of 160 practitioners from across the Forth Valley area. The feedback was very positive.

 StirlingEPS retweeted



Clare Hoare @learn_curious

16 May 2017

A thought provoking talk about #Mindfulness tonight with Stan Godek & Charlotte Murray recognising stress, anxiety & what we can do to help

  5  6  

- Two locality mindfulness working groups were established with a range of interested staff.
- A mindfulness Glow group was created for practitioners, where they could find mindfulness research documents and a network of peer and educational psychology supports.
- A leaflet was produced to give parents further information on mindfulness and links to relevant websites.
- An educational psychologist presented at the Scottish Learning Festival in partnership with a nursery head teacher on mindfulness and the early years.

In 2016, a short video clip of nursery children was taken highlighting the impact of mindfulness and the impact of the EP role in supporting and developing the intervention.
<https://youtu.be/eoRBQygFLrM>

From some tests of change (a method to evaluate whether a change is an improvement) we were able to demonstrate that mindfulness in early years had made a positive impact on:

- Improved concentration of preschool children during a craft activity,
- Improved attention of preschool children to the adult giving instructions/ retention of instructions during the activity,
- Improved detail/realism of preschool children's drawings following a mindfulness visualisation.

We recorded the identified impact on a wider range of pupils across other establishments who were in receipt of mindfulness approaches. Pupils demonstrated:

- Improved focus on tasks.
- Managing their own reactions.
- Awareness of their own emotional state.
- Sharing feelings and supporting each other.

What are our next steps?

We have made good progress in supporting staff to embed mindfulness within their

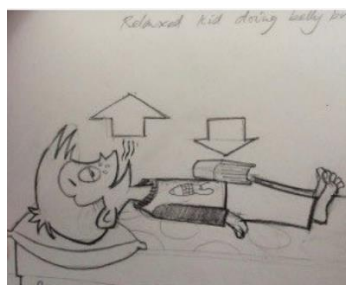
establishments and the service has contributed positively to supporting schools in evaluating the impact of mindfulness.

We will continue to provide support and advice to schools and staff who would like further information on mindfulness or who would like to implement mindfulness. Our main aim is to work with staff who can take a lead role in sustaining the approach within their own context and for mindfulness to be incorporated into the work that we will be supporting on nurture approaches.

The parent information leaflet will be added to our website page for ease of access and a poster presentation will be developed to display at the national educational psychology service annual conference in September 2017.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SELF REGULATION:



In relation to the raising attainment agenda, the educational psychology service provided 0.1fte of an educational psychologist's time to support an attainment primary school in Stirling with a focus on developing self-regulation skills in pupils.

All the children in the school were trained on the use of a self-regulation strategy focusing on attention, breathing and control and using the belly breathing technique.

Evaluation of the input highlighted that for some children there had been:

- a reduction in the frequency of outbursts in class
- a reduction in the intensity of outbursts in class

Teachers reported increased knowledge and awareness of the impact of trauma and on self-regulation strategies.

Through our work with the attainment school we have helped to produce two video animations on self-regulation for children and young people, which will be uploaded on to You Tube when finalised.

PEEP PROGRAMME (Peers Early Education Partnership):

people

The PEEP Learning Together Programme, is an evidence based early learning intervention designed to improve the life chances of young children by raising attainment. The focus is working with parents and carers to build on the home learning environment and attachment

relationships with their children by making the most of everyday learning opportunities such as listening, talking, singing, sharing books and stories.

The PEEP programme was included as a case study in the Scottish Government's report 'Review of Family Learning Supporting Excellence and Equity' (2016) as an effective intervention.

The development of a Parent and Family Support Team in Stirling Council, provided an ideal opportunity to seek funding to train staff in the PEEP Learning Together Programme.

Our service led on the funding bid for PEEP through the Early Years and Early Intervention Team and funding was awarded during the session to support the implementation of the PEEP programme.

Training was delivered by the Peeple organisation to a number of staff. This included nineteen practitioners, of which five were senior early years educators, six were family support workers (FSWs) in the Parent & Family Support Team, four were FSWs from health, two were Home Start coordinators and two were educational psychologists.

The service has led on an implementation plan to support practitioners in implementing PEEP into their everyday work. A steering group has been set up to provide an overview of progress in the delivery of PEEP and on the evaluation of the programme.

Interventions have started in some provisions with improvement methodology being used to evaluate whether change is an improvement.

Eleven practitioners have expressed an interest in signing up for the practitioner accreditation through the City and Guilds to obtain an additional personal qualification.

PEEP is an emerging intervention therefore evaluations will be ongoing and these will continue to be led by our service.

The Model for Improvement



The Model for Improvement is an aspect of improvement methodology widely used in health care and by the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC). It provides a framework for developing, testing and implementing changes leading to improvements. To test out an idea for improvement, if it makes a positive difference we can build on it; if it doesn't we can tweak it or we can go back to the drawing board and start again.

Our service has adopted this methodology as a core framework to support our improvement work and we are currently supporting schools and early years' establishments in using this methodology through training and on-going coaching/consultation.

One of our educational psychologists is currently seconded 3 days a week as the Project Manager of the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) in Stirling to drive forward improvements based on a methodology supported by the Scottish Government.

Staff Development



Over the past 5 years Stirling EPS has contributed significantly to the professional development programme for staff across the authority providing 225 training sessions to a wide range of stakeholders, with positive links to improved outcomes.

During 2016-2017 the service has continued to provide a significant input to the authority's professional development programme i.e. 32 training sessions were delivered by the service to a range of participants such as education staff, health, social workers, school nursing team, 3rd sector, university students and parents/carers. A range of topics were covered such as attachment and trauma, mindfulness, the model for improvement, nurture principles.

From participant feedback following training input (on a scale from 0-10, with 10 being the 'most useful' or 'most knowledgeable'):

- 66% rated their knowledge of the topic prior to the training as 5 or below
- 91.4% rated their knowledge as 6 or above after the training
- 87% rated the usefulness of the training input as 7 or above

The feedback outlined that for the participants there was improved reaction and knowledge in relation to the topic they were learning about and an improved confidence in supporting children with knowledge & skills gained as a result of the training.

Some participants reported an:

- Increased reflection of their own practice e.g. use of language or behaviour/s.
- Improved understanding of evaluation/tests of change/use of data.
- Reduction of frequency and intensity of children's distressed behaviours in the classroom.

The service will continue to work with the Children's Service in relation to supporting the professional development calendar for 2017-2018 based on identified improvement priorities.

Validated Self-Evaluation



A range of validated self-evaluation (VSE) activities took place the week beginning 29th May 2017 for Stirling Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in collaboration with Education Scotland and local authority stakeholders and partners, from which the service was successfully validated.

VSE is an evaluative process that aims to support, develop and challenge an Educational Psychology Service's (EPS') own self-evaluation and by doing so affirms, or otherwise, the service's identified strengths and areas for improvement.

The VSE process supported the EPS' current self-evaluation and provided further clarity in relation to its strengths and how they are recognised and valued by others, as well as clarity

in relation to the key areas for development. These areas of development will inform the service's improvement plan for the following session.

Key Priorities for Improvement Planning 2017-2018:

The service will have a focus on the following key priorities, which contribute to the Children's Service Plan (2017-2020) priorities for raising attainment and reducing the poverty related attainment gap, developing further links to learning and teaching and using data to inform future planning and to measure impact.

- Nurture Approaches,
- Mental Health (including pupil participation),
- Action Research (with a focus on learning and teaching)
- Strengthening Local Resources for children are looked after and accommodated.
- Consultation – developing a framework.

For further information on the Standards and Quality Report or to provide any comments please contact the Principal Psychologist at Stirling Educational Psychology Service: 01782 237818 or psychological@stirling.gcsx.gov.uk

**STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK IN RELATION TO OUR SERVICE'S CONTRIBUTION
BASED ON SOME OF THE SHANARRI INDICATORS: (2016-2017)**

SAFE/HEALTHY

- *I feel that I have the tools to be a much more positive person. I am looking forward to living a more positive life (Young Person)*
- *You have made a huge difference in my life for which I am grateful (Parent)*

ACHIEVING

- *There is direct evidence of a positive impact on teacher planning since the psychologist's input on nurture and on brain development. (HT)*
- *I am seeing a different attitude in the class since introducing growth mindsets. (HT)*

NURTURED

- *You opened my eyes to a different way of seeing things and thinking about using different strategies (Parent)*
- *The training made it real about how early brain development can impact on the presentation of a child in nursery. (Key worker)*

RESPONSIBLE

- *Children are feeling able to talk about things they struggle with and have reduced anxieties about expressing themselves. (Class Teacher)*
- *The child was able to manage his anxiety due to his problem solving skills he gained from working with the psychologist. (HT)*

RESPECTED

- *Support to mum was invaluable in helping her to see how well her child was doing. (HT)*
- *You helped us to understand her difficulties. (Parent)*

INCLUDED

- *He is more positive about school now. (Parent)*
- *Reduced number of exclusions as a result of targeted casework by the psychologist. (HT)*
- *A weight has lifted off my shoulders. I feel happier inside and more confident to make friends.(Child)*