

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST: A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST (EP)?

Educational Psychologists are trained professionals who support the learning, emotional wellbeing, and development of children and young people, from birth to young adulthood. They use their expertise in psychology to address a wide range of needs at individual, school, and local authority levels. By working collaboratively, EPs aim to empower educators, parents, and other professionals to create inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive.

EPs are guided by legislation and frameworks such as the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) (Scotland) Act 2004 and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), ensuring that their work aligns with national priorities like inclusion, equality, and attainment.

HOW MIGHT TEACHERS WORK WITH AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST?

EP's role is negotiated with the school's ASN link (usually a Deputy Head Teacher). If you feel support from an EP would be beneficial, please contact them in the first instance.

Teachers play a pivotal role in collaborating with EPs to support students effectively. Below are key ways in which teachers might engage with EPs:

CONSULTATION

1

- Discussing specific concerns about a pupil's learning, engagement or emotional wellbeing.
- Exploring strategies to support individual pupils or groups within the classroom.
- Identifying additional resources or interventions that could enhance engagement, teaching and learning.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Participating in workshops or training sessions on topics such as:
- Supporting students with additional support needs (e.g., literacy difficulties, ASD, anxiety).
- Promoting resilience, emotional regulation, or restorative practices.
- Implementing evidence-based strategies for inclusive teaching.

2

ASSESSMENT

3

- Collaborating on assessments to gain a deeper understanding of a pupil's strengths and challenges.
- Providing insights to inform a child's plan.

INTERVENTION

- Developing and implementing interventions tailored to specific needs.
- Using approaches such as solution-focused strategies, restorative practices, or Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

4

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

5

- Partnering on projects to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions or teaching approaches.
- Reflecting on practice to continuously improve outcomes for pupils.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN EP IS INVOLVED?

When an EP works with a school, this is coordinated through the school's ASN link (usually a Deputy Head Teacher), and their involvement is guided by consultation and collaboration. Teachers might experience the following:

INITIAL COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS OR DISCUSSIONS

An EP may have a meeting that you are invited to that will help us to understand the context and share your insights about a pupil, class or group.

OBSERVATIONS

EPs may observe pupils in the classroom to gain a clearer picture of their learning and interactions.

JOINT PROBLEM-SOLVING

Teachers and EPs work together to identify barriers and explore evidence-based solutions.

FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

The EP will provide actionable recommendations, which might include changes to classroom practice, tailored resources, or targeted interventions.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF EP WORK

EPs operate using the following principles:

COLLABORATION

Working alongside teachers, families, and other professionals to support children's learning and development.

CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH

Ensuring that the pupil's voice is heard and their needs are at the heart of decision-making.

INCLUSION

Promoting equality and removing barriers to learning for all pupils.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Empowering teachers through training and sharing psychological expertise.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Using research and data to inform the least intrusive interventions and strategies.

EXAMPLES OF EP SUPPORT IN PRACTICE

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

- Developing inclusive approaches for pupils with communication needs.
- Providing advice on managing transitions to reduce anxiety.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS

- Co-delivering interventions, such as social skills groups or restorative practice workshops.
- Offering coaching and mentoring to support inclusive teaching practices.
- EPs are formalising support for teachers' mental health through initiatives like reflective teams. However, they already provide valuable informal support through daily conversations, offering teachers a vital space to process challenges and manage workplace pressures.

SYSTEMIC WORK

- Advising on whole-school approaches to wellbeing, such as anti-bullying strategies or nurture principles.
- Contributing to the development of school policies on inclusion and additional support needs.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Educational Psychologists are here to support teachers in their crucial role, ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed. By collaborating effectively, we can create learning environments that are inclusive, supportive, and tailored to the diverse needs of all pupils.

CONTACTING THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

IF YOU BELIEVE AN EP COULD SUPPORT YOUR WORK, HERE'S HOW TO GET IN TOUCH:



Speak to your school's Additional Support Needs (ASN) Coordinator or Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

CONTACT INVERCLYDE'S EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE DIRECTLY:



Email: psychological.service@inverclyde.gov.uk

Phone: 01475 715430

Website: Inverclyde EPS Website