

Argyll & Bute Council

Educational Psychology Service Newsletter

May 2017

Spotlight on Lisa Myburgh



Lisa completed her undergraduate degree in Psychology and Journalism at Rhodes University in South Africa. She moved to Scotland in 2009, and in 2013 was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Psychology from Glasgow Caledonian University. Lisa's final project was a qualitative study looking at the forms and functions of impersonation play. Lisa graduated with a distinction, and the award for best overall performance. From 2014-2015 Lisa worked as a support for learning assistant in a primary school where she supported a range of children with different needs, particularly children with ADHD and

SEBN. She has also worked as a nursery assistant, and a volunteer Humanitarian Education Officer with the Red Cross. Lisa has always worked with children in various capacities, including working as a freelance environmental children's photographer (one of the reasons she has fallen in love with Argyll is its dramatic landscapes). Her experiences working within education, however, convinced Lisa that she wanted to pursue educational psychology, a career in which she can support vulnerable children, enhance inclusion and improve outcomes for children. Last year, Lisa co-conducted a meta-analysis of reading comprehension interventions in secondary schools. Her final year project focuses on gathering children's views on how they would like to be consulted, their experiences of participation in child planning meetings and on children's perceptions of the drivers and barriers to participation.

Particular areas of interest for Lisa are nurture, attachment theory, and trauma. She is also interested in evidence-based interventions that target 'soft skills' like motivation, emotional literacy, self-efficacy and self-regulation, and the impact these have on children's wellbeing and academic attainment.

Lisa was keen to express her gratitude for the opportunity to start her career in Argyll and Bute, within "an experienced and highly regarded team". Having grown up in a quiet coastal town in South Africa, Lisa has wanted to move to the coast since she came to Scotland. She and her family are so looking forward to taking advantage of the outdoor lifestyle, beautiful scenery, and sense of community offered here.

Building Mentally Healthy Schools—A new initiative

The last edition of this newsletter focused on mental health ("*Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Our Children and Young People*" Anne Greig, November 2017) and it continues to be a key priority for the EPS team. The Building Mentally Healthy Schools project focuses specifically on building the capacity of secondary schools across Argyll and supporting establishments to develop a robust approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. Fantastic work goes on in our establishments already, for example the current SeeMe initiative at Dunoon Grammar, and the film produced by Tarbert Academy pupils last year (www.tigershark.tv/tarbert)

Alongside health colleagues (Tracy Preece and Sam Campbell) the EPS are looking to build on this through collaborative discussions with secondary colleagues to create and implement a bespoke plan for each establishment, including meeting training and development needs. Our first collaborative meeting went ahead at Tarbert Academy in April, with the next scheduled for Lochgilphead HS in June.

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Welcome

Welcome to the May 2017 edition of the Educational Psychology Service Newsletter.

This time, the spotlight is on Lisa Myburgh. The team are delighted to welcome Lisa, who will start with us in July 2017 following her completion of the Educational Psychology MSc at Strathclyde University. Lisa will work largely in the Oban area and comes to us with a wealth of experience (see over the page!).

Also in this edition, a timely focus on mental health and meeting emotional wellbeing needs, with information on how the service is supporting the mentally healthy schools project (p.1) and continuing to deliver training on the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) programme. (p.2).

Additionally, read on to page 2 for news on an initiative led by our colleague, Stuart Craig, to deliver twilights on all aspects of literacy across Argyll and Bute.

Linden Ginter, Educational Psychologist,
Mid Argyll/North Lorn

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Update

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is a nursery/classroom based educational programme designed to improve children's social and emotional learning. Its main aim is to prevent or reduce the impact of socio-emotional and behaviour difficulties upon an individual's learning and development. The programme is designed to be fun whilst providing learning opportunities in which children can become more self-aware and develop positive relationships with their peer group and practitioners.

Since an initial Argyll & Bute pilot in 2012, the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has continued to lead the implementation of PATHS in collaboration with the Early Years Team. To date, seven pre-5 units, twelve partner providers and fifty-one primary school settings have been trained in PATHS.

In 2015, Education Scotland visited the EPS as part of the Validated Self-Evaluation process, during which the impact of PATHS was evaluated. Feedback about the programme itself, the training and support, and the impact on children, was ex-

tremely positive. The agreed next steps related to embedding PATHS within an authority wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy and further developing evaluation approaches.

In 2016-17, in response to feedback in training evaluations, a training programme with a primary school focus was developed, delivered and evaluated positively. Recently, one primary school has agreed to pilot a whole school implementation in order that this approach can be evaluated.

The EPS and Early Years Team continue to support settings with implementation, and plan to further develop support materials. Over the coming session it is hoped that an online forum for the sharing of materials and resources can be created (e.g. via SALI) and that links between settings can be established or strengthened, to ensure that new PATHS settings can benefit from the knowledge of experienced PATHS practitioners.

Sarah Jamieson, Educational Psychologist (Helensburgh, Islay, Jura, Tiree)

Literacy Forum—Twilight training for practitioners across Argyll

The EPS continues to support the work taken forward by the authority-wide Literacy Forum. The forum includes members of the Early Years Team, Adult Literacy Team, representatives from the authority and the primary and secondary sectors.

As part of the work currently being undertaken by the forum, a programme of twilight training sessions are being provided to clusters across the authority. The twilights provide workshops with topics relating to literacy which have previously included:

- ELC Literacy Tracker
- Practical Phonics interventions
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Nessy
- Shared / paired reading
- Effective use of assessment
- Identification of literacy difficulties / dyslexia
- Supporting literacy difficulties across the secondary school
- Adult and family literacies – assessing and supporting adults

In addition, in each cluster twilight session local practitioners have had the opportunity to share good practice with their local colleagues. .

Thus far, twilights have been provided in Kintyre, Oban & Lorne, Islay & Jura and Mull. Practitioners from the Health and Social Care Partnerships and the third sector have also taken part.

Each session has been well-attended and evaluations have been positive, with participants commenting on the informative nature of the talks and workshops.

Further twilights are planned for Helensburgh & Lomond, Cowal and Bute and these will be staged this term.

Stuart Craig, Educational Psychologist, Bute & Cowal, Isle of Mull

What did participants say about the twilight sessions?

What did you learn from this session?

The importance of literacy before school / early intervention

Reciprocal Teaching – interesting to hear how it works in practice as part of developing a reading culture

What will you do differently?

Increase parental engagement

Implement the tracker / use it more effectively

I will focus on literacy and appoint a literacy leader

Thank you for reading our newsletter. Any questions or feedback can be directed to:
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