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ALLIANCE



**KYRA JOURNAL**  
NOVEMBER 2015

*Building a strong foundation: The Early Years*

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# Welcome



I am delighted that this edition of the Kyra journal focuses on the Early Years sector – a key element of Kyra’s remit and ambition for children. The alliance has seen its Early Years work expand significantly over the past year, not least through our designation as a national Early Years Hub.

The Project (which is funded by the National College) is designed to develop a practitioner-led system focused on improving practice and providing mutual support for those serving children under-five. It’s a timely development, not least because a tighter funding climate has resulted in fewer opportunities for Early Years settings to access face to face support. We’re delighted that the Birth to Five Service of Lincolnshire County Council is contributing its vast experience and expertise as a member of both the steering group and project board.

An SLE, Claire Logan, Priory Witham Academy, led the project during 2014/15. In the first phase of the project, Claire encouraged settings to work together in triads on a piece of action research (supported by Bishop Grosseteste University). Nursery schools worked together, as did daycare providers and childminders, to explore and develop successful practice in a number of areas. Indeed, you can read a few examples of their work and impact in this journal.

The second phase saw triads involving a mix of setting types working together on different questions, such as improving the social interactions of children with EAL. The

action research explored if children stick to the same language friendships, if there was a dominant child in the friendship groups and if this changed in time and how EAL and non EAL children interact.

The two phases were evaluated by the North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership and the final report (published in early October) can be read here: <http://www.northliverpoolteachingschool.org/early-years-hubs-research-project.html>

So, an exciting new phase has now begun. Around 50 settings throughout Lincolnshire have been recruited to take part in the new triads. Seven co-ordinators from a variety of Early Years settings have been recruited to drive the project, and Birth to Five continues to be involved with a childminder triad. Initial meetings are taking place to decide on the focus of this year’s action research, to draw up action plans, and to determine baseline settings. Whole towns are involved and are working together.

Meanwhile, Kyra is working with some other Lincolnshire teaching schools to develop an Early Years Educator Lead role. This will be similar to the SLE role but designed for exceptional practitioners in private, voluntary and independent early years provision. More information can be found later in the journal.

Thank you for reading, and, as always, prepare to be inspired!

**Jane Ledger**  
*Early Years Lead*  
Kyra Teaching School Alliance

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## Dates for your diary

### Ongoing until April 2016, NQT Support Sessions

A series of sessions designed to provide relevant high quality training and networking opportunities to NQTs. Each session is designed and delivered by an SLE with significant expertise in the subject area.

### 11th November 2015: Kyra SEN Conference: Bentley Hotel, Lincoln.

The theme of this year's conference is ambitious for children with SEND & how we work toward accelerated progress. The event is designed for leaders and SENCOs in both primary and secondary schools. Further information, including location, costs and agenda, can be found here: <http://kyrateachingschool.com/wp-content/uploads/Kyra-SEN-Conference.pdf>

### Better Reading Support Partners:

#### Supporting Struggling Readers From Year 1 To Year 10

Better Reading Support Partners is an effective Wave 2 Every Child Counts reading intervention for pupils in Years 1 to 10. It raises the attainment of children who can read but who lack fluency, understanding and enjoyment and may need support with decoding skills, vocabulary and/or comprehension. It is for children in KS1 who have fallen slightly below the level of their peers and for children in KS2-3 whose reading age is below their chronological age.

This is a 2-day Teaching Assistant training for primary and secondary schools.

A member of the SLT (who is the BRSP Co-ordinator) is advised to accompany the TA for the first half day to set the intervention in the context of school improvement. The SLT member manages the partnership in school and acts as the main link with the school's senior leadership team, class teachers and parents. Ideally, the Co-ordinator would be a Intervention Manager, Senior Leader, SENCO or Headteacher.

**Dates:** Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th December 2015

**Venue:** Mount Street Academy, Lincoln

#### Did you know?

Every one of Kyra's trainee teachers was rated as good or outstanding upon completion of the School Direct programme in 2014 and 2015. 100% of our 2015 graduates went on to employment in September.



# KYRA SEN CONFERENCE 2015

FOR LEADERS & SENCOS IN PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS

#### TIME & DATE

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November  
2015  
8:45am to 4:00pm

#### LOCATION

The Bentley Hotel  
Lincoln  
LN6 9NH

#### COST

£180 + VAT  
per delegate (non-members)

£150 + VAT  
per delegate (Kyra members)

This price includes a copy of Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants, 2nd edition, publication date 12 October 2015 for every delegate

## KEYNOTE 1: ROB WEBSTER



Rob Webster is a researcher at the UCL institute of Education. He is co-Author of Making the Best use of Teaching Assistants a guidance report published this year by the Educational Endowment Foundation. In his keynote Rob will unpick the research and recommendations in this document and look at how schools need to rethink and reform how they deploy and prepare TAs to ensure that they make a meaningful contribution to teaching and learning.

## KEYNOTE 2: MATTHEW BURTON FROM EDUCATING YORKSHIRE

### Delegates will be able to select and attend 3 of the following workshops:

- **Developing independent learning while also providing a secure emotional base**  
How Teaching Assistants can bridge the need to promote independent learning, while also offering warmth, positive regard and emotional security to students.  
(Bekki Docherty –Lincolnshire Educational Psychology Service).
- **Achieving sustainable positive behaviour change using the 'My Feelings and Me' approach for both staff and pupils**  
(Tim Ward, Behaviour Wise)
- **Strategies for supporting children with dyslexia in the classroom**  
(Lesley Shapcott and Helen Lane, Dyslexia Outreach Service, part of the Specialist Teaching Team).
- **Removing the velcro; planning for effective use of TAs in the classroom**  
(Ruth Clark and Karen Richardson, SENCOs and Kyra SLEs specialising in SEND).

To book a place at this exciting conference, complete the booking form and return to [kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk)



## Kyra Development Day: A Summary

*'There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about'*

Margaret Wheatley

On 6th October, colleagues from across Kyra came together to reaffirm our commitment to the vision and hallmarks of the alliance, and to consider how Kyra should evolve and develop in a fast-changing education landscape. The conversation began from a very clear starting point – namely, that the 'why' of Kyra is to shape an environment in which each and everyone of us can – by working together – achieve the very best for children across Lincolnshire.

The discussions, which were supported by an inspiring and provoking input by our new Kyra Associate, Maggie Farrar, centered around how Kyra should adapt and evolve in the current local and national education climate. The view was that Kyra should be a generator of social and professional capital – drawing upon the support, knowledge and potential of adults and children – as a basis for collective improvement and even greater ambition for our children.

This, we concluded, means that Kyra will:

- **Provide the training and support for every adult in our schools to be coaches, mentors and facilitators** of professional networks. Everyone in Kyra schools should receive coaching and provide coaching to another person. Everyone – at all levels of Kyra schools – will be encouraged to foster networks and create opportunities to share practice. The concept of an 'open school' morning

in each school – where colleagues can observe lessons and undertake learning walks, was strongly endorsed by the group.

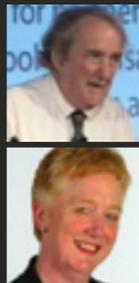
- **Create more alliance-led opportunities for professional networking.** Professionals – including Kyra school governors, SENCO, SBM and Pupil Premium champions for example – should belong to a relevant Kyra network. Kyra will provide SLEs – as well as governors and heads – with a regular forum, which they themselves will shape and deliver to best meet their needs.
- **Provide informed brokerage of school to school support and CPD** – based on a public 'pledge' made by every Kyra school to share its strengths and weaknesses as identified by peer review or other means of school-led evaluation. Quality assurance of school to school support will continue to be achieved through Kyra's LLE and SLE model;
- **Pool our resources as an alliance of schools to procure support in priority areas** – achieving both economies of scale and quality assurance in areas such as teacher supply, behaviour support etc. Kyra 'kite-marked' services could be procured at scale by the alliance in response to common needs.
- **Look to the wider system for provocation, challenge and expert support.** This means that Kyra will continue to engage in the national education debate, contribute our expertise to wider education developments and thinking, and establish a Kyra Associate role which will help us work towards being amongst the very best professional learning communities in the world. Sir Tim Brighouse and Maggie Farrar have both accepted the role.

The day also provided a clear steer on what Kyra should not do. Kyra:



- **Will not try to replicate the oversight and accountability role played by the Local Authority or multi-academy trusts.** It was felt very strongly that Kyra schools - whether maintained or academies - should support one another to pursue continuous improvement and be ambitious about future opportunities for children. Kyra will support schools within the context of the accountabilities they face, and provide access to a wider pool of support, networks and expertise to meet and surpass those formal accountabilities.
- **Will not be constrained by the national accountability system.** For example, our own accountabilities as a group – to one another and our pupils – will be ambitious, creative and invite a wide range of perspectives, including those of children in our schools. **Our support to one another will not be superficial – we will avoid ‘quick fix’ solutions to school improvement (Ofsted response SWAT teams were rejected!) and reactive CPD / support based on short term changes in policy or ‘events’.**
- Colleagues concluded the day by reaffirming their belief and hope that Kyra will continue to be an alliance defined by integrity, strong values, and impact that makes a transformational difference to our children’s learning and life chances.

If you would like to share your thoughts on the day or any further ideas you may have, please contact us at: [kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk) v



### Did you know?

Sir Tim Brighouse and Maggie Farrar CBE were announced in October as the first ‘Kyra Associates’. The role of the Kyra Associates is to inspire and challenge our alliance to become one of the very best professional learning communities in the world. These national experts will champion our work across the system.

## When three is a helpful crowd



When Kyra embarked upon the Early Years Hub Project last year, the steering group was clear that the programme should be inclusive – working with all types of settings across the sector. One key group identified were childminders, a core, yet often overlooked, body of Early Years practitioners.

Being a childminder is no easy feat. Here are the facts: the hours can often be very long (6am – 8pm is not unusual!), the level of compliance and accountability from Ofsted and others is quite demanding for one individual to manage, and it can

often be quite an isolated role as childminders most often work from their own homes. As a result, Kyra was keen to involve childminders as a distinct group of practitioners so that they could develop their networks of support, work together on the key challenges they face, and further develop their professional practice wherever possible.

One example of how the Early Years Hub is making a difference to the work of childminders is through a triad in Gainsborough. Debra, Clare and Pauline have been working together to develop practice and provide support to one another. With recent years seeing reduced funding for traditional support channels, building a network of support was essential for the group and they have since demonstrated just how powerful this can be.



*“With recent years seeing reduced funding for traditional support channels, building a network of support was essential for the group”*

In 2014/15 the group decided to focus on developing strategies for building the confidence of children with English as an additional language. This focus originated from a particular need of one child within Debra’s group, and Ofsted’s view that encouraging diversity was a development

area for her setting. As a result, Clare and Debra worked together to research potential approaches and to test them out. This included gradually introducing the particular child to children in Clare’s setting and both childminders spent time together observing the play that interested him and considering ways to introduce this into social situations with other children. The child has demonstrated increased confidence as a result, something which Debra does not think would have been possible without the links through the triad and the opportunities to provide wider social interaction.

Beyond the focus on language, the benefits of being part of a group have been evident to all three ladies. Both Clare and now Pauline are strongly of the view that the support was essential in preparing them to become a childminder, and that all prospective childminders

should join groups so that they have the confidence to deliver the very best provision for children. "I would have been completely overwhelmed by the forms, the need to develop policies and the pre-registration Ofsted if it wasn't for Debra's help and support" says Clare, "but it also goes beyond managing compliance, it's also about how you best invest in the resources that make a difference to children's development and learning, setting pricing, and knowing when it is best to take your holidays – these are all issues that you need good advice on, as well as the day to day questions that come up."

*"(the nature of support) goes beyond managing compliance, it's also about how you can best invest in the resources that make a difference to children's development and learning."*

It is clear that there is a collective confidence amongst the group, but also a determination to work together to provide even better development and learning for their children. It is driven by a passion to give the very best to the children they care for. In 2015/16, the group are embarking on a piece of work – with support from Kyra and Birth to Five – on supporting the development of movement in two to three year-olds. As with last year's project, this is driven by the needs of children within the triad's setting whilst also gaining an understanding that can be shared with childminders and other practitioners in the wider system. The group's findings will be shared later this year.

**If you would like to contact Clare or Debra to find out more about their work, including developing a triad or their learning around supporting children with EAL, please contact them at:** Debra: [debdecnath@gmail.com](mailto:debdecnath@gmail.com) or Clare: [clarepoulter27@talktalk.net](mailto:clarepoulter27@talktalk.net)

### Did you know?

**Kyra, together with a group of other Lincolnshire Teaching Schools, has developed the Early Years Educator Lead (EYE Lead) Role. EYE Leads will be excellent practitioners who, while continuing to work within their settings, will be deployed by the Teaching Schools to inspire and enable providers to assess possible areas of improvement in the practice of their settings. More information on the role, criteria, and application process can be found at the end of this journal.**

## Practitioner in focus: Gemma Jarman

Kyra's Early Years triads are also shaping practice in the nursery sector. Here we talk to Gemma Jarman, from Priory Witham Academy, about her experience and her new role coordinating some of this year's newly established triads.

### Who was part of your triad last year and what was the focus?

Our triad consisted of myself and colleagues from Mount Street Academy and St Faith's Infant School in Lincoln. It was an ideal partnership because our schools are quite close



geographically and we were able to find the essential meeting time for both planning and review. The focus of our triad was on researching and developing strategies for engaging boys in reading and storytelling – particularly those boys who we were struggling to engage. We were able to do this through testing out the various approaches and then discussing and comparing the outcomes across schools.

### What strategies were tested and what did you learn?

Across all three schools we assessed the engagement of boys when storytelling was delivered in large, medium and small groups. It was quite clear, looking at our baselines and the level of engagement (including through observation and questioning the boys following the reading sessions), that storytelling in small groups had the greatest impact. That wasn't a surprise – but nevertheless it was our experience that reading in small groups was often not given the time or investment it deserved. Storytelling can often be seen as a 'holding exercise' for the whole group rather than a focused activity. The work of the triad has ensured that small group storytelling is now a priority because we can clearly demonstrate the impact on learning and development.

*"small group storytelling is now a priority because we can clearly demonstrate the impact on learning and development."*

### Did the triad take any innovative approaches to storytelling?

Yes, our colleague at St Faith's was the first to place a big emphasis on the use of actions as part of the storytelling process – encouraging the boys to play the part of characters in the stories, rather than simply using props as we were all doing. She noticed a big increase in the level of engagement through this and it was something that we eventually adopted across the triad, with real success. The boys absolutely loved becoming part of the storytelling process and this showed in the levels of engagement!

### Tell us about your role supporting new triads this coming academic year?

I am really pleased to supporting other triads to grow and develop this year. I'm working with day care settings and nursery settings in Grantham who are currently at a very embryonic stage in developing their triads. The potential for collaboration and joint-practice development within and across these settings is huge. The focus of the groups will be on developing strategies to support the speech and language development of children with English as an additional language (EAL). This is a key issue for the settings involved and the issue was also picked up by Ofsted as a strategic priority for the East Midlands region in its recent report.

## So what is the next step for these groups?

The next step is for the settings to carefully consider the common issues their EAL children face, and to consider what strategies are likely to have impact – with a particular focus on research and evidence within the wider system. We will then test this out through day to day practice and with a clear focus on the progress of those children. It is also a great opportunity for me as I will be able to see the project develop and, hopefully, bring some powerful ideas and approaches back to colleagues in Lincoln.

*If you would like to contact Gemma to learn more about her triad's focus on boys' engagement in reading, or about the work taking place in Grantham, she can be contacted at: [gjarman@prioryacademies.co.uk](mailto:gjarman@prioryacademies.co.uk)*

## Early Years reading: Some helpful recent news & resources for schools & EY practitioners

### Childcare and early education – A year until first working parents receive doubled free childc are

Government plans to double the current number of free hours of childcare available to parents a week, to 30 hours, will be rolled out to parents in September 2016, a year earlier than planned. Education secretary Nicky Morgan is asking childcare providers and councils to come forward with innovative and flexible ideas of how they would deliver the new offer from next year.

The new 30-hour offer provides the equivalent of 30 hours per week of free childcare, making every 3 and 4 year old with working parents eligible for 1,140 hours of free child care per year. This is worth £5000 per child, per year. The 2-year old offer gives 15 hours of free childcare per week to the 40% of children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. It is worth £2500 per child, per year.

Further details can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-year-until-first-working-parents-receive-doubled-free-childcare>

### What to expect, when

4children has produced a booklet for parents and carers to help them find out “what to expect during these vitally important years by focusing on the seven areas of learning and development which are covered in the EYFS.”

The booklet can be shared by schools and Early Years providers to support parents to:

- use it as a reference - see what you notice your child can do;
- use it as a prompt to explore and try new things together;
- identify areas about their child's learning and development that they might wish to discuss with an Early Years practitioner.

The full document can be downloaded it here: <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2015/03/what-to-expect-when-a-parents-guide/>

## Case study: St Giles Nursery, Lincoln

You can access Kyra's recent case study on St Giles Nursery in Lincoln here: <http://kyrateachingschool.com/wp-content/uploads/Kyra-Case-Study-St-Giles-Nursery-School-Web.pdf>

The case study considers:

- strategies for raising aspirations, including through curriculum development and parental engagement;
- extending provision to two-year olds and tips for managing this;
- developing external partnerships;
- the nursery's participation in the Early Years Hub project, including learning and key outcomes.

## The new Early Years Educator Lead Role

### What are EYE Leads?

The EYE Leads will be excellent practitioners who while continuing to work within their settings, will be deployed by the Teaching Schools to inspire and enable providers to assess possible areas of improvement in the practice of their settings. Support may be a one-off visit, meeting or phone conversation or a more prolonged programme of work. EYE Leads will also be given the opportunity to work with other EYE Leads and Teaching School staff to develop and deliver innovative CPD.

### Who can be an EYE Lead?

We are looking for practitioners who are passionate about ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children and fulfil the following criteria:

### Required Qualifications/Skills/Experience

- A degree level qualification
- At least 3 years' post qualification experience of working in Early Years with children from birth to 5 years.
- Current employment in a Early Years setting.
- Proven success as an Early Years practitioner and mentor.
- Experience of successfully using coaching and/or facilitation skills to bring about sustainable improvements.
- An understanding of what constitutes 'outstanding' in your field of expertise and the ability and confidence to communicate this.
- An understanding of how your specialism and skills can contribute to wider setting improvement goals.

- Resilience and determination to succeed in the face of pressure and difficulties.
- The ability to identify concerns and resolve issues in a fair, ethical, open and reasoned manner.
- Good analytical skills and the ability to communicate and plan effectively.
- Ability to reflect on the quality of own performance, respond positively to direction and improve own performance.
- The ability to demonstrate research skills to gather different kinds of information by a variety of means.
- The ability and skills to analyse and make deductions from information in order to form judgments and take decisions.
- The ability to work collaboratively.
- A personal commitment to continuous development and learning.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.

### Desirable Qualifications/Skills/Experience

- Knowledge and experience of Early Years Pupil Premium.
- Knowledge and experience of ELKLAN.

### What can EYE Leads expect?

EYE Leads will receive high quality induction and ongoing training to enable them to carry out their role. During deployments for setting support, they will be assigned a named person by the Teaching Schools who will act as their point of contact and support and will carry out quality assurance during the deployment.

This role provides an excellent opportunity not only for EYE Leads to share their knowledge and expertise with other settings, but for them to learn and to take their experience back to their home setting.

### What can Home Settings (settings who have an EYE Lead on their staff) expect?

EYE Leads will only be designated if they can demonstrate that they have the full support of their setting manager, and if the manager provides a satisfactory reference. Once designated, EYE Leads will be provided with high quality and appropriate induction and ongoing training and with support by a named person during deployments.

A maximum number of days for deployment will be agreed between the Teaching Schools and the Home Settings and this is expected to be between 5 and 10 days per year. We will aim to give no less than 2 weeks' notice of a requirement for deployment and in most cases of setting support, Home Settings will be able to arrange the date of the work with the supported setting. Where there is perceived to be a conflict of interest (e.g. for business reasons), the Home Setting may refuse a deployment.

Home settings will be remunerated for the time that they release their EYE Lead at the rate of £8.00 per hour. Home settings can claim this on completion of the work by invoicing the appropriate Teaching School.

## How to apply

Complete the application form. (this can be requested by emailing [kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk) or phoning 07769 661479).

Send the completed application form to your setting manager to complete the reference section.

Submit your completed application by the closing date of Monday 14th December 2015 to:

*By email:* [kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:kyra@lincolnmountstreet.lincs.sch.uk)

*By post:*

Lisa Yates  
Mount Street Academy  
Lincoln  
LN1 3JG

### Assessment of applications

Applicants whose applications show that they fulfil the required criteria and demonstrate the commitment of themselves and their manager to the role will be invited to a short interview during the week commencing 16th November 2015. Following this, applicants will be informed about designation.



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