

#KyraJournal



TEACHING  
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ALLIANCE

**Evidence Enabling Excellence:  
the growing role of research  
in our schools**

March 2017

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the growing role of research in our schools

**KYRA**

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## A Warm Welcome to this edition of the Kyra Journal

I am very proud to have started my role as Research and Development leader for our new Research School. Having worked for the National College for Teaching and Leadership for a number of years, most recently as Senior Manager for School-led Research and Development, I have been inspired by the way in which so many schools and school leaders have increasingly taken on responsibility for undertaking and disseminating research – and the impact it is having in their classrooms. The Research Schools model is a natural development for taking school-led research to scale and unleashing the potential of research to make a difference to children’s learning and development.



Kyra’s designation as one of the first five Research Schools will cement its important role in connecting and involving teachers and leaders with research. This month’s Research School launch conference demonstrated the huge interest, passion and commitment amongst many schools within Lincolnshire and beyond. There is a lot to do, but we begin from a strong base and with ambition for children at the heart of everything we do.

This edition of the Kyra Journal provides a useful introduction to the role research is already playing in our schools, the plans for the Research School, and the ways in which schools will be supported to engage with and be involved in research into the future.

I hope that you enjoy reading the case studies and interviews featured in this edition, and please do feel free to get in touch with me at: [Juliet.Brookes@kyrateachingschool.com](mailto:Juliet.Brookes@kyrateachingschool.com) if you’d like to learn more about how you can get involved.

With best wishes,

Juliet

Juliet Brookes  
Research & Development Leader  
Kyra Teaching School Alliance



## RESEARCH SCHOOL ?

Kyra Teaching School Alliance is just one of five across England to be initially chosen for the project to be part of a network of new Research Schools. The aim of each Research School is to bridge the gap between education research and classroom practice, helping teachers make better use of evidence to implement 'what works' in their classrooms.

The Kyra Research School will provide regular communication, events and training for leaders and teachers on how to improve classroom practice based on the best available evidence. Kyra will also support its schools to further improve practice through research and help them measure the effectiveness of their work.

The Research School key aims are to:

- Inspire engagement
- Grow capacity
- Identify local champions
- Build partnerships
- Achieve Sustainability
- Be ambitious for children

These aims will be made possible through: the provision of professional development to support teachers and other practitioners to access, engage in and monitor research; the provision of resources and key information relating to research-evidence and how to apply it; the work of our Research Champions who will provide ongoing support and advice to colleagues; and the development of more Professional Learning Communities around specific areas of research.



Alongside this, a number of projects such as Mobilise project, the Digital Feedback in Primary Maths project led by James Siddle and established professional learning communities will all feed into, and be supported by, our work.



“There is lots of knowledge out there that will help school leaders and teachers to further improve their teaching and pupil results” says Marie-Claire Bretherton, Executive Head of Kyra, “but it can be difficult to share research across schools in ways that really make a difference in the classroom.

“As a Research School we’ll be leading the way in bridging the gap between education research and the classroom. The work will create big benefits for pupils because it will encourage their teachers to use the latest research and knowledge of what practices are most effective in their classrooms.

“An added benefit will be that new knowledge into what works best in classrooms can be shared more easily between schools across the country through the other Research Schools.”

The Research School will be overseen by James Siddle – Head of the Research School, and Juliet Brookes, Research and Development Leader at Kyra. As James said at the recent Research School Conference, the success of the network will depend on the participation, commitment and collaboration of practitioners across Lincolnshire and the wider region. We are already delighted by the level of engagement and enthusiasm that has been shown and we welcome more colleagues to find out more about how they can become involved in its work.

**Please visit the Kyra Research School website at: [kyra.researchschool.org.uk](http://kyra.researchschool.org.uk)**

# In Summary: Kyra Research Conference 2017

Kyra's first Research School Conference was held at the Epic Centre on the Lincolnshire Showground on Friday 3 February 2017 and was attended by over 80 colleagues. The theme of this first conference was **'Teach, Research, Innovate'**, driven by the research school's vision to transform education for all pupils through inspiring and empowering teachers to undertake and apply research that transforms the lives and life chances of the children in our schools. The aim is to build a network of research schools across the country that will inspire and disseminate innovative research that leads to the highest quality teaching and learning.

Professor Steve Higgins, Professor of Education at Durham University and lead author of the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) toolkit addressed colleagues on the use of evidence to inform teaching. He asked colleagues to reflect on how the role of research could form part of a wider vision for educational practice and improvement, and said that one of his aspirations for the network of research schools would be that it ultimately informs and enhances the influence of research, including the EEF toolkit, within the wider education system.

**"Professor Higgins asked colleagues to reflect on how the role of research could form part of a wider vision for educational practice and improvement."**

He spoke of how accessing a body of research won't in itself provide the recipe for success. It is as important that school leaders and teachers are skilled and discerning in using the ingredients and become 'good cooks' so that it has impact in their context. For example, Professor Higgins stressed the importance of effective 'diagnosis', in other words working out what children need in order to progress in their learning, and the need to match the research evidence that is available to this diagnosis. This is important, he said, because sometimes research evidence often presents us with surprising results and that most of the time, just simply knowing the outcome of research does not tell us enough about why the project was successful for a specific group of pupils; there is a need to dig deeper. The role of research schools should be to enable and empower practitioners

to dig deeper and determine what research is appropriate to their context and how the research can then be applied and made 'actionable' within that context to the benefit of children.

**"The role of research schools should be to enable and empower practitioners to dig deeper and determine what research is appropriate to their context and how the research can then be applied and made 'actionable' within that context to the benefit of children."**

In this vein, Professor Higgins suggested a model for the effective use and communication of research, namely that it should be: accurate, accessible, applicable, acceptable, appropriate, and actionable.

**The key take away messages from Prof. Higgins' input were:-**

- **Ensure that the research base upon which we are drawing and basing our own interventions and research is accurate and robust;**
- **Develop and empower colleagues to be able to interrogate previous research findings and carefully consider how 'appropriate' the intervention (in its presented form) is to their context and children's learning needs. Be clear on identifying the limitations of research findings to your context but also consider the opportunities to build on the findings and adapt them to meet the needs of your children and young people;**
- **Ensure that research is 'accessible' to others in the profession, without losing the emphasis on 'depth' and a detailed understanding of the underlying factors which have contributed (or potentially contributed) towards an intervention's success within a particular context;**
- **In our focus on improving the quality of pedagogy, it is also important to address the subject content and match it well to the pedagogy so that children's learning is moved on. This will help to ensure the 'applicability' of the research we undertake;**

- **Consider carefully the ‘acceptability’ of the research undertaken, and that it engages with the values and motivations of the wider profession;**
- **Ensure that the interventions we develop are also ‘actionable’. This means that they should be practical and manageable for those wishing to translate them into another context;**
- **Use research to challenge and inform changes in government policy where appropriate. We have a responsibility to do this. In informing wide-scale improvement, we need to ensure we are developing our understanding and evidence-base around the quality of interaction in an education system where there is an emphasis on structures.**

The conference also included a number of workshops. James Siddle spoke on ‘Improving Pupil Outcomes Using Disciplined Innovation’ – explaining the journey his school, St Margaret’s C of E Primary School in Withern, Lincolnshire had taken to ensure that practice was informed and driven by research. James’ work is case studied later in this journal. Other workshop contributors included Felicity Norton from The Pen Green Paradigm, who spoke on Practitioner Research in the Early Years; Dr David Reedy, who spoke on the research findings relating to Effective Classroom Talk; Laura McQuade from Haven High Academy in Boston who spoke on ‘Self-regulation strategy development: A Case Study of Research in a Secondary School’; and Jane Elsworth and Stephen Foreman from Huntington Research School, who spoke on ‘Evidence in Practice for Busy Middle Leaders’.

**The day was concluded with inputs from Marie-Claire Bretherton and James Siddle.** Marie-Claire restated the challenge for the system in getting the information about effective practice into every school and classroom, in terms of what is actionable in different contexts. This, she said, is the overarching aim of the research schools network. James Siddle reinforced this point, saying that the big question for the research schools network is how it can start taking the intervention results from the toolkit and elsewhere and ensure work in our schools to make a difference for our pupils. There is much we still don’t know about making interventions work at scale, but schools

need clear, actionable guidance on practical school issues – it’s not enough just to make the information available, it’s what is done with that information that counts.

The conference also included an input on the new Chartered College for Teaching, which we have summarised on page 10 of this journal.

### **Further resources from the Research Conference**

A blog on the conference can be accessed here: <https://kyra.researchschool.org.uk/category/blog/>

A full report on the conference can be accessed on the Kyra website.

### **You can also hear more from some of our keynote speakers and delegates at our youtube channel ‘Kyra TSA’**



**Hazel Bell of Morton Trentside Primary talks about the importance of research to her practice**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj6eEA5txFQ>



**James Siddle outlines plans for the Kyra Research School**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wS854UMtQe8>

# Shifting mindsets – how school-based research has been transformational for children and staff



At the recent Kyra Research School Conference, James Siddle asked delegates: “Do you remember where you were when you first heard about the Sutton Trust’s toolkit?” For James, that first interaction with the document instigated a passion for research and a commitment to evidence-based practice that now runs through his school, St Margaret’s C of England Primary in Withern, like a stick of rock.

“Research was largely something you did at university and it was left behind there” says James. “Unlike in other professions such as law or medicine, robust research hadn’t – until a few years ago – had any major influence on professional discussions and planning in education.” Indeed, as delegates at the recent Kyra Research School Conference discussed, the profession is on a journey towards becoming far more research and evidence-based and St Margaret’s own inspiring story is soon likely to be reflected in many more schools up and down the county.

I begin by asking James where he was when he first came across the toolkit. “It was during a leadership development session I attended in 2010 and I remember being quite excited by the research around teaching assistant interventions - which didn’t sit with my personal experience at all. Within days I was enjoying an email debate with Professor Steve Higgins and I began to realise just how refreshing, interesting, and helpful it was to be discussing research evidence and how it related to practice in my own school.” Indeed, I remind James of the Kyra Leadership Conference in 2014 where most delegates, when asked by Sir John Dunford (at the time, National Pupil Premium Champion) whether they had accessed the toolkit, indicated that they had not. For James, and the wider alliance, it has been a rapid journey.

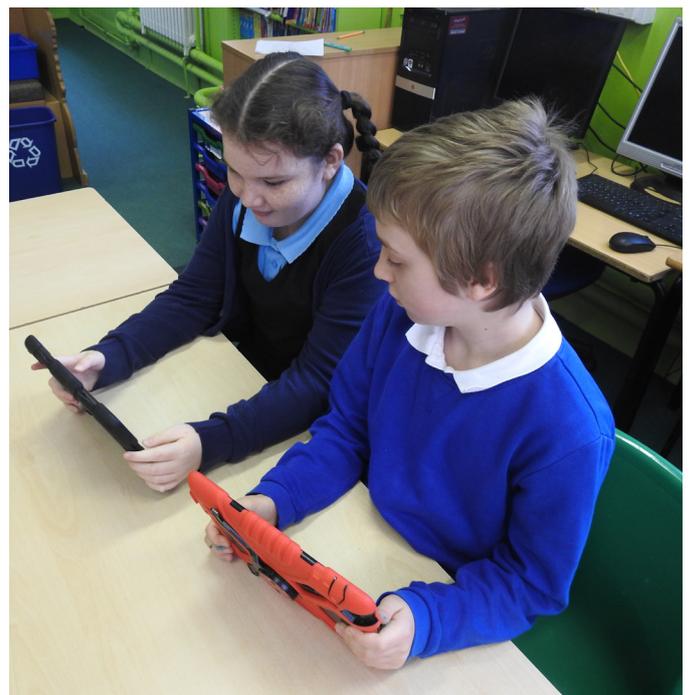
James' interest in research, and specifically in the toolkit, quickly directed his attention to the importance of feedback – an area widely regarded as having the potential for bringing about significant positive improvement in pupils' outcomes if applied and actioned with care. "I remember becoming particularly interested in how some of the evidence around feedback seemed to contradict what Ofsted was showcasing as best practice at that time. Ofsted's emphasis on detailed marking of children's books didn't seem to sit well with the evidence and the toolkit's emphasis on teacher interaction really interested me."

It was at this point that the stars began to align towards a greater role for research in Lincolnshire's schools. CfBT – then school improvement provider to Lincolnshire - launched a project encouraging greater collaboration and research across schools – particularly in rural areas. James and a number of colleagues embraced the opportunity with open arms – establishing a research project looking at innovative approaches to feedback. The project's aim was to trial approaches that could potentially improve pupils' progress across thirty four schools. It involved testing digital technology as an alternative method of providing feedback to pupils, and also included the use of blogging and peer to peer feedback amongst pupils. The research involved two groups of pupils at key stage 2. External markers were brought in to assess the impact of the teachers' feedback and pupils also completed questionnaires, which helped to inform the school's approach to feedback.

"What we found" says James "was a clear mismatch between our schools' traditional approach to marking and feedback and what motivated pupils and helped to move their learning along – particularly in terms of improved writing outcomes." There were also some clear indications that the impact of digital technology was greatest amongst pupils with special educational needs and those on free school meals and also that it was reducing teacher workload in relation to marking. The research certainly appeared to confirm the toolkit's original findings on effective feedback. However, as James concedes, the project was 'small scale' and needed an opportunity to be both scaled-up and to benefit from more rigorous approaches – including the use of randomized control trial approaches.

That opportunity was not long in coming. The National College for Teaching and Leadership's Closing the Gap Test and Learn project was seeking schools to participate in a number of small scale randomised control trials and James jumped at the chance. "Here was a chance to undertake a controlled intervention approach – building on our previous research and findings, and at a time when schools are investing in digital technology but weren't necessarily clear on how to use it to benefit pupils. It was something we just had to be part of."

The research ( which can be accessed here: <https://nctl.blog.gov.uk/2015/11/02/closing-the-gap-test-and-learn/> involved eleven classes from ten primary schools. This time the groups were randomly allocated, key variables were eliminated, and standardised approaches to teaching and both written and digital feedback were introduced. The study confirmed the original findings and the pupils' view that they benefited more from digital feedback was reinforced by the RCT – which again showed greatest impact on pupils with SEND and on those with free school meals. There were still limitations – notably the scale of the research and the fact that the research did not take into account the specific needs of SEND pupils. There is also some interest in looking at the impact of digital feedback on pupil progress in mathematics.



James is clear about the impact that research has had on pupils and staff at St Margaret's. "We have come a long way in the last three years. Pupil progress, achievement and engagement has improved significantly and much of that is down to the quality of interaction between staff and pupils and between pupils too. Involvement in research has been key to this. For staff, we have seen a big increase in professional confidence and much greater depth of professional dialogue and decision making. Staff won't simply accept new research or new practices without understanding the detail behind it, how it relates to our pupils and our context, and – if they do introduce new approaches– how they will be monitored and evaluated for impact." Indeed, James highlights his and his team's membership of professional learning communities as being a key factor here – something which James and I have previously documented for Kyra: <http://kyrateachingschool.com/professional-learning-communities-linking-cpd-to-daily-practice-michael-pain-james-siddle/>

It is this impact on pupils and staff alike which lies behinds James' passion for and belief in the Research School initiative. "It's a chance to ensure that research has relevance to practitioners and classrooms across the country and the region" says James "in a way that has impact on children's outcomes and changes the narrative about what it means to be a teacher. Teachers have the right to be discerning, challenging and convinced about the practices they use in their classrooms – but they also have a responsibility in helping to move research and practice forward in collaboration with their peers. Most practitioners will find that very motivating."

James frequently refers to research as a 'social process' and it is clear that he wants the profession to both have ownership of the initiative and to embark on it with a strong spirit of collaboration. In doing so, they will be supported with carefully designed CPD which will give teachers the tools for translating research findings into their own context and undertaking further research based on the principles that underpin effective research. He's also clear that the work of the Research School will be disciplined and that it will be contextualised – meaning that the research undertaken will respond to the needs of the schools taking part and that it is implemented in a way that recognises the differences with schools that have undertaken similar research in the past. "Research must be relevant – if it is to be sustained, we must use research to respond to some of the key challenges our schools are facing and maintaining our focus on where it can have greatest impact on our children's learning and progress."

The first step, says James, is to create a cultural shift whereby schools and practitioners are increasingly sharing research, engaged in what it says, and that those leading the way are championing and disseminating research throughout the county and the region. For James, the role of Research Champions and the growth of further professional learning communities is essential to this.

Before I leave St Margaret's I ask James to pose for a photograph (to run alongside this article) in the main entrance hall. My attention is immediately brought to a poster, in prime position in the school's foyer, outlining the 2015 Closing the Gap project and St Margaret's findings on digital feedback. It represents the school's passion for research but also its commitment to demonstrating the evidence that lies behind its work and to providing children with the very best learning opportunities. St Margaret's has certainly showed us what will be possible when the Research School reaches its full potential.

James Siddle is Head of the Kyra Research School and can be contacted at: [james.siddle@st-margarets-pri.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:james.siddle@st-margarets-pri.lincs.sch.uk)

*Michael Pain was speaking with James.*





## The big interview: James Richardson

*The Education Endowment Foundation has been at the heart of the developments in education research in recent years. The organisation is now taking its work a step further, having designed, launched and funded the Research Schools initiative. James Richardson, Senior Analyst at the EEF talks to us about the organisation's support and aims for Research Schools.*

### **Please tell us a little bit about your work and role within the EEF?**

Well, my background is in teaching and before joining the EEF three years ago I was a teacher and senior leader at a secondary school. My role is to support schools to use evidence, and the Research Schools are a significant part of how we believe evidence can gain traction in the system.

### **What are your hopes and expectations for the research schools?**

By September there will be 23 research schools operating across the country. They are each going to play a very important and valuable role in ensuring that research is applicable to classroom practice in schools across their regions. There are three core aspects to what research schools will do, namely: providing regular communications and events to encourage many more schools to engage with research; providing training and professional development to support schools in using research evidence within their context; and encouraging and enabling schools to be innovative and supporting them to evaluate the impact of their evidence-based interventions.

### **What will the training and professional development support look like in practice?**

This is about giving leaders and teachers the tools, skills and understanding for how to apply the research evidence to their own context. Research is a 'social process' and how we interpret and apply the research to our own context is critical. We've developed Guidance Reports on key areas, such as literacy and the deployment and use of teaching assistants, to help schools understand the implications of the research for their practice in

the classroom. We will be publishing other Guidance Reports in the coming months on numeracy, science, and all key areas of pedagogy. Our guidance report for making the evidence around the best use of teaching assistants actionable is already being used in Lincolnshire as part of the Mobilise project.

We've also developed a number of resources on assessment and evaluation to support schools in monitoring and evaluating interventions (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/diy-guide/getting-started/>) and the Research Schools will support schools to access and use these resources.

### **How do you see the EEF's role evolving in this?**

The Research School network is a collaboration between the EEF, IEE and the profession to ensure that evidence is as accessible and useful as possible to teachers. We have spent a lot of time ensuring that EEF reports, publications and tools meet the needs of schools. The Research Schools will play a key part in improving and developing these in the future.

### **What impact do you hope that the research schools will have had in three years' time?**

Our aim is that there will be a well-established network of twenty three schools who are able to act as conduits of evidence across the education system – championing research, making it relevant to practice, and supporting practitioners to implement it through low cost, high quality training.

**Find out more about the EEF** <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>

## An introduction to the Chartered College of Teaching

*We were delighted to welcome Joe Treacy, from the Chartered College of Teaching, to present to colleagues at the Research School Conference on 3rd February. The Chartered College of Teaching opened formally on 18 January 2017.*



The idea of a member-driven College of Teaching was explored in 2013 by a Commission of the Prince's Teaching Institute, and its development has been the result of collaboration with subject associations, learned societies and unions, as well as school teachers and leaders. During his first three months in post, Joe has spoken to many teachers about what they wanted from the College. The overall aim is for the College is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- Supporting teacher professionalism, status, pride and confidence
- Being an independent, research informed, trusted and credible voice
- Providing easily accessible, quality research
- Offering Chartered Status, and quality assurance for CPD
- Being inclusive of all teaching practitioners

The CCT will have financial support from the Department for Education for its first three years, and thereafter will have to be self-sustaining. The CCT's Chief Executive is Professor Dame Alison Peacock, formerly Executive Headteacher of The Wroxham School in Hertfordshire.

The CCT is based very much on the premise of 'positive deviance' – a strength-based approach which considered that the community already has the solutions to its problems and the collective intelligence to resolve them.

Professor Dame Peacock commissioned research, which involved over 15,000 teachers from all types and phases of school, to look at what teachers

most wanted from their new College, which led to the following 'wish list':

- Supervision that supports teacher wellbeing
- Partnership between schools and the research community
- A communal learning platform for CPD
- A code of conduct for engaging in professional dialogue

The CCT is already responding to the profession and is developing the Chartered Teacher Programme, which will provide accredited, relevant professional development. The College will also provide its members with access to research, by bridging the gap between schools and the research community and providing access to over 2,000 full text journals, articles and eBooks. Regional networks of teachers will be established to aid sharing of practice and groups of schools will partner with higher education institutions to deliver regional learning communities. Teacher wellbeing will be supported by providing resources and services that won't add to teachers' workload and which will facilitate open conversations. The College will represent and amplify teacher voice and will shine a light on best practice. The CCT is also planning to develop its own peer reviewed journal.

Membership of the CCT is £39 for the year.

# Research Digest

February 2017

## Making best use of teaching assistants

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published updated resources on (16 January) 'Making best use of teaching assistants.' The resources, which also underpin the Mobilise project, include seven evidence-based recommendations to help schools maximise the impact of their teaching assistants. The recommendations are summarised below (source: EEF):

### Recommendations on the use of teaching assistants in everyday classroom contexts:

- TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low-attaining pupils
- Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
- Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
- Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom

### Recommendations on the use of teaching assistants in delivering structured interventions out of class:

- Use TAs to deliver high-quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions
- Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction

### Recommendations on linking learning from work led by teachers and TAs

- Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions

The EEF has also produced a pack of free practical resources to help schools implement the above recommendations. There is also a suggested process that schools can use to re-frame and rethink their use of teaching assistants. The EEF has also partnered with the TES to create a free online course with step-by-step guidance on implementing the recommendations and videos of schools discussing their use of TAs.

Further information can be found: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/>

## Early years research

The Department for Education (DfE) has published (27 January) a number of research reports on various elements of early years provision. The main conclusions from the reports are outlined below (source: DfE):

**Good practice in early education:** In identifying features of good practice in early education, three broad cross-cutting themes emerged:

- Tailoring practice to the needs of the children - underpinning good practice was an ethos that placed the child at the centre of setting practice. Systems and processes were developed with the wellbeing and development of the children in mind and this helped settings maintain focus and avoid distractions that might detract from this focus. In practice, this meant settings had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve for the children in their care, and these clear goals informed all areas of their practice.
- Skilled and experienced staff - a second cross-cutting theme was the importance of staff that were qualified, knowledgeable and experienced because it was this skilled workforce that underpinned the practices that supported children to reach their full potential. Given the importance of a skilled workforce, settings with good practice worked hard to recruit and retain high quality staff, and prioritised ongoing support for their staff's development. Strong leadership was also considered vital, and good practice was underpinned by leaders who led by example; fostered team work and had a clear vision of what they were aiming to achieve.
- An open and reflective culture - the final theme running throughout this examination of good practice was the importance of an open and reflective culture, as this was thought to drive continuous improvement; create a positive working environment and encourage sharing of good practice to increase the quality of the early years sector as a whole. In practice this meant that settings with good practice sought out and worked in partnership with other settings and professionals; recognised the knowledge and expertise of their own staff and valued open discussion and staff consultation; and embedded a culture of self-evaluation as a means of driving continuous improvement.

### **Experiences of the early years pupil premium:**

- In relation to identifying eligible children, providers explained that it would be useful to standardise the eligibility criteria or make eligibility more transparent so that settings would be better able to plan resources. Confusion around which children would be eligible made it difficult for some providers (especially smaller providers with more limited resources) to work with and target families to complete application forms.
- Linked to this, some providers thought that it would be beneficial to remove the administrative burden placed on parents to complete application forms. Providers suggested EYPP applications could perhaps be more easily processed alongside applications for benefits or other subsidies, for example. Overall there was a sense that engaging parents in this process was difficult and that best practice on this particular issue could be shared more effectively.
- There was a sense that some smaller providers struggled to achieve the same kinds of impact as larger settings, because they had fewer eligible pupils and therefore less funding overall. For example some smaller settings found it more difficult to purchase staff resources such as Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) as they were too expensive, although some had found creative ways around this such as training existing staff.

- Some providers indicated that they would have found it useful to have more guidance on how to spend EYPP money, including where it would have most impact (implying low levels of awareness of existing resources such as the EEF toolkit). Providers appreciated the flexibility of the funding but were also keen to learn from the successes of other settings. It was suggested that this learning be compiled and disseminated for the benefit of all early years providers, either through a series of guides, learning and networking events, or both. Greater emphasis could usefully be placed on publicising existing resources, raising awareness within the sector.
- Finally, in relation to monitoring, providers explained that standardised data collection tools would help settings evaluate spending and impact on an ongoing basis, which would be useful in identifying what is working well and any possible areas for improvement, helping to prioritise decision-making and allocations going forward.

### **Children with SEND: Meeting their needs in the early years:**

- Early years provision for children with SEND: parents and settings generally felt that there was sufficient provision for children with SEND in their own local area, and that they were able to access relevant information to support the decision-making process. However, there was also some indication that information about SEND provision could be made more accessible to parents.
- Identification of SEND: all early years providers had processes in place for monitoring children's progress and identifying SEND; most settings combining informal observation with more formal monitoring procedures. These procedures appeared to work particularly well where settings could access support and advice from area Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) or other support services. Settings highlighted the significance of building strong communication strategies with children's parents, who were seen as playing an integral role in early identification of SEND.
- Communication between parents and providers: parents and settings both typically felt that communication channels worked well, with parents given adequate opportunities to speak to staff, discuss progress and raise concerns, formally and informally. Despite opportunities to engage, parents tended to show limited involvement when it came to steering or shaping provision. This was presented by parents as a trust in providers to know what was best for children.
- The introduction of EHC plans: the new EHC process was generally felt to be a positive development in the support and care of children with SEND. However, some providers were reliant on support from other SEND service providers, who were constrained in the amount of help they were able to offer. There was also recognition that the process could be slow and administratively burdensome, although providers felt that this would improve over time.
- Resources and funding: the greatest barrier settings faced to fully meeting the needs of children with SEND was resource constraints, including a lack of additional funding. There were also issues with the complexity of funding application processes and the length of time it took to receive additional funding, as well as the adequacy of amounts.

Further information can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-send>

## Cultural learning

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) has published (25 January) its new report 'ImagineNation: the value of cultural learning', which sets out how studying arts and culture changes and shapes the lives of children and young people. The key findings from the report are set out below (source: CLA):

1. Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%.
2. Learning through arts and culture can improve attainment in Maths and English.
3. Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school.
4. Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.
5. Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment.
6. Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer.
7. Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults.
8. Young offenders who take part in arts activities are 18% less likely to re-offend.
9. Children who take part in arts activities in the home during their early years are ahead in reading and Maths at age nine.
10. People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health.

Further details can be found: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/news/new-publication-sets-out-the-value-of-arts-education/>



# Dates for your diary!



March 17: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

**Kyra Heads' Spring Term Forum – Central (Members Only)**

at Lincoln Carlton Academy



March 22: 1.00pm-4.00pm

**Kyra East Heads' Forum**

at Spilsby Primary Academy



Mar 28: 1:30pm – 4:30pm

**Headteacher Workshop – “Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment”**

at Kyra Central, Lincoln Carlton Academy



May 18th: 4:00pm – 5:15pm

**Kyra Deputy & Assistant Heads' Forum – Summer Term (Members Only)**

at Lincoln Carlton Academy

If you are planning to attend any of these events, please book by following this link: <https://event.bookitbee.com/kyra-teaching-school-alliance>



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