

## **Wokingham Borough Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS)**

### **Evaluation 2016/2017**

Wokingham Borough Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) conducted a survey to gain feedback from schools on the quality and effectiveness of their service during the school year 2016/2017. Responses were received from 15 schools in the Wokingham Borough, 13 Primary Schools, 1 Special School and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. The surveys were completed by 14 SENCo's/Inclusion Managers and 1 Assistant Head Teacher.

Schools have provided their comments on the value of work they receive, ways to improve the EPS, training they have accessed and their training priorities for the next academic year.

In summary:

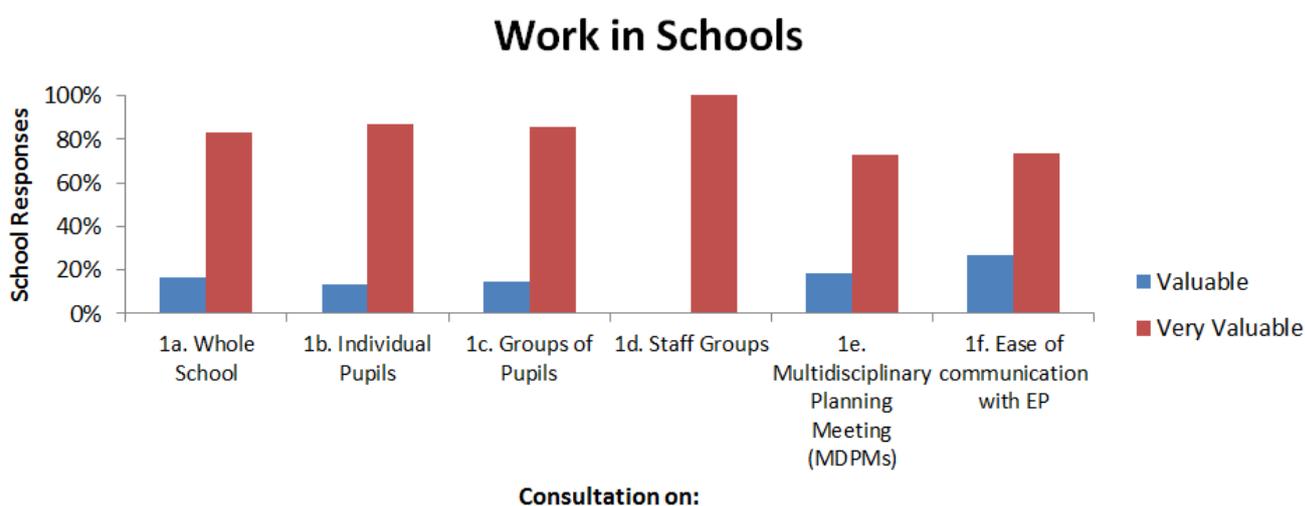
- All schools who received work in schools from the EPS rated it as valuable or very valuable.
- Schools found the following work with the EPS useful; relationship with EP; advice; training; meetings/surgeries; working with individual pupils and parents and statutory assessments.
- Suggestions to improve the EPS mainly focused on access to training and Educational Psychologist Availability. Many schools expressed their satisfaction with the EPS.
- 46.7% of schools had accessed in school training from the EPS, all rated it as being very valuable.
- Two schools had accessed training at a central location, with Attachment training rated as valuable and the Managing Anxiety rated as being very valuable.
- Training priorities for the coming year can be generalised into three themes; specific disorder, knowledge based and strategies based training.
- Nine schools provided additional comments offering praise and thanks to the EPS and specific EP's.

## Work in Schools

Schools were asked to rate how valuable they thought work with the EPS has been. The responses are summarised below in graph and table form.

Key findings show:

- All types of work were rated as being valuable or very valuable.
- All 15 schools accessed work with individual pupils, and 86.7% found it very valuable.
- Across all 15 schools, the ease of communication with EP's was rated as very valuable by 73.3% and valuable by 26.7%.
- Six schools accessed work with staff groups, and 100% found it very valuable.



Consultation on:	Responses	Not Valuable	Less Valuable	Valuable	Very Valuable
1a. Whole School	6	-	-	16.7%	83.3%
1b. Individual Pupils	15	-	-	13.3%	86.7%
1c. Groups of Pupils	7	-	-	14.3%	85.7%
1d. Staff Groups	6	-	-	-	100%
1e. Multidisciplinary Planning Meeting (MDPMs)	11	-	-	18.2%	72.8%
1f. Ease of communication with EP	15	-	-	26.7%	73.3%

## Overall Value of Psychological Input to School

### 1. What work with the EP have you found particularly useful?

Comments from schools can be generalised into six categories, with many respondents making multiple comments. The categories are given below, with examples:

#### 1. Relationship with EP

- *Although she is not always able to meet in school, we are often in contact via email and phone so I feel well supported in this respect*
- *We appreciate the fact that we know our EP very well and she knows our children well*
- *Clear and efficient communication with our EP when I have a query about a child or a specific SEN issue*

#### 2. Advice

- *Useful advice received from our EP about how to support individual pupils*
- *Advice on strategies from observations and consultations*
- *Feedback and confirmation on our practice and effectiveness of strategies used - suggestions on additional strategies*

#### 3. Training

- *Staff training (including ADHD, ASD and Precision Monitoring)*
- *The year 6 anxiety group which also allowed us to run a parallel group so we could support lots of children*
- *Strategies given to TAs in workshop sessions*

#### 4. Meetings/Surgeries

- *Attending MDPMs and gaining useful advice at these meetings*
- *School Planning Meetings and also SEN surgeries with [EdPsyc] are always very helpful & productive*
- *Surgeries have been popular with our staff*

#### 5. Working with Individual Pupils and Parents

- *Cognitive assessments to help clarify degree of Learning Difficulty to help*
- *EP meetings with parents are also very valuable*
- *Strategies for supporting individuals who have been referred and assessed*

#### 6. Statutory Assessments

- *EP attendance at TAFs, TACs and EHCPs has been incredibly useful*
- *Guidance with my first EHP review - very helpful!*
- *Support towards any referrals we make*

## 2. What could be done to improve the service on offer to schools?

Comments from schools fell into three categories, with some respondents making multiple comments regarding how the EPS service could be improved. Many schools expressed their satisfaction with the service they are receiving, whilst others offered ideas for improvement around training and EP availability. Two schools expressed queries/concerns in response to this question. Categories and key comments are given below:

### 1. Satisfied with EPS

- *It's a good service and we are served well by our allocated EP*
- *I think it's great - can't think of anything to improve on*
- *Honestly can't think of anything!*

### 2. Training

- *Perhaps schools joining up together for further training opportunities from the EPS*
- *Access to more resources (via Network meetings?)*
- *Sharing ideas/what works well with others*

### 3. EP Availability

- *More EPs and so a lesser workload for each of them would help!*
- *To retain our current EP for consistency of service for both school and parents*
- *Easier referral system or offering anonymous advice more often*
- *It has sometimes been difficult for the EP to fit meetings/observations in as she has a very limited amount of time to offer us*

### Queries/Concerns

- *If an EP is a specialist in one particular area, can they offer staff training at different schools? Or do we have to rely on our link EP to provide us with training?*
- *I am concerned that recently the Pre-referral checklist for the Autism Assessment team has changed and now states: 'Make sure there's been educational psychology involvement in the school through assessment, observation or detailed consultation.' This means that we are now making referrals to the Educational Psychology Service when we wouldn't normally be doing so*

## Training and Development

### 3. Have you received training or staff development this year in which an Educational Psychologist was involved?

46.7% of respondents had received training/staff development within school, and two schools had received multiple courses. All schools who had attended training rated it as being very valuable. A school who had received ASD training commented “*all staff members said it was really helpful and gave them a better understanding of the ASD and ways to support the children*”. Two schools received courses at a central location. Similarly this was seen as being valuable or very valuable, however the attachment training felt “*too rushed*”. Additionally, one further school had ASD training planned.

#### a) In school:

Course:	Responses	Very Valuable
Working with Girls with ASD	1	100%
Precision Monitoring	2	100%
ADHD	1	100%
Anxiety	1	100%
ASD	2	100%
Precision Teaching	1	100%
Working Memory	1	100%

#### b) At a central location

Course:	Responses	Valuable	Very Valuable
Attachment	1	100%	-
Overcoming Anxiety	1	-	100%

#### **4. What area of training would you consider a priority for your school/cluster for the coming year that Educational Psychologists can be involved in?**

Priorities for future training from the EPS can be categorised into three groupings, with topics of interest shown below:

##### **1. Specific Disorder Training**

- Attachment Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorder strategies
- Anxiety
- Dyslexia training

##### **2. Knowledge Based Training**

- The role of the Educational Psychology Service
- An understanding of the types of activities/assessments EPs conduct when assessing children, including help to understand and interpret data from Cognitive Assessments
- Working Memory (and support for those with a weakness)
- Sensory Processing
- Precision monitoring / teaching

##### **3. Strategies Based Training**

- Increasing resilience
- Behaviour management
- Rapid Phonics training
- Supporting children with more complex behavioural needs e.g. linked to traits of autism; low self-esteem due to academic weakness

**Any other comments:**

10 out of 15 schools provided further comments, all giving praise and/or offering thanks to the Educational Psychologists for their help and support.

*"Thanks for all your help and support this year, [EdPsyc]!"*

*"[EdPsyc] and [EdPsyc] are fantastic. They are very professional, easy to talk with and always reliable."*

*"Thank you for all your help this year and hope you all have a lovely summer."*

*"[EdPsyc] is brilliant. Cool, calm and collected! Gives well thought through and measured advice."*

*"[EdPsyc]'s support has been invaluable to both myself individually and to our school. We have also been lucky enough to have [EdPsyc] supporting us this year under the guidance of [EdPsyc]. The strategies and support plans the EP's have helped us to implement throughout the year have enabled our pupils to develop and progress and I look forward to continuing this support next year."*

*"We are really pleased with the level of input, advice and support we receive from both the EP Service and Learning Support Service. We know that they are at the end of an email for quick snippets of advice and feedback when needed. It is very helpful and reassuring and we would like to thank you as we know that you are VERY busy."*

*Thank you again for all the support you give our children and us at the staff. It's great to have someone to bounce ideas off and give us extra advice.*

*"The EP handover from [EdPsyc] to [EdPsyc] was smooth and seamless - a consistent provision: thank you."*

*"...all the support she gives the staff and children at our school. She knows our school and our children well and can offer advice that successfully meets the needs of individuals in a ..."*

*"The EP service does a fantastic job! Thank you all."*

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